

Farmers, Miners and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), c.1895- 1961.

by
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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature:

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Abstract

This thesis explores the long and entangled relationship of farmers, miners and the state in Southern Rhodesia from 1895 when the Mines and Minerals Act was promulgated to promote the growth of the country's mining industry. The study ends in 1961 when an amendment to this same Act was crafted after the incorporation of considerations from the country's farmers and miners. The country's mining law, devised by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to further its commercial interests, became a subject of controversy around 1907 when agriculture, which had been hitherto neglected, started developing – spurred by disillusioned fortune seekers who had turned from prospecting for gold to pursue farming. The BSAC laws favoured mining and this was challenged by the growing settler farmer community. This laid the basis for the interaction of farmers, miners and the state throughout the study period. The thesis thus explores the protean nature of state policies in dealing with the country's farmers and miners. Mining and agriculture were the country's leading primary industries, with mining contributing more towards the country's revenue until 1945 when it was replaced by agriculture on the apex position. Therefore, state policies on the two sectors had a direct impact on the overall country's economy. The thesis engages broader historiographical conversations on agriculture, mining, conservation and intra-settler relations, law and taxation in Southern Rhodesia. It fills a historiographical gap in existing studies on intra-settler studies in Southern Rhodesia by providing a broader analysis of state-farmer-miner relations incorporating economic, political and conservation concerns. It shows the various shifts in state policies from Company administration into Responsible Government and highlights how different national and international economic developments impacted on state policies and in turn on miner-farmer interactions. The study also demonstrates how the adoption of a formal conservation policy by the G. Huggins government provided a new context for the regulation of miner-farmer relations by the state. It argues that, miner-farmer relations during the period under review impacted heavily on state policy and the country's economy.

Opsomming

Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek die lang en verweefde verhouding tussen boere, mynwerkers en die staat in Suid-Rhodesië vanaf 1895 toe die Myne en Minerale Wet gepromulgeer is ten einde die land se mynbou te bevorder. Die studie eindig in 1961 toe 'n amendement tot dieselfde wet bygevoeg is om die veranderende belange van die boere en mynwerkers te akkommodeer. Die land se mynwet wat oorspronklik deur die "British South African Company" (BSAC) ontwerp is om sy kommersiële belange te bevorder, het omstreeks 1907 omstrede begin raak toe landbou wat tot dan verwaarloos was, toenemend vooruit gegaan het. Dié verwikkeling het momentum begin kry toe ontnugterde goudprospekteerders eerder hulle tot boerdery gewend het. Die BSAC se mynwetgewing het die goudbedryf bevoordeel en die bedeling is toenemend deur die groeiende setlaar boerdery gemeeneenskap bevraagteken. Dit het die basis gevorm vir die interaksie tussen boere, mynwerkers en die staat gedurende die periode wat hier onder die loep geneem word. Die proefskrif ondersoek die vloeibare aard van staatsbeleid ten opsigte van die land se boere en mynwerkers. Mynbou en landbou was die land se toonaangewende primêre bedrywe met mynbou wat tot 1945 die meeste tot die algehele staatsinkomste bygedra het voordat dit deur landbou oortref is. Staatbeleid het derhalwe ten opsigte van die twee sektore 'n direkte impak op die algemene landse ekonomie gehad. Die proefskrif vind aansluiting by breëre historiografiese diskoerse rondom landbou, mynbou, bewaring, onderlinge setlaar verhoudings, wette en belasting in Suid-Rhodesië. Dit vul 'n historiografiese gaping in bestaande studies oor die onderlinge verhouding tussen setlaars in Suid-Rhodesië deur 'n breër ontleding van staat, boerdery en mynboubelange op ekonomiese, politieke vlak asook en bewaringsaspekte. Die verskeie beleidsaanpassings vanaf Kompanjiesbewind tot Verantwoordelike Bestuur word nagespeur en die wyse hoe verskillende nasionale en internasionale ekonomiese ontwikkelinge staatsbeleid beïnvloed het wat weer 'n uitwerking op die verhouding tussen mynwerker en boer gehad het. Die studie demonstreer ook hoe die aanvaarding van 'n formele bewaringsbeleid deur die regering van G Huggins 'n nuwe konteks vir die regulering van die verhouding tussen mynwerker en boer daargestel het. Daar word geredeneer dat die verhouding tussen boer en mynwerker gedurende die tersaaklike periode 'n betekenisvolle uitwerking op die staatsbeleid en die land se ekonomie gehad het.

Dedication

To Paidamoyo and Tavonga (Bongani) with love and to my parents Wilson and Tamare Madimu

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List of Abbreviations

BSAC	British South Africa Company
CONEX	Department of Conservation and Extension
ESC	Electricity Supply Commission
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GBT	Gold Belt Title
GPT	Gold Premium Tax
ICA	Intensive Conservation Area
ICAC	Intensive Conservation Area Committee
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MRC	Mineral Resources Committee
MTBP	Mining Timber Permit Board
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NRB	Natural Resources Board
RGA	Responsible Government Association
RAU	Rhodesia Agricultural Union
RNFU	Rhodesia National Farmers' Union
RNLB	Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau
WAP	White Agricultural Policy
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology

The subject of state-miner-farmer relations and the state has re-emerged in the wake of Zimbabwe's controversial Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from 2000. Moreover, the recent spate of mineral discoveries in the country (mainly diamonds, platinum and uranium) has raised enduring questions about the ownership of natural resources and how best to utilise them. Land has maintained its economic but also its political significance from the colonial era, even as the post-colonial government has ostensibly tried to redress the inequities of the colonial land tenure system. Aspirations for an agricultural and mineral revolution in Zimbabwe have resurfaced (much in the same manner they did in the early 1900s, as this thesis will show) pitting the same protagonists (farmers and miners) against each other and the state.

The discovery of vast deposits of alluvial diamonds in the Chiadzwa area of Marange district in Southeast Zimbabwe in 2006 was followed by a 'diamond rush' as thousands of fortune seekers thronged the Manicaland district. A few months after the discovery, the diamond fields in Chiadzwa became a talking point in international news as they were reported to contain diamond deposits valued at US\$800 billion.¹ This was a major boost to the country's mining sector which had registered significant decline since 2000.² Expectations were high that a discovery of this magnitude, coming as it did in the midst of an economic crisis in Zimbabwe, was going to pull the country back from the edge of an abyss. Controversy has however surrounded the revenue declared by Marange diamond mining companies. It came in very small proportions not congruent to the massive diamond mining operations undertaken by these companies. Finance Minister during the inclusive Government period (Government of National Unity)³ complained repeatedly that, although diamond mining in Marange was registering impressive growth, tax collection had dropped significantly. Responding to a question raised

¹ <http://www.zimeye.com/marange-diamonds-are-finished-lied-chinamasa-playing-animal-farm/>

² See S. Mawowa, 'The political economy of artisanal and small scale gold mining in central Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 4 (2013), 921-936. He notes that official figures show that, except for platinum and diamonds, Zimbabwe's mining sector experienced a general decline between 2000 and 2008.

³ During his budget presentation statements for the period 2009-2012, Tendai Biti appealed to the then Minister of Mines, Obert Mpofu to ensure that revenue from the Marange mines was directed to Treasury.

regarding this anomaly in the House of Assembly, the current Finance Minister, Patrick Chinamasa's reply was that:

Alluvial diamonds are finished and most of the companies we gave the right to mine there have no capacity to engage in further exploitation. Just one company has the capacity to do so and it is discovered that we still have the kimberlite which requires more capital.⁴

This revelation by Chinamasa came as a huge surprise and left a lot of unanswered questions as to what really had happened to the Marange diamond mining in which the state is also a significant player. Viewed differently, this failure by the diamond companies to declare tax to treasury might be used to confirm suspicions that diamond money has been appropriated by very few powerful government officials and their foreign partners who hold stakes in the diamond mining companies.

Diamond mining in Chiadzwa provides a lens into how the state adopted shifting and *ad hoc* policies to deal with the mining companies, artisanal diamond miners as well as the predominantly peasant villagers residing in Chiadzwa. Mining in Chiadzwa started as a 'free for all'⁵ affair, which saw many people from all over the country flooding the area to seek the elusive Eldorado. What emerged was an informal exploitation of the mineral resource which was at first supported by the ruling ZANU PF party and government officials for *political*, rather than economic, reasons.⁶ When the diamonds were discovered, the country was in the midst of economic crisis characterised by a soaring inflation rate, deprecation of the country's currency and massive food shortages. Many people who were struggling to put food on the table in this high inflationary environment descended on Chiadzwa, trying to escape the dangerous levels of poverty the majority of ordinary Zimbabweans experienced during this period.⁷ ZANU PF and government officials encouraged the informal mining activities as a way of trying to win popular support in the forthcoming harmonised election that was

⁴ 'No more cash from Chiadzwa', *Daily News*, 6 March 2015.

⁵ T. Nyamunda and P. Mukwambo, 'The state and the bloody diamond rush in Chiadzwa: Unpacking the contesting interests in the development of illicit mining and trading, c.2006 to 2009', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), 145-166.

⁶ T. Nyamunda et al, 'Negotiating the hills and voluntary confinement: Magweja and socio-economic and political negotiation for space in the diamond mining landscape of Chiadzwa in Zimbabwe, 2006 to 2009', *New Contree*, 63 (2012), 111-138.

⁷ For more on Zimbabwe's economic crisis, see P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's plunge: Exhausted nationalism, neoliberalism and the Search for social justice* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 2002); B. Raftopoulos, 'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in B. Raftopoulos and A. S. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2009); J. L. Jones, 'Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe: The Rise of the Kukiya – kiya economy, 2000 to 2008', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36, 2 (2010), 285-299.

scheduled for 2008.⁸ These influential party and government officials also had their agents, so they stood to benefit more from a continuation of the informal diamond mining activities. Circumstances changed after ZANU PF was defeated in the March 2008 election by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party. The government resorted to the use of brute force to drive away the informal miners who, by this time were being referred to as ‘illegal diamond miners’ (*Magweja*). The military was deployed in the district to drive away the suddenly illegal miners. There are reports of several deaths and other brutal punishments meted on those who defied the order to leave Chiadzwa.⁹ With a measure of irony, the security personnel deployed in the area then ended up engaging in both the illicit mining and trading of diamonds.

Meanwhile, this development of a survivalist form of livelihood was not confined to diamond mining in Chiadzwa. C. Mabhena (2012) discusses the expansion of small scale and artisanal gold mining activities as an alternative source of livelihood in the wake of declining agricultural yields in southern Matebeleland.¹⁰ Mawowa’s study on artisanal gold mining in central Zimbabwe challenges earlier notions which viewed artisanal gold mining as a survival strategy during the crisis period. He argued that “Artisanal small scale mining should be conceptualised as part of the development, sustenance and reproduction of a patronage system controlled by those with state and/or party positions.”¹¹ Artisanal gold and diamond mining shared more similarities as the two “represent a similar anatomy of criminalisation, patronage and accumulation.”¹² The state’s response to the expansion of artisanal mining activities was dictated by the political environment prevailing in the country at a given time. The state succeeded in eliminating the survival economy in Marange but the same still exists in gold mining.

⁸ In Zimbabwe’s electoral system, a harmonised election is a scenario where the presidential and parliamentary elections are conducted concurrently.

