4

IMVO ZABANTSUNDU (NATIVE OPINION)

to their parents and guardians that they do not enjoy the advantages now in the Lovedale classes that the European lads enjoy. This difference has been made quite recently. They cannot understand why the differ­ence is made. Among students of the same class, who have reached the same standard in examinations by

their teachers and Government In­spectors of Schools, a difference is made. The Europeans are given other subjects to study, but Natives are prohibited, even when they ex­press a desire to study those sub­jects. These are classical studies. The parents know nothing of Latin or Greek, but would like to be informed as to why the difference is made. The *Express* has par­tially told us the reason for this. It does not arise from unwillingness to see Natives enjoying the same ad­vantages as the white race, but in the Native mind classics produce positive evil! We think the *Ex­press* should go further and tell us in what way classics produce positive evil among Natives in particular, and what good they have produced among European students at Love­dale, or whether they have produced any good at all. We have no desire to turn the statements in the *Chris­tian Express* to other and unexpected uses as some previous utterances are said to have been turned.

In explaining away some alleged misconception of the famous “ Ex­periment ” pamphlet, the *Express* says: “ The only confession of “ failure there admitted was that a “ classical education for Natives at “present has been a failure—cer- “ tainly for the mass of the Native “ people in their present state.” Now some people who know very little of the Natives in the Eastern Province of South Africa may, from the above statement, think that the mass of the Native people is being taught. This is not the case. The mass of our people have no desire for education, and as a people they can neither read nor write; the mass then has nothing to do with education, and much less has it a desire for classical education. Fur­ther, the majority of those Natives who receive instruction do not receive classical education, and have no desire for such studies. Their edu­cation begins and ends at Mission schools, and few ever reach the In­stitutions. No classics are taught in Mission schools, and so far as we know there has not been any desire expressed by pupils to be introduced to such studies. What is more, even in the case of those who have reached Lovedale and have been educated there during the period when such studies were free to Natives as well as to Europeans, provided they reached a certain standard—the majority of the Native lads have never cared for classics. It was generally a small minority that expressed such a desire.

“ Classical education for Natives “ at present has been a failure.” Now, to all Natives who have received a classical education this is a very serious statement: and es­pecially to those who have received that education at Lovedale. We think the publication of numbers would clear the mist. It would satisfy the educated native young men’s parents, and those who are at

present pursuing their studies, if the Lovedale organ would produce, (1) a list of Native young men edu­cated at Lovedale, who had a classical course while there, but who are now a disgrace to Lovedale and a failure as men because of classics. We think it is possible to give man for man of those who were educated at

Lovedale without classics, but who have become a disgrace and failure as men. (2) A list of those who have been educated at Lovedale and have never reached classical studies while there, who are now a credit to the Institution and a success in the country. We think it possible to produce man for man, if not two names to every name, of those who had classics while at Lovedale and now are a credit to the Institution and a success in the country.

It is not fair to the Native student to exclude him from subjects that are required and are made compul­sory by the Cape University. It practically prevents him competing in the Cape University examinations. While we do not charge the Love­dale organ with prejudice against colour, we fail to see why the Native student only is shut out from sub­jects required by the public examin­ing bodies.

SMALL-POX.

THE heroic efforts of the local Board of Health to put down small-pox among the Natives de­serve special mention. We trust our people will recognise them and, above all, do all in their power to assist the Board in stamping out the disease. If, however, half of what was written in last Thursday’s *Cape Mercury* by Mr. Malcomess is true —that Mbovane, “ ever since the small-pox broke out in his loca- " tion, has used his utmost energy “ and his authority as headman to “ thwart the efforts of the Board of “ Health and the Medical Officer,” that “ his location offered armed “ resistance to Dr. Clark and his “ staff,” and that the doctor “ dis- “ tinctly traces the spread of this “ fell epidemic, the widespread “ misery it causes to the Kafirs, and “ the enormous expense the same “ causes to the rate-payers,” to Mbovane Mabandhla—if half of this, we say, is true, then we are face to face with a strange pheno­menon. And why this heart-rend­ing story has been delayed publi­cation until this, the eleventh hour, only serves to complicate the situa­tion. This is, of course, one side of the case. Mabandhla’s version is quite the reverse of this, and it places him in the position of one more sinned against than sinning. He bitterly complains that when the disease broke out his efforts at isolating affected individuals were not supported, and that he had been actually thwarted. He indignantly denies that the spread of the dis­ease and the inevitable expense of putting it out is due to him, and states that he has actively assisted and is assisting now, by car­rying out the orders of the Board. It is a pity that the public are compelled to arrive at conclu­sions upon one-sided statements. But fair-minded men will suspend their judgments until these facts are established. When we heard Mbovane’s story we were simply

