

https://dspace.org/

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

Garson, N. G. (Noel George)

2015-01-27
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/16791

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

with the Republican authorities at Pretoria.[20] Robinson and Holland gratefully accepted these assurances, trusting that a "peaceful future" could be awaited in Swaziland. At this stage they shared a common reluctance to sanction intervention.

Meanwhile the Republic had for the first time taken the initiative in the correspondence on Swaziland. In June 1887 the State Secretary Bok forwarded the report of the Commission which had investigated the complaints of winter graziers that mineral concessions were overlapping with their own.[21] Bok added that the Commission had been unable to settle the question and suggested that the two governments do so in co-operation. This communication reached Robinson while he was drawing a not unwilling Holland over to his view that the best policy for Swaziland was one of laissez faire. The Republic was therefore informed that the British government was opposed to intervention for the present.[22]

On January 20th 1888 the Republic pressed for a Joint Commission to settle the same "question of grazing and mining rights"in Swaziland. In his despatch Bok referred to a communication from Umbandine of some nine months earlier in which he had stated that he "would ask the two Governments... if by giving grazing licences I have given away my right to the land or the minerals on it" as evidence of the Swazi king's desire for a commission.[23] The Republic's own commission despatched in April 1887 had acted on the basis of this letter. Bok stated further that the interests of the Republic demanded that peace should prevail in Swaziland and that the Republic was "quite prepared to take the responsibility of it upon itself"; but the solution of the "grazing and mining rights" dispute was necessary first and the British government was invited to co-operate in this matter. In his enthusiasm Bok went so far as

(20) Ibid., pp.32,35, telegrams. Robinson to Holland, 30 Nov. and 3 Dec. 1887; and pp.35-6 for extracts from press telegrams on the invasion scare. See van Oordt, Paul Kruger en de Opkomst van de Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, p.494, for Kruger's assurance to Shepstone that Boers guilty of committing irregularities on the Swazi border would be punished; Fenfold (1), p.7.

(21) C 6200, p.4; pp.4-5 for the Commission's report, containing evidence of antagonism between Shepstone and individual Boers, including S.Tosen. The Boer Commission assured Umbandine that no Boer raid would be permitted. For the appointment of the Commission see C 5089, pp.40,55.

(22) Robinson also informed Holland that the "minerals right dispute" was expected to be settled (C 6200, p.32).

(23) C [illegible] 56; for Umbandine's letter of 31 March 1887, C 5089, p.5.

to suggest that R.Williams, the British representative at Pretoria should be appointed as the British Commissioner.[24]

There is no evidence that the dispute referred to by Bok was causing any trouble in Swaziland at the time he wrote his despatch. In March and April 1887 Boers on the Swazi border had complained to Umbandine that the operations of mining concessionnaires whose grants covered areas over which the Boers held grazing licences would interfere with the exercise of their rights. Umbandine's reaction at the time had been to defend his right to make mineral and grazing rights separately and it was obviously his intention, in the letter quoted above, to make that point clear rather than to invite intervention.[25] As there were only two mines in operation in Swaziland at the time (one at Forbes Reef and the other at Pigg's Peak), and as the activities of prospectors could hardly have interfered with grazing, it is clear that on practical grounds the Boer complaints were rather fanciful. They represented a demonstration against Umbandine's concessions policy and its relation to the possible political consequences of the acquisition by British subjects of interests in Swaziland.[26] The complaints of the winter graziers themselves faded with the invasion rumours. Evidently the Boer government, anxious to find a pretext convincing enough to secure the British government's acquiescence in intervention, ~~endeavoured to~~ utilised them for this purpose.[27]

Robinson's reaction to the urging by the Republic of a joint commission was to insist on a formal invitation from Umbandine before acquiescing. Havelock in Natal was asked to find out whether the Swazi king wanted an inquiry.[28]

---

(24) See also C 6200 p.64, Williams to Robinson, 1 March 1888, stating that this was Kruger's suggestion; p.57, Robinson to Havelock, 27 Jan.1888, observing that the British government would appoint its own Commissioner if it decided to send one.

(25) For the Boer complaints, C 5089, pp.58ff., extracts from Mather's articles in the Natal Witness, 2 and 3 May 1887; Mathers, op.cit., pp.225, 227, 232-4.