⁹ For a detailed discussion on the government’s use of force to stop illegal diamond mining in Chiadzwa, see M. Hove et al, ‘Violent state operations at Chiadzwa (Zimbabwe) diamond fields, 2006-2009’, *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 6, 1 (2014), 56-75.

¹⁰ C. Mabhena, ‘Mining with a vuvuzela: Reconfiguring artisanal mining in southern Zimbabwe and its implications on rural livelihoods’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 2 (2012), 219-233.

¹¹ Mawowa, ‘The political economy of artisanal and small scale gold mining’, 921. See also J. Alexander and J. McGregor, ‘Introduction: Politics, patronage and violence in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34, 9 (2013), 749-763; D. Towriss, ‘Buying loyalty: Zimbabwe’s Marange diamonds’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 1 (2013), 99-107 and D. Moore, ‘Progress, power and violent accumulation in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 1 (2012), 1-9.

¹² S. Mawowa, ‘The political economy of artisanal and small scale gold mining’, 23.

As this thesis will show, mining had contributed to the country's economy since the colonial era and continued to be a crucial sector after independence. Together with agriculture, the two sectors were the driving force behind the country's economy. The situation, however, changed towards the turn of the century when the government of Zimbabwe embarked on the FTLRP to settle landless Zimbabweans on land previously owned by white commercial farmers. The idea, as many of the war veterans argue was to complete the objectives of the war of liberation by transferring land to black Zimbabweans from the former colonisers. This discourse was part of the anti-west rhetoric employed by the ruling ZANU PF party after the founding of the MDC, which posed a formidable challenge to the ruling party. The FTLRP¹³ thus marked the genesis of the indigenisation programme meant to empower Zimbabweans who have been marginalised from the main economic arena. The land reform exercise, however, resulted in further deterioration of the country's economy, characterised in the post 2000 era by hyper-inflation and massive food shortages. This indigenisation drive was further entrenched by the enactment of the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act in 2007, which brought manufacturing and mining into the fold. The government did not draw lessons from the FTLRP which had caused more harm to the country's economy. The Chamber of Mines estimated that the country lost 54 percent of its production potential between 2000 and 2010 after the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell from US\$8.7 billion in 1996/97 to US\$4 billion in 2010.¹⁴ The Finance Minister stated that in 2010 "the agricultural sector recorded a sustained cumulative decline of 85 percent between 2002 and 2009."¹⁵ In light of this, the indigenisation of other sectors of the country's economy was even criticised by the former Central Bank Governor, G.

¹³ For more on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, see T. K. Chitiyo, 'Land violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's war veterans' debate', *Fast Track Two*, 9, 1 (2000), http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/archive/two/9_1/zimbabwe.html; S. Moyo, 'The political economy of land acquisition and redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1 (2000), 5-28; D. Moore, 'Is the land the economy and the economy the land? Primitive accumulation in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 19, 2 (2001), 253-266; J. McGregor, 'The politics of disruption: War veterans and the state in Zimbabwe', *African Affairs*, 101 (2002), 9-37; J. Chaumba, 'New politics, new Livelihoods: Agrarian change in Zimbabwe', *Review of African Political Economy*, 30, 98 (2003), 585-608; W. H. Shaw, 'They stole our land': debating the expropriation of white farms in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2003), 75-89; E. Chitando, 'In the beginning was the land': The appropriation of religious themes in political discourses in Zimbabwe', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 75, 2 (2005), 220-239; J. Muzondidya, 'Jambanja: Ideological ambiguities in the politics of land and Resource Ownership in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2 (2007), 325-341; N. Sibanda, 'Where Zimbabwe got it wrong – lessons for South Africa: A comparative analysis of the politics of land reform in Zimbabwe and South Africa,' MA (International Studies), Stellenbosch University, 2010; W. Z. Sadomba, *War veterans in Zimbabwe's land occupations: Complexities of a liberation movement in an African post-colonial settler society*, (London: James Currey, 2011).

¹⁴ Chamber of Mines Annual Report, 2010.

¹⁵ Government of Zimbabwe, *National Budget Statement*, December 2010.

Gono who, all along had been a staunch supporter of government policies. Overall as argued by B. Magure:

whilst there is a felt need for Zimbabwe to redress colonially induced injustices and racial imbalances in the ownership of the means of production, a 'one size fits all' approach to indigenisation of the economy is fundamentally flawed as it deters investors and may further damage the country's already extensively fragile economy.¹⁶

The indigenisation debate in relation to the mining industry was resuscitated in 2010 and since then there have been numerous clashes between huge mining concerns such as Murowa Diamond, Pan American Mining, Zimplats, Blanket Mine, Mimosa Holdings and Duration Gold Mine.¹⁷ The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Ministry has been battling to force these companies, which are foreign owned, to come up with plans to transfer 51 percent share ownership to indigenous Zimbabweans. This move has greatly affected the country's reputation amongst potential investors and resulted in uncertainty for the affected companies. Agriculture and mining have thus been significantly affected by the drive to foster indigenisation of the country's economy. Although the indigenisation drive is good for the country's economy, the manner in which it has been conducted by the ZANU PF government triggered contestations over property rights as the white commercial farmers and miners whose property was taken away could not resist. The current government thus arrogated to itself power through constitutional amendments in the same manner as the colonial regimes had done.

Scope of the study

This thesis explores the long and entangled relationship between miners, farmers and the state. As will become clear, the unfolding of current dynamics in Zimbabwe is a result of what transpired from the colonial period. The thesis does not start from any teleological assumptions about a static, synchronic state of relations; instead it demonstrates a diachronic, shifting set of relationships, showing that those groups were heterogeneous, changeable and diverse. It thus engages the protean nature of colonial state policies, exploring how they influenced the interaction of settler farmers and miners from 1895 to 1961, and how the sectors reacted. Using a chronological survey of miner-farmer relations in Southern Rhodesia, the study contributes to the understanding of colonial economies that were mainly predicated on mining and agriculture. It is therefore intended as a detailed and nuanced study of the interaction of farmers,

¹⁶ B. Magure, 'Foreign investment, black economic empowerment and militarised patronage politics in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 1 (2012), 67-87.

¹⁷ <http://www.zimplats.com/history-of-pgm-mining>

miners and the state, highlighting the shifting and often fractured nature of colonial policies towards the two industries and their reaction and agency in resisting or complying. The study also explores the spin-off effects of this relationship of the triad on African labour supplies during the period under study. Both farmers and miners required adequate supplies of African labour which was not usually readily available. The state on the other hand took keen interest in the labour issue to promote uninterrupted growth of the colonial economy.

The thesis will explore the changes which characterised succeeding colonial governments, highlighting reasons that influenced the adoption of specific policies regulating agriculture and mining. The country's first administrative system, led by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) laid the foundation of a policy framework which dictated miner-farmer relations for six decades from the occupation date. Such relationships were always shifting and mainly characterised by friction. As shall be demonstrated in Chapter Three, state-farmer-miner relations impacted on the country's politics culminating in the birth of Responsible Government in 1923. Through an analysis of the nexus of representation (in the Legislative Council), administration and taxation in Southern Rhodesia, the thesis intends to demonstrate the centrality of taxation in sparking settler agitation against Company rule. This shall be elaborated in Chapter Four by an analysis of how the levying of a special tax on gold miners impacted on the sector's performance as well as its relationship to farmers and the state.

The study demonstrates that miner-farmer relations were uneasy and usually confrontational especially in the first three decades of colonial rule. During this period the Company administration was preoccupied with making profits for its shareholders and made no attempts to end the dispute. It was the farmers who suffered most as a result of the pro-mining legislation and policies that were promoted by the BSAC. These, as stated earlier, were the major cause of the farmer-miner disputes. As a result of this state of affairs during the period of Company administration, farmers organised themselves in an attempt to challenge miners and the state.¹⁸ By 1918, the sector was highly organised and the farmers' representative body, Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU), had amassed political power. This success can be demonstrated by the successful lobbying by RAU for Responsible Government. In the post-1923 period this factor worked to the advantage of farmers. They constituted a significant political constituency

¹⁸ See M. E. Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1974.

which could not be ignored by the settler government. As a result, government extended various subsidies at a time of great economic stress instanced by the international economic recession in the 1930s. Despite this enhanced political clout, the thesis demonstrates that the farming constituency was not homogeneous but was fissured mainly through ethnic, cultural as well as regional differences. Meanwhile, the mining sector, especially gold mining, registered success during the same period and it contributed significantly towards the country's revenue, making up for the losses made by farmers. The government proceeded to levy the country's gold producers a Gold Premium Tax (GPT) from 1931 to 1937 and then during World War II. Chapter 4 will illustrate how this further complicated state-miner-farmer relations during the period and ultimately led to a significant decline in gold production by 1945.

The thesis will also explore how, after 1941, the colonial state played the role of regulator regarding property rights issues between farmers and miners. This marked a major shift in government policy from one based on limited intervention to one characterised by direct involvement in the settlement of farmer-miner disputes. This was rooted in the formal conservation policy adopted after the promulgation of the 1941 Natural Resources Act, which made provisions for a Forest Act (1949). The latter created useful agents through which the government played the role of arbiter between farmers and miners who clashed over the utilisation of natural resources. The thesis explores how different laws and state policies provided a platform of engagement between settlers and the colonial state. The study commences in 1895. This was the date when the Mines and Minerals Act was enacted by the Company administration. It ends in 1961 mainly because the government passed an amendment to the country's mining law which was a product of discussion and compromise by farmers and miners. It therefore lessened the incidence of conflicts between the two groups. Previous amendments to the Mines and Minerals Act did not reflect the desires of the two sides but were crafted by the government. This time frame is long enough to explore big shifts in government policies towards the miners and farmers and it also makes it easier to delineate any changes in the manner the two groups interacted.

Literature Review

This thesis focuses on intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia. It will engage with different groups of historiographical approaches that are related to the subject matter. This aspect has largely been neglected in many historical studies on politics, land, agriculture and mining in

Africa and Southern Rhodesia. However some scholars¹⁹ have emphasised the argument that settler communities were characterised by conflicts and that these were crucial in the making of colonial societies.

Complexity has long been flattened historiographically. C. Leys' (1959) book tremendously influenced the subject of intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia.²⁰ Leys' study discussed the foundations of the country's politics, structure of the government, interest and pressure groups, political parties and the Rhodesia Labour Party. His argument on politics in Rhodesia was predicated on the notion of a homogeneous settler society. He noted that "In the absence of traditional and ethnic barriers, and in the economic context which has been described, a white community has been built up which is remarkable for its political solidarity."²¹ For him settlers lived and acted in harmony but they feared African competition. This view by Leys was subjected to criticism by scholars who were bent on disproving this claim. For example, D. J. Murray²² demonstrated in his 1970 piece that different interest groups in Southern Rhodesia competed for government support in the creation of best conditions for the conduct of business. These opposing views by Leys and Murray laid the basis and influenced future historiography on Southern Rhodesia's intra-settler history.

Shortly after the publication of Murray's book, Lee²³ produced a PhD Thesis (1974) which also challenged Leys' argument. Lee's study focused on the development of settler politics during the period of the BSAC administration. Just like Murray, Lee disaggregated Southern Rhodesia's settler community into various interest groups which constantly lobbied the administration to effect various changes in the administrative system. She highlighted how the RAU was always confronting the administration demanding reforms. Lee's study however ends in 1923 and therefore failed to capture changes that occurred over time. This thesis contributes to this historical conversation by making a detailed study of state-miner-farmer relations. It provides a broader analysis which details the farmer-miner contestations highlighting the state's role in sparking this dispute. It provides a fresh analysis of the pre-1923 period by analysing the desire by elected members of the Legislative Council to have

¹⁹ F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler, 'Between metropole and colony: Rethinking a research agenda' in F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (eds), *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

²⁰ C. Leys, *European politics in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959).

