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The Swaziland question and a road to the sea 1887-1895

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payable by them.[20]

This committee lasted until August 1888. There is little information available as to whether or not it functioned during the year of its existence.[21] It was not satisfactory to a group of concessionaires. As a result of the representations of a deputation to Umbandine, of which David Forbes jnr. was a member, the Swazi king was persuaded to grant a "Charter of self-government" to the Europeans in Swaziland. Under this charter a new committee was elected, consisting of five nominees of Umbandine, Shepstone being one, and representatives of mineral, grazing and monopoly (including treking) interests.[22] Shepstone's immediate position was unaffected, though his relations with Umbandine had been reported to be "very much strained" in the month before the charter was issued.[23] A simplified fresh appointment to his office as adviser to the king was drawn up and at the meeting to elect the new committee some opposition to him was shown by the Europeans.[24]

In December 1888 Shepstone came into conflict with the committee, which claimed the right to examine and copy documents relating to concessions which were in his possession. According to the account in the Argus Annual (1890), Shepstone at first disputed the claim of the Committee, but on Umbandine's insisting that he hand over the documents to the Committee, he later agreed to do so. Eventually members of the Committee examined the documents while Shepstone was absent and letters were alleged to have been found addressed to him and suggesting that he come to an agreement with the government of the Republic to furtner its interests in Swaziland. One of these was supposed to have been from the landdrost of Barberton, J. Z. de Villiers.[25] If these

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(20) C 6200, pp.22-3, extract from the Cape Argus, 11 Aug.1887.
(21) C 6201, pp.10-11. De Winton found that neither this committee nor its successor kept minutes.
(22) Boyce, op.cit., p.25; Forbes, op.cit., pp.115-7 gives an account of the issue of the Charter and the establishment of the Committee. It is plausible in most respects, but Forbes was writing "without book" from a rather faulty memory fifty years later and there are errors in the sequence of events. See also Miller, Swaziland: The California of South Africa, pp.18-19. Miller was secretary to the committee until February 1889 when he replaced Shepstone as one of the king's nominees and became his adviser.
(23) C 6200, p.117, telegram, Havelock to Robinson, 27 July 1888.
(24) Ibid., p.91, revised appointment, 4 Aug.1888; Penfold, op.cit. (2),p.4.
(25) Argus Annual and South African Directory (1890), pp.66-7. Fragments of the correspondence between Shepstone and the Committee are in Miller Papers, File D.

approaches were actually made their results were abortive, for Shepstone eventually came to an agreement with the Republic in October 1890 in circumstances suggesting that no earlier compact had been arrived at.[26] But the incident brought to light Shepstone's feud with members of the White Committee which was the background to his dismissal in February 1889. Shepstone refused to register a banking concession which Umbandine had granted to Thorburn, a member of the Committee. The results were his dismissal, an order from Umbandine to hand over to the Committee all documents dealing with the king's affairs and the temporary appointment of A.M.Miller as his successor.[27]

Shepstone refused to accept his dismissal on the ground that the full Swazi Council and the Nation had not been parties to it and Penfold, his own secretary, removed the documents in question to Steynsdorp in the Transvaal.[28] Excluded from the Committee and no longer influencing the king, Shepstone was deprived of much of the control he had exercised over affairs in Swaziland. He still claimed to exert an influence against "killing-off" by Umbandine and the killing in December 1888 of Sandhlana the king's "prime minister", took place while Shepstone was temporarily absent from Swaziland. But the government of the Europeans passed entirely into the hands of the Committee, of which Miller became a member as Umbandine's nominee after his appointment was made permanent in May 1889.[29]

The evidence available on the working of the Committee indicates that while it existed it did not govern successfully and that it showed no prospect of being able to do so. De Winton, who arrived in Swaziland after the Committee had ceased to function, stated in his report that the inexperience in administration and the private interests and internal dissensions of its members had brought about its failure both to govern and to collect revenue.[30] The manager of the Forbes Reef gold mine in Swaziland, Doering, complained to a London

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(26) Below, Chapter V (1), for Shepstone's relations with the Pretoria government.

