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## Land Policy in Southern Africa During the Nineteenth Century

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The formulation and implementation of land policy in the nineteenth century were vital parts of the colonization movement which affected large areas of the world; but there has been only an occasional historical interest in the agricultural attractions of the lands receiving the migrants. The importance of land policies in the receiving countries was well recognized at the time of settlement, however, and this aspect of colonization has been the focus of increasing attention in recent years.

In the last sixty years of the nineteenth century there was a considerable demand for settlers in the various 'New Lands' of the world. To a large extent the governments of the countries and colonies involved competed with one another for suitable colonists. Assisted passages were offered, and rural land policies were formulated which, it was hoped, would attract settlers. Agencies in the major European centres were established to publicise the attractions of the colony or state concerned, and a flood of propaganda was issued. The Victorian era witnessed a great drive to extend European settlement and make use of land which was lying idle. Settlement promotion was undertaken in the utmost optimism that a better way of life lay ahead for the colonist and that the opening up of 'New Worlds' would make the existing one a better place to live in.

There was no fixed agreement upon how this should be effected. If land was the key to coloniz-

ation, there remained the question of how should it be distributed in the best interests of the state. Two basic approaches to this problem could be seen in Victorian times. The first regarded land as being of intrinsic value and therefore a price could be placed upon any parcel of land; land, in fact, was a reserve of revenue which could be called upon by the state to meet other expenditure, often that of financing immigration. The second regarded land as only of value once improvement had been effected, and therefore land could be given to the settler on the understanding that he improved it and therefore increased the total capital value of the rural areas of the country in question. The two approaches had their own origins in earlier times but were elaborated and refined to suit changing circumstances and provide for the occupation of new lands on an unprecedented scale.

The countries involved in attracting settlers were primarily the United States of America, the British colonies in Australia, North America and, to a lesser extent, South Africa. The South American states were also engaged in attracting settlers but tended to obtain them from different geographical areas from those supplying the English-speaking world.<sup>1</sup> The United States of America, in particular, provided a model for land regulations which, because of the success of the settlement of North America, was frequently copied.<sup>2</sup> The fact that there was competition for

settlers meant that there was a keen interest in the development of other states and that frequent adjustments to land regulation were made. It is noticeable that as time passed, land regulations became more generous for the prospective settler.

In southern Africa there were two influences upon land policy, the British Imperial system and the Cape Dutch system. The two had varying effects upon settlement, and were applied to different areas for very different periods of time. The British Imperial system affected Natal for most of the second half of the nineteenth century, and the Cape of Good Hope only for a short period. In the remainder of southern Africa the Cape Dutch system, sometimes modified by ideas from the United States, was dominant. It is proposed to examine the two systems and show their relevance to the settlement of southern Africa and to determine why southern Africa was unsuccessful as a reception area for agricultural colonists.

#### BRITISH IMPERIAL SYSTEM

The British Imperial system of land settlement owed much to the operation of the Congressional system of land division and sale; and an examination of this system is essential to an understanding of the British system. The United States of America formulated its land policy in the period immediately after the American War of Independence.<sup>3</sup> In 1785 Congress adopted a Land Ordinance which was to apply to the federal public domain. The Ordinance provided for the survey of the land and its disposal by public auction at a minimum price of U.S.\$1 per acre (\$2.50 per ha). The system was improved by the passage of the Land Act of 1796, which became the model for much legislation in other parts of the world.

The United States government envisaged a close settlement of the public domain by an agricultural community, on lots of 80-160 acres in extent. The lots were systematically arranged into sections and townships. The system of regular survey and auction was extended westwards from Ohio as the lands were opened up. Undoubtedly, the scheme attracted many settlers who were able to buy land at reasonable prices at the auctions. The government looked upon the disposal of the public domain, at first, as a means of raising revenue, and the minimum price was varied according to the economic conditions in the country until 1819 when it was fixed at \$1.25 an acre (\$3.12 per ha). However, attitudes changed as the volume of immigrants increased in the 1830s. The extensive tracts of land in the western

United States were seen as a place where immigrants could be settled, making the country internally strong. Thus in 1841 Congress allowed the sale of alternate sections within each township at a fixed price of \$1.25 an acre, as a means of attracting further immigration.