astonished at the perversity of the Government, and it must be remem­bered that Government was not very willing to assist at the begin­ning: as reasonable men we felt

that injustice might be done to Government in running a muck at it on the strength of Mabandla’s independent statement, and surely enough the other side is presented in Mr. Malcomess’ letter. The best course to adopt now is to have an inquiry instituted which would give the public ascertained facts. We have been too much at the mercy of hearsay evidence and *ex parte* statements on this matter. Let the authorities sift the matter to the bottom, so that the public indignation may find an outlet.

We are sorry to hear that there are still cases in locations reported to officials which have not been re­moved to the lazarettos. This is the case at Keiskama Hoek. No doubt when these are discovered by indirect means they will be put down to Natives harbouring the sick. We are assured that not many natives are anxious to hide their sick, as they have a wholesome dread for the disease.

So far the sickness is among the Natives of the red-clay persuasion, and it was recorded the other day that the unvaccinated suffered from it. This shows that cleanliness alone can do a great deal in saving life ; and we advise all our people to keep their dwellings and their persons scrupulously clean. The constant moving about of people from areas affected is to be depre­cated. Perhaps it is in the power of the authorities to stop this.

MISREPRESENTATIONS. THE side issues that have been raised in connection with Mbovane Mabandhla’s deposition have thrown us into a mood of re­flection. First we have the letter of Mr. Malcomess on Mabandhla’s attitude on the small-pox question which we have dealt with elsewhere ; then there is Mr. De Wet’s statement that he has been dismissed because “ he bad attended meetings, the object “ of which was to set the people “ against the hut tax.” It has been well said that “ if Mabandhla incited “ people not to pay their taxes he de- “ served dismissal.” We are in a position to state that this, as are all the charges against this unfortunate chief, is nothing more nor less than a fabri­cation, and an inquiry would prove it. All the facts in our possession on this subject lead us to the conclusion that Mr. De Wet ought either to re-instate Mabandhla or institute the fullest possible inquiry without delay. We gladly testify to ’the moderation and ability with which Mr. De Wet has presided over the Native Department, and we are only surprised that it has only come out in the present case that he has not shown the characteristics of fairness and justice that have hitherto marked his administration. Of course he will plead that he has proceeded upon the official representa­tions from the spot. As these repre­sentations, however, are proving un­reliable whenever they come in con­tact with independent testimony, it becomes a question whether Govern­ment is not doing itself and the Natives incalculable injury in placing in positions such as Middle Drift, in- volving delicate questions of diplo­macy, inexperienced young officials dressed in little brief authority. We are not at all surprised that under these circumstances Mr. De Wet has been placed in the ridiculous and un­tenable position of having to base his decisions on sensational narratives based on unsifted evidence. Elsewhere

we publish matter taken from various papers on Mabandhla’s case, and call special attention to ’’the various alle- gations laid at the Chief’s door which are now being set up as pretexts in the place of the one set forth in the letter of dismissal that he “ has been “ holding a meeting for the purpose of “ initiating an agitation for the trans- “ fer of the Natives to the control of “the Imperial Government.” Resting however upon Mr. De Wet’s sense of justice we still hope Mabandhla will yet meet with his proper desert, viz., to be restored to his position.

MABANDLA’S CASE.

*(Cape Argus)*

THE FIRM HAND.

