

Farm Labour in the Eastern Province of Zambia

**FARM LABOUR IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA,
1898 TO 1964**

by

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
in History.**

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I hereby declare that this dissertation represents
my own work and that it has not previously been
submitted for any degree at this or any other
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A B S T R A C T

When examining the contributions of labour exploitation by capitalist centres to the underdevelopment of countries in the Southern African region much emphasis has been placed on labour supply mechanisms related to the copper mines. No systematic study has been done on the social and economic conditions of farm labour in the region. It was the need to fill up this 'neglected factor' in the economic history of Northern Rhodesia that gave birth to this dissertation. The choice of Fort Jameson and Petauke as a micro-area of study was determined by the fact that the area was one of the three regions in the country where commercial farming started. The other two areas are Abercorn (Present day Mbala) and the Railway line maize belt. Also, the Eastern Province became the cradle of tobacco farming which is known to be labour intensive.

We argue in this dissertation that the loss of fertile lands per-se, undermined the production capacity of the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga in the two areas because it meant that only small plots of fertile land remained in the hands of the local people. Secondly, the creation of native reserves further undercut the traditional economies, as the reserves were infertile and rocky areas. Ultimately, the native reserves became 'labour reservoirs' for labour-hungry institutions ^{within} / and outside the territory. However, the created labour-reservoirs did not adequately satisfy the labour requirements of the commercial farms in the locality throughout the period 1898 to 1964. We have concluded that the endemic shortage of labour experienced by the commercial farmers amidst abundant labour, stemmed from the low wages and the appalling working conditions obtaining on their farms. This perpetual shortage of labour consequently, not only retarded the tempo of commercial farming in the region, but also contributed a great deal to the high rate of labour migration the area experienced throughout the period under study. The high rate of labour migration further underdeveloped the region, as the major factor of production, labour, was often drawn out of the traditional economic system.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B S A C	British South Africa Company
M G L C C	Mozambique Gold, Land and Concession Company
N C C E C	North Charterland Concession and Exploration Company
N E R	North-Eastern Rhodesia
N R L A	Northern Rhodesia Labour Association
N W R	North-Western Rhodesia
R N L B	Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau
W N L A	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

Abstract

[illegible]

MAP SHOWING THE STUDY AREA AND ITS RIVERLANDS

Eastern Province, and, indeed, that of Zambia as a whole. There is a serious lack of literature on the working conditions of farm

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this dissertation an attempt is made to examine the social and economic conditions under which farm labour worked during the colonial period. The areas of study are the Fort Jameson and Petauke districts of the Eastern Province. Focus is on the period between 1898 to 1964. This period was characterized by changes in the economic organization of the indigenous societies not only of the Eastern Province, but also of the whole country due, partly, to external influences. The period under study was also marked by changes in the political organization of the people in the areas of study. Firstly, political subjugation of the Ngoni, Chewa, Nsenga and other ethnic groups in the Eastern Province was executed by the British South Africa Company. (BSAC). The company relinquished the administration of the area to the British Imperial Government in 1924 which ruled the country as a whole up to 1964 when the country became independent. It is important to mention here that from 1953 Northern Rhodesia formed part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The preoccupation of this dissertation is to explore the extent to which different economic and political changes affected the social and economic conditions of farm workers in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts.

The study helps to fill the gap in the historiography of the Eastern Province, and, indeed, that of Zambia as a whole. There is a serious lack of literature on the working conditions of farm

employees in the country. Hitherto, historical works on the underdevelopment of Northern Rhodesia and the other countries in Southern Africa have almost exclusively been preoccupied with labour conditions in the mining and manufacturing industries. Books such as Van Onselen's, Chibaro (1976); Berger, E. L. Labour, Race and Colonial Rule: the Copperbelt from 1924 to Independence, (1974); Davis, M. (ed), Modern Industry and the African (1933 & 1967), and many others, have mainly concerned themselves with the social and economic conditions of the mineworkers. In the case of Southern Rhodesia only one book (so far it appears) has been addressed to the study of the workers' conditions on farms. However, Duncan Clark's Contract Workers and Underdevelopment in Rhodesia, (1974), like many other works, has concentrated mainly on the instruments of obtaining contract rather than on the development or underdevelopment of the farm labour itself. This glaring deficiency has prompted this dissertation to divert its attention to the impact commercial farms had on the underdevelopment of the Eastern Province, as exemplified by Fort Jameson and Petauke districts.

Our main focus in this dissertation will thus be on the rise and growth of commercial farms in the areas under study mobilization of required labour onto the farms; the workers' working conditions on the farms; social control of the workers and the kind of worker-organizations. Before tackling the main preoccupation of this work, a brief outline is made of the pre-colonial social formations of the people in the two areas under study. This approach enables us to easily determine the degree of underdevelopment contributed by commercial farms to the Eastern Province through the

employment of labour.

We argue in this dissertation that land alienation and the commencement of settler farming, coupled with the institution of poll tax, rendered the majority of able bodied men in the two areas sellers of their labour. For instance, in Fort Jameson the growing of tobacco, which started in 1903, attracted more settlers to take up commercial farming. Fourteen new farmers in addition to about forty already established, are reported to have engaged in tobacco farming in the 1913-1914 planting season alone.¹ The increase in number of commercial farmers in Fort Jameson meant that more land would be grabbed from the indigenous people, uprooting them to wander from place to place for paid work.

Secondly, despite the assistance commercial farmers received from the Government and other institutions in terms of loans and technical skills, the farmers remained undercapitalized. A number of factors have been advanced for their persistent undercapitalization. Prominent among them, was that commercial farmers were far from their potential markets. Transport facilities were poor for almost the whole period under consideration. The absence of good communication links between Fort Jameson, Petauke and potential markets such as Southern Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, the Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt and South Africa, posed a serious financial constraint on the farmer to realize any meaningful profits. Consequently, the farmers in the area explained the poor wages and appalling working conditions on their farms in the light of meagre profits. The offshoot of persistent poor wages and appalling

working conditions on the farms was the exodus of labour emigration from Fort Jameson and Petauke to other labour markets with comparably better conditions and higher wages. The high degree of labour migration to other labour markets further created an endemic shortage of labour on the local commercial farms.

In the last part of this dissertation, we look at the implications of land alienation and labour migration against the requirements of traditional economic production. Our argument is that land alienation deprived the people in Fort Jameson and Petauke of the most important factor of production and this reduced their production capacity. The institution of Poll Tax, coupled with persistent poor working conditions on local farms encouraged labour migration to elsewhere. This situation deprived not only the traditional economies, but also the commercial farms of one of the major factors of production-labour. Consequently, we find both gross retardation of traditional agriculture as well as non-expansion of commercial (settler) agriculture. The general economic outlook for the whole area is a glaring agricultural underdevelopment in the period under study. As W.J. Barber has argued to confirm the above analysis

1 an indigenous economy may reshape the form of the expansion process through its role as a supplier of labour to the money economy. In the early stages of growth of the money economy, this influence would be slight ... but a further withdrawal of male labour from its rank could not be accomplished without a reduction in agricultural output there in.
2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The writing of history, like the reproduction of any economic

or social knowledge, requires a given theoretical frame within which specific questions are posed and necessary data is procured. That given theoretical framework becomes the tool with which to analyse data and arrive at relevant conclusions. In this dissertation we have striven to insert our discussion within the "structural underdevelopment theory" advanced by Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank and Walter Rodney.³ Our discussion is informed by Paul Baran's thesis of the underdevelopment theory (simplified by Leys) which states that:

The starting-point of underdevelopment theory is the period in which any given region of today's 'third world' began to be progressively incorporated into a permanent relationship with the expanding capitalist economy. Sometimes the initial relationship was largely one of simple plunder and extortion though generally represented as trade ... Later, and in some cases from early on, trade was supplemented by investment, for example in gold-mining or plantations, which used to be reinforced by direct rule, or colonialism, so as to make possible the enforcement of contracts, protection of title to property, forced labour, and so on⁴.

This thesis facilitates our understanding of the pattern of underdevelopment inherent in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts, and further enables us to delineate the factors that undermined the agricultural production of the areas at the level of labour exploitation.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The data that constitutes this dissertation have been derived from a multiple of sources. In a historical reconstruction of this nature, it is most important to heed Marc Bloch's caution in the analysis of data. Marc Bloch says:

The most naive policeman knows that a witness should not always be taken at his word, and similarly, it has been many a day since men first took into their heads not to accept all historical evidence blindly.⁵

Thus, the method of analysis involved data collection based on source criticism and comparison, so as to identify data which would be free from ideological biases of the authors and of the Government officials. This enables us to obtain undistorted data. The first part of data collection consisted of published and unpublished - Secondary sources such as books, articles, journals, theses and official reports, like the Orde Browne and Pim Reports. This body of literature was consulted in the University of Zambia Library and it provided initial reading on the topic as guide to archival sources.

Archival research in the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) formed the most important part of data analysis for this dissertation. This was so because NAZ had stocked a bulk of historical records relevant to many aspects of farm labour in the Eastern Province. Of special mention are the Annual Native Affairs Reports which mostly contained on-the-spot reports on labour; District Note Books, Department of Agriculture Annual Reports; Northern Rhodesia Blue Books; Medical Reports; Magistrates Reports and Commission of Enquiry Reports related to the topic. Other invaluable archival sources consulted included files of official correspondence among administrators, and between individual subjects and their chiefs.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation covers a period of about sixty-six years, 1898 to 1964. With a topic like the one above, it has been found advisable to adopt a thematic approach so as to avoid repetitions that would be inherent if we were to approach it chronologically. The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The rest of this chapter examines the Pre-colonial socio-economic formations, and colonial penetration and its impact. Special stress is on the division of labour and labour organization. Chapter two looks at Labour Mobilization for the Commercial Farms in both the Fort Jameson and Petauke areas. The focus of the chapter is on the mechanisms of labour procurement employed. Inter alia, analysis is made of the role of the Government as a labour recruiter for the farms.

The third chapter deals with labour conditions on the farms. Among other aspects, the nature of that labour, type of accommodation provided, wages and the quality of food rations, and the quality and quantity of medical facilities, have been examined. Chapter four looks at the response of the workers to conditions on the farms in the two areas vis a vis other labour markets. The final chapter contains a conclusion which summarises how the emergence of settler agriculture in Fort Jameson and Petauke contributed to the underdevelopment in the area.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE AREAS AND THE SOCIAL SETTING BEFORE THE COLONIAL CONQUEST

Fort Jameson (renamed Chipata after Independence) and

Petauke Districts are part of the Eastern Province of Zambia. The Eastern Province was formerly called "East Luangwa", as part of North Eastern Rhodesia which included some parts of the present day Northern Province (see map). The area of the Province is about 26,000 square miles.⁶ The Province is shaped like a triangle. Its southern base forming the border with Mozambique; the eastern side of the triangle borders Malawi; and on the western side of the Province is the Luangwa River which divides the Eastern Province from the rest of Zambia.

The two districts to which this study is restricted formed a large portion of what was called the North Charterland Concession, from about 1893. This was when the North Charterland Exploration Company was formed to manage the earlier exploits of Carl Wiese. The physical features of the area comprise of a plateau of about 13,000 square miles, stretching from east to west; an escarpment, called the Muchinga escarpment of about 6,000 square miles which straddles to the north-west of the plateau. The area has also a valley that spans about 7,000 square miles.⁷ The vegetation of the area is generally savannah.

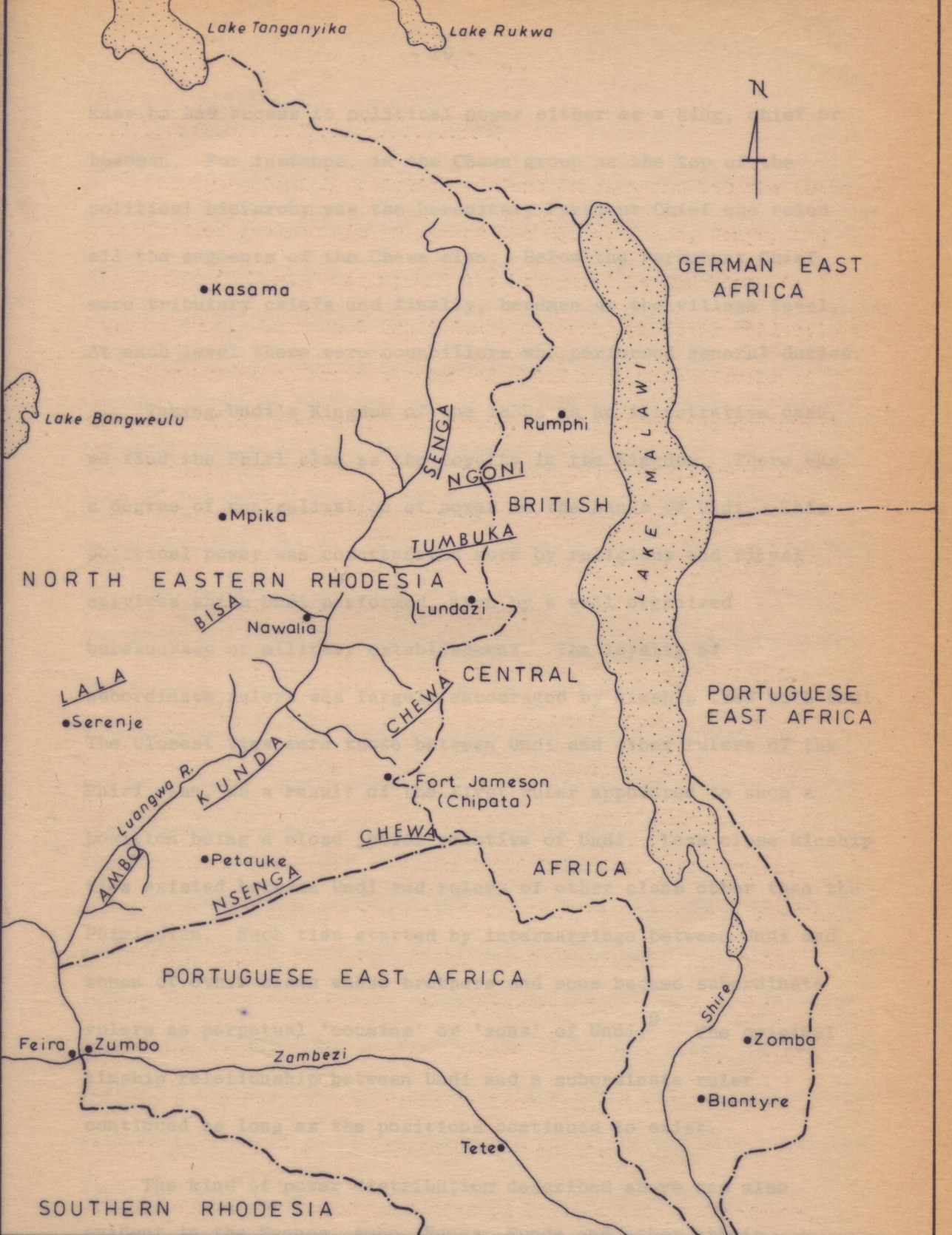
The importance of knowing the ecological features of an area of study is that it helps to determine settlement patterns of the people in the area. In the case of Fort Jameson and Petauke, population concentrations were mostly found around the plateau which had fertile soils, and in some pockets of the escarpment, most of which was unsuitable for both human and stock habitation, because it was infested by tsetse flies. Thus, it was thinly populated.

PRE-COLONIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING

The Pre-colonial societies of Fort Jameson and Petauke areas comprised of such ethnic groups as the Chewa, Kunda, Senga, and the Nyanja in Fort Jameson; and the Nsenga, Ambo and Wiza in Petauke area. From oral traditions, an early phase is said to have involved the Maravi cluster of chiefdoms, which developed around the 15th century in the areas.⁸ The Chewa are acclaimed the first to inhabit the area which was later to be known as the Charterland Concession and followed later, by the Nsenga, Ambo, Kunda, Senga and Wisa. The Ambo were a valley people while the Nsenga and Chewa occupied the Plateau.

The latest group to migrate into Fort Jameson was Ngoni. The Ngoni from the south crossed the Zambezi River near Feira in about 1835 and moved up to the Ufipa Plateau in south-western Tanganyika (Tanzania). In the process of Ngoni fissure and fission after the death of their initial leader, Zwangendaba, one sector led by Mpezeni crossed the Luangwa River from the West, in about 1865. This group of the Ngoni managed to defeat the Chewa, Nsenga, Ambo and Kunda, and eventually settled in the headwaters of the Lutembwe River around 1875 (see map). Nearly all the conquered ethnic groups in Fort Jameson and Petauke finally came under the suzerainty of Mpezeni.

In the pre-colonial societies of Fort Jameson and Petauke, distribution of political power was hierarchical, and the status of each individual was determined by ascription. The position of a family in each tribal strata determined the social mobility of the members. If one was born in the royal family, then he



Source: Leroy Vail, "Ecology and History: The example of eastern Zambia" in Journal of Southern African Studies volume 3 number 2 (April 1977), + 31

knew he had access to political power either as a king, chief or headman. For instance, in the Chewa group at the top of the political hierarchy was the hereditary Paramount Chief who ruled all the segments of the Chewa clan. Below the Paramount Chief, were tributary chiefs and finally, headmen at the village level. At each level there were councillors who performed general duties.

Taking Undi's Kingdom of the 1830s as an illustrative case, we find the Phiri clan as the royalty in the Kingdom. There was a degree of centralization of power in the hands of Undi. This political power was countenanced more by religious and ritual services which Undi performed, than by a well organized bureaucracy or military establishment. The loyalty of subordinate rulers was largely encouraged by kinship ties with Undi. The closest ties were those between Undi and other rulers of the Phiri clan, as a result of the first ruler appointed to such a position being a close junior relative of Undi. Less close kinship ties existed between Undi and rulers of other clans other than the Phiri clan. Such ties started by intermarriage between Undi and women of other clans whose brothers and sons became subordinate rulers as perpetual 'cousins' or 'sons' of Undi.⁹ The original kinship relationship between Undi and a subordinate ruler continued as long as the positions continued to exist.

The kind of power distribution described above was also evident in the Nsenga, Ambo, Senga, Kunda and other ethnic groups. The slight difference, though, was that there was less pronounced centralization of power in these other ethnic groups. Another common aspect among these ethnic groups was that all of

them were matrilineal societies.

The patrilineal Ngoni had a different form of socio-political organization. The Ngoni society, like the Nguni societies of South Africa, comprised various segments, Vigawa. The segment, cigawa, of the highest order was the state itself consisting of more people than any of the lower segments. The Great Chief Mpezeni, Nkosi ya Ma Nkosi, was at the top of the state hierarchy. Luangeni, his palace, was the centre of Administration. However, each of the primal segment had its own leader, Mfumu. Mfumu, a segmental lord, was politically responsible to the Nkosi ya Ma Nkosi and took charge of political and economic affairs of his segment. The Mfumu was normally agnatically related to most/^{of}the members of his segment, while to his captives he assumed the duties of a surrogate father. At times he would make some women captives his own wives. In the absence of true agnatic descendents, a lord was sometimes succeeded by a quasi-related dependant.

Another aspect of the Ngoni socio-political organization that was absent in the other ethnic groups was the age-set system. 'About every three or four years, depending on the military requirements and on the availability of lads of the right age, a new regiment was formed by all the boys aged about fifteen years old'.¹⁰ These boys were usually encamped at the Paramount Chief's great wife's village. Each age-set was given a regimental name by the Chief. These age-sets were under orders of the chief's senior lieutenants and once the age-set graduated into a full army squad, an experienced senior warrior was chosen from the senior army ranks to take command of the new regiment.

The age-set system has one interesting consequence of note. It reveals that social mobility in the Ngoni society was not within the confines of the smallest unit - the family - as in the other groups mentioned above. Social mobility of individuals was determined by the age-set unit which drew its membership from a wide spectrum of the society, commoner or non-commoner. As such the Ngoni socio-political organization cannot be said to have been a tightly-knit structure. Positions in the higher political hierarchy were, from time to time, held by persons from families unrelated to the Ngoni royal clan. Some of the Cewa and Nsenga people who came under the suzerainty of Mpezeni, found their way to top political positions in the Ngoni state. As has been noted;

There is a well known instance of a son and other close relatives of an Nsenga chief who joined the Ngoni and rose to high position in the state.¹¹

We could thus, safely argue that social mobility in the Ngoni society was not based on ascribed status as in the other ethnic groups, but based on achievement in society, especially as a member of the society's army.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The Ngoni and the other ethnic groups in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas lived in large and usually centralized villages, with the Paramount Chief's village serving as the capital. This pattern of large village-settlement served certain important purposes. Firstly, it afforded the polity easy control of the

communities and provided the individual villager the chance to contribute as effectively as his skills could allow towards Public affairs. Secondly, large-village settlements helped the Ngoni, Cewa and Nsenga, for example, to deal with ecological and human foes. The need for defence against warrior ethnic groups, like the Ngoni in the mid 19th century further justified the Cewa, Nsenga, Ambo and the Kunda to live in large concentrations. The Ngoni themselves, a 'predatory group' in the areas of Eastern province, lived in large population concentrations for easy mobilization of its society for socio-political tasks. Similarly, large community organizations enabled the people to easily tackle ecological problems. For instance, if one village community was moving to another site because the earlier site had become infertile, construction of the new village was done faster and easily because of the many hands available. As Allan points out, 'the more labour operations, such as tree-felling, bush-clearing, opening new land, heavy housing and harvesting, are still commonly carried out by collective work parties of kinfolk and neighbours who are offered beer, meat or any other item as reward.¹² What is important here is not the reward offered, but the fact that the person who prepared beer to implore more hands to assist him in his task, did so because there was a big community to fall on for assistance. The number of hands attendant depended mainly on the number of people one had assisted similarly.

The penetration of colonialism in the Eastern Province, with its land alienation policy in the Fort Jameson and Petauke

districts, greatly dislocated the above mentioned settlement pattern. A further result was that the pattern of community labour mobilization in the society's economy had been altered both in quality and quantity. That change has remained a permanent feature of the underdevelopment of the Eastern Province as a whole.

PRE-COLONIAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

The Chewa, Nsenga and the Ngoni practised a mixed economy. However, while all of them were both agriculturists and cattle-herders, the Chewa and Nsenga depended almost entirely on agriculture for livelihood. They practiced a shifting form of agriculture which took cognizance of fallowing. When virgin soils were exhausted the 'peasant' left them and moved to fresh tracts. In time, the exhausted fields would recover their fertility and would again be brought under cultivation. This agricultural system illustrates a fundamental principle of rotations, namely, that land cannot be kept continuously under an exhausting system of cropping without manuring; and that it contains recuperative powers which in time would restore its fertility, or at least some of that fertility, even without manuring.

The shifting cultivation practiced by the people in the Eastern Province differed from the Chitemene system practiced by the Bemba in the Northern Province. The Chitemene system practised by the Bemba involved the lopping of tree branches. The Nsenga and Chewa system involved selection of new garden

sites around January; grass and undergrowth were uprooted and all the trees were felled to waist height. The lops and branches were piled into mounds around February to April.¹³ These new garden sites could then be left until around September and October when the mounds would be burnt. Inter alia, the first crop to be planted in the ash-fertilized field was millet alongside maize. The other crops grown by the Nsenga and Chewa included kaffir corn, beans, groundnuts, potatoes and general vegetables.¹⁴ These crops were grown in random rotation.

Cattle-keeping in the Chewa and Nsenga economy was on a very insignificant scale. This was not due to the incidence of the tsetse fly, but merely because the Tonga, Tswana or Ngoni.¹⁵ It was not the whole Eastern Province which was fly-infested.