The United States government ignored a number of problems in framing land laws, and consequently they appear extremely simple compared with some of those framed elsewhere. The first problem arose from the lack of provision of land for pastoral farming. All land was supposed to be farmed for growing crops. The extensive runs of the pastoralist had no place in American policy.<sup>4</sup> Consequently one of the major problems of southern Africa was ignored. The second problem was the refusal, at first, to recognize that different environments required different regulations. The westward extension of settlement in the United States involved the farming of increasingly arid lands, but the problems were only encountered in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>5</sup>

The United States government thus provided an attractive land policy against which the British government had to compete, if it was to settle its own colonies. British land policy as formulated in 1832 copied many of the features of the American system, but it needed to be more favourable. The loss of emigrants to the United States was a serious problem as throughout the nineteenth century over 60 per cent of all emigrants from the United Kingdom went to the United States.

The reforms in British policy effected in 1832 were to have a profound influence upon southern Africa. The Colonial Reformers attempted to mould the American system to British needs and introduce a system common to the entire British Empire but it seems doubtful whether prospective conditions outside Australia were seriously considered in the formulation of the new policy. The basic thinking behind the change in policy was the desire to establish across the globe a series of colonies socially similar to England. The best features of the English rural community were to be transplanted to new environments and the evils associated with industrialisation were to be left behind. In so doing, it was hoped that there would be an increase in health and prosperity, not only for the new communities, but also for England, where contemporaries were faced with what appeared to be over-population.<sup>6</sup>

The whole policy of emigration was seen to be bound up with the price of land in the colonies.

The Colonial Reformers believed that to develop a successful colony of settlement, there must be a balance between the supply of land, labour and capital. The lack of one or the superabundance of another led to disaster. There had been many precedents for believing this. The failure of the scheme at the Cape of Good Hope in 1820 and that of the Swan River Colony (Western Australia) in 1829 pointed to the good management of land policy as being the key to the problem of establishing soundly based colonies.<sup>7</sup> Land, it was thought, had to be used to attract settlers. The basic thinking behind the scheme propounded by the Reformers was that land should be sold in the colonies at a fixed 'sufficient' price, instead of grants at low rentals which had been the normal colonial practice in the past. The settlement's prospects were determined by the price of land. The price had two functions. First, it had to be low enough to allow settlers to buy land that they could afford, but it had to be high enough to prevent persons buying very extensive tracts and thereby spreading the settlement unduly. Secondly, the price of land determined the state of the labour supply. A high price prevented labourers from buying land and thus a large labour force would be available; but the price had to be sufficiently low to give labourers a reasonable chance of becoming proprietors without completely depleting the labour force. Also proprietors should have some capital to invest in land, buildings, machinery, and animals. It was hoped to achieve a balance in this way and so avoid colonial paralysis.

The new policies of 1832 were, to a large extent, a departure from the previous approach to colonial land settlement whereby colonies had granted land for a moderate rental to anyone who would occupy it, with some hope of either cultivating the land or pasturing animals. The old approach was felt to be wasteful and it was abolished. The fixed price or minimum upset price at auctions was introduced throughout the British Empire. Nowhere was its introduction more troubled than in southern Africa.

#### CAPE DUTCH SYSTEM

The Cape Dutch system of land grants had developed in southern Africa during the period 1652-1806 when the Cape of Good Hope had been under the control of the Dutch East India Company. It had not been the intention of the Company to establish a colony of settlement when it took possession of the Cape, but one had gradu-

ally evolved. The first land grants were made in 1654 to Company servants to grow vegetables near Cape Town. The settlement's main function was seen as a supply base to provide passing ships with fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. The land grants were, therefore, small at first while the Company adhered to this plan, but increased rapidly as the settlers moved into areas remote from Cape Town. Cattle farms in particular needed extensive areas. A group of colonists later arrived from Europe and established a colony for settlement, which provided the Company with its exports.