(27) C 6200, p.117; Leyds, op.cit., pp.253-4; Penfold (2), p.5; File D in Miller Papers contains the original documents of Miller's appointment.

(28) Penfold (2), p.5.

(29) Miller Papers, File D; C 6200, pp.195-6. Miller had resigned as secretary to the Committee after his original appointment as adviser to Umbandine in February 1889.

(30) C 6201, p.10. De Winton headed the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of Swaziland in October 1889.

director of the company that the members of the Committee were

> "intent upon one object, viz. getting concessions from the king for any purpose which can be turned into money, quite regardless of the evil effects such grants may have on the interests of those having large stakes in the country and whose welfare they ought to be protecting".[31]

On May 20 1889 Shepstone, still insisting that his own official standing was accepted by the Swazi nation if not by the king, addressed Kruger on the situation in Swaziland, stressing the incapacity of the committee to govern. He added that Umbandine had been ill for some months, was not responsible for his actions and signed any document which was accompanied by a money payment. A meeting to elect the next Committee was proposed for July 29th, but it had been called without Umbandine's consent and Shepstone feared that disturbances would occur if it were allowed to take place.[32]

It was on the basis of the above letter that the Republic justified its decision to send a commission to Swaziland. This was communicated to Smyth, the acting High Commissioner, early in the following month.[33] In the communication to Smyth, he was informed neither of the detailed contents of Shepstone's letter, nor of its authorship. But Shepstone had addressed a similar communication to the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal.[34] The Republic's commission, consisting of General Smit, the Vice-President, and the Attorney General Krause, was authorised to inquire into and forestall possible disturbances in Swaziland. It left Pretoria on June 12th. This move forced the hand of the British government whose officials had long been debating the desirability of sending a British commissioner to Swaziland. Smyth and Knutaford agreed that Col. Martin should be sent to Swaziland, not as Commissioner but with instructions to observe the activities of Transvaal officials and to protest if any breach of the London Covention was made. He was also to report on the desirability

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(31) Miller Papers, Letter Book B, Doering to Faviell, 4 March 1889.
(32) T.Shepstone to State President, 20 May 1889, in R.A.3319/95 (6).
(33) C 6200, pp.161-2 and in R.A.3319/95 (6).
(34) This letter is not printed in the bluebook, but it is referred to in C 6200, pp.161, 175.

of a Joint Commission being appointed to settle the Swaziland question which the Republic would be invited to join. Finally, Martin was to use his influence and advice to prevent possible disturbances, but was not to act in a judicial or an administrative capacity.[35]

Martin arrived in Swaziland from Natal on July 15. He was able to cross Transvaal territory, as he had been instructed to follow the example of the Boer officials and travel without a police escort. After conferring with Smit and Krause, Martin persuaded them to join him in recommending the postponement of the meeting for the election of the new "white committee" planned for July 29th. It was agreed also that Umbandine be advised to extend the life of the existing Committee for three months. Martin expected the appointment during that period of a Joint Commission, while Krause and Smit hoped that the approaches of their government to the acting High Commissioner would lead to the Republic's taking the country over without delay.[36]

Although the meeting planned for July 29th took place in spite of the above decision, no new European committee was elected and on the same day Umbandine extended the life of the existing committee until the proposed commission should have assembled.[37] At the meeting resolutions abolishing the Committee and recommending the annexation of Swaziland to the Republic were carried. The Boers were strongly represented, for the winter graziers were in Swaziland. But a section of the Committee was also in favour of the Republic's taking over the government of the country. Ewing, the chairman of the original committee and a nominee of Umbandine on the existing one, approached Martin with a document which he proposed the Swazi king should sign, requesting the Republic to take over the government of the Europeans provided the consent of the British government could be obtained. Martin

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(35) C 6200, pp.161ff., exchange of telegrams between Knutsford and Smyth, 5-18 June 1889; pp.175-6, instructions to Martin, 20 June 1889. Robinson had left for England to confer with Knutsford in May. (Knutsford was the title adopted by Holland on his elevation to the peerage in 1888.)