... the fly-belts, however, are by no means as continuous as commonly represented, and are probably lacking from considerable areas of the main plateau above 4,500 feet.¹⁶

For instance, the areas occupied by the Chewa and Nsenga in Fort Jameson and Petauke before colonialism were free of tsetse-fly (see map). Nevertheless, both ethnic groups reared other livestock such as pigs, goats, sheep and fowls. Besides, the Chewa were skilled iron smelters and blacksmiths, while the Nsenga were adept at basket-making.

Components of the Ngoni economy before colonial conquest comprised of cattle-keeping, agriculture and raiding. Cattle played a very prominent role in the Ngoni pre-colonial economy.

The Ngoni are said to have owned a total of between 15,000 to 24,000 headsof cattle before their defeat in 1898.¹⁷ To the Fort Jameson Ngoni, cattle were a storage of wealth and a symbol of status. They were frequently used as bride wealth - Lobola in the Ngoni society. Cattle were also used for milk but seldom for meat. Slaughter of cattle for meat was only done at special occasions such as funerals, weddings - muthimba, or at investiture ceremonies of a Chief or headman. Frequent meat supplies were obtained by hunting as the area around Luangwa had a lot of game. Unlike the situation in the pre-colonial Tswana society of Bechuanaland where cattle ownership was the monopoly of the royal family, among the Fort Jameson Ngoni, cattle was individually owned by all the people and distributed according to the individual person's capability.¹⁸

The Ngoni were not a settled ethnic group. As a warrior group they were most of the time in transit. This aspect of life made the Ngoni develop a tenuous attachment to land. But this did not mean they had contempt for it. It has been confirmed that the Ngoni actually practiced agriculture and produced their staple foods. Early travellers who remarked on the settlement pattern of the Ngoni also commented on the extent of the cultivation around villages. One such early traveller and explorer was Angus, who observed as follows:

Before us lay an undulating valley some miles in breadth which, as the heavily timbered hills on either side proclaimed, had once been covered with forest, but was now denuded of every vestige of a tree. Village after village surrounded by waving cornfields, and green plains dotted with herds of cattle, stretched away in the distance. Never before in any of

my African wanderings had I seen such an extent of land under cultivation; the cornfields seemed unending, and the size, and number of the villages fairly astonished me; and it was not till then that I realized what a powerful and prosperous people were those whose acquaintance I was about to make.¹⁹

Save exaggerations that might be inherent in the above observation by Angus, it does prove to the contrary the argument that the Ngoni had a negative attitude to cultivation and, relied heavily on raiding for agricultural supplies. Raiding merely played a supplementary role to Ngoni agricultural production. Raiding other ethnic groups was for cattle, agricultural crops and captives. The initial impetus for raiding other groups was to have more cattle all the time, and, secondly, to replenish diminishing agricultural stocks in difficult harvest seasons. Usually, the loot was shared among the society through the Paramount Chief. As the Ngoni themselves always said, "In the time of peace, Chamutendere, our spears, were our hoes".²⁰ The time of peace referred to here is, incidentally, the pre-conquest days when they would raid and marauded other tribes for cattle and agricultural supplements in their lean years without restraint.

The prominence of agriculture in the economy of the Chewa and Nsenga, and the prominence of cattle in the Ngoni economy thus shaped the kind of political, social and economic institutions that emerged in these societies. Those modes of production further became the basis on which specific modes of behaviour were shaped and to which the Chewa, Nsenga and the Ngoni conformed respectively. To be succinct, the pre-

colonial economy of the societies understudy depended greatly on land for both agriculture and pastoralism. And that production was largely for subsistence with little desire for competitive production.

PRE-COLONIAL LAND TENURE OF THE CHEWA, NSENGA AND NGONI

The term "land tenure" has been used in various senses by various people of different disciplines. One anthropologist has defined land tenure as:

Total range of inter-relationship between
Man and the land, including rights over
game, fish and forest produce.²¹

Some writers include in the above definition, the aspect of land usage. On the other hand, C.M.N. White defined land tenure to mean:

the analysis of the rights of individuals
or groups over arable, grazing and residential;
how such rights are acquired, what they consist
of; how they operate in holding, transfer and
inheritance of land and how they may be
extinguished.²²

For our purpose in this dissertation we will define land tenure as "total range of inter-relationships between man and land including rights over game, fish, forest produce, land usage, arable, grazing and residential land; how such rights are acquired, operate in holding, transfer and how those rights might be forfeited". This definition of land tenure is all-embracing and had included aspects from the earlier given definitions. Note that this definition is the author's

construction from aspects of the above definitions.

The Chewa, Nsenga and Ngoni like many other ethnic groups in Central and Southern Africa, moved on from one place to another, whether as agriculturalists or pastoralists. They did not own land as individuals, that means, land would not be owned in the same manner a person would own a knob-kerry. Land was something of which a man might have the use of, if the Chief agreed, but the right to use it was not something that could be exchanged for something else. Nor had the chief as figure head, power to sell it. The Chief was the custodian of land and controlled it through his subordinates.

In the Chewa, Nsenga and Ngoni systems the tribal areas were divided into semi-autonomous villages, each under a hereditary headman. Each village was both a geographical and kinship Unit containing a group of families. The village was essentially a temporary establishment whose members were related by family ties. Within each village or segment of the Ngoni in Fort Jameson, land was allocated to individual families by the headman. Typically, the father or a son about to marry obtained permission for his son to use a piece of land. The headman would then indicate roughly the area which could be used. Individual rights to arable land were protected so long as the cultivator occupied it or was presumed to have an interest in that particular holding. Only clearly abandoned land could be reallocated. But, if a claim to that land conflicted with that of a previous occupier, the previous occupier had precedence. Also, among the Ngoni as among

the Chewa and Nsenga, only on the death of a garden owner could the right of land revert to the next of kin in the family. Also a family land reverted to the headman if the family migrated to another chiefdom permanently. Land reverted to the chief only when the whole village dismantled either by migration to other chiefdoms or otherwise.

Grazing lands among the Ngoni, were not individually owned. The community owned them. Likewise, unoccupied lands in both the Ngoni and the other ethnic groups were owned theoretically, by the chief for the benefit of the community at large; for hunting, collecting firewood, water, collecting clay or to provide for other common needs. However, when it came to hunting, the person who killed game in the territory of a certain village, was under obligation to offer the headman a hind leg Mukhono, of that game. This was some kind of tribute to the headman. Similarly, if one caught a lot of fish from the communal waters, he had to give some of it to the headman. The significance of such tribute to the headman was that he would offer his clan prayers to their ancestors' spirits happily and thus, the spirits would be happy too, to multiply the riches of the tribal natural resources.

An examination of the pattern of land utilization of the three selected tribes in Fort Jameson and Petauke before colonialism, reveals that their use of the natural resources was aimed at instilling some mode of conduct into a person's relation-

ship with his community. For instance, a member of a family was entitled to the use of a piece of land within the territorial limits of the village (clan), but that land did not become his property. He had rights to the land allotted him and the produce from that land was his property. He could dispose of the produce but not the land. Land remained the property of the community in which he was a member. A sense of equal sharing was encouraged. Secondly, the communal use of unoccupied lands such as grazing lands, hunting lands, fishing grounds and drinking water areas served in narrowing the gap between the inherent disparities within the community. Thirdly, community use of communal natural resources encouraged in the people a sense of responsibility and consideration for others. Further, the shifting from one place to another did not merely end at discovering fresh arable and grazing lands, but also had the function of maintaining an ecological balance necessary to support the communities. All these important aspects of the Chewa, Nsenga and Ngoni traditional land tenure were distorted during the reign of colonial political economy. The colonial political economy with its land alienation in Fort Jameson and Petauke, reduced the available quantity of land and hastened the diminishing of its quality by restricting people's movements. This had the consequence of forcing people off the land to become a wage labour force which is the focus of this dissertation.

PRE-COLONIAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION AND LABOUR PROCUREMENT

In the pre-colonial Ngoni as in the other communities, the division of labour was almost always according to sex. Household chores were exclusively a woman's responsibility while political organization and the general organization of community affairs remained the province of men. Hunting, and in the case of the Ngoni, warfare, were tasks almost exclusively done by men who formed regiments. By the canons of the Ngoni society, nearly all operations related to cattle were undertaken by men. For instance, looking after cattle or deciding on the quantity of cattle to dispense with in bridewealth, were done by the menfolk. In the agricultural field the family was the major labour unit. In the Ngoni community, the large part of agricultural work was performed by women and young children below regiment level, while men performed the arduous task of felling trees on fresh land. Women's tasks in agriculture thus included, clearing the land, planting, weeding, harvesting and storing the produce. Ngoni men regarded cattle tending, raiding and running community affairs with exclusive importance and regarded the bulk of agricultural chores with simplicity to be left to the femalefolk.

Among the Nsenga and Chewa, while the division of labour was akin to that obtaining in the Ngoni community, agricultural tasks were almost shared equally between the menfolk and the womenfolk. The felling of trees on virgin land was indeed the exclusive task of men. This was no doubt because of the hard nature of the task. But clearing, planting, weeding and harvesting, were equally done by both sexes. This equal share

share of agricultural tasks by men and women in the two ethnic groups is perhaps explained by the fact that agriculture constituted the major part of their economic activities while in the Ngoni pastoralism featured prominently in their economy.

One customary obligation was that there be mutual help in providing labour, particularly in the Chewa and Nsenga communities. If a household labour-unit felt it needed extra labour to expand production, it would brew beer for people who would come to help in the field or cook Nshima with some special relish like game meat. This kind of procuring extra labour favoured people who had surplus foodstuffs to spend on such occasions. All the same, it did help in procuring labour outside the family unit in difficult times. In any case, it was a reciprocative system between and among members of villages located in the same milieu. It thus did not disrupt the normal labour-units of the distinct families.

by sex in the family,
Besides the division of labour, Chiefs, headmen and other people with power, procured labour from their subjects. Chiefs and other aristocrats were not to be detracted from their task of planning and conducting the organizational affairs of their communities by engaging in the day-to-day execution of economic production. So the subjects were under some obligation to provide their surplus labour to their rulers. One way through which a Nsenga, Chewa or Ngoni chief procured labour was tribute. He was entitled to a variety of tribute from his subjects ranging from agricultural crops to cultural artifacts like a spear,

knob-kerry, ivory, animal skin and a host of other treasurable items. More directly, Ngoni, Nsenga and Chewa Chiefs and their lieutenants, procured labour in three ways. Firstly, tribal work expeditions were organized by villagers to work on the chief's fields or perform a task on any aristocrats' quarters. These work expeditions were organized in alternative fashion by villages of the various segments of the tribe. Each segment would work for one day in a season. In this fashion little disruption was caused to the production of the household units.

For the Ngoni especially, the second way the chief and aristocratic households procured labour was through the regiments. As pointed out earlier, after every three to four years, and depending on the availability of boys aged fourteen to fifteen years, a new regiment was formed. While this regiment was in camp at the Paramount chief's palace, it performed such tasks as tending cattle, building and repairing chief's houses and grain-bins, clearing fields for both the chief and other influential people; and hunting for them. They could also perform any other duty deemed necessary by society. When this youth regiment graduated into a full army, it fought wars on behalf of the society. This method of labour procurement was, to some extent, exploitative because boys drawn from family labour units rarely went back to assist their respective families in their daily chores. This method tended to reduce almost permanently, the labour force of family labour-units since the boys grew up while in the camp and when they became full-fledged soldiers they set up their own homes.

The third source of labour for the royalty and other aristocratic households was captives of war. While most male captives were incorporated into Ngoni regiments, women captives were distributed among the Paramount chiefs' palace, aristocratic households and the households of the elite class of the regiments. Women captives were used in jobs like cultivation, keeping the palace or the village clean, fetching water and smearing walls and floors of influential people's houses. In the initial stages, the captives in the Ngoni society would be treated as children who would not own property of their own. They had to be fed within the households they belonged. Eventually, as they got more integrated into the society, especially women captives as wives of the superior society, they were allotted lands of their own and their servitude diminished.

Looking at the system of labour organization of the Ngoni, Nsenga and Chewa above, one notices an embryo of class formation where the rulers form their own class as drawers of labour from a class or classes of their subjects. In Tribute in items and work expeditions helped to strengthen the political and economic power of the ruling clans and maintained the poor subjects at base of the socio-economic ladder. What has been of major interest to this dissertation is the examination of the impact of labour organization in the colonial political economy on the traditional system of labour organization and its production capacities.

PRE-COLONIAL TRADE

Inter-community trade had been an important aspect of the

pre-colonial societies of the Eastern Province to supplement the deficiencies of their various economies. According to White, the Chewa were skilled Iron smelters and smiths, and conducted their trade in iron implements. Of the Ambo Senga in the valley, he says "they customarily sold baskets and tobacco on the plateau and/a lesser degree rice and chickens".²³ On the other hand, Barnes noted a continuing inter-village trade in pots and baskets amongst the Ngoni. An administrator's Report in 1898 noted of the Senga that:

they grow enormous crops of grain; their tobacco is famous among other tribes and is much used as an article of barter ... the men are expert weavers, making strong cloth with designs of very pretty pattern. It is possibly due to this widespread tradition of barter and trade that the commercial possibilities of peasant farming have been so quickly recognized in both the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts.²⁴

The bulk of the internal pre-colonial trade in Fort Jameson and Petauke was through barter, exchange of one item for another, say, a pot for a basket. However, in certain circumstances, items like hoes and axes became accepted medium of exchange. For instance, an axe would buy a sheep or goat and at times a hoe would be used as part of bride wealth.²⁵ It is important to note that inter-tribal trade had the important function of encouraging more production of items whose raw materials could easily be secured.

COLONIAL PENETRATION AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

In Chipata and Petauke districts of the Eastern Province of

Zambia, colonial rule came in the name of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). Prior to the establishment of the colonial administration in the area, there was contact between European traders and explorers and the local people. One such explorer and trader was Carl Wiese, a German national who is said to have visited Ngoniland in about 1881 and gradually gained his confidence with Chief Mpezeni. Sometime in 1886, Chief Mpezeni is said to have granted Carl Wiese land concession amounting to about 10,000 square miles. It was claimed by Wiese that Mpezeni ratified the land agreement in writing on the 14th of April, 1891, certificate of which read in part:

... Mpezeni, described as Paramount Chief of the Angoni (Zulus) and Sovereign Ruler over Maravia and Western Nyasaland; granted Wiese a concession in one Part of his country some 6,700 square miles in extent and reaching to within twelve miles of the Zambezia near Chicoo.²⁶

The Concession was for ninety-nine years. Carl Wiese was to give Chief Mpezeni £200 annually, plus one percent of his profits. In time, Wiese decided to dispose of the Concession. Around 1893 the Mozambique Gold Land and Concession Company (MGLCC), paid £1,500 for Wiese's Concession. However, the first colonial administrator of Nyasaland, Harry Johnston, refused to furnish the company with a certificate of claim. Instead, Johnston recognized the claim of the BSAC. The Mozambique Company pressurized for recognition of its concession from Wiese and finally on 8th May, 1893, an agreement was reached whereby

the MGLCC was granted mineral and land rights in the block of land ten thousand square miles in extent within the B.S.A. Company's territory.²⁷ This concession covered large parts of the present day Chipata and Petauke districts. In order to operate the resources of the concession another company was formed. This new company was called the "North Charterland Exploration and Concession" (NCEC) and the B.S.A.C. bought some shares in it.

The institution of the NCEC heralded the start of a new era for the Ngoni, Chewa, Nsenga and other ethnic groups in the area. The BSAC replaced the Ngoni as the major military and political power and the NCEC became the land owner and the entrepreneur. The NCEC, for instance, established its headquarters at Fort Young in 1896, while the BSAC, had earlier established an administrative outpost sixty miles north of Mpezeni at Chinunda, though no effective control was really done.²⁸ The increased tempo of European political and economic activity was not particularly welcome in Ngoniland. The people's chagrin in Ngoniland was vented through an uprising which was largely instigated by Mpezeni's heir Nsingu, in December, 1897. The BSAC raised troops in Nyasaland, and on the 19th of January, 1898 the Ngoni were declared defeated.²⁹ The defeat was the end of an era highly cherished by the Ngoni.

With the defeat of the Ngoni in 1898, came the establishment of colonial administration under the BSAC in North-Eastern Rhodesia as whole. While the NCEC Headquarters remained in the old place Fort Young in Nyasaland, the B.S.A.C. administration was set up at Fort Patrick. In October, 1898 it moved to Fort

Jameson, earlier Kapatamoyo's Kraal.³⁰ It was not until 1899 that North Eastern Rhodesia acquired a capital on its own soil, at Fort Jameson in Ngoniland. Prior to that date the Administrator lived at Blantyre in the British Central Africa (Nyasaland - Malawi). The North-Eastern Rhodesia Order in Council, formerly placing North-Eastern Rhodesia in the administrative hands of the BSA Company was passed on the statute book in 1899.³¹ The area was to be administered on similar lines as Nyasaland, and its political and economic assistance mostly came from Nyasaland.

Until 1900, it should be pointed out, the British Government's general supervision of the Company's rule in North-Eastern Rhodesia was exercised by the Commissioner for the Nyasaland Protectorate. It was with the approaching of the unification of North-Eastern and North-Western Rhodesias into Northern Rhodesia, that transferred the function to the High Commissioner for South Africa who had already been supervising the BSAC administration in North Western Rhodesia. The unification of the two halves of Northern Rhodesia was effected on the 31st May, 1911.³² This arrangement terminated North Eastern Rhodesia's intimate political ties with the Nyasaland Protectorate.

The establishment of effective company administration in Fort Jameson was followed by economic pioneering. In the first place both the BSAC and the NCEC had anticipated the concession areas to be rich in mineral deposits, especially

gold deposits, but the anticipations were in vain. However, some small gold deposits were initially discovered with short life spans. For instance, between 1901 and 1913, 640 gold and 150 base metal claims had been registered at Fort Jameson, but by the end of 1913, there were only three European miners in the whole of Eastern Province.³³ The first mine to be opened in 1901 was at Sasare in Ngoniland, but the venture proved uneconomic and was closed down shortly afterwards. It did not take the profit-minded company very long to realize that minerals were not to be the basis of the economic structure of the region.

In the absence of minerals, the BSAC and the NCEC veered their attention to the agricultural potentials of Fort Jameson and Petauke as a more viable economic venture. The growth of agriculture was to be based on European commercial farming. The introduction of European commercial farming in the area required three preconditions: Firstly, that more arable land in addition to the ten thousand square miles already alienated was to be set aside for the anticipated coming farmers. Secondly, a ready labour force; and thirdly, the availability of capital and managerial skills.

LAND ALIENATION AND COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE BEFORE 1911

Along side a small group of administrators that came to Fort Jameson, were traders, missionaries and small bands of settler farmers who had been lured into the territory by cheap land prices. The BSAC and NCEC land prices were considerably lower

than land prices obtaining elsewhere in the Southern African region. For instance, purchase prices per acre in North-Eastern Rhodesia in 1890s to 1911 varied from 3d to 8d depending on the distance of the farm from the townships;³⁴ while during the same period land prices in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa had increased from 3d per acre, to 1/8d and 3/6d per acre.³⁵ This disparity in land prices attracted potential farmers in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa to migrate into Northern Rhodesia.

Settlers who came into North-Eastern Rhodesia were mainly from Nyasaland from among retired British Civil Servants who had earlier decided to stay in Nyasaland. A few came from among the 'poor white' class in South Africa. The first farmers were mostly with little capital. They were mainly ranchers and co-farmed with the Ngoni cattle herders in the early stages. But when Rinderpest crippled the cattle industry in Southern Rhodesia, in 1896, that country provided North-Eastern Rhodesia cattle with an expanded market. Cattle prices went encouragingly high. For instance, an ox that fetched 15/- and £2 in North-Eastern Rhodesia fetched between £10 and £20. Similarly, cows fetched much more on the Salisbury and Bulawayo markets.³⁶ This development enticed most settlers in the area to intensify cattle farming and at the same time pressurized the BSAC administration and the NCEC to exclude indigenous farmers from the market by pressing for the creation of reserve areas for them. The settler farmers had formed a 'Famer's Association' in 1904 which became their mouthpiece. More land was made available to European

settlers.

Prior to 1903, however, land allocations in the concession areas were done by the Local Manager of the Charterland Company. By mid 1904, the BSAC Administration had taken charge. Earlier, the BSAC could not allocate land because it had no authority to make land grants until a treaty was signed with Lewanika empowering the company to grant land as it so desired. Despite the fact that Lewanika's authority was confined to North Western Rhodesia, it seems the BSAC used the treaty to include North Eastern Rhodesia. Thus, in 1904 alone, the BSAC allocated 53,892 acres to new farmers, and the sizes of farms granted ranged from 12,000 acres (like the 'Lutembwe Ranch' of Vereka Irving and Page), to small farms of 1,500 acres.³⁷ Also, generous terms were offered with farms of up to 9,000 acres being made available at an annual quit rent of £1 per 1,000 acres, plus a total survey charge of £35.³⁸ Besides, a "free of purchase price ..." held on a £3 quit rent yearly, plus a survey charge of £22, were required before grants were made.³⁹

The slight increase of settler farmers into Fort Jameson and Petauke districts encouraged the creation of the first 'Native Reserve' in Mpezeni's area. There were by 1908 thirty settler farms in the concession area. The first 'Native Reserve' was demarcated in 1906 on the South-East of Fort Jameson. This Reserve was called the "Mpezeni Reserve".⁴⁰ The demarcation of this reserve was the brain-child of the "East Luangwa Land Commission" which was appointed by the BSAC to investigate on land problems in the Concession area. Unfortunately, for the North-Eastern Province farmers, as well as for the farmers in

the whole territory, their economic activities got impetus from favourable or unfavourable events in Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. The cattle boom in North-Eastern Rhodesia thus did not last long. By about 1907 the Southern Rhodesia Market had dwindled as a result of the recovery of cattle there from rinderpest. The early fortunes of the cattle industry in the North-Eastern Rhodesia received another jolt. By 1912 the cattle in the area were ravaged by bovine Trypanosomiasis and thus, pushed the producers out of the market almost completely. The effects of the tsetse fly epidemic on the North-Eastern Rhodesia cattle can be gleaned from the table below:

TABLE 1

AFRICAN OWNED CATTLE BETWEEN 1897-1907 IN FOR JAMESON
AND PETAUKE

Year	Quantity
1897	20,000 (approximately)
1898	6,000 (14,000 looted in the war)
1903	1,457 (5,547 Eliminated by Trypanosomiasis)
1907	800 (purposeful destruction)

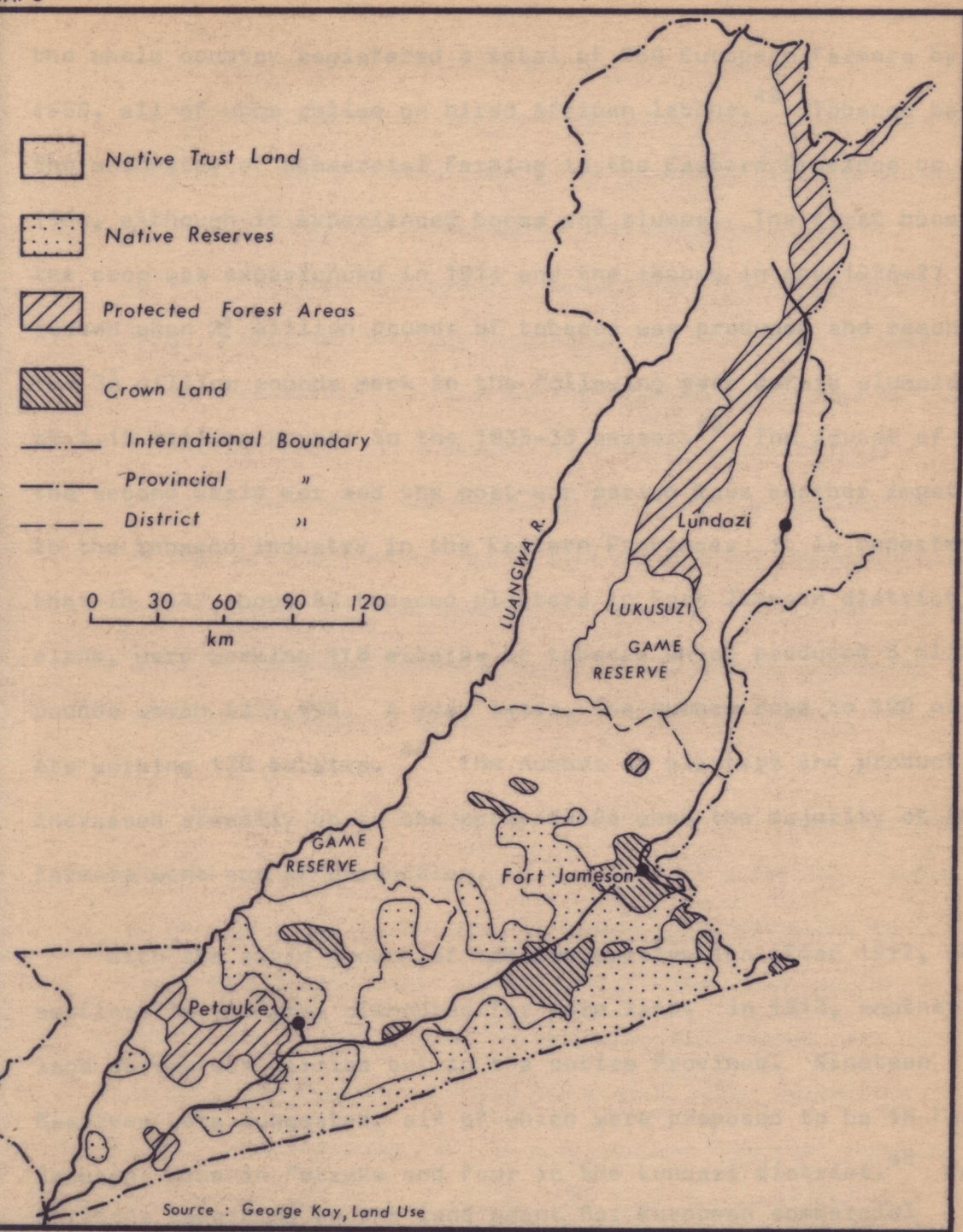
Source: George Kay, Changing Patterns of Settlement
and Land Use in the Eastern Province of Northern
Rhodesia. (Yorkshire, University of Hull
Publications, 1965) p. 9.