Whatever opinions colonists may hold upon what we comprehensively term the native question, all are agreed that no Government is deserving of public con­fidence that goes out of its way to sow the seeds of possible trouble. There may be more of expediency than principle in the conclusion ; but if there is one point of common agreement it is, after our former unhappy experiences, that we should let well alone; that we should meet our troubles with a united front if they must come upon us, but that we should no more make them for ourselves. When Mr. Upington assumed office we could not restrain our anxiety lest some renew­ed policy of adventure should be brew­ing; our tears being based upon Mr. Upington's very indiscreet announcement that a “ firm hand ” was to be kept over the natives. It was well that the Govern­ment should keep a firm hand over both black and white men, but it was unwise to say anything about it beforehand. We refrained from saying much on the sub­ject at the time, because of the foolish tendency of some opponents to depict all criticism on native policy as directed to “stirring up the natives,” and thus per­chance bringing about the very evil deprecated. Moreover, we thought the utterance was probably only a little bom­bast for the new gallery, not to be follow­ed by anything calling for serious com­ment. We are happy to say that under the moderate administration of Mr. De Wet there has been no cause for hostile criticism as to native policy, and in the interests of the colony, it has been a source of profound satisfaction to us that it has not hitherto been necessary to raise any agitation upon native questions, which all sensible men would gladly see sleep for a time.

It is therefore greatly to be regretted that an unexpectedly good, because un­eventful, record of native administration should be broken by an occurrence which we can only regard as most unfortunate from the standpoint of public policy. Perhaps we ought to place its gross hard­ship and injustice first. A short time since some natives in the neighbourhood of Middle Drift met, as was reported in several of the colonial papers, for the very loyal and laudable object of forming a branch of the Empire League. We should have thought the day was far dis­tant when a meeting of natives, to declare their loyalty to the Queen, and their desire for the continuance of British supremacy in this country, could give offence to gentlemen who are fond of describing themselves as, and rightly so, the “Queen’s” Ministers in South Africa; but so it is. The Government cannot very well imprison the whole of the natives for their perverse preference for Empire League, but such petty revenge as is open to it we regret to see it taking. Incidentally the question of the transfer­ence of the Transkeian territories to the Imperial Government was brought up at the meeting ; and we do not know that it should have occurred to anybody to walk out on that account; but the mere intro­duction of the subject was productive of very disagreeable consequences to at least one native present, and the sword is hanging over some others, and may yet fall. One of the men present was Mbovani Mabandla, who is a headman in receipt of Government pay, and he has been peremptorily dismissed from his office without so much as being asked for an explanation, the charge being that he “ has been holding a meeting for the pur­pose of initiating an agitation for the transfer of the natives to the control of the Imperial Government.” In the com­munication in which this decision is con­veyed is the ominous passage: “ Mr. Secretary De Wet would also be glad to hear the names of the other headmen who took part in the meeting and what attitude they assumed.”

A more silly and mischievous step we have never heard of. Mabandla is not very likely to be silent over his wrongs, and it will be understood by the natives far and wide that to have anything to do with the Empire League for the purpose of ranging themselves on the side of Im­perial influence in this country is to bring down on their heads the wrath, and, if possible, the vengeance, of the Govern­ment. The Empire League is said to want work to do. It will not be likely to want for work while cases o f this kind can occur. What Ministry in their senses would not have viewed with complacency the establishment of branches of the League from one end of Kafirland to the other? The Bondsmen will be exultant at this touch of the firm hand, but there are even Bondsmen who look back with vexation on our troubles of four or five years ago, and, whatever their theories, would only be thankful to know that the natives were being left without interfer­ence. The general bearings of the case are of more importance than the indivi­dual wrong done to Mabandla, but we may say that he is not a mere nominee of the Government, being a chief by birth, and, whatever the Government may do, a man of great influence amongst his people—an influence which will not be diminished by his dimissal on the unfor­tunate pretext selected. This is not the first occasion upon which the Government has applied the strict regulations of the higher branches of the Service to persons who are cut off from its privileges. We will not anticipate the consequence that may follow from this arbitrary act; but the Government may be assured that no

act of the kind has ever been committed without bearing fruit after its kind some day or another.

DISMISSAL OF A HEADMAN.