(36) C 6200, p.180, Martin's despatch, 15 July 1889. See also R.A.3319/95 (6), containing an extract of the report of Krause and Smit to their government.

(37) C 6200, pp.185-6.

replied that he would protest if Umbandine signed the document while he remained in Swaziland. The Boer officials held aloof and acquiesced in Martin's view that the resolution of the meeting be regarded merely as expressions of opinion upon which the three officials could not act.[38]

Martin and the Boer officials left Swaziland about the middle of August, on the understanding that all questions should stand over until the proposed Joint Commission had assembled.[39] In their report to their government, Krause and Smit argued the necessity for the speedy establishment of a settled form of government in Swaziland in order to curb the atrocities of the Swazi king and council, prevent collisions among the Europeans and provide security for life and property. They added that only intervention by the Republic could secure these ends. Although the suggestion was not included in the extract of the report which was later forwarded to Smyth, the Republic adopted the line that a Joint Commission could accomplish no good purpose in the hope that the British government would take the hint and permit a Republican annexation.[40] But Knutsford now insisted on a Joint Commission and his policy prevailed. On November 20 de Winton arrived in Swaziland with Joubert, the Republic's commissioner who had joined him at Pretoria, both being accompanied by subordinate officials.[41] In the four months' interval between the departure of Martin and Krause and Smit from Swaziland and the arrival of the Joint Commission at the end of November, the Republic showed an inclination to intervene on the ground of preventing further bloodshed as the result of "killing-off" among the Swazi which Shepstone had reported to Pretoria.[42] But the British government refused to sanction the step, Smyth pointing out that it could lead to the Joint Commission's encountering "accomplished facts" when it arrived.[43]

In his despatches Martin made no direct reference to the working of the European Committee, which Krause and Smit had described as powerless in their

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(38) C 6200, pp.185, 186-8, Martin's despatches and minutes of the meeting.
(39) Ibid., p.191.
(40) R.A.3319/95 (6), containing part of the report of the Boer officials (3 Sept.1889); C 6200, pp.229-30, extract forwarded to Smyth, 25 Sept. 1889; and p.197, telegrams from Kruger to Smyth, 24 and 29 Sept.1889.
(41) C 6201, p.
(42) Leyds, op.cit., p.273.
(43) C 6200, pp.199-200.

report, but he stressed the advisability of a Joint Commission and described the country as very unsettled.[44] In so far as Martin's findings pointed to the need for external intervention in Swaziland in order to provide a settled administration, they were in agreement with those of the Boer officials and provided some justification for the implicit appeal for intervention which Shepstone had made in May. Only after Martin's visit was the need for the provision in Swaziland of a settled form of government finally recognised by the British authorities. Despite the many ramifications which the Swaziland question developed after 1889, the onus which the situation on the spot placed on the negotiating governments to avoid a relapse into anarchy endured throughout the course of the question.[45]

Before the members of the Joint Commission arrived in Swaziland, the situation there had altered. Umbandine died in the second week of October and on the 21st Shepstone was formally reinstated as adviser and agent of the Swazi nation, on the authority of the Swazi Queen Regent and the Swazi Council.[46] While Martin was in Swaziland in August, he and the Boer officials interviewed the Swazi Queen Mother (Umbandine's "mother") and Council and their support for Shepstone, who was present, was expressed. Martin refused to discuss Shepstone's position, but he informed Smyth of rumours of his reinstatement.[47] Even before Umbandine's death Shepstone's influence among the Swazi was being felt. As Umbandine's successor, Bunn, was a minor, the "mother" of Umbandine had been elevated into the position of Queen Regent. In the Swazi tribal system the mother of the reigning king, or as in Umbandine's case a senior wife of the previous king who was called upon to fill the position, wielded considerable influence in the government of the tribe, even during the actual rule of the king. On his death she virtually replaced him as ruler until