Cotton and Rubber cultivation was carried out alongside ranching, but proved unsatisfactory by 1911 because of crop failures due to pests and poor transportation. For example, the only outward route from the Province at that time, was a foot path to Tete in Mozambique and down the Zambezi river by a river-steamer.

LAND ALIENATION AND COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE AFTER 1911

The failure of ranching and cotton growing made the settler farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts to turn to tobacco growing in 1912. In reality the growing of tobacco in the area started around 1903, but it began to expand by the 1913-1914 season. Expansion of tobacco farming was accredited to the support rendered by the 'United Tobacco Company' of South Africa whose representatives visited Fort Jameson in 1912 and encouraged the farmers to grow virginia tobacco. The 'United Tobacco Company' also established storage facilities and gave free advice to the farmers.⁴¹ Besides, the high prices on the market, especially in South Africa which became the main market, gave more impetus to many farmers in Eastern Province to take up tobacco farming. The Imperial Preference accorded by Britain further boosted the tobacco industry in the Eastern Province.

As Fort Jameson and Petauke began to be the cradle of tobacco growing, a number of European farmers migrated to the area. For instance, the area recorded 161 Commercial farmers in 1928; the figure rose to 250 by 1950. On the other hand,



MAP SHOWING ALIENATED LAND AND RESERVES, 1898-1963

the whole country registered a total of 950 European farmers by 1950, all of whom relied on hired African labour.⁴² Tobacco became the mainstay of commercial farming in the Eastern Province up to 1964, although it experienced booms and slumps. The first boom of the crop was experienced in 1914 and the second in the 1926-27 season when 2½ million pounds of tobacco was produced and reached the 3½ million pounds mark in the following year before slumping to 1.15 million pounds in the 1935-36 season.⁴³ The advent of the second World War and the post-war period gave another impetus to the tobacco industry in the Eastern Province. It is reported that in 1947 about 88 tobacco planters in Fort Jameson district alone, were working 118 estates of tobacco which produced 3 million pounds worth £321,494. A year later, the number rose to 100 planters working 130 estates.⁴⁴ The number of planters and production increased steadily up to the early 1960s when the majority of the farmers went out of production.

With the rapid growth of tobacco cultivation after 1912, white settlers in the area clamoured for more land. In 1913, another land survey was carried out in the entire Province. Nineteen Reserves were suggested, six of which were proposed to be in Fort Jameson; nine in Petauke and four in the Lundazi district.⁴⁵ Any Africans remaining on the land meant for European commercial farmers would become tenants and would usually pay two months' of work per male annually. The advent of the first World War however, interrupted the official sanctioning of these reserves.

It was not until 1924 when the Colonial Office assumed the responsibility of administering the territory that the question of land holding was investigated once more, since the BSAC policy with respect to land was not thought satisfactory. Thus, another Land Commission was instituted in 1924 which recommended that nine Native Reserves be created in the concession area. As a result, nine areas in the Eastern Province as a whole were formally designated as "Native Reserve" in 1928 and they covered an area of about 8,977 square kilometres.⁴⁶ Most of these Reserves were in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts. Table II shows the Native Reserve' areas and the population densities in each of them.

In delimiting the nine 'native' reserves it was suggested that an average of 14.19 acres per head was sufficient; while in providing for 17,000 head of cattle, then estimated to be owned by Africans, only eight acres per head were considered sufficient.⁴⁷ But a close study of the table shows that the official 14.19 acres per head was a great under-estimation of actual land requirements. In most 'native Reserves' population density per square mile was greater than the available land. The effects of this phenomenon have been examined in chapter two and three.

The movement of Africans from European areas into the Reserves was to take five years in Fort Jameson and ten years in the Petauke district. Before the ultimatum period in either cases, it was discovered that additional acres of land

TABLE II

NAME	AREA SQUARE MILES	POPULATION		ACREAGE PER HEAD - ACRES	
		1924	1942	1924	1942
FORT JAMESON		1924	1942	1924	1942
Msandlil (No. 1)	264	15,151	22,539	11.2	7.5
Ngoni (No. 2)	784	42,961	63,561	11.7	7.9
Chewa (No. 3)	756	37,045	53,350	13.1	9.1
Zumwanda (No. 4)	177	5,707	9,800	19.8	11.6
TOTAL	1,981	100,865	149,250	126.00	8.8
PETAUKE DISTRICT:					
Nsenga (No. 5)	960	38,450	43,218	16.0	14.2
Lusandwa (No. 6)	172	5,000	6,213	22.0	17.7
Petauke (No. 7)	293	5,500	6,666	34.1	28.1
Mambo (No. 8)	44	1,056	2,308	26.8	12.2
Chibinga (No. 9)	16	500	1,263	20.4	8.1
TOTAL	1,485	50,500	59,668	18.8	15.9

Source:

L. W. G. Eccles,

Report of the Land Commission on the Area

Acquired by the Government from the North Chartered Land Exploration Company

(Government Printer, Lusaka, 1942) p. 3.

were required to nearly all the reserve's to cope with the expanding population. For instance, in 1934, the District Agricultural Officer reported that:

Some areas have a density of 250 and over, which cannot possibly be supported for more than a few years. As a direct result of this overpopulation, the reserves are being rapidly denuded of their timber- erosion is a serious problem and portions of the reserves are approaching the nadir of their production.⁴⁸

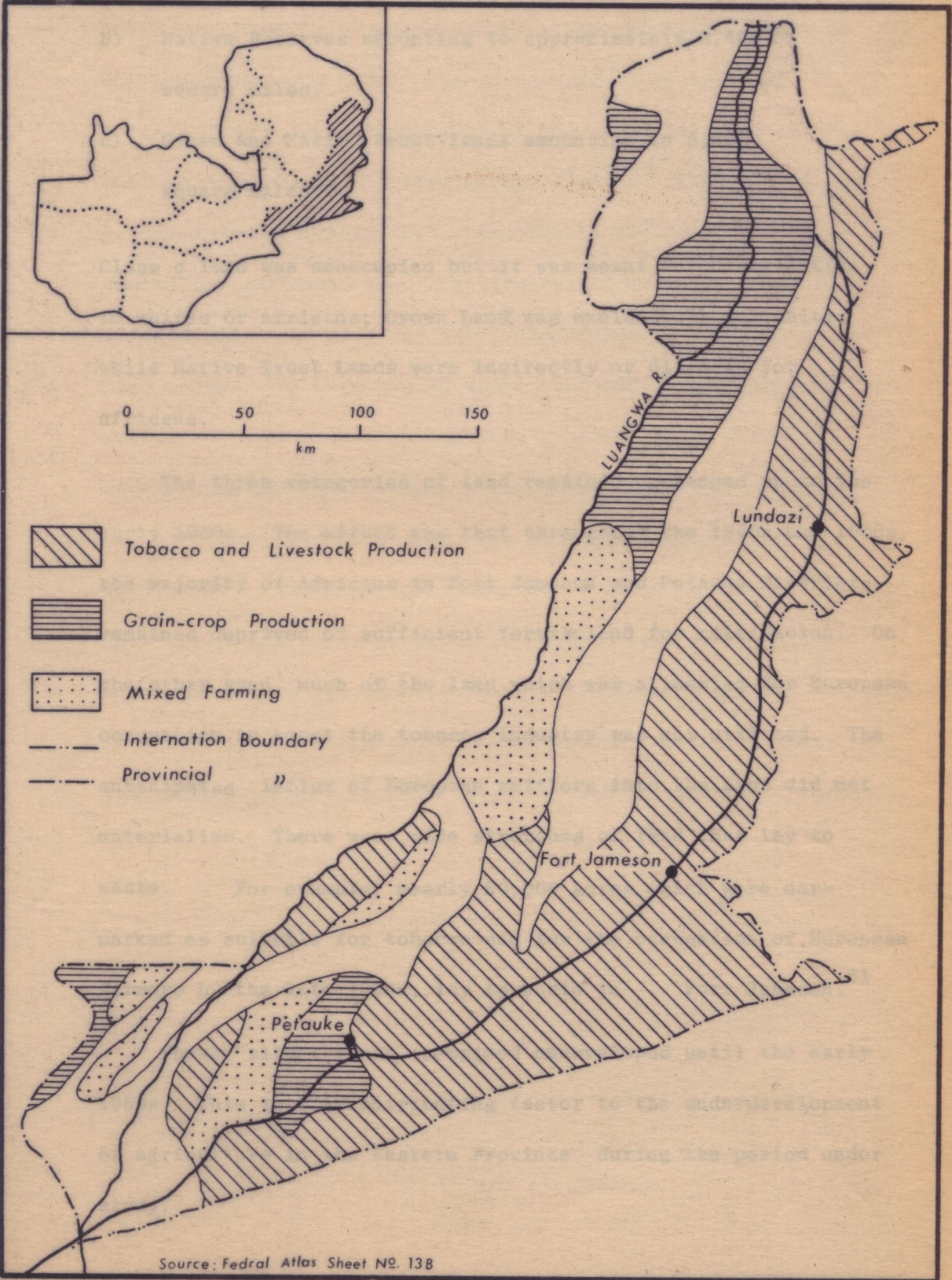
It was discovered by 1940 that there were about 90,000 surplus people in Fort Jameson and 22,000 in Petauke Reserves to be resettled on additional land. Until December, 1940 the Colonial Government would compulsorily acquire additional land from the North Charterland Concession. But this time the chunk of land required was more than the NCE Company would be prepared to lose. Roughly, 1,340,000 acres of additional land was required for the resettlement of Africans.⁴⁹ Instead, the Government entered into mutual negotiations with the NCE Company with a view to purchasing the remaining land in the concession. The purchase of the remaining land in the concession area was concluded in 1941 and the government paid £154,000.⁵⁰

The following year saw the institution of a land Commission to classify and demarcate the purchased land in the Concession area into "Crown" and "Native Trust Lands". The Concession thus, was divided into three broad classes of Land:

These were:

- a) Land alienated to Europeans which amounted to

MAP 4



MAP SHOWING COMMERCIAL FARMING AREAS, 1900-1964

640 square miles.

- b) Native Reserves amounting to approximately 3,466 square miles.
- c) Crown and Native Trust lands amounting to 5,894 square miles.

Class c land was unoccupied but it was meant for distribution to whites or Africans; Crown Land was exclusively for whites while Native Trust Lands were indirectly or directly for Africans.

The three categories of land remained unchanged up to the early 1960s. The effect was that throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the majority of Africans in Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts remained deprived of sufficient fertile land for cultivation. On the other hand, much of the land which was alienated for European occupation to boost the tobacco industry was not utilized. The anticipated influx of European settlers into the area did not materialize. There were wide stretches of land that lay to waste. For example, nearly 80,000 acres which were earmarked as suitable for tobacco and for the occupation of European farmers by the late 1950s, lay to waste in Fort Jameson.⁵¹

These "silent lands" remained undeveloped until the early 1960s. This is one contributing factor to the underdevelopment of agriculture in the Eastern Province during the period under study.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have attempted to examine the pre-

colonial political economy of the ethnic groups in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts. The pre-colonial economy of these areas has been juxtaposed with the colonial economy of the period 1898 to 1964. The juxtaposition of the pre-colonial and colonial economies of the area, helps us in our further discussion to determine the kinds of changes that occurred in the traditional economies in the colonial, capitalist-dominated era. Particular attention is paid to changes that took place in the realm of labour utilization and land tenure. We have argued above that the commencement of settler agriculture which required a hired labour force accelerated land alienation in the area. However, it should be noted that land alienation was in the initial stages instigated by the hunt for rich mineral deposits. We hold that alienation of large parts of fertile land to the white settlers and the creation of "Native Reserves" for the local people in barren areas, was a prime factor to the underdevelopment of the region. This point will be amplified in subsequent chapters.

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CHAPTER TWO

LABOUR MOBILIZATION FOR THE COMMERCIAL FARMS

Labour is one of the main factors of production which are needed before any production can take place. The other factors of production that have to combine with labour in the production process are land, capital and enterprise.¹ Of great significance to any potential entrepreneur setting up a business, is the availability of these factors of production. Ample and steady supply of labour, especially in labour intensive industries like commercial farming, is important. Each industry has to devise various ways of obtaining and retaining the required labour.

In this chapter we examine the methods of procuring labour employed by the Eastern Province settler farmers in the period 1898 to 1964. Claims were sometimes made by the farmers that it was hard to obtain an ample and steady supply of labour in the area. The Troup Commission echoed the farmer's lament when it stated:

It was clear that there was no large untapped labour reservoir for the further development of European farming and that its progress would depend very largely on its ability² to increase efficiency in the use of labour.

In this light, we further try to determine whether the labour shortage that the farmers experienced was due to factors other than the de facto absence of a labour reservoir.

LABOUR MOBILIZATION BEFORE 1911

The period 1898 to 1911 can be seen as a period when both the

British South Africa Company and the North Charterland Exploration Company were searching for a potential economic venture for the area. In the first instance, they explored for minerals which they had hoped the area possessed in abundance.

When it was discovered that Fort Jameson and Petauke areas had no mineral wealth, the BSAC turned to two alternatives: first, to encourage commercial farming in the region to be spear-headed by the white settlers; secondly, to make the area a labour supplier of the developing mining industry in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The BSAC had vested interests in the mines of both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. While a lot of land had been alienated for white settlement by 1911 (e.g. 10,000 square miles), very few settlers arrived to take up farming. With the inadequacy of European settlers to take up farming, the BSAC concentrated on luring labour for Southern Rhodesia. The BSAC efforts were particularly essential for the Southern Rhodesian mines because in the early days of their development, local labour there appeared to have been unwilling to take up wage employment. Thus, as early as 1898 Robert Codrington who became the Administrator of North-Eastern Rhodesia, stated that they wanted to "induce 'Natives' living in the Southern portion of Northern Rhodesia to go to work in Mashonaland, who would in time go down in considerable numbers ..."³ In Fort Jameson and Petauke however, the local people began to migrate to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia for wage labour long before the establishment of Company rule in the area. The migration to the Diamond Mines was nevertheless, on a small scale. The BSAC administration thus, had the task of merely expanding the volume of migration

to meet the mine's labour requirements.

The two districts had also institutions that required hired labour. In the area labour was required by the commercial farmers, public works such as transport, roads, buildings and general maintenance. In the initial stages to 1911 labour requirements by the settler farmers were not high because only thirty farmers operated in the region. But despite the fact that their labour demand was not much, the farmers still experienced difficulties in obtaining adequate supplies. As mentioned in the first chapter the early farmer in the province first experimented with ranching and cotton-growing before tobacco became the mainstay of agriculture from 1912. The government had encouraged both African and European farmers to plant large acreages, but the outbreak of insect pests led to a high proportion of crop failure on both African and European farms. During the period 1898 to 1907, when Rinderpest shattered the Southern Rhodesia Cattle Industry gave a boost to Eastern Province farmers. Labour was procured in two ways. Firstly, labour was obtained from children of the local people who continued to live on the European farms. The Ngoni children in particular who herded their father's cattle, would simultaneously herd the settler farmer's cattle on the farm. The kind of cattle farming practised in the two areas at that time was in actual fact at its inchoate stage. It remained at the level of herding and selling live herds. At this primary stage of the cattle industry, little labour was needed since it does not require a lot of labour to tend cattle. In many cases cattle would be left to wander around and graze on their own.

Labour for the commercial farmers who grew cotton alongside ranching was obtained from adults, mainly from Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa. A small proportion came from local adults. This labour was somewhat on casual basis, and it would appear that the supply was not adequate for the farmer's requirements. Although statistics of foreign labour-migrants are not available for the period up to 1911, farmers' reports mentioned of such people working for planters in the East Luangwa. For instance, a group of farmers in Msoro lamented in a petition in 1909:

We understand that in the North-Eastern Portion of N.E. Rhodesia there are many "Natives", who would, if BSA Company organized to supply, come to work on the plantations; Planters, themselves are unable to obtain labour for the planting season. In fact the 900 acres now under cotton cultivation in the area, were almost entirely sown and cultivated by labour from Nyasaland4

The farmers claimed that they were representing the majority of the other farmers in the concession area. They complained in the petition that even the imported labour was not adequate; some hundreds of acres of cleared ground could not be sown with cotton due to lack of labour. The labour requirements for farmers who practiced both cattle herding and cotton growing were determined by sizes of their plantations and herds.

Cotton growing, it must be noted, is labour-intensive. It involves clearing the field and planting; picking the cotton and packing it into bales. All these stages required more hands to be employed since there were no machines on the farms at the time. A look at actual sizes of some farms could shed light on

the issue.

In the NCCEC, 54,000 acres were granted to Europeans by the 31 March, 1904. This land was considered suitable for both cattle rearing and cotton growing. This total amount of the area granted was split to individual farmers as follows:⁵

TABLE III

SIZE OF SETTLER FARMS - 1904

- G. Campbell	Lutembwa Farm	5,772 Acres
- H.K. Brown	The Ranch	7,325 Acres
- Dutch Reformed Church	Magwero	2,279 Acres
- H.K. Brown	Extension	4,516 Acres
- G. Campbell	Extension	4,000 Acres
- C.H. Cobitt	-	3,000 Acres
- Cooper and Hardy	Usipisi River	4,500 Acres
- J.A. Ford		3,000 Acres
- D.R. Church	Madzimoyo	1,500 Acres
- Verker, Irvin and Page	Lutembwe Ranch	12,000 Acres
- Brady	-	3,000 Acres
- Cohen and Johnston	Lutembwe	3,000 Acres
TOTAL		53,892 Acres

Source: BS1/75-76 A letter from the Administrator Fort Jameson to the Secretary NCCEC Ltd. London. (1 April 1904).

The average acreage put to cotton cultivation by each farmer during the period to 1911, could arguably be estimated to be around a hundred acres. A look at the sizes of some farms could give some credence to our hypothetical average figure above. For instance, in 1905 three farmers in the Msoro area cultivated about one hundred acres of cotton each. Mr. de Josselin de Jong, one of the farmers, had in that year alone, 64 acres of fresh ground cleared for cotton and four ten acre plots planted with cotton, while 24 acres had been planted with tobacco.⁶ On the other hand, by 1909 two farmers around Fort Jameson, Mr. Honey and Mr. Thompson, cultivated 220 acres of cotton between them and produced 19 tones of it.⁷ There were also in the area, four other cotton estates of similar sizes. Further, the size of company farms by 1911 ranged from 12,000 acres like the Lutembwe ranch owned by Vereker, Irving and Page, to small farms of 1,500 acres.⁸

For farmers who mixed cotton farming with ranching, there was a possibility that the majority could have owned between 100 and 200 heads of cattle, while companies might have owned even more heads. These estimate figures are arrived at by examining the numbers of actual cattle the BSAC distributed to farmers by 1904 in order to encourage ranching. In its efforts to encourage settlers to take up farms, especially in the vicinity of Fort Jameson, the BSAC distributed breeding stock from its herds as follows:⁹

TABLE IV

CATTLE OWNERSHIP BY SETTLERS

G. Campbell	221
H.K. Brown	100
D.R. Church	51
C.H. Cubitt	82
Cooper and Hardy	100
J.A. Ford	102
Vereker and Co.	252
W. Brady	82
Cubitt and Co.	89

| Total distributed by 31/3/1904 | 1,079 |

Source: KDG 5/1 Fort Jameson District Note Book, Vol. 1 P. 64.

These farmers also acquired cattle of their own besides the breeding stock from the Company. The most important point here is that the farms in the area did require a sizeable labour force. What has been hard though, is to determine the average size of labour force required by each farm in the absence of any statistical record. One can simply gauge, knowing what is involved in tilling, planting and harversting by hand, that each cotton farmer could have required the services of not less than ten men per acre*.

In Fort Jameson and Petauke two factors accounted for the inadequacy of local labour to the farmers. The first factor was the

* (I visited five farms around Landless Corner along Kabwe Road) Central Province - average workers per acre of cotton was 10.

contradictory policy of the BSAC Administration of encouraging people in the area to migrate to Southern Rhodesia at the expense of commercial agriculture in the area. From the start, the B.S.A.C. played a very active role in encouraging the Africans in Fort Jameson and Petauke to migrate for work on the farms and mines of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The imposition of tax in 1901, for instance, was in a bid to put economic pressure on the local people to sell their labour, though admittedly, the introduction of hut tax in the area served other purposes. The B.S.A.C Administration for instance, wanted to impress on the "natives" that political power no longer lay with the chiefs to whom they paid tribute, but with the B.S.A.C Administration. Furthermore, the company administration had to extract revenue from the Africans with which to run the administration.