(26) Miller, Swaziland: The California of South Africa, pp.20-1, suggest that Umbandine showed preference to British subjects in his concessions policy.

(27) On the "ground dispute" see further Honey, op.cit., p.55,6; Boyce, op.cit., p.16, quotes Dr Clark, a Liberal M.P. who was in Swaziland early in 1887 and who later represented the Boer government in London. Clark, writing in De Volksstem described conflicts between mineral and grazing concessionnaires which the Swazi king refused to settle, the implication being that the governments or one of them should do so; Kotze, Memoirs and Reminiscences, vol.II, p.157, Leyds, op.cit., pp.247-8 and Kuper, op.cit., pp.25-6 write of the dispute as if there was a danger of clash between the trekboers and the mineral concessionnaires owing to their conflicting interests, which seems very unlikely.

(28) C 6200, p.57, despatches from Robinson to Havelock and Kruger, 27 Jan. 1888.

In March and April 1888 the Republic tried to convince the British officials that Umbandine had already given his consent to an inquiry, and urged that it be held immediately as the winter graziers were about to embark on their annual incursion. The argument from Pretoria was now based on a letter from Shepstone acknowledging the Swazi king's receipt of Bok's notification that a Commission was pending and stating that although no communication had been received from the British government the arrival of the commission could be awaited.[29] The British officials began to discuss the possible personnel of the British commission and Knutsford approached the Treasury for its sanction.[30] But Robinson had insisted on a formal reply from Umbandine to Havelock's inquiries and despite Kruger's pleas for immediate intervention before "intrigue" persuaded Umbandine to change his mind, he remained adamant.[31] On April 21st Bok informed Robinson that Umbandine's answer, received through Shepstone, was that he did not want a commission and was "perfectly aware what and to whom Ambas has given grazing and mineral rights". Robinson communicated this to Kruger, adding that he could not now assent to the intervention of a joint commission.[32] In August 1888 after Havelock had informed him of reports that Umbandine was on bad terms with Shepstone and did in fact want a Commission, Robinson insisted on a formal request. He added that if a commission were appointed the inquiry would now go beyond merely settling the disputes between graziers and mineral concessionaires.[33] But Umbandine issued no invitation and the year 1888 passed with the Republic's having failed to secure the British government's consent to intervention.

The Republic was probably basing its hope that joint intervention in Swaziland would be to its advantage upon its knowledge that Robinson had

---

(29) Ibid., p.66, Bok's despatch of 16 March enclosing Shepstone's letter of 31 Jan.1888; p.71, Kruger's telegram, 6 April 1888.
(30) Ibid., pp.65, 71, 72.
(31) Ibid., pp.76, 77.
(32) Ibid., pp.77. Shepstone's attitude at this stage indicates that he had not yet approached any agreement with the Transvaal government. pp.80-1, 83, for his letters to Bok and to H.C.Shepstone in Natal, explaining Umbandine's attitude.
(33) Ibid., p.85.

recommended the British government's consenting to a Republican annexation of the country, and that Knutsford had declared himself opposed to a British annexation on the proclamation of a British protectorate.[33a] On February 13th 1889 the Republic brought its aims into the open in a despatch urging the annexation of Swaziland to the Transvaal.[34] To place this communication in its proper context it is necessary to make a short digression.

In January 1888 the Republic had protested against the British government's treaty of December 1887 with the Tonga Queen Zambili, by which the Tonga were placed within the British sphere of influence. The protest was on the ground that the treaty included the territories of Zambesa and Umbegisa, situated between the Pongola and Usutu Rivers along the eastern slopes of the Lebombo and alleged by the Republic to be independent chiefs. Treaties had been concluded with the chiefs which, had the Republic presented them for the imperial government's approval in terms of the London Convention (article IV) and had they been approved, would have made the chiefs Transvaal subjects. In raising this question again in October 1888 Bok had stated the Republic's interest in the territories which was to annex them and so take a territorial stride towards the sea. Robinson had refused to recognise the independence of the two chiefs, adding that while the British government had no objection per se to the Republic's legitimate ambitions to reach the sea, it could not permit the Transvaal to acquire territory which would "practically shut out Her Majesty's Government from exercising any effective control over the future settlement of the Swaziland question."[35] Bok's despatch of February 13th 1889 therefore embraced both questions: he suggested that the Swaziland

---

(33a) The British bluebook C 5089 was presented to both Houses of Parliament in June 1887. Its contents must have been known in South Africa before the year was out. In March 1888 Kruger drew attention to Holland's despatch of 19 May 1887 in which he had suggested a joint commission (C 6200, p.64). Bok's despatch of 2 Feb. 1889 (C 6200, p.111) referred to Robinson's remarks, in communications to Knutsford, on the strength of the Republic in Swaziland resulting from its geographical contiguity with the country. Hence C 5089 must have been studied at Pretoria.