The settlers evolved their own system of appropriating farms, which was recognized by the Company in 1732. There were either few or, at times, no surveyors in the Cape during the period of Dutch rule. A farm, however, had to be demarcated in areas where there were few recognizable boundaries. It became an established custom that a man could possess all the land within half an hour's ride, at walking-pace, from his house or the centre of his farm. Thus farms could be spaced at an hour's ride from one another. The area involved was 3 000 morgen (2 500 ha) per farm. Tenure was not secure, being on a fifteen year lease; but land was plentiful and new farms could be carved out of the wilderness. In time the term 'farm' and 3 000 morgen of land became synonymous.

The method of survey was approximate, and the walking pace of horses varied appreciably, but the Cape government was unconcerned with the errors. Even after the British occupation (followed nine years later by formal annexation) and the introduction of regular surveys in 1813, farms of 3 000 morgen were allowed on secure tenure at low quitrents. The general instability of the farming community may be seen in the outward extension of settlement throughout the Dutch period. Each member of the family was entitled to a farm and a farm was regarded as the birthright of every man. The boundaries of the Colony were regularly expanded and many farmers occupied land, at least temporarily, beyond the colonial borders. The return to the colonial government was slight and whereas the Dutch administration had been largely content to forget about the pioneers, the British government was not.<sup>8</sup>

#### BRITISH POLICY AT THE CAPE

In 1832 the system of quitrent grants in the Cape of Good Hope was replaced by the new Imperial policy of land sales, although quitrent

grants appear, in fact, to have continued until 1839 when they were stopped at the express demand of the Secretary of State.<sup>9</sup> The Imperial Government now attempted to impose its own ideas at the Cape. The obvious result was stagnation. The Governor estimated in 1840 that there remained some 34 000 000 acres (14 000 000 ha) of Crown Land, most of which was too rocky, mountainous, sterile or inaccessible for use. However, the Government was obliged to introduce a uniform price of 5s. per acre (12s. 6d. per ha) for land at the Cape in 1841. This price was unacceptable and few purchasers were forthcoming. In 1843 the price of land was reduced to a minimum of 2s. per acre (5s. per ha) at auctions. It must be remembered that this price was a tenth of that asked in the Australian colonies and therefore supposedly designed to recognize the special circumstances prevailing in southern Africa. It was obviously not a price which would attract existing Cape citizens to purchase land after a long period of quiescent grants for which no capital outlay had been necessary. Good land was too plentiful at prices considerably lower than the Government minimum, to attract settlers, especially as the Government admitted to having little desirable land left. The Cape Government maintained this system until 1860, thus losing many colonists to other parts of South Africa.

The Cape colony tended to stagnate under the new land laws but other parts of South Africa were opened up in the 1840s. A sizable body of Cape farmers left the Cape Colony for a variety of reasons in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>10</sup> Much has been written about the reasons for the Great Trek and the motives of the Voortrekkers for penetrating new lands but these need not be dwelt upon here, beyond stating that the emigrants from the Cape Colony were, for a wide variety of reasons, dissatisfied with the British administration. The Great Trek led to an extension of settlement and furthermore the Trekkers took their own ideas on land policy with them, which were naturally at variance with Imperial ideas.

In 1838 the 'Trekker parliament, meeting in Pietermaritzburg, laid down the principles upon which land was to be granted in areas under its control which included the present provinces of Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State.<sup>11</sup> Farms of 3 000 morgen each were to be available to all citizens and two farms were available for certain classes of citizen, notably the early pioneers who had taken part in the conquest of the land.<sup>12</sup> Low rents were payable on land, and there

appeared to be sufficient land outside the Cape Colony to provide for the foreseeable needs of the Trekkers.

The land regulations entitling each citizen to a farm remained in force in the Republic of Transvaal and Orange Free State until the end of the century but the methods of allocation changed.<sup>13</sup> The circular farms of the Cape were seen to be wasteful and therefore in the Transvaal square farms were recognized. The size was approximately 4 000 morgen (3 200 ha); but horses were sometimes ridden at speeds greater than walking-pace and farms up to 6 000 morgen (5 000 ha) were not uncommon. The lack of surveyors throughout the nineteenth century hampered the Republics in the fair distribution of land, but the existence of plentiful land until the 1880s did not mean that this was a serious problem.