Initially hut tax was collected either in produce or in labour for public works. It was not until 1903 that a decision was made that hut tax be payable only in cash. During the period when hut tax could be paid in kind, the local people were able to retain their labour on their own land. They merely engaged in surplus 'peasant production' of any commodity out of which they paid their tax. Even after 1903 when hut tax was to be paid only in cash of 3/- per hut,¹¹ not many people made themselves available for wage employment in the two districts under study. A similar situation was experienced by white settler farmers in Kenya, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. In Kenya, after the First World War, the "embryo capitalists faced the greatest difficulty in recruiting labour in open competition with

the peasant sector".¹² In the circumstances, the capitalists turned to the state to put its coercive power more directly at their disposal so as to force labour out of their reserves to work on the commercial farms. In South Africa it was observed in the late 1880s that there was a negative relationship between a rise in peasant production and the flow of labour onto the commercial farms. The Magistrates of Ixopo, Umgeni and Newcastle in Natal commented:

It has been seldom that Natives here have been at all dependent on wages earned by entering the service of a Whiteman. Nay! All, or nearly so, have ploughs, which are worked by the younger male branches of the family, enabling them to dispose of produce on a much larger scale than formerly when they used the land-hoe only - their thriving stock of cattle gives them all they stand in need of... (and consequently very few from the district entered service).¹³

Giovanni Arrighi talks about a similar situation prevailing in Southern Rhodesia. It is contended that the expansion of the mining industry without a comparable development of capitalist agriculture generated a demand for, and tended to raise the price of African produce. This incidence thus discouraged African participation in the labour market.*

As in Kenya, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, the people in Fort Jameson and Petauke before 1911 could still produce a surplus of agricultural crops such as maize and groundnuts which they sold on local market to raise money for tax. The available local market consisted of Mission Stations such as the Dutch Reformed Church at Magwero and Madzimoyo, the Administrators in both districts, labour recruiters and settler farmers who bought food from the peasants for

* See G. Arrighi, in Essays , 1974, P. 193 .

their own consumption and for their workers. Thus, the idea of creating a labour reservoir out of the local people in the area failed in practice.

In view of the deficiency of tax as a lever pushing people out of their land for wage labour, the B.S.A. engaged in direct recruitment or permitted other agents to recruit in the area. On tax-collecting tours Native Commissioners also acted as labour recruiter. Names of people who had not paid the tax would be written on and deployed mainly in public institutions like road-building and road-maintenance to earn money for their hut tax. Individual recruiters such as J.H. Hayes were permitted by the Company administration to recruit labour for Southern Rhodesia from among the Ngoni Villages in Fort Jameson. For instance, Hayes is said to have recruited 500 men for Salisbury by March, 1902.¹⁴ On the other hand, labour in the area was recruited by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), which was instituted in 1903. The Bureau was first officially permitted to recruit in the Eastern Province in 1906.¹⁵ The RNLB recruited solely for the employing institutions in Southern Rhodesia. The Rand Mines in South Africa depended on the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, (WNLA) for their recruits in Eastern Province. At Indabas, (meetings), Administrators would speak highly of the benefits of going to work on the mines and farms of Southern Rhodesia in a bid to entice potential labourers. At an Indaba (meeting) held on the 30th of March, 1906 at Fort Jameson an Administrator said:

You all understand now that much money can be earned by young men if they go to Southern Rhodesia. You have seen some of the men come back from Johannesburg, how they get their money paid to them at the Boma. It is much better to be written on at the Boma when you go to work at the mines and to get some of your pay on your return to Fort Jameson... 16

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Speeches such as the above, not only enticed the local people to offer

themselves for wage employment outside the region, but also indirectly discouraged them against voluntary migration. The importance of the labour registration at the Boma before migrants proceeded to the South was that it ensured that the B.S.A.C. would get its hut tax revenue from the remittances without fail. This state of affairs deprived the Fort Jameson and Petauke settle farmers of the required labour.

The other factor that made the local labour difficult to obtain by the Fort Jameson and Petauke commercial farmers was the availability of other employing institutions in the area. The little adult labour that could be available for work in the region was mostly taken up by the Government as carriers and for other civil tasks. The majority of those who entered the local labour market in the area consisted of tax-defaulters who were required to provide tax-labour. Tax-labour was widely used in public works such as the construction of Government buildings and roads; working on Government farms, and sometimes employed as domestic servants for the Administrator on the Government pay-roll. Very little of this labour was employed by private institutions and individuals. In fact, commercial farmers in the area were almost completely shunned by the local labour. The farmers in the area, who had formed their own 'Farmers Association' in 1904, had struggled throughout the period to 1911 to stop this African 'boycott' against

17
them.

The farmers incessantly urged the Government not to allow labour recruiting for Southern Rhodesia from East Luangwa District because it became detrimental to the agricultural interests of the area. However, what the farmers appear not to have realized consciously was that the local labour did not shun them because of the presence of labour recruiters. Nor did the Africans migrate just for fun! It was largely due to the level of wages and the kind of working conditions offered on the farms that people boycotted them. The bad working conditions forced people to go South for work. A detailed examination of the working conditions on the farms is done in the next chapter. What is important to note here is the fact that during the period 1898 to 1911, the commercial farmers in the areas of study, found difficulties to mobilise adequate labour for their farms. Their main source of labour supply was the foreign immigrants who could not adequately meet the demand. The farmers themselves did not have agents to recruit labour for them, neither did the Farmers Association engage in direct labour recruitment. The best the Association did was to direct its complaints to the Administration in a bid to have it encourage the local Africans to take up work on the farms. This strategy failed.

LABOUR MOBILIZATION FROM 1911 TO 1953:

The period 1911 - 1953 is characterized by marked change in the ways and means employed in the mobilization of labour for the

farms in the area. This change was due to the great increase in the demand for labour. The increased demand for labour in the area during this period was ushered in by the inception of tobacco farming which attracted more settler farmers. In Fort Jameson and Petauke the growing of tobacco started in 1903, but it was grown on a small scale. It only began to expand by the 1913 season. The expansion of tobacco growing in the area was promoted by five main factors. Firstly, there was the support rendered by the United Tobacco Company, which encouraged the farmers to grow more tobacco, and also established storage facilities and gave free advice to farmers.¹⁸ Secondly, the high prices on the market, especially in South Africa, which became the main market and the 'Imperial Preference' given to the tobacco grown in these areas also gave more impetus to many farmers in the Eastern Province to take up tobacco farming. For example, 505,416 pounds weight of tobacco was sold in Fort Jameson to the United Tobacco Company in 1920 at 1/- per pound.¹⁹ Thirdly, there was the failure of cotton growing. By 1912 cotton farming had proved unsatisfactory due to the outbreak of insect pests which led to high incidence of crop failure. Further more, cattle farming suffered the ravages of the tsetsefly and the loss of the Southern Rhodesia market which got clogged by the local supplies gave a boost to tobacco farming in the area. The fifth factor to make tobacco farming an attractive venture was the introduction of ox-wagons for transport in about 1912. The supplementing of "Tenga-Tenga" transport (Porter transport), with ox-wagons on the only route

joining the 'outside world' with Fort Jameson through Tete in Mozambique, facilitated the expansion of tobacco farming in the Eastern Province. Earlier, transportation of commodities was entirely by human, (African).²⁰ This kind of transport was not only slow and hard to ensemble, but also expensive. For example, it was reported that transport costs from Kasama to Kapiri Mposhi in 1908 (a short distance), was 3d per pound weight, and this was the ruling charge in the whole of East Luangwa.²¹ Farmers found this means of transport uneconomic especially when it involved transporting goods to distant places like Blantyre in Nyasaland or Tete in Mozambique.

With tobacco farming promising a bright future for the farmers in the area, more settlers took up farming. The increase in the number of commercial farmers in the area stimulated both demand for more land to be alienated and more labour to work on the farms. A look at how this labour was mobilized for the farms in the period 1911 to 1953 at this stage, is of crucial importance.

The first method that was employed in an effort to mobilize labour for the farmers was the alienation of land and the creation of Native Reserves. This method was also effectively practised in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Kenya. In Kenya for instance, it is learned that:

In the South the greater part of African land was confiscated by settlers, the economically unproductive members of the population were herded into the small reserves set aside for them, and the able-bodied males were then forced by economic necessity to sell their labour to the settlers who had dispossessed them.²³

in the Eastern Province, during the period under study, large numbers of Africans were living in and around areas settled or supposed to be settled by Europeans. In Fort Jameson, for example, the area was already well populated before the Europeans arrived. Some of the land given away by the NCCEC carried a native population of 140 people per square mile.²⁴ The NCCEC was at the time very eager to sell or lease more suitable land to tobacco farmers, but could not evacuate the Africans who were living there. It was thus strongly felt that certain areas within the concession areas be set aside for the sole occupation of the Africans. The creation of native reserves was to serve two functions of Paramount importance: to make available fertile land to potential European farmers; and to create a labour reservoir out of local people so that they would be forced to sell their labour on the farms. How was this achieved?

When the Commercial farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke began to improve their livestock and to engage in tobacco farming, they became anxious to see Africans removed from their estates. They agitated for territorial segregation. As a result in 1904 a Reserve Commission was set up which considered that 490 square miles of land in the Ngoni land be constituted a native reserve. "Natives" were to stay on European land only as tenants. For those who elected to move out, a compensation of 3/- per hut was to be paid.²⁵ However, the overwhelming majority of the Ngoni preferred to stay on the European farms and no African was ejected without

his consent. As farming became more intensive with tobacco cultivation, there was a change in attitudes, farmers began to demand unconditional removal of Africans into the reserves. More reserves were also demanded in about 1912.

At an Indaba between the Administrators and Chiefs, held in Fort Jameson on June 15th 1913, the provisions of additional native reserves was agreed upon. Paramount Chief Mpezeni is reported to have said in reply to a native reserve suggestion: "It is good that we should have our own land where the whiteman cannot come".²⁶ It is evident that the chiefs finally agreed to the principle of further native reserves without the slightest knowledge that their production capacity on land would eventually be retarded both quantitatively and qualitatively. Had they realized what would happen, they would most probably not have acquiesced. However, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 interrupted the actual exercise of delimiting the reserves in the proposed areas in both Fort Jameson and Petauke. It was not until after the War, around 1918 and after the Colonial Office had taken over the administration of Northern Rhodesia from the B.S.A.C. in 1924 that the matter was tackled seriously. As mentioned in the first chapter, nine Native reserves were finally delimited by 1928.

Native Reserves in the area had the effect of mobilizing labour for the farms and other institutions in two ways. Firstly, the areas that became reserves were agriculturally infertile. Secondly, the quantity of land for each reserve was inadequate for the Ngoni and Chewa population who practised shifting cultivation. The agricultural system required plenty of land. The official

allocation of 14 acres per head based on the 151,000 estimated population in the area, and the 8 acres per head of the estimated 17,000 heads of cattle, did not take into account subsequent population growths which would overcrowd the reserves. This was a conspicuous failure in all the nine native reserves. Neither did the delimitation of these permanent areas for the Africans in the areas consider the expansive requirements of the traditional shifting cultivation. The Macdonell Commission on the other hand, recommended the introduction of a scheme of education to the local people to adopt new methods of agriculture and the provision by the Government, of the necessary facilities to the reserves. These recommendations proved a total failure and only satisfied the real motive for creating the reserves to act as labour reservoirs. It was certainly wishful thinking to have expected the Chewa and the Ngoni to discard overnight the agricultural system they had practised for generations and adopt a new one without there being "internal" changes in their forces of production.

From the start in 1928 when the Native Reserves were finally delimited, the people in both Fort Jameson and Petauke were either enticed into the reserves with promises of better facilities to come, or physically forced into them by the administration, where Africans became "justifiably" unco-operative to move. By the late 1930s and early 1940s a large number of people had finally moved into the native reserves. It is reported for instance, that by 1931 only 1,717 persons out of a population of 160,000 living in eight villages

in the concession area remained outside the Reserves.²⁷ These people appear to have finally been removed from the Company's land by the early 1940s.

The forcing of people into insufficient and barren areas created appalling conditions which were detrimental to both agricultural production and peoples' good health. There was overcrowding in the native reserves, a development which made the production of agricultural surplus untenable. It was found by 1938 that in the Ngoni and Zumwanda native reserves, population densities stood at 156 and 240 persons per square mile respectively.²⁸ In such places soil erosion was at its highest, for it was caused not only by overcrowding and overgrazing, but also by uncontrolled bush fires and the absence of fallowing. Also the predominance of the tsetse fly in most native reserves particularly in the Petauke district seriously undermined cattle keeping. The supply of water became another perennial problem in the reserves, and thus worsened people's hardships. In general the conditions in the native reserves in the region under study were no better than the conditions found in the native reserves of South Africa. The Native Economic Commission of 1932 appointed to examine the conditions in the native reserves of South Africa spoke of the "descent of the reserves at a rapid pace towards desert conditions". They also said that the "process of ruination threatened an appalling problem of Native poverty".²⁹ Of the native reserves in Ciskei district, an official observed as follows:

I have no hesitation in saying that the Natives of this district are not making any progress. They are steadily going back, and I should say that their economic conditions as a people is deplorable, and, as a whole, they are hopelessly in debt. Most of them live in a state of semi-starvation.³⁰

In Fort Jameson and Petauke, half-baked measures were undertaken to alleviate the poor conditions in the reserves but to no avail. For instance, during the early 1930s the Government, through the Colonial Development Fund, distributed a sum of £6,800 to be spent on wells and dams in the Eastern Province Native reserves. This money was spent on 19 dams and 14 wells in Fort Jameson, 9 dams and 4 wells in Petauke and 14 dams and 13 wells in Lundazi.³¹ But due to lack of organized maintenance, very few of the dams and wells were successful. Also, following a recommendation by K.G. Bradley and Rott Fraser, who had made a report on the conditions of the native reserves in Fort Jameson District in 1938, more land was bought from the N.C.E.C. for the resettlement of the excess population in the Reserves.³²

In 1940, the Northern Rhodesia Colonial Government bought all the unalienated land of about 5,600 square miles in the Concession area for £154,000.³³ In the following year, surveys were carried out to calculate the carrying capacity of the new areas. It was discovered that the new areas would accommodate a capacity of only 78,000, people even when ambitious water development and tsetse fly control programmes were to be carried out in those areas. On the other hand, there were 98,000 Chewa and Ngoni in excess of the

carrying capacity in the old Fort Jameson Reserves, while in the Petauke District, the old native reserves were over-populated by 35,000 Nsenga, and 8,000 Ambo³⁴. Thus, the purchasing of additional land for the resettlement of the excess population in the native reserves was of little help in the effort to solve the prevailing conditions in there because in fact, there were still about 63,000 people unresettled.

In the light of the prevailing conditions in the reserves where land was not sufficient for the majority of the people and where even the available land was infertile or rendered barren, the only alternative left for the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga in meeting their economic exigences was to sell their labour power. Thus, it may legitimately be argued here that the creation of Native Reserves in Eastern Province constituted one of the main measures of mobilizing labour for employing institutions such as the Commercial farms. Native reserves, as will be shown in Chapter four, became ready labour reservoirs from which commercial farmers drew their supply of labour.

The second official method employed to mobilise labour for the commercial farmers in the Eastern Province during the period 1898 to 1964, was the manipulation of tax. Just as Gann put it: "the need to earn tax-money was one of the most important incentives to induce Africans in Northern Rhodesia to take up paid employment".³⁵ This was definitely the case with the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga in the Eastern Province from 1914 onwards. Before the amalgamation of North-Western and North-Eastern Rhodesias in 1911, different rates of native tax were in force in each region. For instance, in North-Eastern Rhodesia there was a hut tax of 3/- per annum in respect of every hut occupied by an adult male and

also, on each hut occupied by his family or dependant. In North-Western Rhodesia there was an annual poll tax of 10/- on adult males with an additional of 10/- for each wife or concubine after the first wife.³⁶ As long as hut tax had remained at the rate of 3/- per adult male, the people in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas were able to pay the amount out of the sale of their agricultural produce. Until the late 1920s when people were forced into native reserves, the local people were able to produce agricultural surplus which they disposed of to obtain money for tax. Despite the fact that much of the land had been alienated by then, the majority of Africans remained on the alienated land. Lane Poole who was the Fort Jameson District Commissioner, asserted that people in the Eastern Province were not eager to sell their labour power until 1915. He wrote:

Up to 1915, inspite of increasing labour demands, the Ngoni were growing enough grain on their fertile soils to be able to convert their surplus to cash,³⁷

This development deprived the commercial farmers in the two areas of adequate labour supply. Persistent appeals were made to the colonial administration to assist the farmers in making the local people available for work.

After the unification of the two components of Northern Rhodesia, it was decided that tax should be raised, ostensibly, in a bid to raise more revenue for the government. The main reason for raising the tax, however, was to bring it to a level which would be difficult to raise through people's efforts in subsistence production. In actual fact, when the plan to increase the tax was announced to the Chiefs in Fort Jameson in about June

would find it hard to raise the additional money, and that, in any case, it was ridiculous for the Government to raise the tax while prices for their produce remained low. Nonetheless, in July 1914 poll tax was raised to 5/- for North-Eastern Rhodesia and 10/- for North-Western Rhodesia.³⁸

It appears as if the 5/- tax rate was not enough economic pressure on subsistence production to force people out for paid employment. In 1915 representatives of the North-Eastern Agricultural and Commercial Association and the North Charterland Exploration Company had an interview with the Administrator. Speaking on behalf of the farmers Association, Rangeley asked if the 5/- tax was going to be increased since such an increase would have a serious effect on the planting industry because many more Africans would respond by seeking work.³⁹ As if to satisfy the Eastern Province farmer's demands directly, in 1920 the Government raised the tax to 10/- for each male in NER. Three years later, it was reduced to 7/- 6d. This remained the ruling rate until around 1929 when the taxation of Plural wives was abolished but a tax increase of 2/- 6d through out Northern Rhodesia was imposed.⁴⁰ The operational rates for the various districts in the country thus shifted to 10/- for North-Eastern Districts; 7/- 6d for Balovale due to the poverty of the area; and 12/- 6d for North-Western Districts. For the North-Eastern Districts, 10/- was retained up to 1937 when it was reduced to 7/- 6d , understably due to low wages which prevailed from the early 1930s. This rate ramined fixed to early 1950s.

The manipulation of the Taxation system as a Government measure to mobilize labour for the planters also included steps to arrest tax evasion by the Africans. As per the tax proclamation of 1914, a 'Native' tax defaulter was liable to a fine of £5 or 3 months imprisonment for each tax owed.⁴¹ It was found that there was a high degree of tax evasion in the North-Eastern Districts let alone the whole country by the 1930s. For instance, it is reported that by the end of 1933 there was an accumulation of £152,000 in tax arrears in the North-East Rhodesia and reached a total of £183,000 at the end of 1934.⁴² Prisons were mostly full because the majority of tax defaulters would prefer jail terms to the £5 fine which was not easy to raise. For instance, in 1933, 7,589 persons were imprisoned for evading tax in the country by 1936, 1,951 were interned. It was thus, suggested by the Government to introduce "Tax labour system" where Africans who found it difficult to raise tax money out of their subsistence production would work for a Planter or any other employing institution to pay off his tax arrears. This system was operational from about 1935. In the "Tax labour system" each defaulter worked for 30 days to clear off one year's arrears or 23 days if he provided his own food; those numbers of days were considered to be equivalent to 7/- 6d which was the tax rate. Although tax labour was mainly used on public works, it did help greatly to alleviate labour shortages experienced by the commercial farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas. Nonetheless, many people only preferred to work for the

Government on public works rather than on the commercial farms because the working conditions offered by the farmers were not attractive.

The third device used to push peasants to take wage employment was the dual price system for agricultural products for Africans and European producers. Also, the State deliberately prevented Africans from producing agricultural crops that would easily find market. Due to the expansion of the mining industry in the late 1920s, both African and European agricultural production expanded rapidly. For instance, in 1930, African producers in the whole territory sold about 30,000 bags of maize to traders, but by 1935 the figure had soared to 100,000 bags. The European output available for sale within the same period expanded only from 168,000 bags to 211,000 bags.⁴³ The short retrenchment in the copper industry between 1931 and 1933 further reduced the maize market and clogged the market with the result of reducing the price to between 6/- and 9/- per bag. With the stiff competition evident from African producers, European farmers, especially along the line of rail, feared that they would be driven out of their farms. As a result, the state intervened for the European farmers by enacting the "Maize Control Ordinance of 1936".⁴⁴

The 1936 Ordinance led to the establishment of the Maize Control Board which was empowered to purchase and sell all the maize in prescribed areas at fixed prices. Inter Alia, the Ordinance split the maize market into an "Internal Pool" and

"Export Pool", with a dual price system. The "Internal" Pool became the prerogative of the European Commercial farmers who had been allocated three-quarters of that market as against only one-quarter allocated to African producers in the whole country. On the other hand, the "External Pool" - the external market, was wholly open to both African and European farmers. The purpose of the separation of the maize market was to set the domestic price above the external price and thus dump any surplus above the internal sales on the export market. Thus, obviously the profitability of African production was retarded because the African producer was deprived of the lucrative internal market. The export market was not attractive to the African producer because of high transport costs and also, because the external market was often clogged by outside producers in such countries as Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

To illustrate the operation of the dual price, the European farmer was paid 7/- 9d per two hundred pound-bag as a result of the Act, while the African farmer got 5/- to 6/- per bag. In Fort Jameson in particular, by 1947 the controlled price of maize per a 200lbs. bag was 8/- 6d in areas near Fort Jameson (the Boma), and 7/- 6d per bag for maize bought outside the Boma precinct.⁴⁵ The stark fact here is that the 8/- 6d price per bag was in reality meant to benefit the European farmers since they were the majority farming near Fort Jameson, while African growers were pushed far away from the Boma. On the other hand, the export price which affected a larger proportion of African-grown maize was very low, not more than 3/- per bag.⁴⁶

Another restrictive agricultural measure adopted by the Northern Rhodesia Administration, which rendered peasant growers economically impotent was the Cattle Marketing and Control Ordinance of 1937. This Ordinance was triggered off by developments in the early 1930s when the internal cattle market had declined sharply while the African share of this market had increased. For example, in 1920 the African share of the market stood at 50% but by 1936 their share had risen to 67%.⁴⁷ The capture of the Congo market by Southern Rhodesia in the late 1920s weakened even more the position of the European cattle farmer in Northern Rhodesia. Hence, the measure to undercut the peasant cattle farmer and proletarianize him. Doubtless, the Cattle Ordinance played a major role in helping to weaken the position of the African cattle farmer in the market.

To further sap the productive capacity of the Africans and thus render them sellers of their labour power, the colonial government forced Africans in Fort Jameson and Petauke to grow cotton, maize and Burley tobacco which had very little market. Cotton growing was first experimented by the white farmers in the area. But it proved unviable due to recurrent crop failures and lack of market. When virginia Flue-cured tobacco became an established commercial crop with a ready market in South Africa and Britain. Cotton growing was forced onto the indigenous people who were not allowed to grow flue-cured virginia tobacco because they would then, constitute stiff competition against the settler growers. Similar measures of excluding the African from competitive production and thus make him rely on wage labour, were pursued in Kenya. For

instance, the Policy of rating agricultural crops which was established in 1919, heavily favoured settler farmers. This was at the expense of consumers, especially African consumers, since cotton piece goods were placed in the highest class, and of the producers of higher-rated exports, notably cotton lint, coffee, sisal and subsequently tea.⁴³ Prior to 1919, cotton lint, coffee, sisal and tea were predominantly grown as cash crops by peasants in places like Bukoba in Tanganyika. Although crops such as maize, groundnuts and other products would be grown by peasants in the Eastern Provinces, lack of transport facilities joining the region with potential markets militated against surplus production for sale at a large scale. The local African then was adequately forced to rely on the sale of his labour in order to meet his economic requirements.

Officially sanctioned recruitment constituted another method of mobilizing labour for the commercial farmers in the Eastern Province. Direct recruitment of labour for the commercial farmers in the area was helpful in the light of perpetual labour scarcity. However, despite the above measures of labour mobilization for the employing institutions within and outside the Province, farmers experienced perennial labour shortages. This was the case because the majority of Africans preferred to be employed by institutions other than the commercial farms in the region. We will examine the factors determining this phenomena in the next chapter. For now we take a look at how labour recruitment was carried out for the farmers.