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(44) Ibid., pp.185-6.
(45) For example, see C.0.438, p.7 (Graham's Memorandum); C 7212, p.140, Loch to Loch, 1 Dec. 1892.
(46) C 6200, pp.204; 238-9. Shepstone's reappointment was made in terms of his original appointment by Umbandine in February 1887.
(47) C 6200, p.193.

the formal installation of his successor. This was delayed in the case of a minor until he came of age. After the new king's installation his own mother (or an appointee from his father's wives) became the tribal queen and the Queen Regent lost her influence. This meant that after Umbandine's death the Queen Regent and the council of headmen governed the tribe, with the influence of the Queen Mother and Bunn increasing as the young king grew older.[48] Until the second half of 1893 there was apparently no opposition among the Swazi to Shepstone's acting for them in their relations with the European governments who also accorded him their recognition. From that point, however, considerable opposition to Shepstone developed among the Swazi and the manner in which they were governing themselves and expressing their policy once more necessarily became a concern of the governments.[49]

In December 1889 Shepstone's reinstatement was accepted by the Joint Commission. Its members, after interviewing the Queen Regent, Swazi headmen and Shepstone, and being furnished with documentary evidence of his reappointment declared themselves satisfied that the Swazi wanted him as their representative.[50] The Commission also accepted from the Swazi the declaration that Bunn was Umbandine's successor, but that during his minority the government of the tribe would be carried out by the Queen Regent and the Swazi Council.[51]

On November 21 Shepstone had dismissed the White Committee, in the name, and according to his account, on the order of the Swazi nation. A few days after the arrival of the Commission he presented its members with a memorandum on his reasons for having dismissed the Committee. Whatever objections there might have been to some of his detailed allegations, he was correct in his contention that the Committee had become defunct.[52] There is no evidence of opposition to its dismissal having been voiced at the time the step was taken, or when the Joint Commission held its meetings.

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(48) Hailey (2), op.cit., pp.354-7, 365.
(49) See below, Chapter V (2).
(50) C 6201, pp.11, 29, 31, 34, 46.
(51) Ibid., pp.27, 35.
(52) Ibid., p.26.

With the dismissal of the Committee the position regarding the government of the Europeans became somewhat uncertain. Although the "Charter of self-government" (August 1888) had not been explicitly withdrawn by the Swazi, de Winton took the view that the government of the Europeans had passed to Shepstone with the dismissal of the Committee. He also thought that as most of the Europeans in Swaziland were hostile to Shepstone, this situation might bring about a conflict between the Swazi and the Europeans with a consequent appeal to the Transvaal government to intervene and restore order.[53] In his instructions de Winton had been informed that the Joint Commission, being one of inquiry alone, was to "have no authority to interfere in any way, with the administration of the country ...".[54] But while he was in Pretoria de Winton reached an understanding with the Boer government on the desirability of the Commissions' taking steps to maintain law and order during its stay in Swaziland.[55] In the "memorandum of provisional understanding" which the Commissioners drew up before entering Swaziland it was further agreed that a "commitee of management" be set up with the consent of the Swazi, to govern the Europeans until whatever "final arrangements" the governments arrived at were implemented.[56]

At the first meeting of the Joint Commission in Swaziland on December 2nd, de Winton proposed that Shepstone attend the Commission's sittings as representative of the Swazi nation. Joubert agreed, provided it could be established that Shepstone was the nation's "authorised adviser".[57] The Swazi, whose independence the Commissioners agreed to respect, were consulted and declared that Shepstone was their mouthpiece.[58] De Winton suggested that as Shepstone could not be constituted a member of the Commission, the latter should resolve itself into a committee with Shepstone as a member. This proposal was accepted by Joubert and the procedure was followed for the duration of the Commission's stay in Swaziland.