#### BRITISH POLICY IN NATAL

British Imperial policy in the Cape was unsuccessful owing to a lack of land for sale; in the Transvaal and Orange Free State it was ignored. It was only in Natal that any direct clash in ideas occurred. Furthermore, Natal did not gain complete internal self-government until 1893 and consequently Imperial ideas on land policy continued to influence the colony long after the Cape Colony had gained internal self-government in 1854, and returned to a policy akin to that which had operated before 1832. The impact of Imperial policy may therefore be clearly seen in the disasters which pursued the colonization of Natal.

Natal had been occupied by the Voortrekkers who in 1838 established the ephemeral Republic of Natalia. In 1843 this state was annexed to Britain and colonial rule was imposed. In the land settlement which followed, the Trekkers were able to retain their title to some three million acres (1 200 000 ha) out of a total of ten million acres (4 000 000 ha). These farms contained some of the best land in the colony but many of them had been sold to speculators and so constituted a block of unused lands, which were a positive hindrance to development.

Upon annexation the land policy of the Cape Colony was introduced with the sale of land by auction at a minimum price of 2s. per acre (5s. per ha). The minimum price was, however, raised to 4s. per acre (10s. per ha) in 1848 owing to the supposed greater fertility of soil in Natal. The Government thought that the Colony could be transformed into an agricultural settlement

producing tropical and sub-tropical crops. Glowing accounts of the agricultural potential of the Colony persuaded many that this was indeed the best area of South Africa. In this case a minimum price of 4s. per acre could be regarded as low.

On the basis of a considerable propaganda campaign the Government of Natal was able to encourage settlers through a series of immigration schemes through the offices of a number of proprietors. The Byrne scheme was the most famous of these.<sup>11</sup> It was intended that immigrants could be settled on lots of 20-60 acres (8-24 ha) in various parts of the Colony and make a living from agriculture. If the emigration propaganda had been correct there would not have been much difficulty in doing so; but it was not correct. Small plots in the middle of land which was otherwise unused could not succeed. The experience of the Albany settlement in the eastern Cape Colony in 1820 should have acted as a warning, but it did not. The settlers soon found that 4s. per acre in the South African context was too high a price for land. Although some 5 000 persons emigrated to Natal in the period 1849-51, many soon left, unable to make a living on their allotments, several of which were in highly inaccessible and barren areas of the Colony.

The Natal Government was understandably disappointed in the failure of a close settlement scheme, similar to the ones in operation elsewhere in the Empire. The basic premises of the Colonial Reformers were absent in Natal and it was impossible to put into practice the theories formulated in London. The other aspects of development, such as roads and to an increasing extent railways, together with urban settlements were absent in Natal. The environment was against the project too, as a lack of reliable rainfall and the dearth of suitable soils made most settlers give up.

The concentrated settlement was clearly unsuccessful and the Government sought to find new ways of attracting settlers. Land was its sole asset as a means of attraction. In 1856 the Government departed from its usual custom and allowed grants of varying size according to the number of armed men the farmer could supply in time of emergency. Thus a farmer supplying five armed men could obtain 5 000 acres (2 000 ha) at a nominal rent, in any unoccupied part of the country. Such a scheme might appear generous at first sight, but the mustering of several armed Europeans was difficult and other terms imposed made the scheme

unpopular. The Government had hoped to attract veterans of the Crimean War but again this proved to be unsuccessful and had to be abandoned.

Thus in 1857 the Government once again resorted to the granting of farms in return for a moderate rental. The scheme proved to be popular, but mainly with speculators. Grants of varying sizes were allowed in different parts of the Colony according to the distance of the farm from the port of Durban. However, the Imperial Government which still retained the overall supervision of land policy in the Colony, ordered the repeal of the laws allowing such grants, and forced a return to a policy of sales by auction at a minimum price of 4s. per acre. The Imperial policy was thus imposed once more and Natal stagnated in its rural areas.