(34) C 6200, pp.110-12, Bok to Robinson, 13 Feb.1889.

(35) Ibid., p.110. Cf. on this point C.O. 488 pp.16-17, 18. C 6201, pp.13-14, and C 7212, p. 41, Ripon to Loch, 1 Dec.1892; Section (3) of this chapter for more information on the Tonga treaty and Zambesa and Umbegisa..

question be settled by its annexation to the Transvaal with guarantees for the interests there of British subjects, adding that in this way the objection to the Republic's extending its authority over Zambaan and Umbegisa could be removed.[36]

Simultaneously with the request to be allowed to annex Swaziland, the Republic asked to be allowed to incorporate the territory on the western boundary of Swaziland, known as the Little Free State.[37] As had been the case in the New Republic, Stellaland and Goshen, a group of Boers had here established themselves as an independent community in what was legally native territory, set up machinery to govern themselves and later applied to be incorporated in the Republic.[38] But the Little Free State differed from the other little republics in being far smaller and considerably less important. Based originally on a cession of land made to two Boers by Umbandine in 1876, the area was extended by a further sale of land in September 1888. Later Umbandine ceded his sovereign rights over the area and gave his permission for the inhabitants to apply for incorporation in the Transvaal.[39] The total area ceded was 15,000 morgen and the population numbered about eighty. The "state" was established in May 1886 under the "presidency" of J.J.Bezuidenhout. In September 1887 Umbandine was informed that the Little Free State could not recognise the White Committee in Swaziland and would govern itself. The Boers of this little community appear to have been prominent in the agitation of the winter graziers against Umbandine in 1887 and some of their names occurred among those who were accused of planning to raid Swaziland.[40] In November 1887

---

(36) Quarterly Review, op.cit., p.235, for the comment that Robinson's despatch "had not been very prudently worded".

(37) C 6200, p.112, Bok to Robinson, 14 Feb.1888.

(38) "Legally" as far as the British and Republican governments were concerned, under the London Convention. The rights of the Boers who created the states beyond the boundaries of the Transvaal were always carefully grounded in cessions obtained from the local native chiefs. To that extent they were set up in legally acquired territory. But as the Boers concerned were generally subjects and sometimes officials of the Republic, the latter, in not preventing "encroachments" by them, was guilty of a breach of article 2 of the London Convention.

(39) Watson, The Little Free State, passim, and for the information utilised here pp.5, 7, 13-14, 23, 89, 103-5, 112-15, 120-1, 127. See also Boyce, op.cit., pp.8, 29-30; Symington, op.cit., pp.67, 102-3; Leyds, op.cit., pp.307, 309, 515-6.

(40) For example, S.Tosen and J.J.Ferreira. The latter was not a burger of The Little Free State, but he had obtained the grant by which its territory was added to in 1888. He was a spokesman for the Little Free Staters in their relations with the Republic. (Watson, op.cit., pp.105, 109.)

Krogh, the landdrost of Wakkerstroom arranged a meeting with Bezuidenhout to discuss matters relating to Swaziland. As the Republic was simultaneously informing the High Commissioner that it was taking measures to prevent the occurrence of irregularities on the Swazi border, it is possible that Krogh's mission was connected to these measures. In November 1888 J.J.Ferreira forwarded to the Executive Council a petition from the Little Free Staters for union with the Transvaal. The outcome was Bok's despatch to the High Commissioner in the following February.[41]

The New Republic had led to an extensive Boer penetration in Zululand which would have reached the Indian Ocean had it not been checked. The republics of Stellaland and Goshen beyond the Transvaal's western boundary would have given the South African Republic control of the Rand to the North had they been fully incorporated.[42] The Little Free State, on the other hand, was an insignificant tract of grazing country the acquisition of which would have had a negligible effect on the Republic's position in Swaziland. There the Republic was unable to employ the technique attempted in Zululand and Bechuanaland, by which Boers who had been encouraged or at least allowed to go beyond the boundaries to set up little states had their appeals to have these incorporated seized upon to further the expansion of the "mother Republic".