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(53) Ibid., p.11.
(54) Ibid., p.4, Herbert to de Winton, 26 Sept.1889.
(55) Ibid., p.27.
(56) C 6201, p.12.
(57) Ibid., p.29.
(58) Ibid., p.27, for the decision on maintaining Swazi independence, p.34, minutes of the meeting of the Committee and the Swazi headmen, 9 Dec.1889.

After discussions with the Commissioners Shepstone secured the issue of an Organic Proclamation by the Swazi which placed the government of the Europeans in the hands of the Commission for as long as it remained in Swaziland.[59] When the Commissioners first put their proposal to Shepstone regarding the appointment of a temporary "committee of management", he had suggested that if a committee was appointed for this stop-gap purpose, he should be its chairman.[60] The Commissioners accepted this suggestion. It was eventually arranged that Shepstone's fellow-members on the Committee would be Martin, who was acting as de Winton's secretary, and D.J.Esselen, representing the British and Transvaal governments respectively. Esselen was not a member of the party making up the Republic's members on the Joint Commission, but he arrived in Swaziland before the Commission's departure and became a member of the committee into which the Joint Commission had been constituted to ensure Shepstone's participation. When the Joint Commission departed in December 1889 the "Provincial Governing Committee" of Shepstone, Martin and Esselen took over the administration of the Europeans in Swaziland.

It was intended by those who set up the Joint Government in Swaziland that it should last a few months at the most. As de Winton informed the Swazi, it was meant "only to remain in force during the time the two Governments are considering the matter" - which Joubert thought would occupy four months.[61] In his report de Winton advised against the adoption of a scheme of dual control: "it would not lead to any finality, and would soon result in a state of affairs adverse to the general interest of Great Britain in South Africa".[62] In the event the "curious triple administration" lasted more than five years.[63] The explanation of this lies in the diplomatic course of the Swaziland question.

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(59) Ibid., pp.11, 38. C.O.438, pp.4-5.
(60) C 6201, pp.11-12.
(61) C 6201, pp.34, 47 (minutes of the meeting between the Commissioners and the Swazi headmen, 9th and 18th Dec.1889).
(62) Ibid., p.16. De Winton was implying that unless the Republic's claims to Swaziland were recognised, the Republic would adopt other policies (for example, in Matabeleland) adverse to British interests.
(63) Argus Annual and South African Directory (1893), p.67.

The establishment of the provisional government was the most important part of the work performed on the spot by the Joint Commission. It had been agreed at Pretoria to leave the concessions question for settlement by a court which it was intended to set up after a permanent administration for Swaziland had been decided upon and put into operation.[64] At the last meeting of the committee of Shepstone and the Commissioners on December 18th, a resolution moved by Schreiner, the legal adviser to de Winton, that the Swazi be called upon to state in a legislative manner what concessions they were prepared to recognise was accepted on the understanding that the two governments would later establish the court to settle the question.[65] No further concessions were issued after Umbandine's death, Shepstone having issued a proclamation to that effect which was approved by the Commissioners.[66] The Commissioners impressed upon the Swazi that the European government disapproved of the "killing-off" which the native rulers indulged in to maintain their authority, and agreed on the desirability of controlling the liquor traffic.[67] Finally, the Commission consulted the Europeans in Swaziland, and although he found them lacking in unanimity de Winton reported that the proportion among them who would welcome rule by the Republic was three to one.[68] The remainder of de Winton's findings are best considered in relation to the question of how far British policy in the Swaziland question was based on his report.[69]

(2) The Governments and Swaziland 1887-1889

The correspondence between the British and Transvaal governments on Swaziland from 1887 to the arrival of the Joint Commission in November 1889 had much in common with the exchanges which have been noted.[1] From the British side Robinson in February 1887 complained about allegations received through

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(64) C 6201, pp.27 (memorandum of provisional understanding), 30, 31, 32, 38 (minutes of the Commission's first, second and fifth meeting in Swaziland, 2-11 Dec.1889).
(65) Ibid., p.45. On the concessions court see below, Chapter V (1).
(66) Ibid.
(67) Ibid., pp.38, 46, 47.
(68) Ibid., p.15.
(69) See below, Chap. III (2) and Chap. VII (2).