²¹ Leys, *European politics*.

²² D. J. Murray, *The governmental system in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

²³ Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups.'

administrative authority handed over to the tax paying settlers. Chapter Three makes extensive use of Legislative Council debates on important matters such as the BSAC's claim to land ownership and the dispute over the use of collected revenue, either for administrative or for commercial purposes. As will become clear in the thesis, these debates revealed the settler representatives' desire for self-rule.

R. Hodder-Williams²⁴ (1983) had all along been the only historian to attempt a sector-specific intra-settler history of Southern Rhodesia. His study on the interaction of settler farmers and the government noted differences and points of conflict between the state and settler farmers. A new generation of a triumvirate of historians in this historiographical clade has analysed the role of white farmers in Zimbabwe's history (colonial and post-colonial). Influenced by Murray's study, J. A. McKenzie's (1989) doctoral thesis examined commercial farmers' lobbying constituted in the two major representative organisations, the Rhodesia National Farmers Union (RNFU) and the Rhodesia Tobacco Association (RTA).²⁵ He laid the foundation for his study by giving a historical account of settler commercial agriculture in Rhodesia and how farmer representatives merged to form the RNFU. His study, which commences in 1963, discussed issues which include the farm labour supply situation, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and how it affected settler agricultural production in view of the sanctions that followed it.²⁶ Agricultural leaders and the government formed a symbiotic relationship in the face of economic sanctions, McKenzie noted that:

The political preferences of agricultural leaders were clearly significant in their dealings with the government particularly in the early years of sanctions, most RNFU and RTA presidents saw maximum advantage in cooperating with a cabinet which they regarded as being basically sympathetic to farmers.²⁷

Together, these are the only two historical overviews of white farmers in Southern Rhodesia from 1890 to 1980. These two did not explore the interaction of farmers and miners which is only mentioned in passing. However, as will be demonstrated by this thesis, miner-farmer interactions provide a useful lens to examine the country's political developments. Until 1945, agriculture and mining were the country's major economic activities and therefore the colonial state kept its eyes fixed on the two sectors. A political analysis of one sector during this period

²⁴ R. Hodder-Williams, *White farmers in Rhodesia, 1890 to 1965: A history of the Marndellas district*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1983).

²⁵ J. A. McKenzie, 'Commercial farmers in the governmental system of colonial Zimbabwe, 1963 -1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

²⁶ McKenzie, 'Commercial farmers', 50.

²⁷ McKenzie, 'Commercial farmers,' 102.

is automatically deficient of more details related to the missing sector. This thesis will thus make up for such deficiencies through an analysis of state-miner-farmer relations.

A. Selby's²⁸ (2006) study is on commercial farmers and the state in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. He offered "an analysis of how they interacted with the state and an assessment of how they competed for access to and control of land and other resources."²⁹ He provided a useful disaggregation of the settler farmers which contradicts earlier assertions by Leys and illuminates the heterogeneity of the settler farming community.³⁰ Selby's study is rich in primary source material since he was allowed unlimited access to Commercial Farmers Union Archives (CFU). R. Pilosof's³¹ (2012) ground-breaking study on personal experiences of white farmers in Zimbabwe challenged the three earlier studies and provides a new analytical framework. Pilosof criticised Hodder-Williams' study as a "micro-narrative masquerading as a national study."³² Hodder-Williams failed to live up to the promise that he made in the title of his monograph. Although commending the richness of Selby's study, Pilosof, however, argued that "Unfortunately his analysis and use of that material is not as rigorous as his source extraction."³³ Consequently, Pilosof offered a new analysis to the subject which captured farmers' voices through different forms of their life-writings.

Both Pilosof and Selby have called for a more nuanced understanding of the white commercial farming sector.³⁴ As Pilosof noted: "it must be acknowledged that a singular and cohesive white rural identity (or voice) does not exist."³⁵ Selby has argued that the:

white farmers, as a community, as an interest group, and as an economic sector, were always divided by their backgrounds, their geographical regions, their land uses and crop types. They were also divided by evolving planes of difference, such as affluence, political ideologies and farm structures.³⁶

So any formulaic one-dimensional representation cannot accurately reflect these diverse and changing communities. The groups elude neat and homogenous identities, as this thesis

²⁸ A. Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state: internal group politics and land reform in Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006, 7.

²⁹ Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state', 7.

³⁰ Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state.'

³¹ R. Pilosof, *The unbearable whiteness of being: Farmers voices from Zimbabwe*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2012). See also R. Pilosof, 'The unbearable whiteness of being: White farming voices in Zimbabwe and their narration of the recent past, c.1970-2004', PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010.

³² Pilosof, *The unbearable whiteness of being*, 13.

³³ Pilosof, *The unbearable whiteness of being*, 12.

³⁴ Pilosof, 'The unbearable whiteness of being'; Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State', 10.

³⁵ Pilosof, *The unbearable whiteness of being*, 20.

³⁶ Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state', 7.

demonstrates for an earlier period than those focused on by Pulosof and Selby. Tacit assumptions of the existence of homogenous groups function to make falsely concrete the nebulous and imaginary constructs of “the colonizer” and “the colonized” – turning them into the colonizer’s fantasy. This fantasy offers a synchronic and simplistic taxonomic structure with monolithic classifications, which impede more complex understandings of power (and the lack of it). As A. Stoler and F. Cooper asserted, to counter this tendency, historians of the colonial (and, indeed, post-colonial) period should investigate the internal complexity of both “sides” of such encounters.³⁷

Environmental historians have also made a contribution to the historiography of intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia. Studies by M. Musemwa³⁸ (2009) and V. Kwashirai³⁹ (2006) on farmer-miner conflicts in Southern Rhodesia are the only studies to date that are directly focused on the subject. These two studies focus on the wastefulness of farmers and miners of forest resources, mainly trees to obtain fuel and mining timber and how this eventually triggered the development of environmentalism during the colonial period.⁴⁰ Musemwa and Kwashirai have made significant strides in breaking new analytical ground. They succeed in deviating from what all along appeared to be the norm in the presentation of intra-settler history. Kwashirai focuses on the Mazoe District and illustrates how ignorance and carelessness in the use of natural resources by settlers engaged in mining and agriculture resulted in environmental degradation and posed a threat to any attempts at conservation by the state.⁴¹ Kwashirai’s study, while offering a new perspective, is limited in geographical and temporal scope since it looks at Mazoe and ends in 1930.

Musemwa’s paper illustrates how settler farmers and miners clashed over land, timber and water rights in the Gold belt area from 1908 to 1939. His key argument was that farmers’ discontent over the activities of miners was not in any way guided by a desire to minimise environmental degradation, but rather, it was guided by the need to wrest control of the means of production from the miners.⁴² Apart from referring to miner-farmer conferences convened

³⁷ A. S. and F. Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda’).

³⁸ M. Musemwa, ‘Contestation over resources: The farmer-miner dispute in colonial Zimbabwe, 1903 to 1930’, *Environment and History*, 15, 1 (2009), 79-107.

³⁹ V. C. Kwashirai, ‘Dilemmas in conservationism in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1930’, *Conservation and Society*, 4, 4 (2006), 541-561.

⁴⁰ Musemwa, ‘Contestation over resources’; Kwashirai, ‘Dilemmas in conservationism.’

⁴¹ Kwashirai, ‘Dilemmas in conservation’.

⁴² Musemwa, ‘Contestation over resources.’

to discuss the dispute in 1925, 1926, 1933 and 1935 Musemwa does not show the shifting attitude among government officials who were proposing the amendment or repeal of the Gold Belt Title (GBT) after 1923. This was within the new political context of Responsible Government which is explored in Chapter Four. The conflict emanated not only from inherent intra-racial struggles between farmers and miners, but from the way the colonial administration sought to structure the colonial economy. Although useful in highlighting miner-farmer interaction in Southern Rhodesia, these two studies have not exhausted the seam of research since their chief focus was to link the miner-farmer tussle to the rise of environmentalism in the 1940s. This study provides a much broader discussion of state-farmer-miner relationship and how it impacted, not only on conservation issues, but also on the country's political economy. Musemwa and Kwashirai's coverage and assessment of farmer-miner disputes is therefore limited by the parameters within which they set to make the analysis (environmentalism).

An earlier study by G. Arrighi (1966), influenced by Marxist ideology, discussed the different economic classes in Southern Rhodesia, thus emphasising on the plurality of the settler society in the country.⁴³ He identified five different classes which included the white rural bourgeoisie (made up of small to medium mine owners and farmers), for him these constituted the foundation of the capitalist system. Other classes were international capital (mainly dominated by the BSAC), white wage workers, traders and the Africans.⁴⁴ He thus discussed the development of the country's political economy as guided by the different class struggles of the settler community. His Marxist oriented approach however concealed the inherent differences within particular classes. He lumped together miners and farmers and thus failed to capture the differences between the two groups (which this thesis explores). His study also failed to capture the ethnic and cultural differences amongst settler farmers. The country's demography (white) constituted of settlers from various European countries, with the farming sector being made up of mainly British and Afrikaner settlers who were divided by ethnic and cultural differences.⁴⁵ Arguing in sync with Arrighi was P. Mosley (1983) on the settler

⁴³ G. Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia', *New Left Review*, 39 (1966), 36-65.

⁴⁴ Arrighi, 'The political economy', 36.

⁴⁵ See K. Larsen, "'You Rhodesians are more British than the British': The development of a white national identity and immigration policies and restrictions in Southern Rhodesia", PhD Thesis, University of Western Australia, 2013; A. S. Mlambo, *White immigration into Rhodesia: From occupation to federation*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002); A. S. Mlambo, Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II', *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 123-146; R. Bickers (ed), *Settlers and expatriates*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); R. Hodder-Williams, 'Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A partial portrait', *African Social Research*, 18 (1974), 611-644; J. Bonello, 'The development of settler identity in

economies of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁶ Although challenging Arrighi's argument on the existence of divisions between international capital and local capital, he also identified fault lines between economic sectors in the two countries.⁴⁷ Although his arguments were similar to what was earlier presented by Murray on the progressive role of the state in the economy, Mosley argued that this role of the settler state was significantly diminished after World War II (WWII). This thesis challenges this argument by Mosley and argues that the state's role in the country's economy (particularly relating to farmers and miners) was neither fixed nor did it diminish after WWII, it simply transformed to suit prevailing conditions at a given time. Chapter Five will elaborate on this aspect on how the state's position had changed, first as a result of the adoption of a formal conservation policy and also because of structural changes in the country's economy caused by the war.