The two approaches to land policy, based first on planned settlement from 1849 to 1851 and then on the granting of extensive holdings on low rentals, failed to achieve their objectives. Both were aimed at introducing a substantial number of settlers, but in 1859 the Colony only possessed 9 087 European inhabitants, although 4 500 000 acres (1 800 000 ha) had been granted in the process on secure tenure. The security of tenure offered to grantees of pastoral holdings was an unusual feature of southern Africa land policy. In Australia the pastoral holders usually lost their land or at least part of it as settlement was made closer at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Thus Natal pursued one of the least successful land policies of any country in the world in the nineteenth century, which in terms of economic development and numbers of immigrants introduced was even less advantageous than that of Western Australia.<sup>13</sup>

#### END OF IMPERIAL POLICY

By 1860 the British Imperial land policy in southern Africa was seen to be unsuccessful. The Cape Colony abandoned it in 1860 while the Orange Free State and Transvaal had never operated it. Only in Natal after 1860 was it still pursued. By the 1860s indeed it is impossible to talk in terms of an Imperial policy any longer because most colonies in Australasia and North America began to administer their own policies after they had been granted responsible government. A general liberalization of land policy throughout the world is clearly discernible; and the year 1861 saw what was probably the best

known law regarding land settlement ever passed, the American Homestead Act.

This Act introduced the concept of free land to a country which had hitherto only been engaged in selling land. Under the Act any person who was a United States citizen or who had taken out his first papers for naturalization was entitled to claim 160 acres (65 ha) at a nominal fee. The 160 acres could always be extended by purchase so that persons possessing some capital could also be attracted. Free land or at least the idea that it was possible to acquire land free, was a major factor in the promotion of large scale emigration from the overcrowded countries of Europe to the United States.

In the Cape Colony the Crown Lands Act of 1860 provided for a return to rents on land which did not limit the area that might be rented. The new grants differed from those issued prior to 1832, however, in that the land was sold at a public auction and taxed thereafter by means of a perpetual rent. This had the advantage of providing the Government with an immediate income from sales and a continuing income from rent. Prices and rents were low as both were calculated on the apparent value of the land for pastoral farming. The areas involved were large containing as much as 60 000 acres (24 000 ha) per farm. Many exceeded 10 000 acres (4 000 ha) in the drier interior of the Colony. The system was highly flexible, in contrast to both the Imperial and Cape Dutch systems. The Surveyor General's office was able to adjust rents, minimum prices and the extent of the farm according to the capabilities of the land. The result was one of the most flexible systems in operation and hence only possible where the volume of work for the Surveyor General's Office was small. The Agricultural Lands Act of 1870 provided that land could be purchased for 10s. per acre (25s. per ha) with freehold tenure but such lands were to be limited in extent to a 500 acre (200 ha) maximum. Legislation provided for an increasing range of types of lease both perpetual and with a fixed time limit, and for sales. Special grants for military purposes and for agricultural settlers were introduced and elaborate and generous credit facilities were offered to assist with the purchase of land. Finally under the Crown Lands Act of 1891 land could be disposed of in any manner, with the consent of the Cape Parliament.

The relaxation of the regulations undoubtedly assisted the settling of the interior of the Colony, whose boundaries had been pushed far inland

since the 1840s. Large farms suitable for sheep grazing became available and were rapidly occupied. However, despite its appearances the relaxation was not aimed at close European settlement but rather the opposite. It was men with capital who were required, not farm labourers, or the poorer industrial workers of Europe. Although the policy was successful from an economic point of view, settlement, as envisaged in the United States, was not the aim of the Cape legislators. Special schemes in the most desirable areas of the Colony were based on the idea of close settlement but it was recognized that extensive pastoralism was the best economic activity for the Cape and consequently there was no interference with the owners of pastoral holdings. Even more significant was the lack of any drive to gain European labourers, and this was to have a significant bearing on the racial composition of the Colony.