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Unlike the Southern Rhodesia mines, the Rand mines and the Northern Rhodesia copper mines which subsequently formed their own 'Northern Rhodesia Labour Association', the commercial farmers in the province did not have their own viable recruiting organization. They relied to a greater extent on Government officials as recruiters. Prior to 1950, the Eastern Province commercial farmers did utilize the services of the "North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and commercial Association", as it was called after 1911. Besides the Association being a labour recruiting agent, it was a medium of political expression. As Thomas Page put it:

We had no member of the Legislative Council to fight our battles and the only way to get at the Administration was through the Association.⁴⁹

However, while it is true that the farmers Association did recruit labour for the farms in Fort Jameson and Petauke, it is hard to determine the level of its effectiveness. This is because statistical information is lacking. On the other hand, commercial farmers themselves were permitted to engage their own labour agents. For example, 25 labour agents' licences were issued to local farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts in 1950.⁵⁰ Agents like Mr. J. Jacobs recruited labour for supply to the farmers, ranchers, railways and other industries. In 1931, Mr. Jacobs is said to have recruited 1,325 Africans most of whom were supplied to the starving farmers in North-Eastern Rhodesia.⁵¹

In order to supplement the Eastern Province Farmers Association and individual recruiters, the government created the African Labour Corps around 1945 and made it available to farmers to alleviate farm labour shortage. The African Labour Corps was mainly composed of Africans who had served in the Second World War and Tax defaulters. They were paid and fed by the Government, except when gangs were actually engaged on farms. People who drew their labour from the Labour Corps paid a wage of 2s. 3d per head per day in 1948 and by 1949 the rate had increased to 3/-1½d per head per day,⁵² rations included. The strength of the African Labour Corps grew from 800 men in 1948 to 1,500 by 1950. The Labour Corps proved a very popular supply of labour to the commercial farmers to whom squads of 24 men would be released for specific periods.

Despite the above mechanisms to mobilise labour for the commercial farms, scarcity of labour was experienced by the commercial farmers. In an effort to alleviate this chronic labour shortage which haunted the farmers, another recruiting organization was established by the end of 1950. This time, the suggestion to form another recruiting organization to recruit for the commercial farmers in the Territory was mooted by the farmers on the line of rail. The established organization was called the Farmers Recruiting Organization.⁵³ The organizations' headquarters was in Lusaka and a depot was established at Nakonde near the border with Tanganyika. A manager was appointed, buildings for recruits were erected at

both Nakonde and Lusaka and a licence was obtained for recruitment under approved conditions of up to 2,000 alien "natives" per annum. Unlike the North-Eastern Rhodesia Farmers' Association, which catered only for the Eastern Province farmers, the Farmers Recruiting Organization catered for all the farmers along the line of rail, around Abercon (Mbala) and those in the Eastern Province. It was a National farmers' organization. Recruits were shared among the farmers depending on their requirements.

The period between 1953 and 1963, the Federal period, did not see any changes in the measures of Labour Mobilization for the commercial farmers. The federal Government did not institute any new measures to add to the existing ones. Conditions in the Native reserves, manipulation of tax, structural underdevelopment at the market level and direct recruitment remained determining forces of labour mobilization. However, the commercial farmers in the Eastern Province still suffered the inadequacy of labour supply.

CONCLUSION.

This chapter ^{has} attempted to explain how labour was mobilized for the Eastern Province commercial farms during the period 1898 to 1964. Our argument makes a contribution to Giovanni Arrighi's framework on Southern Rhodesia Labour Supplies. Briefly, he disputes the thesis by Barbar and others that the low rate of African participation in the labour market during the early days of white rule was due to an alleged lack of response on their part, to unfamiliar opportunities for increasing their real incomes.⁵⁴

Arrighi has rightly argued for the Southern Rhodesia Labour, that the reasons for the low rate of African participation in the labour market lay in the "discretionary character of African participation in the money economy and in the low comparative effort-price of income earnable through the sale of produce".⁵⁵ In Fort Jameson and Petauke, our evidence shows that up to 1911 the farmers' main supply of labour were the immigrants from the neighbouring countries and that local adults remained attached to their lands, or migrated to the South where earnings were comparatively attractive.

After 1911 we see greater involvement of the Colonial Administration in labour recruitment in a bid to alleviate shortage of labour to the commercial farms. The creation of native reserves, the manipulation of tax, the exclusion of the peasant from the market and the direct official recruitment of labour, were all deliberate official measures to create labour reservoirs out of the local people. Yet, the labour reservoirs did not adequately meet the requirements of the commercial farms in the area partly because they evaded them. Labour from the region took up employment on the farms and other employing institutions outside the province. Consequently, we have argued that this development suggests that factors repulsing labour from the farms should be sought in the farms themselves. In the next chapter we set ourselves the task of examining the conditions under which employees worked on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke areas in comparison to working conditions in other labour markets which attracted the majority of labour from the two areas.

FOOTNOTES

1. G.F. Stanlake, Introductory Economics. (London: Longman, 1973) PP. 29 - 33.
2. Troup Report, P. 25
3. NAZ, BS1/118, R. Condington to N.C.E. Company, 7th September 1898.
4. NAZ, BS1/58, Honey, Thompson and other six farmers in Fort Jameson to the Secretary of the B.S.A. Co., 5th April 1909.
5. NAZ, BS1/75-76, Administrator of Fort Jameson to the Secretary of N.C.E.C. Ltd., 1st April 1904.
6. NAZ, BS1/58, Administrator Fort Jameson to the Secretary of the B.S.A. Co., 24th May 1905 and October 1911.
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8. NAZ, NE/A2/5/5, B.S.A. Company Report, 1904. August 5th.
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16. NAZ, KDG5/1, Fort Jameson District Notebook, Volume 1, P. 108.
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18. Gelfand, Northern Rhodesia in the Days of the Charter, P. 155.
19. Gelfand, Northern Rhodesia in the Days of the Charter, P. 156.

NB. The source of the cattle statistics in table 4 does not however, state whether the farmers were asked to pay for the breeding cattle they received from the B.S.A. Co.

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CHAPTER THREE

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON THE FARMS

Conditions of life of a worker have a great effect on the reputation of an enterprise, and consequently upon its success in obtaining labour. Housing, food, medical attention, quick and accurate issue of attractive pay, all go to make a place of work popular or otherwise. The existence of bad conditions might render not only one employer, but wage-earning in general, unpopular. Thus the bad employer is the enemy of the good employer, and low-grade conditions of employment prejudice the whole labour market. The need to render conditions of life in employment sufficiently congenial to encourage the worker to return again is thus of vital importance.

In this chapter we set out to examine the quality of accommodation, the quality and quantity of food, medical facilities and wages offered to farm workers in the Eastern Province throughout the period 1898 to 1964. The quality of these social facilities offered on the Eastern Province farms will be juxtaposed with social and economic amenities offered to workers in outlying labour markets that attracted labour from the area. This approach enables us to determine two things: Firstly, to ascertain the extent to which the farmers in the area strove to attract and retain workers in the light of such reports as that:

The labour problem is not one of scarcity of "Natives" willing to work, but of attracting the workers to remain within the territory.

Secondly, the comparative approach enables us to investigate whether the apparent unattractiveness of the commercial farms to potential

workers in the area had anything to do with the terms and conditions of service, as opposed to the view that farm work was regarded as inferior by most Africans in preference to industrial work.²

It was not only the commercial farmers who demanded cheap labour during the period 1898 to 1964 in the Eastern Province. Government institutions and private companies such as the African Lakes Company and the mines within the territory, and other employing institutions outside the territory, also expected their share of African labour from the region. As the above quotation informs us, there was no defacto scarcity of labour willing to work for wages especially after the local people were deprived of their fertile land. What appeared to have created the perpetual labour scarcity to the commercial farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts was the failure by the farmers to make farm work attractive to potential workers. Their failure to make farm work attractive can be attributed to the fact that up to 1929 there lacked a statutory instrument stipulating worker-employer relationship and terms of service.³ It thus behoved the individual employer to make the best out of his worker within his financial limits. Consequently, the employee was frequently at the mercy of the employer. We now proceed to examine each variable in detail.

WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION

During the period when most of the labour force comprised the children of the African tenants and adults from neighbouring countries, the farmers did nothing in the way of providing them

with accommodation. Accommodation for herdboys was provided by their parents and guardians. General care for these youths in terms of food rations, medical attention and education (traditional), were accorded by their families. On the other hand, adults who were employed from neighbouring countries had to provide their own accommodation. Most of them would lodge in villages adjacent to the farms on which they worked and made their own provisions of food and medical facilities. Those immigrants from Nyasaland and the Portuguese East Africa who failed to obtain lodging places in nearby villages built their own huts on the farms. The worker built his hut using his own tools and in his own time. The employers did not pay the employee for the time spent on building the hut, nor did the employer pay the employee any monthly house allowance, although the house/hut remained the property of the farm when the employee left. In a situation where the tools used were poor and building done in haste, the huts were naturally poor. The huts were no more than mere ramshuckles unfit for human occupance. It was among other things, the docility of the immigrant labour that made the commercial farmers prefer foreign labour to local labour. But due to the insufficient supply of foreign labour, the farmers did not mind engaging local labour each time it was available.

The poor state of housing was not only experienced by the agricultural workers in the Eastern Province. Their counterparts in the commercial farms of the Southern Province and those of other British territories had an equal share of the malaise.

We are informed of the plight of the workers in colonial Kenya that:

Poor housing and congestion was another serious problem which workers experienced. The Government, the Railways and Municipal Councils provided accommodation for some of their employees. But even where such houses were made into permanent structures, there was often poor drainage, communal kitchens, communal latrines and bathrooms⁴ which were almost impossible to keep clean.

Private employers rarely provided housing for their labour.

Commenting on the general conditions of farm labour in Northern Rhodesia, the Annual Medical Report of 1936 stated:

The housing of Agricultural labourers hardly anywhere comes up to the standard required by⁵ law, and on too many farms it is frankly bad.

When tobacco became the main cash crop to the Eastern Province farmers, more labour with less fluctuation was required by the farmers. One factor which would have helped in ensuring a steady supply of labour was good housing. One would have expected thus, in the years between 1912 and the 1950s, to have observed an improvement on the pre-tobacco housing conditions of the workers. The colonial administration had hoped particularly from the 1930s, that the farmers would comply with the Government regulation which stipulated, among other things, that all employers should provide their workers with proper accommodation. While the mining industry responded positively to the Government housing regulation, commercial farmers in the Eastern province failed to comply with the regulation. However, although the mining industry is said to

have provided better accommodation to its workers, the accommodation was only better in comparison with the poor accommodation found on the farms in the whole territory. The state of housing on the mines in the 1920s and 1930s left much to be desired. Both the Anglo American Corporation and the Rhodesia Selection Trust, built round huts and long blocks for married and single workers respectively. The huts were built of burnt bricks, corrugated iron sheets and were also plastered. Nevertheless, the houses were often overcrowded. Sanitation was also poor and constituted a hazard to the worker's health. For instance, in the 1950s there was an average of 6 people to a small hut. Further, the compounds were not properly maintained.⁶

On the commercial farms in the Eastern Province, annual Government reports incessantly lamented throughout the period under study that the accommodation offered to the workers was appalling. Some Government officials even concluded that the perennial shortage of labour that the farmers experienced in the area was partly due to the poor housing conditions that made farm work unattractive. Even in the tobacco boom periods of 1914 and 1929 and of the period during and after the Second World War when farmers would have been in a position to improve their workers' conditions, the poor housing conditions remained unimproved. In 1914, for instance, an annual Report in the Petauke district recorded some complaints received from farm workers. It was observed that "... insufficient food, accommodation and general bad treatment are frequent... The Chitika plantation is particularly bad... they appear to be quite indifferent to the welfare of their native employees".⁷ The Report also drew direct connection between poor housing and general bad treatment on

the one hand, and the local shortage of labour on the other. The Native Affairs Report of 1930 expressed a similar concern about poor housing on the farms in the Eastern Province. It urged the farmers to improve their workers' conditions in order to check the exodus of able-bodied men from the area, and thus eliminate the perpetual labour shortage they experienced. On housing the Report stated: "The general conditions prevailing for local labour are poor - poor housing and sanitation, poor medical care and poor food".⁸ The poor state of housing was exacerbated by the economic depression which set in from 1931 to 1934. It sent many farmers out of business and made many employees redundant.⁹ Redundances resulting from the depression were not restricted to farm areas. Mine workers suffered the same fate. For example, by 1931 when the economic depression had set in, the number of employed persons in the mines fell from 28,974 in January 1931 to 13,261 persons in December the same year.¹⁰ Also, in 1935 it was reported that owing to curtailment in output, the number of natives employed in the year, decreased from 17,000 to 15,000.¹¹ The most important point here is that those few employees who remained on the mines during the depression, like their counterparts on the farms, suffered further poor housing and food conditions because no money was put aside for their improvement.

Immediately after the depression, the tobacco industry began to pick up and by 1939 the industry experienced a boom period. Despite this boom, farm workers still lived in poor housing conditions. In the year 1935, a Government report pointed out that conditions as regards quarters on the farms in the Eastern Province were

"not infrequently far from all that could be desired".¹² However, in a tone that sounded absolving the farmers of the blame for providing their workers with poor housing, the report denied that it was the farming community as a whole that cared little for the welfare of their African workers. The report asserted that it was the pecuniary embarrassment that rendered it impossible for many farmers to provide good accommodation and food rations in conformity with the requirement of Government regulations.¹³ The reports' assertion that poor conditions on almost all the farms were as a result of the farmers' poor returns, begs for a comment. The report does not give us specific examples of the implicitly 'few' farms where employees had enjoyed better accommodation than others. While it might be true that in ~~less~~ years farmers' poor returns may have contributed to the workers' poor conditions, the main cause of the prevalent appalling conditions on all the farms lay in the operation of the capitalist system.

Our observation in this study is that the farmers failed to observe Government regulations pertaining to workers' housing in a deliberate move to render African farm labour cheap and hence, maximise their profits. To the farmers, constructing houses for their workers which conformed to modern sanitary requirements while at the same time seeking to make them attractive to the African occupants, was considered a costly venture which would reduce their profits. Yet, at least part of the real answer to the perpetual labour shortage that farmers experienced in the area lay in providing the workers with good working conditions which should

have included good accommodation. As one Government official put it: "... for were better conditions to be found in ordinary places of employment, most natives would have preferred to work nearer their villages than cross borders into other territories".¹⁴ If the prevailing poor housing conditions on the farms in the area were attributed to the farmers' financial problems in the 1920s and 1930s, then one would expect to see improved conditions of work in the 1940s and 1950s when the tobacco industry experienced a boom which stretched from 1939 to the late 1950s.¹⁵ As stated in Chapter One, in 1947, 88 tobacco farmers in Fort Jameson alone produced three million pounds weight of tobacco worth £321,494. This means that the average income per farmer was £3,653. On the other hand, the minimum cost of farming an acre around the same period, averaged between £70 and £77.¹⁶ Since labour was one of the most important inputs in farming, we would be inclined to assume that each farmer's net profit should have been substantial. It was out of each farmer's sound income in good seasons that an extra pound would have been reinvested into improving the housing conditions of his employees.

With the farmers' blind eye on the poor living conditions of their employees despite their sound economies in favourable years, the few people who offered their labour onto the farms continued to work under squalid conditions throughout the period to the 1960s. We are informed, for instance, that:

while the building of Government and local authority permanent housing in Fort James area went on steadily in 1952, improvement of housing on the farms received no attention, as they were below what was permitted by the Employment of Native Ordinance.¹⁷

Eight years later, the African employee on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke still worked under poor conditions. It was observed in 1960, "African housing on European farms remained, unfortunately poor".¹⁸ Throughout the period under study, the provision and maintenance of accommodation on the farms of the Eastern Province thus, hinged on the initiative of the individual employee. With time and other resource limitations, the employee failed to bail himself out of the accommodation squalor that became conspicuous on the majority of farms in the area. Despite the fact that Government officials made annual comments on the poor state of housing obtaining on the farms in the territory, the Government did virtually nothing to either assist or force the farmers to improve the workers accommodation.

WAGES

One of the factors that determine the upward and downward movements of wages in any labour market is the behaviour of labour demand and supply in response to each other. Also the upward and downward movements of wages in a free market situation are determined by the changing cost of living. But in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas, wages were little influenced by the above mentioned factors. There were apparently two factors that helped to determine the level of wages in colonial Zambia. Firstly, there was the colour of the employee. Europeans were generally paid many times the amount received by the Africans for the same type of work whether in private or public sectors. Secondly, the rate of native tax ruling at a particular time became the basis of wage fixing in most parts of colonial Africa. For instance, giving evidence to the commission of enquiry investigating the 1935 riots

on the copperbelt, a Nkana safety officer called Rex L'Ange (later to become Federal Minister of Works) said:

In efficiency the natives have been improving daily and whereas at one time you had four or five boys doing one job, you now have two boys doing it. But there was ¹⁹no correlation between efficiency and reward.

Also, in 1940, when the starting wage rate for an African surface worker was 12s 6d per month and 22s 0d for an underground worker, the European average wage was more than £40 per month. An African lorry driver on the mines was paid £3 per month while his European counterpart earned £30 per month.²⁰ The colour of the worker rather than his skill seems to have been the main determining factor in fixing the wage level in Northern Rhodesia. Literature on conditions of workers in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia reveal similar situation.²¹

In the pre-tobacco period in the Eastern Province, farm-wages were largely paid in kind. When ranching was the dominant agricultural activity of the commercial farmers, herdboys often received wages in kind which varied in both quality and quantity. Also, they depended on the benevolence of the individual employer. Payments were made in the form of salt, soap, cloth or any western item of attraction to the local people. In most cases the employer had the discretion of determining when the payments should be made. As such, employees often got their wages irregularly. To the farmers, paying wages to the herdboys whose fathers lived on European land was considered a kind of favour. That the herdboys' family lived on and used the settler's land without rent, was seen as enough

payment for the services rendered by the herdboy. Adult farm labour which was employed alongside herdboys to work on cotton plantations were partly paid in kind and partly in hard cash. Each adult worker received 3s 0d for thirty working days in the dry season; and 4s 0d in the wet season. The workers, as a rule, were not supplied with food rations but received 1s 0d with which to buy food for the whole month.²³ The 4s 0d monthly wage offered in the wet season was meant to attract more African labour to the commercial farms at a time when people needed the labour in their own fields. The inadequacy of that inducement is reflected in the fact that people continued to shun wage employment on the farms in the area. Commercial farmers in the Eastern Province were not the only ones to suffer labour shortage due to poor wages. Commercial farmers in the Orange Free State and the Eastern Cape Province suffered the same fate in the 1930s. It is reported that the local people there found the attractions of farm work to have much less weight, and preferred either to retain their labour in the reserves or migrated to other industries in towns.²⁴ The farmers in the Orange Free State and the Cape Areas had to draw seasonal labour from outside areas such as Basutoland and the Transkeian territories.

From the First World War, wages on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke districts remained repulsive. For instance, the average wages for farm workers in the 1920s did not go beyond 10s 0d per month. The farmers did very little to make farm-wages attractive to job seekers. This attitude on the part of the farmers was ironical especially that in the late 1920s the farmers experienced a period of tobacco boom. At this time, the

mines in the territory were experiencing a reconstruction period and began to offer comparatively higher wages and more attractive conditions than farmers. For instance, in 1928 the monthly wage for Africans on the mines was 18s 0d for surface work and 22s 0d for underground work. In the same year, the monthly pay for farm employees in the Eastern Province was 7s 6d.²⁵ This development had the effect of rendering farm work in the Province more despicable. In the circumstance, if one wanted to sell ones labour power within the territory, he naturally preferred to work on the mines rather than on the farms. Furthermore, the laissez faire attitude adopted by the Government helped to throw commercial farms as a labour market into the background of all labour markets. Up to 1931, there was no legal tool providing official minimum wages to be followed by all the employers in the country.²⁶ Each employer, including the Government, had the discretion of determining wages for his employees. Consequently, each employer had his own basis for pegging out the wages he paid.

For the commercial farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas it appears the major factor that determined the wages they paid was the rate of Poll tax the African was required to pay to the Government. Take for instance, when the farmers paid their workers 3s 0d to 4s 0d per month, the annual poll tax was 3s. per person. Each time a suggestion was made to raise 'Native tax' the farmers objected because of the fear that such a move might lead to demands for higher wages. In 1914, when a suggestion was made to raise the Native tax from 3s 0d. to 5s 0d., the farmers only accepted the move on condition that farm wages should remain low. In their appeal to the Magistrate through the Eastern Province Farmers' Association, they stated:

... it was pointed out that native Hut Tax would be raised to 5s. Od this year; it is in the interests of all the employers of native labour (including the Government) to cooperate and, inspite of the raising of Hut Tax keep wages as at present, VIZ: Dry season labour 3s. + Posho, Wet season labour 4s + Posho. The farmers hope you will help them by keeping to these rates and not forcing up the price of labour.²⁷

The monthly wages on the farms of the Eastern Province remained fluctuacting between 5s. Od. and 7s. up to the outbreak of the depression. In comparison to other industries in the Territory, the above wages were the least enticing to a worker. Tables 5 and 6 below show wage rates as offered in different sectors in Northern Rhodesia in 1924 and 1931.

TABLE 5. WAGES AND COST OF LIVING:

Average Rate of Wages for Native Labour:
For the Year Ending 31st December 1924.
PER MONTH.

a. <u>Agriculture:</u>	
Labourer - North Western Districts.	6s to 10s.
- North-Eastern Districts.	5s to 7s.
Artisans:	15s. to 40s.
b. <u>Domestic Service:</u>	
Cook Boys	15s to 30s.
Kitchen Boys	2s. 6d. to 8s.
Garden Boys	7s. 6d. to 15s.
Wood Boys	5s. Od. to 10s.
House Boys	10s to 20s.
c. <u>Trade and Manufacturing Industries:</u>	
Carpenters and Joiners	£1 to £9
Bricklayers	£1 to £7
Blacksmiths	£1 to £4
Painters	£1 to £4

(Adapted from the Northern Rhodesia Blue Book. Govt. Printers, Livingstone 1925. Page 30.)

The information on table 5 indicated two things: Firstly, that agricultural workers in the territory were the lowest paid category. Secondly, that agricultural labourers in the North-Eastern Rhodesia were the least paid category in the whole country. It appears that Commercial Farmers in the North-Western Rhodesia offered slightly higher wages than their colleagues in North-Eastern Rhodesia because they were juxtaposed with industries along the line of rail which paid comparatively higher wages. A lower starting wage than 6s, per month would have exacerbated the labour shortage problem that the farmers in the region experienced.

TABLE 6.

Labour, Wages and Cost of Living.

For the Year Ending 31 December, 1931.

Occupations	Average Number Employed	Average Rate of Wages Per Month.
a. Govt. Employment.	8,146	7s. 6d. to 12s 6d. and 15s. to £7. for skilled
b. Agricultural Employment	10,508	7s 6d. to 12s 6d. £3 for skilled labour.
c. Manufacturing Employment	2,791	12s 6d to 17s 6d. £9 for skilled labour
Building	10,133	- - - -
Mines	21,888	12s. 6d to £9.
Railways	3,204	- -
d. Domestic Service	16,315	5s. to £3.
e. Various others	6,177	10s. to £1 labourers £1 to £5 for skilled

Adapted from the Northern Rhodesia Blue Book. Govt. Printers, Livingstone, 1932, P. 25.

- NB. 1. Rations for Government employees cost between 7s. 6d to 15s. per month.
2. Rations for the Mine workers cost between 10s. to 20s. per month per person.
- But no ration allowance indicated for the agricultural workers.

Table Six above shows the average wage rates ruling in the whole territory by 1931. These rates indicate that there were wage increases over the wage rates of 1924. Although the average wage rates for farm labour by 1931 were between 7s 6d. and 12s 6d. for labourers, the actual wage paid to the farm employee by the majority of Commercial farmers in Eastern Province did not exceed 10s. per month.²⁸ This wage had for instance, to compete with 17s 6d as actual starting wage per month for a surface worker on the Northern Rhodesia mines and 30s. Od. for underground workers.²⁹ It would thus, have taken a simpleton to seek employment on the Eastern Province farms in a situation where the potential employee had comparatively attractive labour markets elsewhere in the territory.