The thesis also engages with a huge body of literature on the country's history which chronicled the country's mining and agricultural history differently. This literature however makes tangential reference to miner-farmer relations. This thesis therefore makes a significant addition by providing a broader analysis of the interaction of the state, farmers and miners. Early historiography on Southern Rhodesia, written by what might be crudely termed "colonial apologists" before 1960 was heavily influenced by a Eurocentric notion with a whiggish, triumphalist view on agriculture, mining and political development. This colonial historiography criticised African economic and political systems for lack of sophistication and credited settlers for being progressive and scientifically-minded. Settlers were hailed for being brave frontier types who opened up Africa to civilisation. The best known representative of this Eurocentric strand of liberal historiography was L. H. Gann.⁴⁸ His earlier accounts of Rhodesia's history attempted to defend and justify European actions of setting up European rule in Africa for the benefit of both, European settlers and Africans. Gann's 1963 defence of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act is a salient example of supposed settler generosity. He

Southern Rhodesia 1890-1914', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), 341-361; B. S. Schutz, 'European population patterns, cultural persistence and population change in Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, 1 (1973), 3-25; G. Hendrich, 'A history of Afrikaners in Rhodesia 1890-1980', PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2010.

⁴⁶ P. Mosley *The settler economies: Studies in the economic history of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1900 to 1963*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴⁷ Mosley, *Settler economies*, 6.

⁴⁸ L. H. Gann, *A history of Southern Rhodesia: Early days to 1935*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965). See I. Phimister, 'Economic and social historiography since 1970', *African Affairs*, 28, 311 (1979), 266. Also see L. H. Gann and M. Gelfand, *Huggins of Rhodesia: the Man and his Country*, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1964).

described the Act as “an essay in trusteeship”: arguing that it was mainly intended to protect African land rights against unfair competition posed by settlers who could buy more land.⁴⁹ In addition to this, memoirs and literary accounts were produced by former colonial officials who praised the European economic and political system, supported by agriculture and mining, as a testimony of ingenuity of politicians like Charles Coghlan and Godfrey Huggins.⁵⁰ This literature made passing reference to miner-farmer relations, the subject is only discussed in reference to the pioneers who first went to Southern Rhodesia as being brave and adventurers who managed to make the country habitable.

Ian Phimister described the year 1970 as an historiographical watershed.⁵¹ In that year G. Arrighi published his Marxist analysis of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Southern Rhodesia.⁵² This article tremendously influenced the writing of the country’s history as will be demonstrated in this section. His study was premised on how the capitalist system restricted peasant production and ultimately refuted the notion that capitalism had an ultimately beneficial influence.⁵³ Arrighi’s argument was primarily a challenge to the assumptions made by liberal scholarship as espoused by W. Barber (1961).⁵⁴ Barber drew from A. Lewis’ model of development theory whereby labour was transferred from a low productivity sector to a high productivity economy.⁵⁵ This analytical framework was also adopted by Mosley in his study on the settler colonies of Southern Rhodesia and Kenya.⁵⁶ These liberal arguments were attacked by Arrighi who argued that Barber and Lewis conceived “of the underdevelopment of the African peoples as an original state which the development of a capitalist sector gradually eliminates.”⁵⁷ Arrighi argued that the state resorted to the use of coercion in securing African labour mainly because market forces were not producing the desired effect.

⁴⁹ L. H. Gann, ‘The Land Apportionment Act in Southern Rhodesia: An Essay in trusteeship, National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland’, Occasional paper, (Government Printer, 1963), 71-91

⁵⁰ E. Tawse Jollie, *The real Rhodesia*, (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1971); E. Tawse Jollie, ‘Southern Rhodesia: A white man’s country in the tropics’, *Geographical Review*, 17, 1 (1927), 89-106; H. M. Hole, *Old Rhodesian Days*, (London: Macmillan, 1928); J. P. R. Wallis, *One man’s hand: The story of Sir Charles Coghlan*, (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1972). Tawse Jollie was a prominent politician during the early years of colonial rule: she was the first female member of Southern Rhodesian Legislative Assembly, and a leading figure in the campaign for Self-Rule.

⁵¹ I. Phimister, ‘Economic and social historiography since 1970’.

⁵² G. Arrighi, ‘Labour supplies in historical perspective: a study of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia’, *Journal of Development Studies*, 6, 3 (1970), 197-234.

⁵³ Arrighi, ‘Labour supplies’, 201.

⁵⁴ W. Barber, *The economy of British Central Africa* (London: Athlone Press 1961).

⁵⁵ See W. A. Lewis, *Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour* (Manchester: Manchester School, 1954).

⁵⁶ Mosley, *The settler economies*.

⁵⁷ Arrighi, ‘Labour supplies’, 199.

Arrighi's seminal paper laid the foundation for more scholarly work on Southern Rhodesia's political economy from the mid-1970s. He provided an analytical framework that gave birth to the discourse on political economy as studied by D. Clarke, I. Phimister and C. Van Onselen produced works on African labour, peasant production and underdevelopment, and mine worker consciousness which offered significant revisions to the liberal school of thought. Phimister's (1988) study also presented a formidable challenge to colonialist historiography.⁵⁸ He disaggregated the capitalist state into two different entities and gave agency to the dominated classes and groups.⁵⁹ He therefore produced a detailed study of the state, capital, labour and the peasantry inspired by class struggle analysis. C. Van Onselen's (1976) *Chibaro* is another comprehensive piece of work on Rhodesia's mining history.⁶⁰ The study which ends in 1933 provides a firm basis for any study on the mining history of the country. It makes useful contributions on the development of early worker consciousness and situates the country's labour dynamics in the context of the sub-region. This historiographical school analysed inter-racial relations in Southern Rhodesia's history using a class based analysis. They therefore make passing reference to intra-settler struggles, especially farmer-miner relations, which are the subject matter for this thesis. Although raising important issues on the country's development, they neglected an equally crucial aspect which significantly shaped colonial societies. As observed by F. Cooper "African history, particularly in Anglophone scholarship, took shape by differentiating itself from colonial history."⁶¹ Writing about intra-settler conflicts in colonial Africa was considered tantamount to writing colonial history⁶² and to "reaffirm the old canard that real history meant the history of white people in Africa."⁶³ This thesis therefore sought to elaborate on how the interaction of farmers and miners shaped settler society in Southern Rhodesia.

A counter-narrative to the earlier historiographical school was also provided by R. Palmer, whose 1977 monograph offered a revisionist interpretation and became a major source of reference for scholars writing on land and agriculture in Rhodesia.⁶⁴ He provided a revised account of factors that ultimately led to the development of a successful white agricultural

⁵⁸ I. R. Phimister, *Economic and social history of Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988)

⁵⁹ Phimister, *Economic and social history of Zimbabwe*.

⁶⁰ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*.

⁶¹ Cooper, *Colonialism in question*, 43.

⁶² A. Mseba, "Law, expertise and settler conflicts over land in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1923", *Environment and Planning A*, 48, 4, (2015), 665-680.

⁶³ Cooper, *Colonialism in question*, 34.

⁶⁴ R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977).

sector. For Palmer, the apparently triumphal rise of European agriculture was mainly a result of discrimination and appropriation. Writing on South Africa, C. Bundy (1979) explored how the peasantry in South Africa responded to the new market conditions availed by capitalist developments and how this rise was curtailed by the development of a systematic and deliberate agricultural policy which promoted the growth of settler agriculture.⁶⁵ Palmer's argument emphasised the significance of the Land Apportionment Act (1930) in ensuring the promotion of white settler needs at the expense of Africans, to whom the piece of legislation was a major disability inhibiting any form of agricultural progress. This offered a direct challenge to earlier assertions by Gann that Europeans and Africans alike had benefited from the colonial land tenure policy. Many other scholars subsequently echoed similar sentiments to Palmer and provided an alternative explanation to what had been presented by colonial apologists. For example, V. E. M. Machingaidze's (1980) study deals with the role of the state in the development of white capitalist agriculture.⁶⁶ M. Rukuni⁶⁷ also chronicled the development of settler capitalist agriculture. The two elaborated on how the colonial state ensured the promotion of white agriculture and the suppression of African production along with the Palmer model. Machingaidze's study discussed how white farmers benefited from state support, use of ultra-cheap African labour and how they managed to extract surplus from the African producers through primitive accumulation.

Most historical works on mining deal with the subject of mining separately and argue that, together with agriculture, mining formed the basis of the colonial economy. Phimister has written extensively on mining, his (1975) PhD thesis on the history of mining in Rhodesia was indeed ground breaking.⁶⁸ Although it ends in 1953, the thesis remains a major point of reference for anyone undertaking any study of Zimbabwe's economic history. The thesis looks at mining as it formed the basis for the colonisation of the Zimbabwean plateau and how the industry impacted on the political development of the country.⁶⁹ This thesis augments and

⁶⁵ See C. Bundy, *The rise and fall of the South African peasantry*, (California: University of California Press, 1979). Also see S. Trapido, 'South Africa in a contemporary study of industrialisation', *Journal of Development Studies*, 7, 3 (1971), 309-320.

⁶⁶ V. E. M. Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture with particular reference to the role of the state, 1908 to 1939', PhD Thesis, university of London 1980. Also see F. Keyter, 'Maize Control Act in Southern Rhodesia 1931 to 1940: African contribution to white survival', *Rhodesia History*, 8 (1977), 1-30; H. V. Moyana, *The Political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, (London, Mambo Press, 1984).

⁶⁷ M. Rukuni, 'The evolution of agricultural policy: 1890 to 1990', in M. Rukuni, P. Tawonezwi, C. K. Eicher, M. Munyuku-Hungwe and P. Matondi (eds), *Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution revisited*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2006).

⁶⁸ I. R. Phimister, 'History of mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953', PhD Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1975.

⁶⁹ Phimister, 'History of mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953'.

extends Phimister's explanation of the decline of gold production in 1945, when agriculture produced more revenue than gold mining. It argues that this was a direct result of fiscal policies, on large gold mining companies, adopted by the settler government in its attempts to cushion settler farmers from the impact of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Apart from the thesis Phimister has a collection of articles that deal with mining in Rhodesia. For example, he covered the mining history of Rhodesia in the early years of colonial occupation, when hopes were still high that the second Rand lay in Mashonaland.⁷⁰ The paper provides a useful link between Rhodes' Rhodesian and South African mining interests. More importantly, it shows how prospects of mining in Rhodesia rode on the back of South Africa's mining success story. During the early colonial period farmer-miner contestations took centre stage, being fuelled by the company's need to promote mining interests while neglecting farmer interests. This study will therefore illuminate how the Company administration presided over a disillusioned settler population. As discussed in Chapter Three, the country's settlers made repeated requests for administrative authority

The early years were characterised by more speculation than actual mining with the company officials managing to sustain high share values on the London stock market through exaggerated advertisements of the colony to London investors. Phimister discussed this illusory phase and how it came crashing down after the Jameson Raid and the Shona-Ndebele uprisings.⁷¹ He highlights the reconstruction era of Southern Rhodesia's gold mining industry. He notes the various adjustments that were made by the Company administration as it sought to rejuvenate the mining industry and bring it to profitability, these included among others, the replacement of the fifty percent share clause by a thirty percent vendor scrip, the encouragement of small workers who were allowed to operate even without registering companies.⁷² Phimister also writes on mining labour issues and how they impacted on the political and economic affairs of the nation. His article on the Wankie Colliery discusses the various mine labour dynamics characteristic of Rhodesia's mining economy. He starts by discussing how mining capital sought to make maximum use of cheap African labour, this was mainly because of the strict adherence to the capitalist concept of cost minimisation and profit

⁷⁰ I. R. Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1 (1974), 74-90.

⁷¹ I. R. Phimister, 'The reconstruction of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, 1903-10', *The Economic History Review*, 29, 3 (1976), 465-481.