(1) Above, pp. 25-6.

Shepstone that Krogh the landdrost of Wakkerstroom, had threatened a Boer "raid" on Swaziland after Joubert's failure to induce Umbandine to sign a document making over his country to the Boers.[2] The Republic denied the charges made against its officials, furnished elaborate data to prove the inaccuracy of the complaints and added a charge of its own: that these complaints pointed to deliberate attempts to create misunderstanding between the two governments.[3]

It would be unprofitable to attempt from the evidence of the sworn statements and other data provided by the parties to unravel the truth, on the one hand of the accusations against Boer officials, and on the other of the insinuation that Shepstone and others were making false charges to inveigle the British government into intervention.[4] There was antagonism between Shepstone and the Boers on the Swaziland border, among whom were some officials, and it is likely that some irregularities accompanied the incursions of the winter-graziers into Swaziland.[5] But the 'invasions' which were rumoured to be impending in the opening months of 1887 and again in November did not materialise. Moreover, the Republic's assurances that its government knew of no intention to proceed with an invasion and would prevent it if plans were made were accepted by the British authorities. The latter were not anxious to intervene on the basis of rumours of a raid. For these reasons the exact degree of truth in the accusations and counter-accusations which figured in the correspondence between the governments is relatively unimportant.[6] But it

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(2) C 5089, pp.14-15, 18.
(3) Ibid., pp.22-9, 30, 43, 47/9, for the correspondence between the Republic and the High Commissioner between February and April 1887.
(4) Robinson implicitly made the charge against Shepstone, accepting the Republic's view that "certain persons" were "endeavouring to create difficulties" between the governments. C 5089, pp.46-7, Robinson to Holland, 20 April 1887.
(5) Cf. Mathers, op.cit., pp.227ff; Penfold (1) p.7.
(6) C 5089 and C 6200 contain this correspondence.

is clear that by 1887 the situation in Swaziland was compelling both governments to formulate policies toward the country.

In January 1887 Sir Henry Holland, who had held a minor post in Lord Salisbury's cabinet which was formed in August 1886, took over from Stanhope the post of Secretary of State for the Colonies.[7] Holland had been legal adviser to the Colonial Office and had later inherited a fortune and entered politics. He was selected by Salisbury for the office in a cabinet reshuffle early in 1887. As Salisbury explained to Queen Victoria, this was owing to his "standing, acquaintance with the subject and popularity with the Party" and also because the post was "an office of much labour" and therefore unsuitable for the decrepit Lord Iddesleigh whom Salisbury himself had displaced from the Foreign Office.[8] In February 1888, however, Salisbury informed the Queen that Holland had suffered during the Parliamentary session of 1887 "and fears that he cannot face another". He therefore asked whether Holland could not be promoted to the House of Lords: "It would facilitate arrangements exceedingly, and he is well off and a deserving man".[9] The Queen complied and Holland was elevated to the peerage as Lord Knutsford. He remained at the head of the Colonial Office until the defeat of Salisbury's Government in the election of July 1892.[10] The importance of Knutsford in the present connection is that he was the first Secretary of State for the Colonies after Derby who held office long enough to be forced into giving his attention to the Swaziland question, and influencing its course by the policy he adopted.

In February 1887 Holland reversed the line of conduct of the earlier 1880's, by which British officials in South Africa had advised the appointment of an officer in Swaziland without eliciting any response from the Colonial Office. He informed Robinson by telegram that the government was being urged to appoint a commissioner under article II of the London

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(7) Stanhope became Secretary of State for War.
(8) Letters of Queen Victoria, Vol.I, pp.252-3, Salisbury to Queen Victoria, 9 Jan. 1887 and 10 Jan.1887.
(9) Ibid., Vol.I, p.383, Salisbury to the Queen, 10 Feb.1888.
(10) Hall, The Colonial Office, pp.61,77; Holland in Black and White, pp.92, 208-9; Ensor, England 1870-1914, p.609.

