

Other Examples, successful and unsuccessful.

Well, there have been other excellent settlements. There were some, I remember, which the British Government sent out itself in 1856 after the Crimean War. They were sent out, some of the German Legion, and some of the English as well. They settled down round about East London, and later the Cape Government settled others in the Cape flats, which were absolute sandy wastes; they have converted that area into a blooming market garden, which supplies Cape Town with produce, and are doing remarkably well. Other settlements in other parts of South Africa have done well too. Unfortunately, some of them have been hopeless failures, and one's experience evidently does not, even at this day, enable one to say this is going to be a success, or it is not going to be a success.

No Room for Unskilled Labour in South Africa.

Well, now, at your last Conference South African representatives told you that South Africa could not do as much in this direction as the other Dominions because of our limited field for white labour, and in that connection you must always bear that practically controlling factor in mind. The ordinary unskilled labour of South Africa is done by the Native in the main. The ordinary unskilled labourer of our country is the black man, and therefore it is quite impossible for us to negotiate the migration into South Africa of the ordinary unskilled labourer that you have in this country. It would be simply sending him to an already overstocked market, and he would probably be in a hopeless position. He must find his way there himself as an individual, and it will depend upon himself and circumstances, which I need not go into in detail now, as to whether he would succeed or whether he would not.

We have got to confine ourselves almost entirely to what you may call land-settlement. The settlers for whom you make schemes to come from here to South Africa must be settlers who are going to settle on our land, and therefore must be prepared to become agriculturists. Well, now, I think General Smuts, at the meeting in 1921, told you of these limitations and our inherent difficulties. You know what our population percentage is there. We have 1,500,000 Europeans and 5,500,000 Natives. You can see what our position is, and wherever you go in South Africa—whether you go to the docks, whether you go to the mines, whether you go to the railways, wherever you go and wherever there is work to be done of the ordinary unskilled character (and, indeed, sometimes of a considerably skilled character)—the bulk of that work is done by the Natives of the country. They do it extraordinarily well. They are excellent workmen, and their labour is comparatively cheap. So we have to confine ourselves to the other aspect; and what I want to say this afternoon is this: that on a more recent review and more detailed examination of our situation in South Africa, I am happy to be able to say that we hope now to do a great deal more than we felt we were able to do in 1921, and you may rely on our assistance, our co-operation, and our entire sympathy in the whole of this work.

Need for Agricultural Settlers with a Little Capital.

You will not expect me to go into details about that now as to what we can do. To some extent it depends upon the maturing of some of our larger irrigation schemes, where there may be a very large amount of land probably not taken up by our own people and which may be available, we hope, for settling people such as you have in mind. I would just like to say this: that, with regard to our terms, a good deal of trouble, I believe, has arisen and a good deal of criticism directed against South Africa, because it is said that before a man can come to our country he must have from £1,500 to £2,000 capital. They say that a man who has got that might as well remain in his own country. There is some sense in that, on the surface. But what I have just told you is that we want people to settle on the land.

Recently we have not done so badly for a comparatively small country like our own in that way. A good many people have come into South Africa, and the right class, but we must have people with some little means at all events, so that their settlement on the land can be something of a success. But with regard to this limit also, this limitation upon the entry of agricultural settlers, we see our way to diminishing that, and very largely indeed to reducing any conditions of that sort which have to be imposed and which, as a matter of fact, are imposed really in the interests of the settler himself, more than for any other purpose. The terms we offer, I think, will compare favourably when the man once is there and is in a position to be assisted. Our terms compare favourably with the terms given by any of the other Dominions. I think I can say that quite fairly.

Terms offered to Land Settlers.

Under our Land Settlement Act, we advance up to four-fifths—if I am not mistaken—of any amount required by the settler for purchasing land up to £1,600, and we also advance in a similar way up to £500 for stock and implements which he may require. Our difficulties hitherto have lain more rather in the indefiniteness of our provisions with regard to the actual obtaining of the land, but in this way and in others that I have mentioned we see our way to taking what I hope will be a material step, in advance, in the absorption of a larger number of settlers whom we think we shall be able to provide for, in addition to looking after those in our own country, who naturally have the first call upon our attention.

Procedure.

As to the details, I suggest that those should be discussed, as far as we are concerned, by a Committee consisting of somebody from our side and some members of your own Government, who can go into that matter carefully and settle it.

Mr. Innes: I do not think I can say anything useful in this discussion, because the whole subject is one which bears no relation, as I think the Conference will realize, to the state of affairs which obtains in India.