⁷² Phimister, 'The reconstruction of the Southern Rhodesian mining industry, 1903-10.'

maximisation.⁷³ It was however, not easy to get the adequate number of labourers to work in the mines chiefly because more Africans were now going to the more remunerative Mashonaland farms, hence they resorted to recruiting migrants and Wankie mainly preferred those from Zambia.⁷⁴ These labour shortages coincided with a rise in the coal demand and a further deterioration of working conditions. Mine employees worked in unhealthy conditions with no protective clothing. Phimister proceeds to discuss labour dynamics for white workers and how they managed to carve a niche for themselves during the wartime labour shortages.⁷⁵ White workers at Wankie won concessions for themselves which included pay rises and a cut on working hours, it was also during this time that active trade unionism developed amongst white workers and it marked the genesis of strikes and labour activism. This thesis will deal with farmer-miner contestations over African labour in Chapter Six. The chapter does not make use of a class based analysis, but rather, it will examine the struggles amongst settlers over the distribution direction and supply of African labour.

This thesis also engages with historical literature on conservation. The farmer-miner controversy was sparked by the Gold Belt restrictions on timber usage by farmers whose properties were located in mining areas. The two groups (farmers and miners) required timber for use as fuel either to run the mining mills or for curing tobacco. The adoption of a formal conservation policy in 1941 provided the context within which the settler government attempted to regulate timber cutting for mining purposes. This new system implanted by the enactment of the Forest Act in 1949 ultimately resulted in reduced tension between farmers and miners. Surprisingly, this subject has received limited scholarly attention. Musemwa's (2015) study is the only one to date which is linked to the subject.⁷⁶ It explores the development of environmentalism and then discusses how the Forest Act affected miners' access to timber. It does not however deal with how the new system impacted on the miner-farmer relations. Chapter Five of this study considers the changing role of the state as it sought to arbitrate the farmer-miner differences. It therefore goes beyond Musemwa's study by adopting a broader framework (not limited to conservation) but one which takes on board economic developments at that time, for instance the structural change in the country's economy that was instanced by

⁷³ I. R. Phimister, 'Coal, crisis and class struggle: Wankie Colliery', 1918-1922,' *Journal of African History*, 33 (1992),65-86.

⁷⁴ Phimister, 'Coal, crisis and class struggle', 67.

⁷⁵ Phimister, 'Coal, crisis and class struggle', 69.

⁷⁶ M. Musemwa, 'Sic utere tuo ut akienam non laedas: From wanton destruction of timber forests to environmentalism: The rise of colonial environmental and sustainability practices in colonial Zimbabwe, 1938-1961', *Environment and History*, 22, 4 (2016), 521-559.

WWII. Other scholars who write on the Forest Act demonstrate how it impacted on Africans who lived on areas that were designated as forest reserves.⁷⁷

There are a number of scholars who write on conservation issues on the sub-region and specifically Zimbabwe during the colonial period and beyond. This body of literature discusses conservation as it affected natural resources exploitation either by the white settlers or Africans. Interventions by the colonial state in the agricultural practice of both Africans and white settlers have sparked debate amongst scholars as they grappled to come up with a valid explanation behind the state's intervention. W. Beinart discusses agricultural development schemes that were rolled out by the state in African areas during the colonial period. For him, the colonial officials were mainly concerned with soil conservation more than anything else.⁷⁸ His major argument is that these development schemes were first intended to solve difficulties facing settler agriculture. He notes:

One explanation that could be offered for the extension of conservationist concern to peasant farming is that colonial and especially settler states intervened in African agriculture in order to secure the basis for agrarian production. The response to stock disease provides an analogy. Scab in African owned sheep could threaten white farmers' flocks....⁷⁹

This argument was, however, challenged by Phimister who argued that the roots of conservation were shallower than what Beinart implied, for Phimister the major driving force was the settler goal to manipulate and exploit the Africans.⁸⁰ This historiographical debate has influenced the writing of the country's conservation history with many scholars supporting Phimister's argument.⁸¹ Writing on Svosve communal lands and using spatial and temporal scales, J. A. Elliot presents a study on erosion and conservation highlighting the state's moves

⁷⁷ See S. Maravanyika, 'Local responses to colonial evictions, conservation and commodity policies among Shangwe communities in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe 1963 to 1980', *African Nebula*, 5 (2012), 1-20; E. Mapedza, 'Forest policy in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe: Continuity and change', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 33 (2007), 833-851.

⁷⁸ W. Beinart, 'Soil erosion, conservationism and ideas about development: A Southern African exploration, 1900-1960,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11, 1 (1984), 54.

⁷⁹ W. Beinart, 'Soil erosion, conservationism,' 64. Also see J. McGregor, 'Conservation, control and ecological change: The politics and ecology of colonial conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe', *Environment and History*, 1, 3 (1995), 257-279; E. Kramer, 'A clash of economies: Early centralisation efforts in colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935', *Zambezia*, 15, 1 (1998), 83-98; Mwatwara, 'A history of state veterinary services.'; S. Maravanyika, 'Soil conservation and the white agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1908-1980,' PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2013.

⁸⁰ I. R. Phimister, 'Discourse and the discipline context: Conservationism and ideas about development in Southern Rhodesia 1930-1950,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12, 2 (1986), 263-275.

⁸¹ See J. McGregor, 'Conservation, control and ecological change: The politics and ecology of colonial conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe,' *Environment and History*, 1, 3 (1995), 257-279; S. Maravanyika

to improve agricultural production through development schemes, J. McGregor also writes on conservation and how the state attempted to improve agriculture. She uses the case study of Shurugwi.⁸² Such works provide an important context for this study, especially in the era of formal conservation (after the passage of the 1941 Natural Resources Act). They provide a window through which the policy of native development can be discussed since Africans were also important stakeholders.

This study also draws concepts from comparative international studies that look at mining and agricultural activities as well as natural resources exploitation. Most of the existing scholarly works focus broadly on how imperialism resulted in the abuse of natural resources in settler societies. The settlers are depicted as pure capitalists who did not care about conservation but only utilised the resources for profit. This was mainly true for countries that were colonised by Chartered Companies. These wanted to maximise their profit levels and did not try to control reckless use of natural resources, in fact they encouraged the practices. T. Griffiths and L. Robin⁸³ and Beinart and L. Hughes's⁸⁴ studies are very important in this regard, they look at the environmental history of the British Empire. By referring to different case studies they use a diverse approach which makes reference to more case studies. The problem of deforestation was also rampant elsewhere and drew the energies of various governments as they attempted to curtail it. R. Grove⁸⁵, W. Williams⁸⁶, W. Dean⁸⁷, K. Brown⁸⁸ and W. Beinart and P. Coates⁸⁹ all write on the ever-growing settler demands for wood to be used for mining purposes and the clearing of forests to create land for agriculture. K. Morse's study on gold mining in the United States of America (USA) is also important since it acts as a useful example where mining activities had a negative impact on the environment, drawing the ire of farmers in the process.⁹⁰

⁸² McGregor, 'Conservation, control and ecological change.'

⁸³ T. Griffiths and L. Robin (eds.), *Ecology and empire: Environmental history of settler societies*, (Edinburgh, Keele University Press, 2011).

⁸⁴ W. Beinart and L. Hughes, *Environment and empire*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁸⁵ R. H. Grove, *Green imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁸⁶ W. Williams, 'Ecology, imperialism and deforestation', T. Griffiths and L. Robin (eds), *Ecology and empire: Environmental history of settler societies*, (Edinburgh, Keele University Press, 2011).

⁸⁷ W. Dean, 'Forest conservation in South Eastern Brazil, 1900-1955', *Environmental Review*, 1 (1985), 54-69, notes that, 'the forest was attractive to European settlers because of the extreme though temporary richness of the litter and humus that remained when it was cleared.'

⁸⁸ K. Brown, 'Trees forests and communities: Some historiographical approaches to environmental history in Africa', *Area*, 35, 4 (2003). She writes on the rising demand of wood for Kimberly mines.

⁸⁹ W. Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and history: The taming of nature in the USA and South Africa*, (Oxon, Routledge, 1995).

⁹⁰ K. Morse, 'The nature of gold: An environmental history of the Klondike gold rush,' *Environmental History*, 9, 2 (2004).

C. Montrie⁹¹ also highlights how various states in the USA passed laws that were intended to discourage surface coal mining since it had serious consequences for the land. There are other scholars who examine how resource conflicts in Africa affect politics and economics on the continent. B. Derman and A. Hellum discuss such conflicts arguing that the role of land and water in securing African livelihoods is unlikely to diminish.⁹² This study will make use of this kind of literature for comparative purposes and establish whether the Rhodesian settler government attempted to draw lessons from international trends as it sought to deal with farmer-miner conflicts in the country.

Research questions and analytical framework

The thesis sought to answer the following key questions: What was the attitude and policy of the state towards the farmer-miner relations throughout the period under study? What was the attitude of the state regarding the GBT? Were there any shifts by the state regarding farmer-miner conflict? If there were, what influenced these shifts? This study is mainly concerned about the role of the state in the regulation of miner-farmer relations through the enactment of various pieces of legislation. It is therefore not confined to a single overarching theoretical orientation. It draws upon S. S. Eriksen's ideas on state formation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Eriksen notes that "...state formation can be assessed empirically by analysing first the extent to which the state has been able to establish domestic sovereignty and second; whether it has the administrative capacity to enforce its rule."⁹³ The state must establish and sustain its position as the highest authority within its territorial boundaries with a capacity to make binding decisions for the entire society. As will be demonstrated in the thesis, the government in Southern Rhodesia achieved this status after Responsible Government was granted in 1923. After this date, the settler government enjoyed enhanced autonomy since the Imperial government had significantly loosened its grip on the colony's affairs. Eriksen posits that the state should possess administrative capacity, mainly economic resources to ensure effective implementation of its policies.⁹⁴ As shall be delineated in the thesis (Chapter Three and Four),

⁹¹ C. Montrie, 'Expedient environmentalism: Opposition to coal surface mining in Appalachia and the United mine workers of America, 1945-1975,' *Environmental History*, 5, 1 (2000).

⁹² B. Derman and A. Hellum, 'Land, identity and violence in Zimbabwe,' *Conflicts over land and water in Africa*, (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2007).

⁹³ S. S. Eriksen, 'State formation and the politics of regime survival: Zimbabwe in theoretical perspective', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 23, 2 (2010), 318.

⁹⁴ Eriksen, 'State formation and the politics of regime survival', 317. Scholars such as C. Tilly. 'War making and state making as organised crime' in P. Evans et al (eds), *Bringing the state back in*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and M. Mann, *The sources of social power: Volume II: The rise of classes and nation states, 1760 to 1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) discuss the rise of nation states in Europe.

the colonial state (starting with the Company administration and then the post-1923 settler government) continuously adjusted its revenue generation strategies as it aspired to create a stronger state (This has been discussed in depth by Mick Moore).⁹⁵ For instance the tax imposed on gold miners (Gold Premium Tax) during the Great Depression period which was intended to sustain the colonial economy when the agricultural sector was under siege.