The basis of this policy in the Cape was the assumption that there was an inexhaustible supply of land upon which farms could be laid out; and the traditional approach to land acquisition in the Orange Free State and Transvaal had been based on the same assumption. In the Cape the assumption was valid, or nearly so, until the end of the century; in the Orange Free State and Transvaal it was not. Pressure on available land built up within these states, as sons found there was no land available to claim and that division of existing holdings was not a practical economic proposition.

At several stages in South Africa's history, during the nineteenth century, military conquests established new zones of settlement to relieve pressure on the older established areas. Usually these were the result of activities in the Transvaal, but occasionally in the Cape. The conquests were established often as separate entities either colonial or republican, with land policies similar to those of the Transvaal. Farms of regulation size were granted to persons who had taken part in the conquest of the new lands. The period from 1882 to 1893 was particularly active, although earlier movements such as the 'Thirstland Trek' of 1874 had led to the establishment of new settlements in Angola and South West Africa.<sup>17</sup>

The first major advance involved the establishment of the Republics of Goshen and Stellaland in Bechuanaland in 1882. This was followed by the creation of the New Republic of Zululand in 1884, and the Klein Vrystaat in Swaziland in 1886 as a miniature republic. In each case, use was

made of tribal warfare among the African population to introduce a small army of Europeans, who having defeated one of the contenders in the tribal war exacted their price, in land, from the victor. In Stellaland and Goshen farms of 3 000 morgen (2 500 ha) were granted, but in Zululand only 4 000 acres (1 600 ha) could be allowed owing to the restricted nature of the area gained.

In 1890 the British South Africa Company occupied Mashonaland, north of the Limpopo. The Pioneers were allowed grants of only 1 500 morgen (1 200 ha) apiece,<sup>18</sup> but this was not a serious drawback, as many of the Pioneers were attracted not by land but by the fifteen mining claims they were allotted and the hope of a second Rand. Agricultural pioneers such as those who trekked to Gazaland in eastern Rhodesia, however, were allowed full 3 000 morgen farms.<sup>19</sup> Similarly when Matabeleland was conquered in 1893 the Company allowed grants of 3 000 morgen to pioneers. It is interesting to note that the Portuguese Moçambique Company offered similar terms in the area they controlled adjacent to the Rhodesian border.<sup>20</sup>

In this manner pressure was relieved upon the existing settled parts of South Africa. As each new area opened up, it was a pioneering district at the time of colonization, and the generous land policy was held to be necessary. The old Cape Dutch system of land grants which evolved in the seventeenth century, was the dominant influence on land policy within each of the new areas settled in the nineteenth century. Only in Natal was a policy of land sales adhered to, although increasingly generous credit terms were provided from 1869 onwards, which amounted in their generosity after 1889 to little more than a rent for twenty years, at the termination of which the land was the freehold property of the farmer.

#### CONCLUSION

Land policy in southern Africa thus exhibited several trends and traditions in the Victorian era. The traditional Cape Dutch system of a minimum of government intervention left its legacy to the Victorian administration and governors who saw their duty as ruling southern Africa. Government regulation had always been abhorrent to the Cape Dutch. The Republics of Orange Free State and Transvaal interfered as little as possible with the land rights of their subjects, but the Imperial Government required order in the colonies and this involved the termination of what was regarded as a needless squandering of southern Africa's only natural resource, land. Before the discovery

of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, land was all that South Africa had to offer the prospective colonist.

The clash between the local ideas of the South Africans, and the wider appreciation of Imperial needs was inevitable and regrettable. The Imperial policy was well thought out but inapplicable to South Africa, and failure to recognize this undoubtedly led to a revulsion against the idea of settling in South Africa, on the part of prospective colonists. The British settlement of Natal as probably the most direct implementation of Imperial policy was a disaster from an agricultural point of view. However, the Imperial Government would not allow the situation to be corrected by introducing the more liberalized Australian land laws to the colony.<sup>21</sup> The result was the partial stagnation of Natal for much of the remainder of the century.