Table 5 and 6 also show that domestic workers were second lowest paid category. But, despite the lower wages offered, domestic work attracted more people than agricultural work especially in the Eastern Province. An explanation to this disparity is found in the nature of the job requirements in the two sectors. An agricultural worker was expected to work many hours, sometimes twelve hours without any meal. Only in harvest seasons would an agricultural worker have something to eat while working in the field. Secondly, the regularity of work put great strain on the African worker who was accustomed to working according to his own schedule. The unpalatable nature of the job coupled with the unattractive wages influenced people to avoid farm work. On the other hand, the low wages of a domestic

worker, a cook, house boy and garden boy, were augmented by gifts of a shirt, a pair of shorts a dress for his wife from the 'Bwana' or 'Donna'. Also, food was provided to domestic workers. Often, the Master's left-overs became the lunch or supper of the house boys. With these 'fringe benefits', domestic work became more attractive as it gave room for saving on food expenses.

The depression in 1931 greatly reduced economic activities in Northern Rhodesia as it did in Southern Rhodesia. A number of farmers were put out of business just as some mines were forced to close down in the period. For instance, in 1931 Bwana Mkubwa, a high cost producer of copper, was forced to close its gates, at Nchanga Mine, work was suspended partly due to an accidental flood and the development work at Chambeshi and Kansashi mines was likewise abandoned due to the economic recession.³⁰ For the farms which remained operational in the province, their workers experienced yet worse conditions. Wages were reduced drastically and food rations or food allowance 'Posho',^{*} were either reduced or scrapped altogether. The 1932 Annual Report states, for instance, that:

In 1932 local wages on the farms of East Luangwa had been reduced to the pre-boom, level of 6s. and 2s. ration allowance being the average usual wage of unskilled farm labour.³¹

* Poso or 'Posho' is a vernacular term - a Tumbuka and Nyanja, term for payment in lieu of food rations.

The 1933 Annual Report added:

... and Planters, the only large employers of labour in the District (East Luangwa), had been able to engage all their requirements at the wage of 5s. per month of 30 working days; and 2s. Poso. The above wages were³² probably among the worst in Africa.

The mine workers suffered their own wage cuts as a result of the depression but not as worse off as the farm workers. By 1932 the wage for a surface worker was reduced to 12s. 6d per month, and 17s. 6d for an underground worker.³³

From the late 1930s to the mid - 1940s wage rates were kept low and the general working conditions in the Territory remained at a very low ebb. For the mining industry, the wage rates were kept low by the plentiful supply of African labour after the depression. It should be noted that during the depression the mine reduced their native labour force from 30,000 in 1930 to a little under 7,000 men in 1932.³⁴ This redundant labour, not only from the Northern Rhodesia mines but also from Southern Rhodesia, returned home to aggravate the land problem in the reserves. In the Eastern Province reserves were overpopulated also by immigrants from Nyasaland and the Portuguese East Africa, creating a situation where reserves were unable to meet their own food demands. Thomas Spurgeon Page, a farmer in the Eastern Province, observed that the situation in the Eastern Province was 'serious' where more and more African immigrants were drifting onto already over crowded lands.³⁵ The inflow of foreign immigrants into the Eastern Province in the late 1930s and 1940s, ignited a conflict over land between the

local people and the immigrants in the native reserves. The acute shortage of land in the reserves, thus created labour reservoirs out of earlier repatriated labour from labour markets and the African immigrants from neighbouring countries. With reduced demand for African labour by many industries due to the ravages of the depression, there occurred an over supply of African labour in later years. However, commercial farmers in the Eastern Province did not at any time experience any overflow of African labour. While the number of tobacco farmers increased from 100 in 1946 to 130 in 1947, planted acreage only increased from 7,000 acres to 7,800 acres in the same period. The limiting factor to the expansion of planted acres was the shortage of labour.³⁶ The 'shortage' was actually created by the fact that people shunned the farms because of the low wages. To attract labour farmers in the area tried to raise wages. It was observed in the 1948 Native Affairs Report that:

Three years before, 7s. was the usual average wage with some paying 10s. Od; in 1947, the average wage was 12s. Od., an increase of about 72%. This year the usual wage for plantation³⁷ workers has risen to 15s. a ticket.

However, the Report further lamented that there was no uniformity in wage fixing amongst the commercial farmers in the area and the country as a whole. As if to encourage uniform wage-fixing among the farmers in the country, the Government passed a Wage Ordinance in 1948 which provided for uniform wage-fixing in each region. The 'Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Ordinance of 1948' was a legal instrument/^{which} provided machinery for determining minimum

wages and conditions of employment in the Territory.³⁸ Inter alia, the Ordinance made provisions for the appointment of a board to fix minimum wages for each district. And, that failure on the part of an employer to comply with the ruling wage in that district would be met with a £20 fine. Officers were appointed and empowered to inspect records of wages and food allowances. Refusal by any employer to have his records inspected would be met with a £25 fine. But, no wage board existed in either Fort Jameson or Petauke districts to enforce the well intended provisions in the Ordinance. The incoherent wage-fixing thus, persisted among the commercial farmers and the increases did not change labour supply behavior.

At the threshold of 1950 and throughout the decade to 1963, farm wages per se continued to show a slow rise. However, juxtaposed with wages paid in outlying labour markets, the increases were rendered negligible. The average wage on the farms by the end of 1950 was 17s. 6d. The wages steadily rose to an average of 24s. 0d. per month exclusive of rations by 1955.⁴⁰ In the same period, in comparison to the mineworkers wages, the lowest earnings for thirty days' work was 202s. 6d; while it was 157s. 6d. on the Rhodesia Railways and 67s. 6d. for Chilanga Cement workers.⁴¹ As such, the wage increases on the farms became comparatively unattractive.

After a period of seven years, by 1963, the average wage for farm workers had risen to 82s. 9d. per month in the Territory.⁴² This wage was nevertheless far below the emoluments received by workers in other industries within and outside the territory. The

mineworkers, as a case in point, received monthly wages ranging from 222s. 6d. to 737s. 6d. for surface workers and 240s. Od. to 752s. 6d. for underground workers.⁴³ In addition the mineworkers were given allowances of 36% of their basic pay as Christmas bonus; 10% of basic pay as leave bonus and 21% of their annual basic pay as cash bonus. All these were deposited into each worker's fixed savings. The savings were supervised by the employers and withdrawals were done once per annum. Unless one had a funeral, no withdrawal would be made from the fixed savings before the official date. The farm worker, not only in Fort Jameson and Petauke, but also on the farms on the line of rail and other employees in the other sectors, never enjoyed such attractive benefits as their counter-parts on the mines. Thus, working on the mines had an additional attraction in that the worker was enticed to save for future and emergency uses.

The farm wages in the Eastern Province were not only poor and unattractive in comparison to the wages paid elsewhere, but also in real terms. The farmers never took into consideration the changing cost of living of the African when shaping his wage. The commercial farmers believed that the African's taste for necessities remained as traditionally antiquated as before, throughout the period. They deliberately failed to come to grips with the fact that goods such as soap, tooth paste ^{and} /shoes

which were luxuries in the early 1900s, had by 1940s become necessities. The general cost of living as reflected by prices of peoples' necessities at any given time should have helped the farmers to shape reasonable monthly wages, but this factor was

ignored. In order to substantiate our contention that farm-wages were below subsistence level, we give below a budget of necessities required by an African family in the mid-1940s. The price list of articles was obtained from an average rural boma, Fort Jameson:

TABLE 7 Clothing for the Man Per Annum:

	£	S	d.
3 Shirts @ 5s each		15	0
4 Vests @ 1s 6d. each		6	0
3 Shorts @ 5s. each		15	0
3 Pants @ 2s. each		6	0
1 Pair of Trousers @ 8s. each		8	0
1 Jacket @ 15s. each		15	0
1 Pair of Shoes @ 17s. 6d. each		17	6
2 Pairs of Socks @ 1s 6d. each		3	0
2 Pairs of stockings @ 2s. 6d. each		5	0
1 Rain Coat each		10	0

Clothing for the Wife

3 Dresses @ 4s each		12	0
2 Pairs of Cloth @ 3s each		6	0
2 Knickers @ 1s. 3d. each		2	6
3 Headclothes @ 6d. each		1	6
2 Petticoats @ 1s. each		2	0
Children's clothes @ 10s	1	14	0
Sub total	6	14	6

NB Clothes as per their actual prices but obviously, of low quality.

From Tables 6 and 7, it becomes evident that the required minimum wage for this class of worker would have been 35s. Od. per month. This average rate is exclusive of food rations. But actual wages paid to farm-workers in the 1940s in the Eastern Province, ranged from 7s. 6d to 10s Od. per month. Thus, these wages fell far short of even the subsistence requirements of the individual worker. We conclude herein, that the below-subsistence wages offered by the commercial farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas made people shun farm work, and consequently, kept alive the scarcity of labour to the farms throughout the period under study.

WORKERS' FOOD SUPPLIES.

As in the case of accommodation and wages, the quantity and quality of food or payment in lieu of food rations offered to workers on the farms were very poor. The paucity or nonprovision of the food rations further discouraged people from local employment. The pre-tobacco farm workers in the Eastern Luangwa were not given food rations, unlike their counter-parts on the Orange Free State farms in South Africa where farm workers were given food rations besides an average wage of 13s. 10d. per month.⁴⁵ Employed children of tenant parents on the European farms provided their own food. On the other hand, adult workers especially, immigrant workers, were allotted small plots of land on which they would produce their own food in their spare time. In the absence of small plot allocations on which workers could produce their own food, nearly all the farmers in the area paid their workers 1s Od 'Poso'. However, true while it is that some farm workers could be allocated small plots

of land on which they produced their own food, the majority of the farmers in the area preferred to give their workers the meagre 1s. Poso per month. The preference for payment in cash served a purpose. It helped to retain the worker on the farm all the time and thus maximise production.

In the period up to the early 1930s, the farmers in Fort Jameson and Petauke did not give their workers food rations but merely paid them 'Poso' in cash. The 'Poso' was very inadequate in that it would not even obtain a workers one month mealie meal. For instance, in the late 1920s the minimum monthly rations per worker, a 50 lb. bag of mealie meal cost around 3s.; a ration of meal and vegetables per person per month would cost about 4s. and a bottle of milk just for a day's consumption would cost 4d around small urban areas like Fort Jameson.⁴⁶ Evidently, the total cost of the above food necessities even when an important ingredient like salt is left out, exceeded the amount of the 1s. to 2s. 'Poso' given to a farm worker. The worker was thus, forced to use most of his already meagre wage on food expenses. Consequently, for the poor worker to raise money for tax and for other family requirements he was compelled to stay and work a little longer on the farm.

There lacked in the Territory legal ordinances which would standardize and enforce the quantity and quality of food rations to be offered to the workers. Each employer, including the farmer in the Eastern Province, exercised his own discretion on the type and quantity of food he gave to his workers. As a result, the quantity and quality of food rations offered varied from one farmer to another. Furthermore, the value of food given to farm

workers was never at any time based on actual current food costs per month. It would appear that what influenced the quantity and quality of food rations were the 1908 diet regulations of Southern Rhodesia . The regulations stipulated that mine owners in Southern Rhodesia with more than three hundred African employees had to issue rations in accordance with the minimum legal requirements. The legal ration scale demanded that employers make a daily issue of at least 2 lbs. of maize or millet meal; 1oz. of salt; weekly provision of at least 1 lb. of fish or meat; 2 lbs. of fresh vegetables and 8 oz. of either groundnuts or lard.⁴⁷ Although the regulations specifically referred to the mining industry, they applied to all employing institutions in that colony. It was out of the scales of food rations operational in Southern Rhodesia that the Eastern Province farmers appear to have based their food issues to their workers.

By 1930, little change was noticed as regards the quality and quantity of food issues given to workers. This fact is sounded in the 1931 Native Affairs Report which, among other things, observed that:

The rations on the Eastern Province farms have not been on the same generous scale as on the mines, although there are greater opportunities for obtaining a regular supply of all the requirements.⁴⁸

The Report also revealed that the cash food payments to farm workers in the area had gone up from 1s. to 2s. Poso per month. The 2s Poso per month however, still proved inadequate to a worker's monthly

food requirements. It was in response to the farmers' and other institutions failure to provide adequate food requirements and good general working conditions to their workers that the Northern Rhodesia Administration passed the "Employment of Natives Ordinance in 1934".⁴⁹ On workers food, the Ordinance stipulated that:

No Employer shall supply or cause to be supplied to any native employee for the purposes of consumption by such native employee any food or drink which is diseased, unsound or unwholesome or otherwise unfit for human consumption.⁵⁰

The Ordinance further provided the standard scale for food issues to workers to be adhered to by all employing institutions in the Territory. The normal weekly dietary allowance for a single worker on the farms for instance, was to be:

14 lbs. maize meal
2 lbs. monkey nuts or beans
1.5 lbs. meat
4 oz. salt.⁵¹

Despite the setting up of the official food standard scale, very rarely did the farmers in the Eastern Province comply with its full stipulations. Four years after the enactment of the Ordinance, Major Orde Browne observed that food rations on the tobacco plantations were still poor. He noted:

only a grain of ration was issued or alternatively two shillings in lieu of food issues to workers who came from nearby villages. For those who were unable to return home for food, the rations⁵² on the farms were quite inadequate.

Meat, nuts and vegetables were rarely provided to farm workers.

For meat, provisions were made to the workers only when some accident happened to an animal. Otherwise, there was no deliberate slaughter of livestock for the purposes of feeding workers.

Throughout the study period to 1964, both actual food rations and cash food allowances given to farm workers remained inadequate and unattractive. In comparison to other employing institutions like the Mines and the Government, improvements on workers' food supplies were least impressive. The major reason farmers in the area advanced for not providing adequate food rations to their workers was that they often made little profits due to high transport costs of their products. Provision of proper food requirements to a worker would thus, have rendered the farmer operate at a loss, so the farmers contended. Table 8 will help to illustrate the disparities of food provisions that existed between agricultural workers and workers of other industries in the country.

TABLE 8

1946 ANNEXURE 1

NATIVE LABOUR

PERSONS EMPLOYED AND AVERAGE RATES OF WAGES AND FOODS COSTS:

Occupations	Average Rates of Wages; weekly, Daily, Monthly, per hours.	Remarks.
A. <u>Government Employment</u> - Permanent:	15s Od. to £9 Per Month.	Ration allowance 9s 6d. to 12s 6d cost of living allowance up to 6s 6d.
Temporary:	8s to 9s. per month	Ration allowance and cost of living 7s 6d.
B. <u>Agriculture</u> :	8s Od. to 15s a month	2s 6d. 'Posho' or ration in kind to 6s Od.
C. <u>Other Industries</u> :		
- Manufactu- ring	9s to 13s per month	as in Agriculture
- Building	8s to £5 per month	" " "
- Roads	8s to 10s per month.	ration in kind to the value of 9s plus cost of living 7s 6d.
D. <u>Domestic</u> :	10s to £2 per month	-Ration in kind or 3s. to 10s in lieu of food rations.

As the above table shows, by 1946 cash food allowance had only gone up by 6d. on the 1938 rate of 2s. In the same period a Government worker got between 9s 6d. and 12s 6d. as food allowance in cash and an additional cost of living allowance of up to 6s 6d. The farm-worker did not receive cost of living allowance in the Territory. Even the domestic worker was in every way, far better than the worker on the farm.

While prices of consumer goods showed a marked increase by the mid-fifties, the farmers did nothing to increase their workers' food allowances proportionately. Taking the August 1939 prices as the base line, between December 1950 and December 1956, foodstuff prices rose by 86%. Clothing prices increased by 24%; household utensils by 19% and for all other items the prices rose by 44%.⁵³ In the same period, food allowance in cash rose to 4s, from 2s. 6d; and actual food issues cost the farmer a total of 7s. 6d per person per month. The increases in both cases were about 60% and 45% respectively. These increases were far short of the minimum food requirements by each worker per month. For instance, a worker's shopping basket ^{needed} inter alia, the inclusion of a 200 lbs. bag of maize which cost 19s. Od. in the Eastern Province by 1957.⁵⁴ The cost of the bag of maize alone exceeded both the 'Poso' given to the farm-worker and the maximum cost the farmer incurred if he preferred to buy the required food for the worker. In most cases farmers in the Eastern Province preferred to give their workers the 2s 6d. cash in lieu of food rations to actual food issues. This was because it was cheaper. On the other hand, the worker preferred actual food rations to cash allowance.

This was because with food issues the worker was taxed less for supplements, while with the 2s 6d. food allowance, he was forced to use up most of his monthly wage on food expenses. The standard of food provisions to the farm workers in Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts remained unaltered throughout the remaining period to 1964. Although medical authorities in the territory failed to comment on workers' health as a result of inadequate feeding, it is highly probable that workers' health on the farms was poor. It is within our argument therefore, to say that the inconsequential food allowances and the meagre food issues contributed greatly to spurning off potential farm workers in the area.

MEDICAL FACILITIES:

Medical provisions to farm-workers in the Eastern Province was virtually non-existent on nearly all the farms through out the period understudy. Medical provisions and other health requirements were met as best/^{as} they could be, in the worker's traditional community. The general attitude of the Eastern Province farmers towards their employees as mere 'money-making machines' rather than human beings can be likened to the attitudes of the mine-management in Southern Rhodesia where in 1931, an inspector of African compounds explained without slightest shame to a Medical Director: "...It is economically sounder to discharge a sick native than to incur the expense of restoring him to health, as so much labour is offering".⁵⁵ While the above attitude could be justified on the grounds that labour was easily obtainable in Southern Rhodesia, to the Eastern Province Commercial farmers, it could not find a similar justification as their labour supply was

perpetually scarce. The only covert explanation the farmers gave for the absence of medical amenities for their workers on most farms was that drugs were hard to obtain. The farmers also complained that local prices for drugs were very high and would constitute a considerable burden for the employer. Even when the Director of Medical Services was prepared to make arrangements so that drugs could be purchased at wholesale rates from local agencies, the farmers did not budge. They argued that wholesale supply of drugs at cheaper prices would involve competition between the farms and local industries.⁵⁶ The welfare of the worker was thus, given little importance. The issue of vital importance to the farmer was to minimize production costs and thereby maximising profits.

A legal injunction to employing institutions contained in the 1934 Ordinance, also fell on deaf ears as far as farmers were concerned. After being appalled by the degree of medical neglect accorded to workers in the country, especially before and during the depression, the Government passed regulations which required employers to:

... keep and maintain at the mines and other works, a supply of drugs and dressings as specified in the Third Schedule hereto for the first aid treatment of all accidents,⁵⁷ burns and other injuries likely to occur...

While the mining industry complied with the above regulations as they provided hospitals in the mining areas and trained some of its workers in first aid, the farmers failed to comply with the regulations. The farm worker who fell sick was sent to his home for treatment or if the individual worker chose, he sought treatment at modern dispensaries set up by missionaries in the area.

Throughout the period of study, the commercial farmers in the area did very little to improve the provision of medical amenities for their workers.

EDUCATION:

Educational facilities such as schools were left to institutions like the missionaries and the Government in the area. In other farming areas of the country such as Mazabuka, Choma and Lusaka, the situation was the same. Schools for both settler children and Africans were provided by missionaries and the Government. For example, in 1946 it was reported that African Education was still largely provided by Missionaries.⁵⁸ Commercial farmers in the whole of Northern Rhodesia are known to have played no part in the provision of educational facilities to their workers. On the other hand, the child of a mineworker on the Copperbelt was able, at least by the 1950s, to learn at a mine school, where his father also attended evening classes.

SUMMARY:

This chapter has addressed itself mainly to major aspects that make up workers' conditions at a place of employment. The focus has been on the quality of accommodation, wages, food, medical facilities and education. We have argued in this chapter that accommodation on the farms was largely provided by the individual worker haphazardly, with no part played by the employer to maintain the worker's compounds; and that wages, food or food allowances and medical amenities offered to the farm workers in the two districts, left a lot to be desired throughout the period of study. The quality and quantity of the above social amenities offered to

the Eastern Province farm-labour was not only unattractive in comparison to social amenities offered in labour markets elsewhere, but they were grossly unattractive to the worker and potential worker in their own right. No wonder, therefore, farmers experienced perpetual labour shortage. Chief Jumbe's complaint to the Administration in 1931 at an 'Indaba' in Fort Jameson is illustrative:

our boys when they come to work are not paid good wages, are not treated properly... We are not satisfied with the pay we get. On all the farms they are beaten by the white man; 4s and 1s Posho is not sufficient. ⁵⁹

Indeed, there seemed to have been no incentive for any one to work on the European farms in the area. But the irony of it all was that the farmers did virtually nothing to eradicate the malaise. Thus, we have in the period, a vicious circle. On the one hand there were the meagre wages, poor housing, poor food rations, non-existence of medical facilities and bad treatment of the worker; On the other hand, there was the unpopularity of farm work in the region. In the next chapter we shall examine the forms of response by the workers and potential workers to the working conditions on the farms.

FOOTNOTES

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 4. M.H.Y. Kaniki, "Workers in Colonial Kenya",
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(Morogoro, June 16-20, 1975) P. 12.
 5. Northern Rhodesia Department of Health Report, 1936.
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 6. Roberts, A History of Zambia, P. 189

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 7. NAZ; KDG5/1, Fort Jameson District Notebook Vol. 1. P. 170.
 8. Annual Report, East Luangwa District, 1930
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 9. Hall, Zambia; P. 269
 10. Annual Report, Northern Rhodesia; Social and Economic Progress, 1932 (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1933) P. 27.
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 12. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1935
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 13. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1935
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 14. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1936
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 15. Hellen, Rural Economic Development, P. 179
- NB. He also points out that the 1920s were characterized by a boom period which was climated in the 1927-28 tobacco season when 3½ million lbs. of tobacco was marketed. However, the boom was counteracted by a slump in the depression period. For instance, only 1.5 million pounds weight of tobacco was marketed in the 1935 season.

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18. Annual Report, Department of African Affairs, 1960.
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19. William A. Russel, The Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the disturbances in the Copperbelt, Northern Rhodesia, 1935. (London: HMSO., 1935) PP. 494 - 500.
20. J. Lewin, The Colour-Bar in the Copperbelt.
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21. See: Kaniki, "Workers in Colonial Kenya". Arrighi, "Labour Supplies", PP. 180-234.
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23. Gelfand, Northern Rhodesia, P. 105
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41. Berger, Labour, Race, P. 205
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43. Colonial Report 1960
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CHAPTER FOUR

WORKERS' RESPONSE TO CONDITIONS ON THE FARMS

The kind of response a worker or potential worker assumes is determined by a variety of factors. Prominent among the factors, will be the quality and quantity of socio-economic conditions offered in the various labour markets. Good working and living conditions at a place of work generates in the worker, satisfaction and desire to stay a little longer on the job. Further, a place of work which has pleasant working conditions is likely to attract more job-seekers. Conversely, a variety of negative responses are stimulated in both the worker and potential worker by a labour market with poor working and living conditions.

The quality and quantity of the economic and social facilities offered to farm workers in the Eastern Province created a situation reminiscent of the 'equilibrium of poverty'. This is a situation that does not allow for economic growth or development to take place.¹ The kind of working conditions prevalent on the commercial farms of the Fort Jameson and Petauke districts in the period 1898 to 1964, as observed in the previous chapter, indicate, that the workers operated within the framework of the equilibrium of poverty. This chapter sets out to do two things: Firstly, to examine methods by which the workers sought to escape from the equilibrium of poverty existing on the farms. Secondly, to determine the kind of effects these escape-methods had on both the commercial farms and the traditional economies from which the labour force was drawn.