The thesis also draws from Bruce Berman's study of the colonial state in Kenya. Berman explored the nature of the colonial state in Kenya and challenged earlier Marxist and development theorists for their "limited consideration of the structural forms of the colonial state itself."⁹⁶ Rather, these groups of scholars treated "the political apparatus of colonialism as an externally determined instrument ensuring the conditions for the accumulation of surplus and its transfer to the metropole."⁹⁷ Central to the analysis of the state in this thesis is Berman's depiction of the colonial state in Kenya as a 'neutral and disinterested arbiter' in its engagement with the varied settler interest groups in that country. He notes that "The frequent ensuing clashes between capital and the state authorities often quite unwittingly sustain the apparent autonomy and disinterested neutrality of the state."⁹⁸ As delineated in Chapter Five, from 1941, the settler state in Southern Rhodesia played the role of arbiter regarding the use of land and timber resources by settler farmers and miners. This was instanced by the inauguration of a formal conservation policy which was intended to curb the excesses of capital and minimise environmental degradation. The new policy framework made the state to act as an adjudicator between settler farmers and miners. By 1961 it succeeded in developing a compromise amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act which significantly reduced farmer-miner conflicts.

The analysis of the state and its interaction with settler farmers and miners also conforms to Max Weber's model which is premised on the concept of 'imperative co-ordination', which he

They outline the relationship of state formation, warfare and the need to improve tax collection to finance the wars. All this relates to the geopolitical and fiscal theories of state formation. Although the same cannot be said for Southern Rhodesia, the threat posed by indigenous Africans (because of their numerical superiority over settlers) provided an impetus for the creation of a strong and centralised state with a capacity to deal with any kind of threat.

⁹⁵ M. Moore, 'Taxation and the political agenda, North and South', *Forum for Development Studies*, 31, 1 (2004), pp 7-32. Also see D. A. Brautigam et al (eds), *Taxation and state building in developing countries: Capacity and consent*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); M. Moore, 'How does taxation affect the quality of government?'. Institute of the Development Studies Paper 280, University of Sussex, 2007.

⁹⁶ B. Berman, *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya: The dialectic of domination*, (London: James Currey, 1990), 1.

⁹⁷ B. Berman, *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya*, 2.

⁹⁸ B. Berman, *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya*, 29.

defines as ‘the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) from a given source will be obeyed by a given group of persons.’⁹⁹ This is what can be referred to as domination or authority, whereby the subjects will be obliged to respect the laws and proclamations made by the authority. This scenario is characteristic of most institutions such as churches, business establishments, clinics, schools and the nation state. For the nation state, Weber identifies and distinguishes three types of legitimate authority. He made his classification basing on the source of authority for each of the three. For him, authority can thus be based on rational, traditional and charismatic grounds.¹⁰⁰ Weber’s theory also identifies various power and social relations and argues that “in everyday routine life, these relationships, like others, are governed by custom and in addition, material calculation of advantage.”¹⁰¹ These relations are between those in authority and the subjects and their nature is not constant depending on the state of affairs prevailing at a given time.

This study draws inspiration from, but is not limited to Weber’s tripartite classification of authority which explains the basis of legitimacy for a nation state. In this thesis the colonial state shall represent the legal authority (modern state) since it administered the colony deriving its authority from the Royal Charter and later on using a government drawn from elected members of the Legislative Council.¹⁰² The interaction of the state, settler farmers and miners in Rhodesia was characterised by many dynamics which included amongst others loyalty, discontent, and impunity. The state, firstly the Company administration and then the settler government had to deal with these two groups’ concerns and thus made efforts to ameliorate miner-farmer relations as it continuously sought a lasting solution to the problem for the good of the country’s economy. More importantly, the study agrees with Weber’s view that tensions will emerge as the subordinate groups seek to have certain components of the laws governing the state redressed. This Weberian understanding of the state exhibits striking similarities with Eriksen’s conception which states that the state is characterised by political struggles “about such matters as which policies that the state should pursue and which decisions it should

⁹⁹ M. Weber, *The theory of social and economic organisation*, (London:William Hodge and Company, 1947). Weber distinguishes three ideal types of legitimate political leadership, i.e charismatic authority, traditional authority and legal authority.

¹⁰⁰ Weber, *The theory of social and economic organisation*

¹⁰¹ Weber, *The theory of social and economic organisation*, 297.

¹⁰² Murray, *The governmental System of Southern Rhodesia. The sources consulted include published books, journal articles, theses and dissertations, conference papers*

impose.”¹⁰³ This thesis will explore the various state-miner-farmer relations, highlighting various points of conflict over different policies amongst the three.

Methodology

This thesis utilises primary sources mainly archival material and secondary literature. However, primary sources accessed at the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) form the bedrock of the study. Due to the limited literature that deals with miner-farmer relations in Southern Rhodesia, the study made use of scholarly work that deals with intra-racial/intra-settler relations. As demonstrated in the literature review most of these studies which deal with state-farmer relations are limited in scope since they only link the subject to environmentalism. The thesis was based on the use of documentary evidence, mainly archival documents. All primary sources related to settler mining and agriculture in Rhodesia used in the thesis were obtained from the NAZ. The study also made use of statistics to clarify some aspects of the survey. The material accessed at NAZ included institutional records from the various representative organisations for miners and farmers and these include the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Chamber of mines (Salisbury chapter), the Rhodesian Tributors and Small Workers' Association and the Rhodesia Farmers Union. However, most of the documents for the Chamber of Mines are housed at the organisation's library which is not open to the public. The same applied to the CFU, which keeps all documents for the Rhodesia National Farmers Union (RNFU). Access to their documents was prevented because of the dispute with the government that was sparked by the land reform programme.

Documents that were accessed at the NAZ also include correspondence between relevant government departments (the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines). These provided useful information relating to views of government officials on various concerns raised by both farmers and miners on such matters as the GBTs. This also revealed government plans and attitudes over the farmer-miner controversy. Correspondence between the Ministries of Agriculture and Mining and farmers was useful in highlighting the grievances raised by farmers. These usually constituted requests for the repeal of the GBT and complaints over the adjudication process of disputes between farmers and miners. Replies to such correspondence by the respective Ministries significantly revealed the government's position and willingness to have the problems solved. Some letters also originated from individual farmers.

¹⁰³ Eriksen, 'State formation and the politics of regime survival', 317.

Correspondence by the Chamber of Mines to the Mines Ministry usually included complaints raised by miners against fellow miners over clashes on mining claims. Correspondence to Native Commissioners, Mining Commissioners and the Natural Resources Board (NRB) was also useful in shedding light on the subject. Evidence gathered for various Commissions of Inquiry as well as actual reports, helped in bringing out the voices of the actual farmers and miners on issues under investigation. The thesis also made use of minutes of meetings for the Mining Timber Permit Board (MTPB), NRB, RAU, Chamber of Mines, the BSAC and many other meetings between miner and farmer representatives. Annual reports of the Commissioner of Taxes, Department of Mines, Geological Survey Department and the MTPB provided very useful data for the thesis.

The thesis used Legislative Council debates and law statute reports that provided the official government position. A closer analysis of the Legislative Council debates enabled me to scrutinise the diverging views of the members of the Council on proposed policies. This was very crucial in the pre-1923 period when the Legislative Council was the only platform, closer to administration, that settler representatives had access to, on which to challenge government policies. Legislative Council debates proved to be a useful source especially for Chapter Three which scrutinises the debates so as to get the sentiments of settler representatives on their position in the Council. The thesis used magazines such as *The Countryside*, *The Rhodesian Farmer* and *the Smallworker*. These magazines provided useful reports relating to agriculture and mining issues. Newspapers, mainly *The Herald* and *The Bulawayo Chronicle* were also consulted and they provided a useful source of information which helped in gauging public opinion at different times.

Oral interviews were conducted but it was quite difficult to get informants. This was because of the political situation in the country, therefore many people involved in mining thought I was a government agent and were not willing to give interviews. I am however grateful to Mr Mugumbate, Deputy Director of the Geological Survey Department for the few minutes that he allowed me to ask a few questions on the country's mining industry. Eddie Cross, Member of Parliament for Bulwayo North Constituency, was very helpful. He linked me to the few informants that I managed to interview.

Structure and layout

This thesis is chronologically arranged and makes use of major benchmarks in Southern Rhodesia's history. This particular chapter has introduced the study and gave the scope as well as analytical framework for the study. It has also reviewed related literature and identified gaps that warrant further research. Chapter Two focuses on the interaction of farmers and miners during the period of Company administration. The chapter lays the foundation by providing a background for the development of the colonial economy based on mining and then agriculture. It deals with the land titles granted to farmers that had major hindrances to the development of agriculture since they had blocked farmers from making use of timber resources. Agriculture was initially not allowed on the country's Gold Belt, which coincidentally had rich agricultural land. This became a major grievance and farmers contested it with no success. The chapter traces the farmer-miner conflict, triggered by the GBT which was the Company's way of safeguarding its economic interests.

Chapter Three discusses the politics of administration, representation and taxation during the period of Company administration. It therefore provides a reconsideration of the debate for either joining the Union of South Africa or Responsible Government. The chapter offers a fresh analysis to the dispute between the state and the two major interest groups in the country during that particular time (farmers and miners). It highlights the significance of taxation issues in the country's political agenda, challenging literature which argue that, unlike in the South, taxation issues are more prominent in the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Through a rigorous use of Legislative Council debates, the chapter argues that farmers, and other settlers in Southern Rhodesia were actually not happy with the representation that was granted by the Company administration in 1898. Representation in the Council even at a time when the elected members had a majority did not work to their advantage since the administrator had the power to veto any proposals that were not in the best interest of the Company, in its administrative as well as its commercial capacity. Since farmers and the remainder of settlers not inclined to Company administration were paying tax, they wanted actual administrative power not mere representation.

While Chapter Three highlights how the Company administration protected the mining sector more than any other group in the country, by 1923 agriculture had developed tremendously and farmers had grown into a formidable political force. Chapter Four thus examines how the emerging state (Responsible Government) grappled with issues of taxation, mining law and farmers' interests. It argues that the policies adopted by the settler government almost brought

the mining sector to its knees especially through the levying of a Gold Premium Tax. The chapter considers government policies towards farmers and miners. It explores how such policies, adopted by the state contributed to a significant decline in gold mining by 1945. In that year, the agriculture sector, for the first time in the country's history, generated more revenue than the mining sector.

Chapter Five covers the era of formal conservation, 1939 to 1961. It details how the adoption of a formal conservation policy, ushered in through the 1941 Natural Resources Act, was used by the state to try and bring harmony between farmers and miners. It demonstrates the ever-shifting role of the state, which by this time, posed as an arbiter between settler farmers and miners. The chapter discusses the formation of various state agents such as the NRB, Mineral Resources Committee, MTPB and the Intensive Conservation Area Committees (ICACs). It delineates the crucial role played by these state agents in trying to curb land and environmental degradation and in the process ameliorate farmer-miner disputes. Chapter Six discusses the miner-farmer tussle for labour up to 1953. After the creation of a federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland labour ceased to be a problem in the country. Influx control mechanisms were actually employed in an attempt to limit more labourers coming into the country.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, summarises and ties together the key arguments. It makes recommendations for future study on state-farmer-miner interaction during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period and delineates the role of farmers and miners in sanctions busting. This will also allow for the coverage of the liberation war period. This will produce knowledge on how farmers and miners related during this period as well as illuminate on the areas that were cordoned off by liberation war fighters. The chapter points out that the problems confronting the current government regarding mining companies, artisanal miners and farmers have a long history which dates back to the early colonial period.

CHAPTER TWO

Farmer-miner contestations and the British South Africa Company, 1895 to 1923.