With reference to an article headed “ the Firm Hand,” which appeared in yesterday morning’s *Argus,* we have the personal assurance of Mr. De Wet that in ordering the dismissal of the headman Mabandla he had no knowledge whatever of any connection between the reported proceed­ings of Mabandla and the Empire League ; nor was the name of the League mentioned in any way in the official representations made to him. That assurance we accept implicitly, as all our readers will who know anything of the present Secretary for Native Affairs; but there remain some features of the case which call for the fullest and most impartial inquiry possi­ble ; for every case of the kind becomes an. example, to be well remembered, of how Government deals with natives. We are- J informed that one of the alleged grounds' of the dismissal of this headman was that he attended meetings, the object of which was to set the people against the payment of hut-tax. If Mabandla incited people not to pay their taxes, he deserved dis­missal ; but we should like to know what proof there is in official quarters of Mabandla having agitated against the pay­ment of hut-tax. The natives are in such a wretched condition that starvation would only too readily account for the present falling off. Has Mabandla been allowed any opportunity of making explanations upon the subject? There is not a word about hut-tax in the letter from the Native Affairs Office ordering his dismissal, and it was strictly upon that letter, coupled with the fact that meetings were being held amongst the natives, with a view to affiliating themselves to the Empire League, that our remarks were founded. We have reason for believing that some good might be done if we could get behind this affair, and as certain what official re­presentations it was, and whose, upon which Mr. De Wet proceeded; and what foundation such representations have in fact.

*{East London Dispatch.)*

The Government is not going to tolerate native agitators; there is no room for them. The Bond is quite enough for the Government in that way. Hence the Ministry has decided to dismiss Mbovane Mabandla from the Chieftainship of the Amabele tribes living on the banks of the Tyume. *Native Opinion* intimates that the head and front of this man’s offence is, his initiating an agitation for the trans­fer of the natives to the Imperial Govern­ment and his actively identifying himself with the current movement of expressing loyalty to the Queen ! *Opinion* adds that to the native mind this is about the most sensational news that has been published for some time; and we are not surprised to hear it.

*{Het Volksblad.)*

On Tuesday last the *Cape Argus* told the story of Mabandla, a native headman, who, having taken part in a meeting at Middledrift for the establishment of a branch of the Empire League, at which meeting “incidentally the question of the transference of the Transkei to the Impe­rial Government was brought up,” was dismissed from his office by the Ministry on a charge of having held a meeting “ lor the purpose of initiating an agitation for the transfer of the natives to the control of' the Imperial Government.” The Secre­tary for Native Affairs, Mr. de Wet, verv properly seems at once to have explained matters to our contemporary. The Secretary denies that Mabandla’s share in the attempt to establish a branch of the Empire League had anything to do with his dismissal. But Mabandia was thus punished because he had attempted to “ set the people against the payment of the hut tax.” Like the *Argus,* we accept the word of the Native Secretary, and if Mabandla did really instigate the people to rebellion, he richly deserved dismissal and even more severe punishment But what we strongly object to is that the same punishment is not inflicted upon all Mabandla was punished, and very pro­perly, but it is not right that when natives are thus made to suffer for their disloyalty Mr. D. F. du Toit, of the Paarl, is allowed not only to escape scotfree, but is even re­warded, though it is perfectly well-known to the Ministry that he is guilty of the same offence. We have repeatedly re­ferred to the fact that Mr. D. F. du Toit of the *Patriot,* is the publisher of the “ Almanak voor Regte Afrikanders,” in which the “regte Afrikaanders” are in­structed to pray every Saturday for “ their own flag.” There is no escaping from the conclusion that the man who gives this advice is instigating colonists to rebellion. ’ The Ministry knows that colonists are thus instigated against her Majesty’s Gov­ernment and flag, but Mr. du Toit is not prosecuted for sedition, but his paper is supported by the Ministry, and favoured with Government advertisements. Pun­ishing Mabandla and rewarding Mr. du Toit is injustice. The latter’s sedition mongering has been conclusively proved, and the position he occupies renders him more guilty than the ignorant native. But we have a Ministry which simply dares not prosecute a prominent Bonds­man.

Our contemporary will observe from remarks appearing in another portion of this paper that there is no foundation whatsoever to the charge represented by Mr. De Wet as having led to the dismissal of Mabandla, and for the credit of the colony we trust the matter will not end with this explanation.—Ed. *Native Opin­ion.*

“No, said Fogg, “this is not an old master. It is the work of a house painter I never buy old masters ; they are too com “ mon, you know. I want something unique.”

“ Do you happen to have about you ” said a poor fellow who was always in an impecunious

condition, to an Israelite, “a bit of money you don’t know what to do with ? The rich man felt in the depths of his capacious pockets, and at last, with a sigh, as generosity cost him a pang, drew hence a shilling, and presented it to the eoSar- The latter took it eagerlv, but his joy soon gave way to sorrow. “Why,” he said, as he rang it on the ground, “ the thing is counterfeit.” “True,” was the reply, “ and that is the only reason why I don’t know what to do with it.”