Farm workers and potential farm workers responded to the appalling working conditions obtaining on the Eastern Province

commercial farms in three ways. Firstly, the local labour force shunned farm work and wage labour in general, to retain their labour within the traditional economies. Secondly, those who took up employment on the farms reacted toward the poor conditions by frequent desertions. Finally, the people's main and most consistent escape-mechanism was through emigration to other labour markets with comparatively more appealing wages and working conditions. We here set to investigate in detail how each of the three escape-mechanisms operated at different times throughout the period of study.

PEASANT PRODUCTION.

Until the 1920s the offer of labour for wages by an individual African in the Eastern Province, as was the case in most of East and Central Africa, was, to a large extent, dependent upon rational weighing of alternatives between village incomes and potential wage incomes. Also, migration of wage earners depended principally on the level of village incomes and the rate of wages in the cash sector, and the varying rates of wages within the cash sector.

In the period up to the late 1920s, local labour shunned farm employment and general wage employment in the area because they preferred to use their labour power in peasant production. Although land alienation began as early as 1891 in Petauke and Fort Jameson areas, demarcation of the first native reserves took place in 1907. The first reserves consisted of only 667,520 acres.² However, it was not until the creation of additional reserves in the late 1920s that Africans were removed from the alienated fertile lands

into barren lands. Prior to that, most people in the area were able to meet their increased economic exigences through surplus produced in their traditional economies. Prime among the economic exigences was the obligation to pay hut tax annually. But, even the compulsion to pay tax only in cash as from 1903 did not daunt most Ngoni pastoralists and Chewa agriculturalists. Neither did tax increases uproot them from peasant production in the period to the mid 1920s. The reason was that the local people noted that a person gained more in peasant production than as a wage employee. This sense of critical assessment of gains in the peasantry and economic exploitation as employees was shared by many Africans in the Southern region. For instance, one Administrator rightly observed in Bechuanaland (Botswana), that it was fallacious to be content that tax increases would induce people to seek work in the labour market let alone on plantations.

I have heard it suggested that an increase of taxation would drive the natives to work out of their own economic systems to prive funds necessary to meet it. This I believe to be absolutely fallacious as regards the pastoral population of Bechuanaland. The hut tax is only 5s. per hut. A native gets from 12s to £1 for a goat and from £1 to £8 for a cow. It is very easy therefore (except in the seasons of failure of crops), for the 'Native' to obtain the money for his extra tax by a little more at home... thus tax increase will fail to accomplish³ inducing the native to seek wage labour.

As long as economic and social rewards to an employee failed to supersede the Village socio-economic rewards, the people in East Luangwa continued to shun wage employment. Increases in tax rates and other economic necessities failed to force people into wage

employment. On the contrary, increases in tax rates spurred the Ngoni and Chewa speaking people to greater efforts to produce more in their traditional economies so as to realize more surplus. This trend continued until after the First World War.⁴ In lean years, indeed people were forced to seek wage employment to enable them to raise funds for taxes. But as we have learnt in chapter two, the people in the area who sought wage employment for one circumstance or another, shunned the local commercial farms and engaged their labour in other labour markets. This trend suggests that there must have developed an efficient communication system in the area, which enabled workers and potential workers to make critical assessments and weighing-up of working conditions in different parts of the labour market. We can thus, conclude here that while the majority of the people retained their labour in peasant production because returns satisfactorily met their economic needs, those who sought wage employment shunned work on the farms because of low wages and poor working conditions. These people risked to traverse far afield to other labour markets such as the Rand Mines in South Africa and the mines in Southern Rhodesia. The attraction of the labour markets in Southern Africa lay in the fact that they provided accommodation to workers, though, sanitary requirements were poor. It was nonetheless, better than on the farms of the Eastern Province where accommodation was not provided. Besides, wages on the South African and Southern Rhodesia labour markets were higher than those offered on the commercial farms of the Eastern Province. For instance, the average monthly wage for an African worker on the mines of South Africa in 1935 was £5, exclusive of food

expenses.⁵ On the Eastern Province farms in the same year, the average monthly wage inclusive of food rations or allowance, ranged from 5s to 12s 6d.⁶ In the same vein, the meagre wages and poor conditions offered on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke areas created ground for a spontaneous system of market scrutiny by the local people. This, as mentioned above, enabled them to evade wage labour on the farms.

DESERTION

Herbert Aptheker has described the 18th Century Negro slave in the United States as rebellious. He has included desertions, deliberate destruction of property and total revolts as part of their modes of response to the inhuman treatment as instruments of production.⁷ Inter alia, these modes of response finally helped in the destruction of the slave mode of production.

The Eastern Province farm workers in the period 1898-1964 were not slaves. But they were subjected to conditions that could be described as almost inhuman. The workers reacted to the inhuman working and living conditions obtaining on the farms mainly through individual desertions. Evidence is hard to come by, indicating any incidence of group revolts or deliberate destruction of farm property. While quantitative evidence is lacking to determine the degree of desertions at each farm, there were frequent reports of worker desertions in annual Government Reports. In a letter from the Magistrate of Fort Jameson to the Secretary in Livingstone in 1917, it was lamented that with the introduction of tobacco

cultivation, "loading had become a menance on the farms... To beat the desertions and ensure adequate number of workers, farmers as a rule, would sign on 20 to 30% more juveniles than would actually be required".⁸ Official explanation of the incidences of the workers' desertions was that contracts had been loosely made, with no conditions for regular attendance being inserted. On the other hand, the farmers blamed the frequent desertions on the absence of a legal instrument making desertion legally punishable in a court of law. Both these explanations proved fallacious. The real cause of desertions lay in the poor conditions on the farms and not in the absence of a legal act to punish the deserter. Nor was the desertion problem a product of loose contracts.

It has now become axiomatic that the preponderance of desertions in the Southern African countries was more a consequence of low wages and poor conditions of work than lack of punitive legal measures. Furthermore, the desertion problem was not peculiar to farms. The mining industries in the region had their fair share of the problem. In the period from 1900 to the late 1930s, wages and working conditions at most of the mines in Southern Rhodesia were viewed as comparatively poorer than those obtaining on the South African gold mines. For instance, in 1905 a group of W.N.L.A. recruits which passed through a Southern Rhodesia mine, painted such a glowing picture of conditions of employment in South Africa that the miners staged a mutiny in the compound of that particular mine.⁹ While mutinies constituted

one way of the miners' response to what they considered exploitative wages and conditions on the mines of Southern Rhodesia, desertions also became prevalent. In the post-First World War period the Wankie Colliery was rocked by serious labour unrest due to discontent with low wages. Unorganized resistance in form of desertions and reduced productivity are said to have reached proportions serious enough to warrant a full-scale enquiry by the Administration.¹⁰ On the other hand, 800 workers deserted the Globe and Phoenix mine in November 1918. Desertion at this particular mine was further aggravated by the Spanish flu epidemic which left 220 black workers dead in the same year. The high death toll at the Globe and Phoenix mine reflects the kind of health and sanitary facilities it offered. Arguably, with proper medical facilities on the mine the epidemic death toll would have been lower.

Although labour markets in South Africa were considered better than the labour markets in Southern Rhodesia, desertion as a mode of escaping poor wages and working conditions was also a common phenomenon. It had been noted that in the 1890s, recruits at the Rand mines frequently left their service before they had completed their contracts. Reasons for this development included misrepresentation by the recruiters of the wages and other conditions expected to be offered and misrepresentation of the nature of mining work, particularly work underground. Some indeed, refused to go underground.¹² Others deserted certain places of work to seek work in occupations which appeared more attractive than mining. In

some cases desertions were induced by recruiting agents who would take new recruits to another employer from whom they would receive capitation fee.¹³ The new employer paid capitation fee from the wages of the new recruit. This practice engendered more desertions and induced many workers to seek work independently, for then no premiums would be paid to agents, and consequently no such deductions made.

On the Eastern Province farms in Northern Rhodesia, failure to identify the root-cause of desertions resulted into applying half-baked solutions. Among the measures taken to solve the problem of desertion was the employment of more juveniles. This solution faltered because juveniles would not carry out heavier tasks such as clearing bushes and weeding. They were most suited for harvesting tasks. Besides, juveniles were also hard to obtain because at the time when commercial farmers required them family labour units too,^{needed} their assistance in the traditional economic activities. The farmers appeared to have noticed the limitations of the above solution to the problem and instituted another measure. They introduced the 'ticket system' of payment in 1917, whereby the planter would get 30 days work instead of the usual 26 days in the calender system.¹⁴ If the worker failed to report for work, his ticket would not be marked. In this case, the worker got paid for actual days worked unlike in the calender system where the worker would still be paid even when he loafed for some days. Although the ticket system started around 1917, it was not widely adopted by the farmers until the early 1930s. Nevertheless, this measure did not help to eradicate the malaise.

In 1930 the Northern Rhodesia Government enacted an Ordinance which was inter alia, to eradicate desertions in the territory. The Native Registration Ordinance Number 12 was passed on the 1st of September 1930 and it called for all Africans in 'prescribed districts' to have an identity certificate.¹⁵ Among the prescribed districts were Fort Jameson and Petauke. The Registration Ordinance number 12 compelled every African leaving or entering employment to present his certificate - Chitupa, for endorsement by his employer. With this requirement, it was believed desertion would be eliminated. Among the principal provisions of the Ordinance as regards offences by employees were that deserters would be arrested without warrant; also, that desertion, drunkenness, damage caused through neglect, abusive language, refusal to work, giving a wrong name and brawling would be punished in a court of law by a fine of half-month's wages or one month's imprisonment. Desertion with intent not to return was punishable by a fine of £10 or six months' imprisonment.¹⁶ Besides aiming at eliminating desertion, the other factor that led to the promulgation of the Registration Ordinance of 1930 was the Government's desire to check labour migration from those selected districts. It should be noted that prior to the operation of the mines in Northern Rhodesia, the territory was mainly a labour-exporting country. Except for the 'Master and Servant's Proclamation of 1912 which had provisions to make desertion punishable at a court of law, the law relating to labour was only brought up to date by the Employment of Natives Ordinance, No. 56 of 1929.¹⁷ This was necessitated by the growth

of mining operations which increased the local demand for labour. What is interesting to note though, is that labour legislation in Northern Rhodesia was firmly founded on Southern Rhodesia law. This is evidenced by the fact that principal contents of each ordinance in Northern Rhodesia are almost or verbatimly the same with those of the Ordinance of Southern Rhodesia.¹⁶ It would not be out of the line to argue that labour laws in Northern Rhodesia were influenced by labour ordinances in Southern Rhodesia.

Despite the introduction of the Registration Ordinance in 1930, desertions on the commercial farms of the Fort Jameson and Petauke districts persisted. The Ordinance failed to eliminate the scourge because very few deserters ended up convicts. For instance, in 1947, only 44 labourers were convicted for desertion from employment by courts of law in the area; and only one worker was convicted of desertion from his employers' service in Fort Jameson in 1950.²⁰ Workers seem to have found it easy to desert from one employer, and still got employed elsewhere without their Chitupas being endorsed by the previous employer. Unendorsed Chitupa made the holder liable for prosecution.

In a bid to curb mass desertions which appeared to be worse in the late 1930s, farmers in the Eastern Province applied new measures. In 1937, some farmers resorted to reducing the task for their employees by reducing for example, planted fields.²¹ The desertions on the farms were associated more with poor wages and poor conditions than with the nature of the task. Thus, to reduce planted acreages became instead, a measure to encourage desertions because reduced planted acreages meant dwindled production which resulted in further deterioration of the worker's working conditions stemming from the

farmers' reduced earnings. In fact, the farmers in the area seemed to have recognized the ineffectiveness of the above measure by the late 1940s. For example, in 1948 most farmers introduced a form of bonus paid on results by each employee and the tact of withholding workers' wages became on the increase, as a measure of curbing desertions. Withholding a worker's wages was punishable in a court of law as stipulated by the Masters and Servants proclamation of 1912. But ironically, very few culprits were brought to book. For instance, in 1947 only four farmers in the Eastern Province were convicted for withholding their workers' wages. In 1950, three employers were convicted for the same offence.²² Nonetheless, worker-desertions remained unabated on the farms of the region.

Throughout the period under study, desertion became the major response of the workers on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke areas to the poor wages and conditions. The failure to stop desertion on the farms lay in the fact that the root-cause was rightly identified but deliberately ignored .

LABOUR MIGRATION

Some social anthropologists exemplified by Margaret Read, have argued against assuming that the migration of African peoples is a 'new phenomenon'. They assert that the movement of people in Africa has been a feature of its history from earliest times.²³ We counter-argue here that it is fallacious to equate African population movements in search of better hunting grounds and better farming areas, with the 'phenomenon' of labour migration .

that gripped Central and Southern Africa from the early 20th century. Further, it would not only be unrealistic to explain the phenomenon of labour migration in Southern Africa as an intrinsic feature of the African way of life, but also, absolving the exploitative nature of the capitalist structures in the region, of the blame. The earlier movements to fertile natural resources involved whole units of a family or village. Labour migration on the hand, involves the movement of able-bodied personnel from traditional economies to modern sectors. Unlike the former developments, the latter movement has the effect of reducing the productive capacities of the traditional economies.

In Fort Jameson and Petauke districts, land alienation rendered the local people wage seekers. But the migration to other labour markets outside their areas of origin was a response to the poor wages and conditions obtaining particularly on the commercial farms. Farms were the major institutions offering employment opportunities in the region. As a colonial administrator observed in 1929:

To most 'Natives' eyes in the area, work on farms was viewed as a less attractive means of earning money than work on mines. Only second class labourers took on farm labour. The reasons are that there are better wages and better conditions of employment therein.

However, preference for particular labour markets to which migrants proceeded was further determined by two main factors. Firstly, proximity of the labour markets with comparatively favourable conditions to areas of labour origin played a very important role. Also, hospitality of people of the areas through which labour

routes passed was an added factor to the popularity of certain labour markets. For instance, people from Isoka, Abercorn and Kasama districts of Northern Rhodesia found it easier to traverse into Tanganyika which was near to work on sisal plantations than go to South Africa. Similarly, the majority of the Ngoni of Songea in Tanganyika worked on the Kilosa and Tanga sisal estates which were nearer their home than on estates around Arusha in Northern Tanganyika. For instance, in 1940 40% of the Songea Ngoni went to work in Kilosa area while 25% travelled to the Tanga region. All other labour markets in the country absorbed only 35%.²⁵ Labour centres in Tanganyika give a good illustration of labour markets that became unattractive to certain labour areas more on account of distance than on poor wages and poor working conditions. For instance, in 1953 the rate of pay was 39s. Od. per Kipande for a sisal cutter and 28s. Od. for those in heavy cultivation work in Songea; to both of these latter rates was added free rations amounting to a value of 26s. Od. a month.²⁶ In the same year the rate of pay on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke districts compared very lowly with those of Tanganyika. For instance, in 1953 the general rate of pay on the farms of Eastern Rhodesia ranged from 15s. Od. to 20s. Od. without food.²⁷ Labour migrants from the region would have had every reason to migrate to Tanganyika but were barred by the physical distance.

To the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga people who evaded work on the local farms, Southern Rhodesia labour markets proved most congenial because they were near, and also, because the main route passed

through friendly people in the Tete Province of Southern Mozambique. South Africa ranked second in labour absorption from the Eastern Province with the Northern Rhodesia copper mines from the late 1920s absorbing the larger part of the remainder of the labour migrants from the region. The Katanga Mines in the Belgian Congo attracted the smallest number of migrants from the North Charterland Concession area because of its long geographical location from the region. A look at the migrants in statistical terms in the region should be illustrative at this point;

TABLE 9.

CENSUS SUMMARIES 1911

Population Irrespective of Age

	Fort Jameson	Lundazi	Petauke	Totals
Males	40,000	12,000	16,000	68,000
Females	45,000	16,000	18,000	79,000
Total	85,000	28,000	34,000	147,000
<u>NUMBERS TAXABLE</u>				
Males	22,885	6,603	7,495	36,983
*Females	2,000	782	1,053	3,853
Totals	24,885	7,385	8,548	40,818

Source: Fort Jameson District Notebook
Volume II. P. 251.

- * Figures for taxable females should be taken with caution. This is because the source of the figures does not explain how those women became taxable. We know that hut tax included wives and concubines of taxable husbands. But the figures of taxable females in the table could not be for wives or concubines of taxable males in the respective areas.

As table 9 shows, if we add the figures of taxable males for the two areas Fort Jameson and Petauke, the total sum equals 30,380 men. Out of this total sum of able-bodied men from the two areas, it was reported in the year 1912 that 5,000 of them had voluntarily migrated to Southern Rhodesia which was their adjacent labour market; South Africa attracted only 300 migrants in the same year.²⁸ Those Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga people who had opted to work within the territory were split as follows: the Broken Hill Mines drew 2,530 migrants from the areas, the BSAC employed 660; the African Lakes Company employed 360; the NCCEC employed 2,243 and other employing sectors in the territory shared 400 men. In all, thus a total of 6,243 able-bodied men from the two areas worked within the territory that year. These however, were employed in labour markets other than on the commercial farms of Petauke and Fort Jameson districts.

The total figure of able-bodied men engaged in wage labour outside the region were more than those who worked in local labour markets. In 1912 alone, roughly, 11,543 taxable males from Fort Jameson and Petauke areas worked for wages within and across the territory's borders. Out of a total of 30,000 taxable males in two areas in that year, about 18,000 taxable males did not take wage employment. It could be safely assumed that of the 18,000 or so, remaining, a few could have migrated to other labour markets of their choice such as the Katanga Mines and the Sugar Plantations of the Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The majority of the 18,000 men apparently remained in peasant production

for a variety of reasons which cannot be ascertained. For example, to some the low wages and poor conditions on the local farms might have been repulsive, while the idea to venture into trudging distances to the South to most men, was equally dreadful.

The deterioration of the living conditions in the Native reserves in the late 1920s and the persistent poor working conditions on the local farms increased the tempo of labour migration from the area. In 1934, for instance, about 15,600 out of a taxable male population of not less than 50,00 in the Eastern Province, were estimated to be a way at work in Southern Rhodesia for average periods of three to four years.²⁹ In the following year, the District Commissioner of Petauke district lamented that:

The stream of labour to Southern Rhodesia markets is steadily increasing and in large villages in the Senga Reserve, it is the exception to see more than half a dozen³⁰ able-bodied men.

It was estimated in 1937 that the population of the entire Eastern Province stood at 250,000. It was found that at any given time 50% of its able-bodied male population was working in the Southern African labour markets for various periods. In that year, Fort Jameson had 27,287 taxable men; and Petauke had 14,109. About 60% of the taxable males in Fort Jameson and 50% of those in Petauke had migrated out of the Territory.³¹

Migration as the chief mechanism of evading low wages and poor working conditions in the province, remained unabated in later years. The institution of the Federation of the Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953 in fact propped up migration in the Eastern

Province as the labour market was further broadened. Earlier in 1950, job seekers from Northern Rhodesia had already begun to migrate to Nyasaland for work. A glance at table 10 below confirms the change of the migration pattern.

TABLE 10 LABOUR AND POPULATION STATISTICS, 1950:

	North. Province:	East. Province:	Barotseland.
1. MALE: Taxable:	77,912	79,622	65,296
Exempt:	14,269	9,012	17,633
Sub-total	<u>92,181</u>	<u>88,634</u>	<u>82,929</u>
CHILDREN: Female:	93,683	96,373	96,693
Male:	77,994	69,878	47,113
FEMALE:	<u>74,536</u>	<u>67,341</u>	<u>41,125</u>
Over-all totals	<u>338,394</u>	<u>322,226</u>	<u>267,860</u>
Tax payers making livelihood at home as subsistence producers:	36,389	33,884	38,521
2. <u>AT WORK FOR WAGES:</u>			
a) Locally within the Prov.	10,721	14,224	7,306
b) Outside the Prov. but within country.	23,403	13,409	10,323
c) Southern Rho.	2,378	12,486	4,252
d) Nyasaland	108	574	-
e) Union of South Africa	476	4,726	4,584
f) Tanganyika	3,397	142	1
g) Congo	881	16	29
h) Elsewhere	159	161	253
Total	<u>41,523</u>	<u>45,738</u>	<u>26,748</u>

Source: Native Affairs Report, 1950, P. 109.

The three provinces were deemed the important areas in the territory from the migrant-labour point of view. A close examination of the

table reveals three things relevant to our area of study. Firstly, the Eastern Province was leading the other two provinces in terms of the number of its people at work for wages. A total of 45,738 people out of 88,634 taxable males from the Eastern Province were at work for wages. The number at work for wages was more than half the total number of taxable males for the province. The Northern Province, which ranked second in terms of its people at work for wages with 41,523, had also more than half the total number of taxable males who retained their labour power in the traditional economic activities. About 50,658 taxable males in the province were not in wage employment. Similarly, only 26,748 out of 82,929 total taxables in 1950 for Barotseland were in wage employment.

The second noticeable feature from the table is that there was a greater tendency in the Eastern Province job-seekers to work both outside the province and outside the country, than in the other two areas. For instance, 14,224 people were at work within the Eastern Province and 13,409 people from the province got jobs within the country. On the other hand, the Northern Province was leading in terms of its people preferring to work within the territory. For example, it had 23,403 that year who were working within the country against only 10,323 from Barotseland. The explanation to the greater tendency of the Eastern Province job seekers to engage in wage employment outside the territory can be seen partly in the repulsive wages and conditions in sectors such as the commercial farms in the region. Thirdly, the table above clearly illustrates the positive relationship between the proximity of an attractive labour market and the trend of migration. For the Eastern Province its adjacent

labour market, Southern Rhodesia, drew 12,486 from the area while 4,726 went to work in the Union of South Africa where wages were even higher. Only 16 men from the Province went to work in the Belgian Congo. This was most likely because of its distant geographical location from the Eastern Province. For the people in Barotseland it was near and easier to cross the Caprivi Strip into South Africa for work. About 4,584 went to South Africa while only 1 from Barotseland is recorded to have gone to Tanganyika. Similarly, the majority of people at work for wages from the Northern province went to work on the sisal plantations of Tanganyika which were close to the area. Only 476 people from the area were working in South Africa in that year.

The exodus of labour migrants from Fort Jameson and Petauke areas remained unabated through out the period of study. In 1960 for example, nearly 50% and 47% of the able-bodied people of the Fort Jameson and Petauke districts respectively, were working outside the province.³² In 1961 out of a total of 108,275 taxable males in the whole Eastern Province 65,711 were working for wages and 34,933 of that number were working outside the territory.³³ In the same year the Province had the highest number of people working for wages. The pattern and degree of migration from the area of study did not change until after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Southern Rhodesia in 1965. At that stage, the Zambia Government embarked on discouraging its people working in that country and South Africa.

It is now evident that potential workers in the region were so many that they could have served every employing sector. It

was the mass migration of potential workers from the region that caused the perennial 'artificial' shortage of labour on the farms in the province. We, argue therefore, that had wages and the conditions of work been attractive on the farms, labour migration from the region would not have assumed the high proportion it did. Labour migration thus, became a strategy to avoid low wages and poor conditions on the farms and other employing institutions in the province. Consequently, the high absence of able-bodied men from Fort Jameson and Petauke had adverse effects on both the commercial farms and the traditional economies of the area.

EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

The exodus of able-bodied men from Fort Jameson and Petauke areas to outside labour markets created an endemic shortage of labour for the commercial farms. This development meant that the farmers' output would not expand with the small available labour force. The absence of the able-bodied men in the area left in the villages the aged malefolk, females and children. These formed a 'class' of labour force which could not carry out heavier tasks because they were weak. Infact, the labourer who offered his services to the local commercial farms was encouraged to behave and appear as a target worker. He offered his services on the farms only if he had to purchase some particular item, or meet some social obligation which would not wholly be realized within his subsistence economy. For instance, one would work to obtain salt, a tablet of soap or a piece of cloth which would be required direly at specific times.³⁴ After obtaining the required item he would retract to his reserve .