Cecil John Rhodes' ambition to control what was to become the eponymous Southern Rhodesia in 1890 was premised on the discovery of gold reefs comparable to the Rand. His British South Africa Company (BSAC), having obtained a mandate to administer the territory through the Royal Charter, established an administrative system that oversaw the economic and political order of the new state for the next three decades. Rhodes' goal was to establish an economy anchored by mining enterprise. As a business, the BSAC was supposed to produce profits so that it could pay dividends to its shareholders. It made strenuous efforts to bolster mining development through pro-mining legislation. Although a formal agricultural policy was adopted in 1908, mining remained the "favoured child."¹⁰⁴ Despite the failure of a Second Rand to materialise as anticipated, the base laid for the prosperity of mining remained unshaken, even after the formal adoption of agriculture as the second economic buttress in 1908.

The development of Southern Rhodesia's colonial economy has attracted scholarly attention over the years, with historians focusing chiefly on the development and growth of the country's mining and agriculture.¹⁰⁵ This literature chronicles the economic history of Southern Rhodesia, in most cases highlighting the repressive and exclusive colonial land and economic policies, which systematically promoted European economic advancement at the expense of indigenous Africans. This literature has therefore concentrated on inter-racial economic relations and in the process made passing reference to intra-racial contestations amongst European settlers themselves. Existing literature which covers intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia only deals with state-farmer relations.¹⁰⁶ Yet differences also existed

¹⁰⁴ L. H. Gann, *A history of Southern Rhodesia: Early days to 1934*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 161.

¹⁰⁵ V. E. M. Machingaidze, "The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the state, 1908 to 1939", PhD Thesis, University of London, 1980; G. Arrighi. *The political economy of Southern Rhodesia*, 16 (The Hague: Mouton, 1967); R. Palmer, 'The agricultural history of Rhodesia', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds), *The roots of rural poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (London: Heinemann, 1977); I. R. Phimister, *An economic and social history of Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1940: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, (London, Longman, 1988).

¹⁰⁶ See J. A. Mckenzie, 'Commercial farmers in the governmental system of colonial Zimbabwe, 1863-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989, R. Pilosof, *The unbearable whiteness of being: Farmers' voices from Zimbabwe*, (Cape Town: Cape Town university Press, 2012); A. Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state: Interest group politics and the land reform in Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006.

amongst various settler groups such as farmers, miners and the state as shall be demonstrated by this chapter. M. E. Lee's (1974) study covered intra-group conflicts amongst the various settler factions in Southern Rhodesia during Company rule.¹⁰⁷ She, however, made only brief reference to the miner-farmer dynamics as one of the unfolding struggles amongst the many interest groups during that time. This chapter will instead concentrate more tightly on how ever-shifting state policy influenced (and was influenced by) the changing contours of miner-farmer relations. It will concentrate on the controversies surrounding the Gold Belt reservations and how their construction by the state further affected the interaction of farmers and miners. M. Musemwa¹⁰⁸ (2009), V. C. Kwashirai¹⁰⁹ (2006) and a recent study by A. Mseba¹¹⁰ (2015) discussed miner-farmer disputes but focused more on the development of environmentalism during the colonial period. This chapter argues that the dispute was not because of the inherent greed of the farmers or miners as Musemwa posits.¹¹¹ Rather, this chapter argues, the conflict between the two groups actually emanated from the way the Company administration sought to structure the colonial economy.

This chapter discusses the interaction of the state, farmers and miners during the period of Company administration. The Company administration was the source from which all commands (laws) originated. Such commands, as argued by M. Weber in his model of "imperative co-ordination,"¹¹² were influenced by "material calculation of advantage"¹¹³ by the state. The Company administration enacted different laws to which social and economic groups reacted differently. Some obeyed the commands while others (actively or passively) challenged laws which threatened the success of their economic activities. The chapter provides a brief historical background to the development of a colonial economy based on mining, which saw agriculture (at least initially) as a mere appendage. The chapter traces the genesis of Gold Belt reservations on agricultural land granted. Gold Belt reservations later mutated into the Gold Belt Titles (GBT) granted to farmers who acquired land situated on mineral formation from

¹⁰⁷ M. E. Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1974.

¹⁰⁸ M. Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources: The farmer-miner dispute in colonial Zimbabwe, 1903-1939', *Environment and History*, 15 (2009), 78-107.

¹⁰⁹ V. C. Kwashirai, 'Dilemmas in conservation in colonial Zimbabwe. 1890-1939', *Conservation and Society*, 4, 4 (2006), 541-561.

¹¹⁰ A. Mseba, 'Law, expertise and settler conflicts over land in early colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1923', *Environment and Planning A*, 48, 4 (2015), 665-680.

¹¹¹ Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources', 81.

¹¹² M. Weber, *The theory of social and economic organisation*, (London: William Hodge and Company, 1947), 297.

¹¹³ Weber, *The theory of social and economic organisation*, 297.

1909. This chapter highlights the conflicts brought about by this land holding title on some of the finest agricultural land in the country. The Company administration promoted development of the mining industry at the expense of farming. This is exhibited by its insistence on the GBT even after the inauguration of a formal White Agricultural Policy (WAP). The chapter demonstrates the state's position by using the attitudes of different state and Company officials on the controversies surrounding the Gold Belt reservations during the time of Company administration.

Early Years: Foundation of the Colonial Economy

When the Pioneer Column crossed the Limpopo into Southern Rhodesia in 1890 in the wake of the gold rush on the Witwatersrand, they anticipated finding a "Second Rand". They hoped to establish an economy based on mining. Indeed, the passing of the Mashonaland Mining Regulation number 1 (1890), which embodied the American apex principle¹¹⁴, and the subsequent opening of two large mines, the Cotopaxi and the Dickens, in Fort Victoria District in 1893¹¹⁵, marked the genesis of large scale mining. In addition, numerous mining claims were parcelled out by the BSAC administration. It also encouraged floatation¹¹⁶ of mining companies, as it aspired to maximise profits since it held a 50 percent share in all mining ventures. Mining therefore, became the initial cornerstone on which the colonial economy was built. Its successful execution became the primary goal of the newly minted Southern Rhodesian State – an ambition also shared by some settlers.

In line with its vision of a mining-led economy, the Company administration was at pains to create an enabling atmosphere for the successful operation of the mining sector. This was facilitated by the crafting, and passage of appropriate legislation such as the Mines and Minerals Ordinance of 1895 which granted miners water, timber and grazing rights. This piece of legislation provided that a licenced prospector had the right to peg claims on land owned by others and that on the land so pegged he could freely graze twenty draught animals, take indigenous wood for domestic purposes on payment of compensation, take water for free when this was required for domestic purposes and erect temporary buildings within the limits of the

¹¹⁴ The apex principle, or extra lateral right allowed the claim owner to follow the gold reef in all its 'dips, spurs and variations', outside the limits of the claim. Transvaal mining regulations allowed only that gold within the claim boundaries to be worked.' I. R. Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1 (1974), 74–90.

¹¹⁵ C. Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia*, (London, Pluto Press, 1976), 14.

¹¹⁶ The process of offering a company's shares for sale on the stock market for the first time.

pegged area.¹¹⁷ There was a shift, as this chapter will demonstrate, in settler goals, as these exclusive rights were detested and then contested by settler farmers.

Company directors and officials made efforts to sustain the hopes of a Second Rand north of the Limpopo. As a result, they gave lip service to the country's mineral potential, while eagerly awaiting for the discovery of rich deposits. Leander Starr Jameson, BSAC Administrator in the colony for example telegraphed London in 1893 stating that: "Everywhere new finds are occurring daily. Crushings everywhere successful. Wonderful development in every district. Reefs certainly improve as depth increases."¹¹⁸ This and many other ebullient declarations produced the intended consequences for they were followed by a rise of share prices on the London market. However, the averred boom was ephemeral, the *Rhodesia Herald* reported in 1898 that: "By 1898 shares such as those of the Rhodesian Exploration and Development Company which at the height of the 1895 boom were selling at £18 could be bought at £4 and those of the British South Africa Company had dropped from £8 17d 6d to £2 25s 0d."¹¹⁹ The realisation that the territory was not to become an extension of the Johannesburg gold rush came with J. H. Hammond's report in November 1894, which revealed that there were no vast gold deposits in the country.¹²⁰ This revelation did not end the speculative tendencies which had characterised the nascent mining industry. Significantly, though, it precipitated a slight shift in the state's economic policy from mining to agriculture in 1897. This was born out of the Company's realisation that it could still derive profits from utilising the land it had intended for mining for agro-based activities.

The Company remained adamant about its prospects for mining development in the country. They simply began considering agriculture as an economic activity of note, intended to supplement mining. Optimism did not drop with the fall of share prices on the London market, the Company kept its hopes alive. In 1901 the Company President, the Duke of Abercon assured shareholders that:

Since the close of 1895, in spite of rinderpest, rebellion and war, we have been able to show astonishing progress. Our population and our revenues are increasing, we have more than one million sterling in hand; the success of our gold mining industry is

¹¹⁷ D. J. Murray, *The governmental systems in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1970), 120.

¹¹⁸ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 14.

¹¹⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 March 1898.

¹²⁰ I. Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand'; J. H. Hammond was a Mining Engineer for the Consolidated Gold Field who was asked by Rhodes to come and inspect Southern Rhodesia's mineral potential in 1894.

assured, we have the best coal fields in Africa, we have extensive and efficient railways and we can confidently say that our prospects have never been so hopeful.¹²¹

This was intended to appease shareholders who were yet to receive dividends since the Company commenced operations. All the Company could offer were promises because gold reefs in Southern Rhodesia were not comparable to the Rand. The Company therefore, decided to make their investment in the country worthwhile by mining a different seam: through the successful settlement of mainly British immigrants who were expected to take up farming and work on the land.¹²²

As noted, there had been very little white commercial agricultural activity in the early colonial days. Gann noted “Mining began as the Chartered Company’s favoured child – farming was its neglected Cinderella.”¹²³ It was the indigenous African producers who made available food requirements for the mining men in the absence of a meaningful white agricultural sector.¹²⁴ Most settlers who had received land grants sold that land to big companies and sought to make a quick fortune in prospecting and gold mining. Even some who had come intending to farm in the new colony also sought the elusive fortune from gold mining. According to P. F. Hone:

The perennial hunger for gold, about which fabulous reports were constantly being spread throughout the country drew many of the would be farmers away from their original intentions, in order to seek a more speedy fortune in the most hazardous of all ventures, that the world offers.¹²⁵

For the few who opted to venture into agriculture it was usually at a subsistence level. Some, especially those who settled in remote areas, kept their cattle, goats, pigs and poultry and produced maize by adopting African methods. While many of those who settled on land closer to towns “preferred to make a scanty living by cutting down timber and selling the logs as firewood, by using their oxen and wagons for transport riding or kaffir trading while others eked out a livelihood by market gardening.”¹²⁶ White commercial agriculture thus had a slow start.

¹²¹ British South Africa Company, Report of the 7th General Meeting.

¹²² For more on immigration into Southern Rhodesia see A. S. Mlambo, *White immigration into Rhodesia, From occupation to federation*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publication, 2002).

¹²³ L. H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, (London, Chatter and Windus), 1976), 161.

¹²⁴ See I. R. Phimister, ‘Peasant production and underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia’, *African Affairs*, 73, 291 (1974), 217-228.