Convention, observed that the interests of British subjects in Swaziland were increasing and asked Robinson for his opinion.[11] Robinson had penned a despatch on Swaziland to his predecessor in the previous month. In this he had pointed out that as the Europeans in Swaziland were increasing in number "and appear to be living without the control of any law or authority ..... and as it is undesirable that Swaziland should become an Alsatia", British policy toward the country should be made explicit. He argued against the proclamation of a British protectorate in view of the presence in the native territory of a European population large enough to cause difficulties unless special administrative machinery was set up for their government and he deprecated the annexation of "a country which is not accessible through British territory". He stated his opposition to the British government's [illegible]ing fresh responsibilities and concluded that the best solution would be to [illegible]ourage Umbandine to make a request for an annexation of his country by the Republic, with the British government interceding to secure protection for "native rights and interests".[12] He therefore responded to Holland's enquiry by advising against the appointment of a commissioner unless it was the intention to follow the appointment by annexation, and referred the new Secretary of State to his despatch to Stanhope.[13]

In April 1887 the Republic notified Robinson of the despatch of a commission to Swaziland to investigate Swazi reports that holders of grazing licences were complaining of the granting of mineral concessions over the same ground.[14] Holland had earlier displayed some concern at the "invasion" rumours and he now extended another feeler on the desirability of appointing a commissioner under article II of the Convention of 1884. Robinson again advised against the step unless a British annexation was meant to follow.[15] Later in the month he forwarded a request from Umbandine through messengers to Natal that a British

(11) C 5089, p.10.
(12) C 5089, pp.3-4.
(13) Ibid., p.10.
(14) Ibid., p.40.
(15) Ibid., pp.40,43.

Resident, preferably Offy Shepstone, be appointed in Swaziland. He advised against a protectorate or the appointment of a Resident, particularly Shepstone, who, he implied, was involved in "local interests and local strifes".[16]

In his next printed despatch in May, Holland indicated his agreement with Robinson that it was undesirable for the British government to undertake responsibilities in Swaziland by declaring that he was prepared neither to annex nor to proclaim a protectorate over the country.[17] But he now suggested that the Republic and the British government conduct a joint inquiry into affairs there, adding that the two governments might afterwards agree on the appointment of a Resident who would report to both governments. Robinson replied in August that he failed to see "that there is anything new for a Joint Commission to inquire into". The rumours of a Boer invasion had died down and Shepstone and the White Committee were making a "legitimate attempt at self-government" which should be allowed to proceed without the interference of an official resident who would find it difficult to satisfy both governments and would have little power in Swaziland itself.[18] In two later despatches Robinson forwarded to Knutsford newspaper reports conveying the impression that the Europeans in Swaziland were being governed satisfactorily by Shepstone and the Committee. Holland was satisfied and agreed that no intervention was necessary "at present", adding that the Republic should be so informed.[19]

In November 1887 a raid on Swaziland by 700 Boers was rumoured to be imminent, but Robinson was able to assure Holland that Kruger had informed him of steps taken by his government to prevent trouble on the Swazi border, and that Shepstone had returned to Swaziland having "amicably arranged" matters

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(16) Ibid., p.44.
(17) Ibid., p.50. A further argument against annexation which was not mentioned in the published despatches was that it would have involved a breach of the London Convention, even assuming that the consent of the Swazi could have been obtained. (C. O. 438 pp.1-2,7; C 7212, p.140, Ripon to Loch, 1 Dec.1892.)
(18) C 6200, pp.9-10.
(19) Ibid., pp.11-19, Robinson's despatches and the newspaper extracts; p.10, Holland to Robinson, 9 Aug.1887.

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