It is also apparent that the farmers in the area had assumed a deliberate attitude not to proletarianize their labour force on the farms. Their failure to provide the necessary facilities to stabilize the labour force is good evidence. The contention here is that if the wages and working conditions on the farms had been raised to the level surpassing that of the village socio-economy, people would have been proletarianized and the 'target' worker would have been eradicated. Proletarianization of the workers, we hold, would have had the positive effect of facilitating the expansion of commercial farming and possibly, would have helped to uplift the traditional economic activities in the periphery. But, as it were, to the farmers in the area the provision of better social and economic conditions to their workers as a lure and measure to retain them, became a dead issue throughout the period of study.

The socio-economic consequences of labour migration on a local system depend ultimately, upon the kind of role the male or female members play in everyday life. In a survey of a number of villages in Nyasaland, Margaret Read found that there was no clear relationship between the standard of living in the villages and the proportion of men away, and that over all rates of labour migration for extended areas had even less meaning.³⁵ If the internal system of organization in a society depends very strongly on energetic men, then their withdrawal from the society causes adverse effects. Margaret Read's conclusions in her study in Nyasaland is not only ironical, but fallacious. The agricultural system in Nyasaland depended greatly on energetic men. The absence of the majority of these had great bearing on the productive capacity of the

traditional system. For instance, by 1902 it was estimated that between, 3,000 and 4,000 Nyasas were working in Southern Rhodesia yearly and that by 1904, the number had risen to about, 10,000.³⁶ On the other hand, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was permitted to recruit up to 10,000 yearly from 1903.³⁷ Most of the migrants came from Kasungu and Mzimba districts which were known as the 'Dead North'. In 1936 the colonial government in Nyasaland made an agreement with South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in which Nyasaland would become a 'conscious' exporter of people to work in those two countries.³⁸ From 1936 onwards mass emigrations and recruitment became a marked feature of the territory, and thus peasant agriculture could not be developed.

The high degree of labour migration from Fort Jameson and Petauke, as was the case in Nyasaland where man played a key role in economic activities, adversely affected the socio-economic activities of the area. Such adverse effects were not only limited to the two areas under study, but also encompassed many rural areas of Northern Rhodesia. Between 1931 and 1962, for instance, Northern Rhodesians employed in alien countries increased from 31,000 to 94,000.³⁹ This threefold increase represented a net loss to the country's economy of 21,000 workers in 1931 and 50,000 workers in 1962. This helps to confirm that effects of labour migration attendant in the areas of study were also experienced in other parts of the country where labour migration had reached considerable proportions.

Due to the majority of energetic men migrating to labour markets outside the Eastern Province, traditional agriculture degenerated. As pointed out in chapter one examining the division

of labour of the local people, men were prominent in all aspects of life. Since the operation of the socio-political and economic activities greatly depended on male labour, the adaptability of the rural community hinged on three variables: firstly, the adaptability of the community would hinge on the degree of control the community was able to exert over the timing and length of the migrant's absence; secondly, the quantity and frequency of incomes transferred from wage labour; and finally, the type and efficiency of existent co-operation in the community would help it adapt favourably to the absence of migrants.

In Fort Jameson and Petauke districts neither of the above variables worked so as not to disrupt the traditional socio-economic order. The Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga communities had no mechanism of controlling the timing and length of the migrants' absence. As such, many migrants left their areas at almost the same periods and stayed in labour markets for periods preferred by the individual employee and employer. In most cases they stayed away for average periods of three to five years. From the mid-1930s, some labour migrants from the area even began to migrate with their wives to labour centres in Southern Rhodesia and on the Copperbelt. Transfer of meaningful income from wage labour to the rural areas was not tenable. Despite the fact that wages were better on, say, Southern Rhodesia mines, than on the Fort Jameson farms, in real terms they were meagre. Very little was saved out of those wages to be of significant contribution to the traditional economy. The little money that was saved was mainly for tax and other family liabilities.

The kind of co-operative assistance that existed among the people who remained in the villages favoured certain individuals. The co-operate system which hinged on the provision of beer or other foods at the end of a task favoured those people with surplus foodstuffs. Consequently, only a few could call on such co-operation. Thus, labour migration reduced the productive capacity of the family units in the area. In fact, even some natural calamities in the region were attributed to the absence of the majority of able-bodied males. The famine of 1918-1919 in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas was said to have been aggravated by the absence of a great number of able men to help in agricultural operations.⁴⁰ Mtisi also harps the same point when he says:

The obvious cause of the food shortage and general distress, is the fact that so many men are away at work to earn their tax during the season that would normally be devoted to cultivating and harvesting.⁴¹

Labour migration in the area brought deterioration of village cohesion. In the absences of men huts, kraals, garden fences and other similar buildings fell into disrepair. Women, children and the old men could not provide the tough labour required for the construction of such building. Besides, women whose husbands were away had too many tasks to cope with as traditionally, masculine tasks came under them. Another effect of the absences of able-bodied men from the area relates to the role of a man as a decision maker and innovator. Generally, old men, women and children are conservative. They are not receptive to new ideas of change. Thus, the old folk, women and children who remained in villages were far

less responsive to suggestions for technological changes from extension services. The people viewed their main task as one of providing subsistence for the family rather than producing cash surplus. The absence of strong young men who were sometimes ready to accept innovations, made technological change in rural productivity in the province, difficult.

Labour migration had also adverse social effects on the continuation of traditional ways of life in the area. The exodus of people out of Fort Jameson and Petauke to places of paid employment led to social disruption and the tendency to create social insecurity and loosening of social sanctions. The absence of heads of households weakened tribal systems in that it led to the relaxation of discipline especially among youngsters. The elderly and disabled parents became insecure in that they were left to fend for themselves. Children were forsaken and grew up without proper traditional discipline and respect. Secondly, migrants deprived women of sexual relations. It should be noted that in the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga society motherhood was one of the highest fulfilments in a female's married life. The importance of marriage was judged by the number of children a couple bore. Thus, the long periods the migrants stayed away led to their wives becoming impatient of waiting to have babies. Sexual deprivation further led to general behavioral disorders in the area. In the absence of their husbands, women sustained their sexual starvation by being promiscuous. One woman is quoted as having said, "money is nothing. I want my husband back to give me children".⁴² This sentiment was

universally endorsed by other women found in a similar situation. This does suggest that there was high incidence of sexual deprivation among women in the region, which eventually resulted into high incidence of promiscuity.

The high occurrence of promiscuity in the area as a result of labour migration, is confirmed by the reported activities in a dance called CHIBE CHILYE ('Give it to eat' dance). The dance was started by the Dutch Reformed Church mission members in Fort Jameson in 1914. It was performed from evening to dawn. Unmarried women, wives of husbands who were away and unmarried men participated regularly. The theme of the dance was: "God will come Dear! and no one else can see what we have done here. There are no witnesses".⁴³ During the dance there was mixing of women and men apparently to seek sexual relations. As the name of dance speaks for itself, "give it to eat", it is very easy to guess what thing needed to be given something to eat. As a participant in the dance myself in the mid-1950s, I saw what kind of activities went on during this dance. A man and woman would dance holding each other very close and jerking their hips and sometimes they would cover themselves with a piece of cloth. If body temperatures were disturbed, the pair would slip away to a hidden place to cool themselves sexually and then go back to continue dancing. As the night of the dance wore, one could have sexual intercourse with as many as his virility could last.

Immorality seemed to have become rampant among the deserted women in the area. In 1922, Lane Poole, the District Commissioner

in Fort Jameson, went on a tour of villages and found that there were many unmarried adult girls and young widows. This state of affairs he concluded, led to a very lax degree of morality.⁴⁴ Prostitution also became widespread in the area in the late 1920s. By 1928, for instance, it was reported that some women were migrating to Southern Rhodesia or to the Copperbelt on their own. About 37 women from the area were said to be prostitutes in Southern Rhodesia in the same year, and many more were supposed to be doing the same elsewhere. Venereal diseases such as syphilis, unknown in the Ngoni and Chewa societies in the pre-colonial era, began to be common maladies.

Moral degeneration resulting from migrant labour was not the exclusive experience of Fort Jameson and Petauke. Other areas shared the malaise. For instance, a study of the Luvale ethnic group in the North-Western Province discovered in 1950 that 7% of divorce cases arose from the absence of a labour-migrant husband.⁴⁶ In Lundazi the Chipe Chilye dance had its replica in the name of Khonyo, while in the Chama area the version of the dance was called Kamphaza. Their effects were the same. Pregnancies among deserted women and unmarried girls became common. Eventually, divorces in the absences of husbands increased.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion let us reflect on the discussion in this chapter. We have examined the responses of the workers to the conditions of work in the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke in relation to the wages and conditions in the labour market elsewhere. Our contention is that desertion, retention of labour in their reserves and

migration to better employment centres became the prominent responses to poor conditions of work obtaining on the local farms. Further, we have examined the effects of each of the above responses with some greater detail on labour migration.

It has been argued in this chapter that labour migration as a response to unattractive farm work in the area had greater adverse effects on the socio-political structures on the people in the area. Our argument is that labour migration appeared as a retarding factor, an obstacle to change in traditional agriculture which was required as a prerequisite for the economic development of the whole province. Withdrawal of one major factor of production - labour - deprived traditional agriculture of possible growth which would have been the basis for agricultural development. But as it were, migrant labour became a kind of a low-level equilibrium trap; so long as it existed, the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga would neither become progressive farmers nor efficient employees in the external economy.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a fuller definition of the concept of the 'equilibrium of Poverty' see John Kenneth Galbraith, The Nature of Mass Poverty. (London: Penguin Books, 1979) Chapter 3.
2. Hellen, Rural Economic Development, P. 175.
3. Isaac Schapera, Migrant Labour, P. 150.
4. Ian Henderson, "The Growth of a Wage-earning labour force in Colonial Zambia".
A mimeograph on the Reserve Section of the UNZA-Library. (Sussex: University of Sussex, 1975) P. 5
5. Hobart D. Houghton, The South African Economy. (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) P. 238
6. Annual Colonial Report, N. Rhodesia, 1935. (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1936) P. 22.
7. H. Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts (New York: International Publishers, 1967) P. 141
8. NAZ, BS3/230, Magistrate, East Luangwa to the Secretary in Livingstone, 30th March 1917.
9. Van Onselen, Chibaro, P. 220
10. Van Onselen, Chibaro, P. 222.
11. Van Onselen, Chibaro, P. 222
12. Van Der Horst, Native Labour, P. 132
13. Van Der Horst, Native Labour, P. 132
14. NAZ, BS3/230, Secretary Livingstone to Magistrate East Luangwa, 20th April 1917.
15. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1930 - (Livingstone: Government Printer, 1931) P. 22.
16. Orde-Browne, The African Labourer, P. 160
17. Orde-Browne, The African Labourer, P. 159
18. Take a look at 'Ordinance No. 56, 1929' of Northern Rhodesia, and 'Master and Servants' Ordinance No. 5 of 1901 amended No. 8 of 1929', of Southern Rhodesia. in Orde-Browne, The African Labourer, 159 and 161

19. African Affairs Report, 1947.
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1948) P. 56.
20. African Affairs Report, 1950
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1951) P. 71
21. Native Affairs Department Report, 1938
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1939) P. 8.
22. African Affairs Report, 1950
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1951) P. 71
23. Margaret Read, "Migrant Labour in Africa and its effects on Tribal Life". in International Labour Review
(Volume XLV, No. 6. 1942) PP. 605 - 631.
24. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1929.
(Livingstone: Government Printer, 1930) P. 17.
25. P.H. Gulliver, Labour Migration in a Rural Economy.
East African Labour Studies. No. 6.
(Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research, 1955) P. 7.
26. Gulliver, Labour Migration, P. 126
27. African Affairs Report, 1952
(Lusaka: Govt. Printer, 1953) P. 68
28. NAZ, KDG5/1 North-Eastern Province District Notebooks, PP. 263 and 271.
29. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1935.
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1936) P. 28.
30. Annual Report, Department of Native Affairs, 1936.
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1937) P. 75
31. Pim Report, P. 36
32. African Affairs Report, 1960, P. 51
33. African Affairs Report, 1961
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1962) P. 23.
34. Roberts, A History of Zambia, 178
35. Read, "Migrant Labour", 622.
36. Read, "Migrant Labour", 606
37. B.S. Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy, Land and Labour in Nyasaland 1890-1914". in
B Pachai (ed.), The Early History of Malawi.
(London: Longman, 1972) P. 397.

38. Leroy Vail, " Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment: The Nyasaland Case". in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds.), The Roots of Rural Poverty P. 389.
39. Helmuth Heisler,, Urbanization and the Government of Migration: The Inter - Relation of Urban and Rural Life in Zambia.
(London: C. Hurst & Company, 1974) P. 55.
40. Henderson, "The Growth of a Wage", 6
41. Mtisi, "Rural Misery", 45.
42. Richard Gray, The Two Nation: Aspects of Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
(London: Oxford University Press, 1960) P. 124.
43. Mtisi, "Rural Misery", 43.
44. Gray, The two Nations P. 124
45. Gray, The two Nations, 125
46. Heisler, Urbanization, 75.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The development of commercial farming in colonial Fort Jameson and Petauke, let alone the whole territory, was heavily dependent on the availability of labour. However, the availability of labour was not an end in itself. For the expansion of commercial farming in the area, it behoved the commercial farmers to make their farms attractive to potential wage earners. We set out to do two things in this chapter. Firstly, we pull together the major arguments in the previous chapters. Secondly, we examine the contradictions between low wages and poor conditions of work on the farms in the region on one hand, and the underdevelopment of both commercial and peasant farming on the other.

In examining the social and economic conditions of farm labour in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas, we arrived at several conclusions. Firstly, the study holds that the commencement of settler agriculture, which required hired labour, accelerated land alienation which was in the initial stages instigated by the hunt for rich minerals. The alienation of large parts of fertile land to white settlers and the creation of 'Native reserves' for the local people in barren areas, dislocated the traditional economy in two ways. In the first instance, to the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga people, the loss of fertile land meant that their economic production was undercut as land was their prime factor of production. Secondly, the creation of the native reserves in infertile and mountainous areas, ultimately rendered the

reserves 'labour reservoirs' to feed labour-hungry institutions like the commercial farms. Our argument goes further, that the inhabitants of the native reserves were made to depend almost entirely on the sale of their labour power in order to meet the increasing economic needs introduced by the penetration of capitalism. In the process of their dependence on the modern sector through the sale of labour power, traditional labour organization and utilization was dislocated. This was because the major element of traditional labour, the adult male, was nearly all the time absent from the family labour unit. The dislocation of the traditional labour unit in the colonial period further undermined the traditional economy of the area.

Secondly, we have argued that several deliberate measures were taken by the colonial Administration to mobilize labour for the commercial farms in the region. In addition to land alienation, the manipulation of tax, the exclusion of the peasant from the market and the direct official recruitment of labour, all formed deliberate official measures to create ready labour for the settler farms which were meant to spearhead agricultural development in the territory¹ While these measures succeeded in creating labour reservoirs in Fort Jameson and Petauke, the reservoirs did not adequately meet the labour requirements for the farms in the region. The labour from the area migrated elsewhere for wage employment. The unpopularity of farm work in the region emanated from low wages and poor working conditions obtaining on the commercial farms. As it becomes evident in chapter three, the attitude of the commercial farmer which left the farm employee to provide his own accommodation

and medical facilities, coupled with low wages and poor food rations, forced the potential worker to migrate to labour markets with attractive remunerations. Throughout the period of study wages and conditions of service on the farms of Fort Jameson and Petauke remained uncompetitive with other labour markets in Southern Africa and hence the perpetual problem of labour shortage.

Despite the fact that the farmers in the two areas suffered from perennial labour shortage, they did virtually nothing to improve working conditions, thereby making the conditions of service competitive with those in other labour markets. Similarly, inspite of the fact that colonial administrators identified the cause of the perpetual shortage of labour on the farms to be "low rates of pay; too prevalent unsatisfactory housing conditions and lack of medical care"², they did almost nothing to alleviate the problem. It appears as if the state had hoped that the farmers would feel the pinch to the bone and be forced to improve working conditions on their own. But alas, it did not turn out that way. In the light of the farmer's indifference to their workers' plight, the workers and potential workers devised their own escape-mechanisms from the unsatisfactory conditions of service. Among the 'responses' to the poor conditions of work obtaining on the farms in the area were desertions, retention of labour in the reserves and migration to better employment centres. It has been argued in this dissertation that labour migration had great effects on the socio-economic structures of the people in Fort Jameson and Petauke districts.

In the first place, the self-sufficient economy of the Ngoni,

Chewa and Nsenga was retarded as a result of labour migration. As we have learnt in chapter one, production in the indigenous economy was primarily geared to subsistence with a little surplus for barter and as security in unfavourable seasons. There were no instances where major dislocations were done to the organization of labour. Disproportionate withdrawal of the labour force from the family labour units was not characteristic of the pre-colonial economy of the people in the region of study. It was the advent of the colonial political-economy with the introduction of commercial farming that disorganized the fibre of the traditional labour unit. The dependence of commercial farming on land alienation and hired African labour reduced to a great deal the strength of the labour units. However, it was not until the second 'native reserves' were demarcated in the late 1920s that the majority of Africans were practically moved from fertile lands. The earlier land alienation by the North Charterland Exploration Company in the area, and the creation of the first 'Native Reserves' in Fort Jameson in 1906 did not separate the people from their means of production. This was because, as observed in chapter one, there was no legal instrument to empower the authorities to coerce the Ngoni into the reserves. Thus, an express contradiction arose from the start between the interests of the commercial farmers and those of peasant production. While the commercial farms greatly needed African labour, especially after the introduction of tobacco farming, the local people retained their labour in peasant production. Complaints by farmers until the mid-1920s bear convincing evidence on this contradictory situation. For instance, in 1910 the farmer's Association in the region lamented:

The weather still continues very favourably for both cotton and tobacco; our difficulty is labour... At Msekera we have not planted the acreage in tobacco we hoped to have done, simply because we could not get the labour, and what we have, mostly declined to turn out when it was raining...

By 1917, it was observed that local labour in Fort Jameson and Petauke still continued to remain on their land where they grew enough produce to be able to convert their surplus into cash.⁴ The Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga retained their labour power in peasant production because economic rewards therein were found to be better than from the sale of their labour power. It was not, therefore, as has been argued for Rhodesia, that the traditional society's horizons were narrow and hence its response to "unfamiliar" opportunities for increasing their incomes were delayed.⁵ This explanation only serves the purpose of unjustifiably dismissing the capability of peasant production to cope with expanding needs of its members in its normal operation.

In Fort Jameson and Petauke, peasant production was practically undercut from the late 1920s when more 'native' reserves were demarcated and local people forced to move into them. As observed in the previous chapter, the native reserves had no economic infrastructure of significance in terms of dams, wells and boreholes. Agricultural inputs such as ploughs, fertilizers and better roads linking possibly markets were not provided. Almost all the reserves suffered from overcrowding, making land a scarce factor of production. Hence, peasant surplus production was untenable. Furthermore, general health and educational facilities were lacking in the native reserves. The social and economic conditions in the native reserves thus turned

the reserves into "labour reservoirs".

Naturally, one would have thought that with the labour reservoirs in the vicinity of the commercial farms and other employing institutions in the area, these employing institutions would have been assured of adequate supply of labour throughout. This was not however the case. The farmers failed to comply with an economic imperative which advises that in order to attract potential labour in a competitive labour market,

.... the employer in the money economy would be obliged to offer a real wage which would offset the loss in the real income of the family in indigenous agriculture, and to provide a further increment to the real wage sufficient to induce the African worker to make this break with his accustomed way of life.

Thus, the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga people in Fort Jameson and Petauke became migrant labourers. The consequence of the high incidence of labour migration from the Eastern Province, as has been indicated in chapter four, contributed to the underdevelopment of the area. As Barber has observed:

the indigenous economy might reshape the form of the expansion process through its role as a supplier of labour to the money economy. In the early stages of growth, this influence would be slight but, with continued expansion of the money economy, it could become important. This stage would be reached when the supply of labour from the indigenous economy was no longer perfectly elastic: i.e. the situation which has been described as quasi-full employment. At this point - if the indigenous economy could still function along its traditional lines - a further withdrawal of male labour from its ranks could not be accomplished without a reduction in agricultural output?

It is true for the Fort Jameson and Petauke areas that the absence of the majority of able-bodied males reduced the production capacity of the traditional economy and hampered some schemes aimed at resuscitating peasant surplus production. For instance, the failure of the Improved Farming Techniques and Peasant Farming schemes introduced in 1945 is attributed largely to the absence of the able-bodied men in the area.⁸ Interested members of the schemes were expected to raise their own capital or hire other people's modern agricultural equipment such as ploughs and oxen at £1 per day.⁹ Raising their own capital proved hard to many an African in the area. It was also difficult to join the schemes because most migrants failed to bring home meaningful capital from job sojourns. The general socio-economic picture of Fort Jameson and Petauke areas, let alone the whole Province, was thus, rural stagnation.

In the second instance, migration of able-bodied men deprived settler agriculture of possible expansion. As observed earlier, throughout the colonial period the agricultural policy of the Northern Rhodesia Government was based on the principle that commercial farming should be the prerogative of the European settlers. Alienation of large tracks of fertile land for European farming is but one piece of good evidence of the preferential treatment accorded to European farmers. Fort Jameson and Petauke were the first areas to experience land alienation where about 10,000 square miles of land became the property of the North Charterland Exploration Company. Out of that alienated land many acres were leased or sold to both individual and institutional farmers. However, alienation of large stretches of land for

European farming alone was not enough to expand, and later, develop agriculture in the country. Other factors of production should have been given equal attention if commercial agriculture were to expand. Labour, for instance, was the most single limiting factor of commercial farming in Fort Jameson and Petauke areas in the period 1898 to 1964. It was the cry of practically all farmers in the region that the sporadic supply and poor quality of farm labour hampered their production. It was evident to the Government that labour was not forthcoming to the farms because it migrated to better-paying labour markets. Nonetheless, the Government did nothing beyond the earlier measures to help attract the required labour. We argue here that the scarcity of labour to the farms was one of the major hinderances to the expansion of commercial farming in the area. Labour shortage had the effect of discouraging potential settler farmers to take up farming. This situation is illustrated by the fact that although large portions of land were alienated for potential European farmers, only a small proportion was actually put to use. For instance, it was discovered that by 1940, out of a total of 350,000 acres of land alienated for European farming, only 270,000 acres were put to agricultural use. The rest lay to waste mainly due to labour shortage problem which repulsed potential farmers.¹¹ However, this development was ignored by the settlers who overtly appealed to the government in the province to encourage more European settlers into the area by alienating more land while there were already "yawning" lands.¹²

Our conclusion is that with large fertile stretches of land made available for commercial farming, the economic and technical assistance accorded to settler farmers by the Government and the

United Tobacco Company, commercial agricultural in the area would have expanded had adequate local labour been tapped. The lack of adequate labour to the farms thus, doomed commercial agriculture in the region. What we observe in the area is a vicious circle: low wages and poor conditions creating shortage of labour; the short supply of labour leading to low production, and eventually, discouraging potential farmers to take up farming. The expected level of expansion of commercial agriculture in the region could not thus be attained in the period 1898 to 1964.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gann, A History of Northern Rhodesia, P. 135.
2. Native Affairs Report, 1934.
(Lusaka: Government Printer, 1935) P. 73.
3. NAZ, KOG1/7, East Luangwa Farmers' Association to the Manager, North Charterland Exploration Company, 14th February, 1914.
4. See Chapter two where the point is fully explained.
5. Barber, The Economy, P. 48
6. Barber, The Economy, P. 186
7. Barber, The Economy, P. 192
8. Kay, Changing Patterns, P. 33
9. Kay, Changing Patterns, P. 40
10. Troup, Troup Report, P. 24
11. Eccles Report, P. 9
12. The Eccles Report, P. 6

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