On April 18th 1889 the Republic was informed that the British government's reply to its representations on Swaziland and the Little Free State would be delayed until Robinson had conferred personally with Knutsford. This was after Robinson and Knutsford had agreed to the eventual appointment of a Joint Commission which would include the Little Free State in its inquiry, and would be appointed after their consultations.[43]

---

(41) R.A. 3319/95 (1) for the Little Free Staters' petition and Ferreira's communication; Leyds, op.cit., pp.515-6.
(42) Walker, op.cit., pp.401-6 for Stellaland and Goshen, and pp.407-10 for the New Republic.
(43) C 6200, pp.126, 130-1, 140.

The Republic's next move was Kruger's quid pro quo proposal telegraphed to Smyth on May 3rd, after Robinson's departure.[44] Kruger offered to withdraw the Republic's claims to all territory north of the Limpopo River and support British expansion there, if the British government agreed to the acquisition by the Republic of Swaziland, the territories of Zambaan and Umbegisa and "Amatongaland, including the Kosi Bay". After receiving the news of Kruger's offer Knutsford instructed Smyth to inform Kruger that his proposal was being considered, but that the British government could not state "at present" whether it could be entertained.[45] In August, Leyds, Bok's successor as State Secretary, reminded Smyth of Kruger's offer and almost two months later Knutsford instructed that the Republic be informed "that the questions relating to the territories on the east [not the north too ?] could be best considered" after the Joint Commission had met and delivered its report.[46] The Republic's attempts to press its claims to Zambaan and Umbegisa by informing Smyth of the petitions of those chiefs to come under the Transvaal similarly failed to divert the British authorities from their decision to postpone further action until de Winton's report had been delivered. Finally, the Republic's application to intervene in Swaziland in September 1889 and its plea that a commission was no longer necessary as all that was required was the British government's consent to the Republic's undertaking the responsibility of maintaining law and order there, were without effect. The British government insisted on proceeding with the long-awaited commission of inquiry and placed a ban on intervention until it should have arrived.[47]

The incorporation of Kruger's "friendly offer" of May 1889 into the instructions from the Colonial Office to de Winton issued in September gave the Swaziland question an extra-local complexion which, from the British side, made de Winton's mission one of considerable importance in its relation

---

(44) Ibid., pp.135, 153. See Chapter III (1) for Kruger's offer.
(45) C 6200, p.136.
(46) Ibid., pp.189-90, 204 (Knutsford to Smyth, 9 Oct.1889).
(47) Ibid., pp.203-4.

to British policy in South Africa generally. Before proceeding to a discussion of the Swaziland question in its new diplomatic phase it is necessary to explain aspects of British policy toward Swaziland itself which did not become fully apparent in the correspondence between the governments.

After it became clear that the White Committee would not succeed in governing Swaziland, Robinson again placed before Knutsford the choice of annexing the country or allowing the Transvaal to do so.[48] Knutsford was rescued from having to make a decision by the agreement to proceed with the Joint Commission. He was in agreement with Robinson over the undesirability of a British annexation of Swaziland, particularly in view of the protest which the Republic would make against a step which would have involved a breach of the London Convention.[49] It has been suggested that Knutford's opposition to the alternative course, which was to allow the Republic to annex the country, was due to his being a proponent of British "paramountcy" in South Africa.[50] But his policy toward Swaziland between 1887 and 1889 was indecisive rather than calculated and if he pursued "paramountcy" he did so clumsily. There are indications that Knutsford feared the opposition which might be raised by "philanthropists, gold speculators and other persons ... [in England] interested in Swaziland" should the Boers be allowed to have the country. Robinson admitted the likelihood of an outcry on the part of these groups if his advice were followed.[51]

Missionaries and the Aborigines Protection Society - representing philanthropic pressure - had not been able to prevent the British government's recognising the consequences of the Boer penetration in Zululand where the danger that the Boers might extend their occupation to St Lucia Bay had been the chief cause of British intervention.[52] In Bechuanaland