Basically the problem involved in the imposition of Imperial land policies was a misunderstanding of the nature of the physical environment. The degree of aridity and the lack of adequate surface supplies of water ensured that any agricultural settlement would be unsuccessful. The South Africans realised this, but the Imperial Government was to some extent misled by the information with which it was supplied. Natal was described by the government in a report in 1848 as possessing resources which were 'great, and in our opinion equal, if not superior, to any other British colony, both as respects fertility of soil and abundance of water'.<sup>22</sup> Other accounts were equally extravagant, stating that the colony was suitable for the production of almost every crop, including rice cultivation!<sup>23</sup>

It seems doubtful that these accounts were deliberately misleading as previous descriptions of the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony had been.<sup>24</sup> When detailed accounts outlining the supposed potential of Natal also presented such extravagant pictures, it is hardly surprising that they were accepted as being correct by prospective colonists who wished to emigrate from Europe. The application of Imperial policy to a land, as Natal was represented to be, was again logical in the light of Imperial experience. That it was to be disastrous was not to be anticipated. The real error came in trying to apply the concepts of Imperial policy to the Cape Colony where the administration clearly thought, rightly so, that it was impractical.

The imposition of Imperial land policy upon the Cape Colony was merely another source of



friction between the British administration and the Dutch-speaking colonists. It is highly doubtful whether the continuation of the Cape Dutch system would have prevented the Great Trek, but it would have removed one point of friction. In this respect it was the Cape which was the key to Imperial land policy in South Africa. The extreme impracticability of this policy and the economic stagnation which accompanied it, were in marked contrast to the land policies in colonies such as Victoria or New South Wales which were believed by contemporaries to be similar to the Cape Colony. However, the presence of the Cape Dutch colonists and the lack of any clear settlement policy meant that the conditions in South Africa were different from those in Australia.

Imperial policy was unsuccessful and all the theories associated with it were shown to be inapplicable. Did the Cape Dutch system survive much better? The system with its reliance on free empty land inevitably led to aggression in the same way that the American colonists were aggressive; but the isolation of the scattered farms meant that the frontier spirit, which was but a phase in the development of the United States, was a permanent way of life in South Africa. As land was occupied so the South African pioneers moved on. Contact between Dutch and English-speaking South Africans led some of the latter to do likewise. The constant movement and appropriation of 6 000 or more acres per family led settlers to move to other countries. Treks took place to South West Africa, and even to Angola and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Finally, however, the supply of suitable land became exhausted. International boundaries were introduced into southern Africa and the scope for movement came to an end, as did the traditional concept of the 3 000 morgen farm. The intensification of settlement, based on the ideas of Imperial policy, held little attraction for the South African, and could only be introduced when the condition for the implementation of the Cape Dutch system broke

down at the end of the century. Even then the closer settlement movement achieved only partial success in Natal and was largely ignored elsewhere in southern Africa.<sup>25</sup>

The usual conflict between the pastoral holders and agriculturalists which plagued many of the new settlements of the nineteenth century, was largely absent in southern Africa. The Cape Dutch system of grants ensured security of tenure in perpetuity for the holders of pastoral lands. The Governments in all the countries concerned never attacked this security and consequently agricultural expansion came late, through the development of agriculture on large holdings. The contrast between southern Africa and the United States and Australia could not have been greater, as in the latter countries the agriculturalist was politically dominant by the last quarter of the century.

Land policy was the basis of immigration schemes but even in 1904, when the Census was taken, South Africa possessed only 1 100 000 Europeans, many of whom lived in the towns. The Cape Dutch system was self-contained and did not require immigrants to fill up the land. Natural increase was felt to be sufficient. The Imperial system was based on massive immigration as was that of the United States. The total European population of southern Africa was small compared with the expectation of the mid-nineteenth century partly as a result of the widespread implementation of the Cape Dutch land system.

The confrontation between the two land systems was part of a wider confrontation in South Africa which was particularly violent in the second half of the nineteenth century. The importance of land in this period cannot be overlooked, but, in the final analysis, its significance lies in the different values attached to it, by a pastoral pioneering people and by officials who tried to administer them.

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