

MIRRLEES, W. J.

<17.6.1907>

File 65, nbk. 4, pp. 53-4.

53 Chat with W.J. Mirrlees.¹

The rebellion was brought on by the acts of officials in the Mapumulo Division, viz. by Maxwell, by wrongfully imprisoning Meseni, and by Dunn and Shuter.² Then Captain Campbell (Mount Edgecombe) shot a native of Ndhlovu's tribe before hostilities occurred (no enquiry), Landsberg shot the deaf and dumb man for running away and being armed, and G. Moe flogged men and women.³ All these things should be brought out. Dinuzulu sent messengers about. Poll tax was not the cause. People

54 came to be in a ferment, and the action of officials when natives were in that state inflamed them into rebellion. The breaking up of Meseni's tribe (inheritance case) was a cause of rebellion - a local cause.⁴

A book was kept at Mapumulo in which the statements of natives were entered as they came from time to time to make reports.

He thought Bosman's book was the official history.⁵ He considers that many missionaries, not being English but Americans etc., exercised a bad influence and contributed to disloyalty. A tendency is a force; this force cannot be stopped; it must be guided, e.g. educated.

The Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion - one of the factors to be brought out in the history.⁶ The refusal of the Driefontein natives to turn out to fight; the reprobation of the chief - all due to the effect of this Church's teaching. (See papers.)

Mirrlees says that Osborn, in a lecture, said that anyone who advocated higher education for natives ought to be put in a lunatic asylum.⁷

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55 Mirrlees laid stress on missionaries who were foreigners gradually teaching our natives disloyalty - hence an indirect cause of rebellion.

Notes

¹A prominent businessman. He served with the colonial forces in the 1906 disturbances (here referred to as the 'rebellion'), and was a director of the Tongaat Sugar Company, which had interests close to some of the main areas of disturbance in the Mapumulo, Lower Tugela and Ndwedwe divisions.

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²Chief Meseni's testimony appears in this volume. For information on his arrest and detention without trial see Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 199; Stuart, History of the Zulu Rebellion, p. 346. T. Maxwell succeeded R.E. Dunn early in 1906 as magistrate at Mapumulo. F.P. Shuter was magistrate of Lower Tugela and 'regent' over a section of the Qwabe people who had been removed from the jurisdiction of Chief Meseni.

³W.A. Campbell was a captain in the Natal Mounted Rifles; M. Landsberg was a captain in the Umvoti Mounted Rifles; and G. Moe was a major in the Natal Native Horse. The Ndlovu referred to was either Ndlovu kaThimuni, chief of the Zulu people in the Mapumulo division, or Ndlovu kaDangazela, chief of the Thonsi people in the Mapumulo and Lower Tugela divisions.

⁴See Marks, Reluctant Rebellion, p. 228; Stuart, History of the Zulu Rebellion, p. 345.

⁵I.e. Capt W. Bosman's The Natal Rebellion of 1906, London, 1907.

⁶I.e. in the official history of the disturbances, which Stuart had been commissioned to write.

⁷Melmoth Osborn was British Resident in the Zululand Reserve, 1880-87, and Resident Commissioner for Zululand, 1887-93.