---

(48) C 6200, pp.103, 104, 108; C 5918, p.171.
(49) Cf. C.O. 438, p.2, where it is suggested that the appointment of a Commissioner under article 2 of the London Convention could legally have been followed by annexation, presumably with the consent of the Swazi.
(50) Scholtz, Die Oorsake van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, Vol.II, p.140.
(51) C.O. 438, p.2,6.
(52) Walker, op.cit., pp.407-10.

missionaries had not been the sole influence in securing the intervention of the imperial factor, for the commercial significance of the Road to the North and the Cape Colony's interest in it as represented by Rhodes had to be taken into account.[53] In the case of Swaziland the absence of influential missionaries on the spot meant that the Aborigines Protection Society headed the philanthropic pressure in England.[54] The Society pressed initially for a British protectorate over Swaziland simultaneously with its request that the whole of Zululand (including the New Republic) be annexed. Later it pleaded for the rescue of the Swazi from Boer aggression.

The pressure from Natal in favour of the taking over by the colony of the native territories beyond its northern boundaries similarly coupled Swaziland with Zululand and the interests of Natal traders in the only "Road to the North" open to them were stressed.[55] But Natal officials did not agree that the colony, still under representative government, should be allowed to annex and administer native territories on its own account. In March 1889 Havelock, who had earlier given a British protectorate over Swaziland a tentative recommendation, declared himself in agreement with Robinson that the most expedient solution of the Swaziland question would be to allow the Republic to have the country. Havelock argued that British intervention under article II of the London Convention would be costly and probably ineffective. He showed some sympathy to the Republic's efforts to reach the sea, recommending that they be allowed to take their course if it was the intention of British policy to allow the two Boer states to develop into "a sound and healthy Power in South Africa".[56] Knutsford, whilst he did not accept

---

(53) Ibid., pp.401-2, 403-6, 408-10.
(54) C 5143, pp.1-2, C 6200, pp.207-8, Aborigines Protection Society to Colonial Office, 22 Feb.1887 and 23 Oct.1889.
(55) For resolutions of the Natal Legislative Council see C 4645, p.10. (15 Aug.1885); C 4980 pp.63-4 (12 Oct.1886), including a resolution for a protectorate over Swaziland of which Offy Shepstone was one of the movers; p.71 (28 Oct.1886) referring to Natal's interest in "the trade route to Swaziland and the north"; pp.155-8 (13 Dec.1886).
(56) C 6200, pp.131-2, Havelock to Robinson, 3 March 1889. For Havelock's earlier view, C 4980, pp.115-20, and 121-2, despatch and minute of 19th and 16th Nov.1886.

this view, paid little attention to the pleas of Natal colonists regarding Zululand and Swaziland.[57]

The pressure of "gold speculators" on the Colonial Office is more in evidence for the period during and immediately following de Winton's stay in Swaziland, than during the earlier one in which Knutsford was being advised by Robinson to permit a Republican annexation. While de Winton was in Swaziland representatives there of mining interests tried to convince him that British annexation or at least a protectorate was necessary if their mining enterprises were to succeed. Directors of Swaziland mining companies floated in England made similar representations to the Colonial Office.[58] In June and July 1889 the London and Edinburgh Chambers of Commerce made requests for the appointment of a British Resident in Swaziland.[59] Knutsford's reply to these representations and to those of the Aborigines Protection Society was that the intended inquiry into Swaziland affairs would take into account both the interests there of British subjects and the need to protect those of the Swazi.[59]

The potentialities of Swaziland as a gold-producing country were a subject of speculation in the late 1880's. In his report de Winton expressed the opinion that the mineral possibilities of Swaziland had been exaggerated. His remark that the mining industry was still in the speculative stage was borne out by the fact that only two mines were in operation.[60] The Annual Register for 1887, including an entry for Swaziland for the first time, referred to its having "rich goldfields", but subsequent entries did not repeat this claim.[61] The Argus Annual and South African Directory in its

---

(57) C 4980, pp.162, 172-3, for his refusal to allow eastern Zululand and the reserve to be incorporated into Natal.
(58) C 6201, pp.5ff.; C 6200, pp.244-50; Miller Papers, Letterbook B, for correspondence between the manager of the Forbes Reef Mine and the London directors of the company, referring to their efforts to influence de Winton and Knutsford.
(59) C 6200, pp.164, 177, 207-8, 233.
(60) C 6201, p.10.
(61) Annual Register (1887), p.342.

accounts of the years 1887 to 1889 included a remark that Swaziland had "long been known as a country rich in minerals, and particularly in gold"; but in the 1891 Annual it was pointed out that at Pigg's Park, "the only company which has attempted to carry on mining operations on any extensive scale, ... the results achieved up to the end of October last, were not of a character to give much hope for the future". Although the discovery of "a very rich strike" at the mine was simultaneously recorded, the subsequent Annual reported that it had been very localised.[62] As the comments of the Annual became more precise they pointed to the conclusion that the wealth of Swaziland in gold was insignificant and prospectors' findings indicated that only a small part of the country was auriferous at all.[63] But accurate rather than speculative information on the mineral potentialities of Swaziland only became available in the years following 1890, when it began to point to the existence of a small and struggling gold-mining industry confined to two mines. The pressure of joint stock companies and Chambers of Commerce on behalf of British mining and commercial interests in Swaziland continued to affect Knutford's policy.[64] His successor in the Liberal Cabinet formed in August 1892, Lord Ripon, was untroubled by "gold speculators" and the mining industry that had developed in Swaziland by then was too insignificant to affect the direction of British policy. Knutsford, on the other hand, was in office at a time when speculation was rife and opinion expressed in the press and contemporary publications were enthusiastic about the future of Swaziland as a mining country.[65] His procrastinating policy and his insistence on an inquiry on the spot before taking into consideration the Republic's claim to Swaziland are partly to be explained in terms of his confessed sensitivity

---

(62) Argus Annual and Cape of Good Hope Directory (1888), p.422. In 1889 this became the Argus Annual and South African Directory. See 1889, p.66; 1890, pp.65-6; 1891, pp.73, 526; 1892, pp.79, 405.

(63) Argus Annual (1893) pp.344-5; 1894, p.394.

(64) C.O. 458, pp.2, 6, 21.

(65) See Mathers, op.cit., pp.219, 220ff.; Glanville, The South African Goldfields (1888), pp.29-30, referring to Swaziland as "a rich mining district"; Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain (1890), pp.328-9, stating that Swaziland was "full of gold"; Goldfields of South Africa (1890) pp.523-4, 374, 536, for the prospectuses of the Forbes Reef and Pigg's Park companies; O. Letcher, The Gold Mines of Southern Africa, p.117, describes how "big profits from surface workings were expended on elaborate machinery in anticipation of a vast expansion of the industry" until, about 1890, it was discovered that the outcrops were very localised and further working would be very expensive. Meanwhile the Witwatersrand had attracted most of the capital. For figures for later production of gold in Swaziland, see Letcher, op. cit., p.262, Hailey, African Survey p.1491.

LETCHER

to philanthropic pressure and "gold speculators", whose extravagant claims could not be countered by quoting chapter and verse until after 1890.

Knutsford's attitude on the Swaziland question brings out some general features of his rôle as an imperial policy-maker. It is generally maintained that Robinson after his association with Rhodes in securing the interest of the Cape Colony on the Road to the North became an adherent of the Home Rule or colonial school of imperialism. This school favoured the carrying out of British expansion by the self-governing colonies of their own accord.[66] Opposed to it was "Unionist imperialism" which favoured an active rôle for the imperial factor in the expansion and government of the empire. This was represented by the policies of Mackenzie and Warren in Bechuanaland. Robinson's attitude to Swaziland was in keeping with his adherence to the "colonial" school. In Swaziland he saw no threat to colonial or British interests in the event of a Boer annexation. But Knutsford's line of conduct in the Swaziland question did not suggest that the Secretary of State was an active Unionist imperialist. His chariness of undertaking further responsibilities in South Africa kept him separate from the more ardent members of the Unionist school, and his chief difficulty was to satisfy their strictures on the colonial school, and steer clear of further Treasury commitments at the same time.

In the formation of the British South Africa Chartered Company Robinson tried to meet some of the demands on Knutsford's position. In March 1889 he recommended that the British government recognise "a monopoly, which may perhaps develop into a Royal Charter" over the territory of Lobengula's Matabele, north of the Limpopo River.[67] His aim was to avoid a repetition there of what had occurred in Swaziland, where the country had been parcelled out among individual concession - holders and where he considered that

---

(66) Walker, op.cit., pp.419-20; Lovell, op.cit., p.73.
(67) C 5918, pp.171-2.

annexation either to the empire or to the Republic was the only solution. As annexation implied the maintenance of an administration, it was an expensive affair. Robinson, through recommending recognition of a monopoly in Matabeleland, suggested an alternative. Despite the demands of Mackenzie and the Unionist imperialists for direct imperial rule in Matabeleland, Knutsford eventually accepted Robinson's suggestion. Robinson's trip to England in May 1889 was made inferentially in connection with the provisions of the proposed Charter.[68]

Before leaving for England Robinson made a speech in Cape Town in which he stated that he was opposed to the assumption of an active rôle in South Africa by the imperial factor. The consequent outcry of the staunch Unionist imperialists and the South African Committee provoked him into offering his resignation, which Knutsford accepted. Replying in the House of Lords to a question from Carnarvon, Knutsford explained that Robinson had come to England to state his views on various "questions of importance" which had arisen in South Africa, but that the government "could not immediately and without full consideration, give that assurance of support which he desired."[69]

Robinson's resignation did not portend any significant change in imperial policy in South Africa. As far as Swaziland was concerned, de Winton's report was the next point at which an expression was given to British policy. De Winton's recommendations proved to be not markedly different from Robinson's views expressed after his resignation, but before the publication of the report.[70]

---

(68) Queen Victoria's Letters, Vol.I, p.512, Knutsford to Ponsonby, 11 July 1889, informing him of his own and the Cabinet's approval of the Charter.

(69) Carnarvon, Speeches on the Affairs of West Africa and South Africa, pp.5646. Carnarvon had been privately approached by Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, to get Robinson re-appointed. (Walker, Lord de Villiers and His Times, p.206.) See also Hardinge, Life of the Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, pp.291-4; Lovell, op.cit., p.144; Hofmeyr, Life of J.H.Hofmeyr, p.386; Dilke, op.cit., p.288 on Robinson's resignation.

(70) Fortnightly Review, 1 Feb.1890, The Swaziland Question.

(2) Tongaland and Zambaan and Umbegiaa (1887-1889)

Kruger's offer of May 1889 and de Winton's report connected the Swaziland question to the territories bounded by Swaziland, Zululand, the Indian Ocean and Portuguese East Africa. Before proceeding with the negotiations subsequent to de Winton's report, it is necessary to give an account of conditions in these territories. In February 1885 the German government protested against the raising of the British flag at St. Lucia Bay in the previous December.[1] The negotiations following this protest concluded in an agreement by which Britain and Germany arranged "their respective Spheres of Action in portions of Africa". Germany withdrew her protest and undertook to refrain from acquiring territory or setting up protectorates on the coast between Natal and Delagoa Bay.[2] In 1875 the MacMahon Award had fixed the southern boundary of Portuguese East Africa along the parallel of latitude extending from the confluence of the Maputa and Pongola Rivers to the coast. Portugal showed no inclination to push this boundary southward and Germany observed the colonial agreement, which was one of the first concluded after the Berlin Conference (1884-5). Britain, as far as these powers were concerned, was therefore given the opportunity to claim a sphere of influence between the Portuguese territory and St. Lucia Bay.

In May 1887 Zululand, including the Reserve Territory, was declared a British possession. Three months later the signatories of the Berlin Act were informed that the territory was bounded by the New Republic in the west and north-west and Tongaland in the north.[3] The boundary between Zululand and the New Republic was delimited fairly precisely, but as late as February 1890 the northern boundary was still vaguely stated to be "the southern limits of Tongaland".[4] Although petty chiefs to the north of Zululand were brought under British administration, the British government, not being challenged in the region, made no effort to extend its authority over the whole

---

(1) Hertslet, op.cit., p. 202.
(2) Ibid.,pp. 868-9; C 7442, pp. 1-2.
(3) Ibid., p. 203.
(4) C. 6200, p. 259.

Author Garson N G (Noel George)
Name of thesis The Swaziland Question And A Road To The Sea 1887-1895. 1955

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.