¹²⁵ P. F. Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 93.

¹²⁶ Gann, *History of Southern Rhodesia*, 162.

Land was considered as an asset and was being held chiefly for speculative purposes by the large land companies. These land consortiums had received generous land grants from the Company in the hope that they would use their vast capital resources to develop the country. One example of such land barons was John Willoughby, who apart from buying “a large number of land rights from gold-obsessed pioneers”, was also “granted some 600 000 acres in Mashonaland by Jameson on the understanding that he spend £50 000 on developing the land.” He finally accumulated 1.3 million acres for his own company Willoughby’s Consolidated.¹²⁷ Consequently, many other speculative land companies were floated and Palmer notes that by 1896 the total registered capital of such companies was about £20 million.¹²⁸ By 1899, of the 15.3 million acres of land alienated to Europeans, about 9.3 million acres belonged to the land companies.¹²⁹ No agricultural activity actually took place on these vast tracts of land, which constituted the country’s best agricultural land. Moreover, as shall be demonstrated in the chapter, individual land applicants were denied land grants in such areas and this factor contributed immensely to the predominance of mining interests.

In an attempt to foster the development of agriculture in the country, the Company administration opened a Department of Agriculture in 1897. It was merely a subdivision of the Surveyor General’s office. Some of the department’s main functions as mentioned by the Company report included the maintenance of mining timber through the “demarcation of timber reserves, the conservation of woods and forests and the formation of nursery farms and experimental plantations.”¹³⁰ It was also at this time that formal appeals for the development of a robust agricultural sector that could complement the mining industry were being made. The Mines Department, Bulawayo District declared that:

The district is a good agricultural and pastoral one, but little advantage has been taken of this fact by the farmers and landowners as they have absolutely done little or nothing in the shape of cultivation. The land should be cultivated to assist the mines in providing produce on a cheap scale. It is to be regretted that large tracts of country have been given to people who practically close them up and allow valuable land to lie fallow which should otherwise be of the utmost assistance to the miner.¹³¹

¹²⁷R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977), 36.

¹²⁸ Palmer, *Land and racial domination*, 36.

¹²⁹ Palmer, *Land and racial domination*, 36.

¹³⁰ Report of the British South Africa Company, 1896-97.

¹³¹ NAZ T/2/29/7/1 Annual report for the Mines Department, Bulawayo district for the year ending, 30 September 1897.

Such pronouncements stemmed from a desire to see the coexistence of settler farmers and miners in a way that replicated the gold and maize alliance forged in South Africa around the same period. The first farm in the Lomagundi district can be cited as an example of this intention. It was developed on the Ayshire Mine so as to grow maize needed for the food requirements of the mine's African labourers.¹³² A combination of bovine diseases, introduction of the railway and the South African War connived in necessitating the development of white settler agriculture. The railway line succeeded in opening up new markets for farm produce and replaced ox transport which had been rendered useless by the cattle diseases. The war helped in eliminating competition from South Africa and ensured lower prices for local produce.

As this chapter seeks to show, the gradual promotion of agricultural activities (and the ensuing land grants) meant an encroachment of agriculture into both already pegged mining claims and potential mining zones. This perceived encroachment, as this chapter will show, sowed the seed for contestation between the miners and the farmers. This was exacerbated by the relaxation, in 1903, of the mining regulations which allowed small independent miners to dig without forming companies. The result of this policy was to scatter small miners across the country and they were to come into conflict with emerging farmers over natural resources utilisation and rights of entry into the new farmlands. Meanwhile, Africans were also victim to the colonial land policies. Africans were being relocated to the newly created reserves in marginal areas with poor soils and low rainfall.¹³³

Land Allocation in the Mining Zones and the Genesis of Gold Belt Reservations

The manner in which the Company administration dealt with applications for land grants in the first decade of occupation mimics in microcosm the Company's attitude towards agricultural development and the country's economy at large. Mining was favoured and it became one of the Company's policies to scrutinise all areas before allocation of land for agriculture was effected. It was only the administrator who had the prerogative of approving land grants, especially on land suspected of bearing gold deposits. Land applications were therefore dealt with in a manner that ensured that the Company retained much control over the farms

¹³² Rubert, *A most promising weed: A history of tobacco farming and labour in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1925*, (Athens: Ohio Centre for International Studies, 1998), 29.

¹³³ See R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination*; E. Punt, 'The Development of African Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the inter-war years', Masters Dissertation, University of Natal, 1979.

concerned, in case minerals were discovered upon it. For example, when a settler, J. Squair, applied for a farm in an area about 15 miles from Salisbury in August 1892, Jameson, responded: “With reference to your letter August 22nd last it is evident that the land you have occupied is situated upon the Gold Belt. Under these circumstances the company is not prepared to issue the ordinary title to the land.” This kind of response from Jameson can be taken to be representative of the Company’s general policy on land allocations as it was to be invoked in many other instances as shall be highlighted. Squair was allowed to occupy the land on interim basis until:

...such time as the land is proved to contain gold in payable quantities or no: in the former case you shall vacate the land without any compensation and peg out elsewhere – should the company consider your retirement necessary; in the latter case the district shall be considered as off the Gold Belt and will be surveyed in the ordinary case, title issued and fees charged.¹³⁴

Mining interests were given priority and agriculture was treated as the second option. Squair intended to carry out farming on the said land, but his prospects could be trashed once the area was discovered to bear gold. Land that was deemed unfit for gold production was then allocated to settlers intending to embark on full time farming.

Initial applications for land in that same area, the Enterprise Gold Belt, by Thurgood, Fiancome and Krants had been turned down.¹³⁵ The major reason for this denial to grant land on known gold bearing areas was because of a disinclination by the state to settle farmers on the Gold Belt. This was made clear by the Surveyor General’s statement in 1898 to Frames and Grimmer, he even made reference to Squair’s case, he stated that:

There is much development work proceeding on the Enterprise Gold Belt. I cannot now change the views taken in ’92. Indeed the serious question lately arised re-outsunning the neighbourhood rather strengthens me in the opinion that no ground except gold claims should be alienated. [sic]¹³⁶

This was an accurate reflection of Company’s policy on land grants in the years immediately after occupation. The Company’s intention to promote mining at the expense of agricultural development can be discerned from the Mashonaland Mining Regulations (1890), which provided that:

Every holder of a prospecting licence shall have the right of grazing six horses or mules or sixteen oxen and of taking wood and water for his domestic use free of charge on

¹³⁴ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from L.S. Jameson of the BSAC to J. Squair, March 18 1893.

¹³⁵ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter to from the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

¹³⁶ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter to from the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

unallotted lands, and on allotted lands on payment to the occupier of the land where such license is exercised of one shilling per diem.¹³⁷

This was also emphasised in the subsequent mining law, promulgated in 1895. Very few farmers had managed to acquire land situated on or close to mining formations and working on the land full time. Most of the land grants to people or companies other than mining concerns in the gold bearing areas, had been made to the big land owning companies as indicated in the previous section. There were very few exceptions where farmers were allocated land in these areas. For example, in 1896 Messrs Edmonds and Christian were granted farm Meadows, measuring 3000 morgen, on the Empress Gold Belt.¹³⁸ This land grant was made on condition that if the ground was to be expropriated for mining purposes, the two could not claim any compensation. This land grant had established a precedent which pushed other land seekers to claim land which was next to Meadows. During one of his surveying errands in the Chishawasha area, the Acting Surveyor General met Farranti (a land seeker) in an area opposite the Enterprise Gold Mining Company. Farrant had built a hut close to the river and he claimed to be occupying the area on Squair's behalf.¹³⁹ The Surveyor General at once warned Farrant to vacate the area and to inform his principal that:

permission would not be given to locate a farm in either the Umtinge or Amafen Valleys since the available water would all be used for mill races, the banks of the rivers for battery sites, the ground in the immediate vicinity would in the near future be traversed by tramway lines and would always be necessary for depasturing stock belonging to the mining companies or miners.¹⁴⁰

The Company administration was bent on enforcing the universally known prohibition against selection of land on gold bearing land and kept refusing to grant land requests for such areas. However, pressure was mounting from the settlers who wanted land on the Gold Belt for farming purposes.

The main motive behind the land policy pursued by the Company administration was the maintenance of rights extended to miners through the mining laws enacted during a time when it was believed that mining revenue would finance economic development in the colony. Consideration was not given to farming interests. The overall result of this scenario was that

¹³⁷ NAZ EC4/1/3 Mashonaland Mining Regulations No. 1 of 1890.

¹³⁸ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from the Acting Secretary to the Administrator to Messrs Edmonds and Christian, 11 May 1896.

¹³⁹ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter to fro the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

¹⁴⁰ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter to fro the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

whenever senior company and administrative officials learnt of any development related to land allocation on the Gold Belt, their defence for mining rights was immediate and unequivocal. When in 1896 the Surveyor General was informed about intentions to survey and peg agricultural land on the Penhalonga-Umtali Gold Belt he argued:

To prevent legal complications between future miners, existing claimholders, as the principal and the farmer as the secondary party concerned, the authorised surveyor employed will have to be careful to steer clear of dumping ground, mining timber, miners' water rights furrows and racas, also of ground required for compounds buildings and battery sites.¹⁴¹

Such considerations, as cited above by the Surveyor General, usually delayed the processing of applications made for land in the areas concerned. The response to W. F. King's application for a plot of land in the Imbeza Valley, Umtali was dispatched after three months from the date of application.¹⁴² In this particular case the delay was caused by research conducted by the Mines Department on the matter regarding water requirements of the Lisboa Gold Mining Syndicate situated in the same area.¹⁴³ Permission to grant King the land requested was only issued after the Mines Department had declared that Lisboa was no longer viable. All these were attempts to foster adherence to the Company's vision of a mining led economy and curb any interruptions by agriculture. Such delays, coupled with the country's mining laws, frustrated the genuine farmers who wanted to settle in the country and work on the land.

The Company's attitude and policy towards land grants had the potential to drive away potential settlers. A classic case occurred in 1903 when two pioneers, Wayne and Schukala, applied for a farm in the Belingwe District. Their attorneys notified the Civil Commissioner for Bulawayo that the two did not intend to settle on farms situated on mineral formation, they wrote: "They have instructed us to state that the farms in question are so thickly interspersed with claim pegs – apparently pegged off the gold belt – that they have no desire to disturb the fortunate claim owners by commencing farming operations at or near their properties."¹⁴⁴ The two former prospectors wanted to engage in farming since their former trade was no longer profitable; their initial application for land had been turned down because the land concerned lay on the Gold Belt. Government officials kept on delaying the land grant prompting the attorneys of the two applicants to write to the Civil Commissioner again, this time stating that:

¹⁴¹ NAZ L2/2/80/1 Surveyor General, 22 December 1987.

¹⁴² NAZ L2/2/80/4 W. F. King to Secretary for Lands Department, 2 September 1902.

¹⁴³ NAZ L2/2/80/4 Secretary for the Lands Department to W. F. King, 10 December 1902.

¹⁴⁴ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from Russell and Hendrie to the Civil Commissioner Bulawayo, 11 February 1903.

We would point out that both our clients are ‘pioneer men’ who have constantly resided in the country since the occupation and if the government now refuse to entertain their application for even a small portion of unalienated land which they are prepared to pay for, no other course is left open to them but to leave the territory. Prospecting their former occupation is no longer encouraged or transport riding allowed and farming which they were anxious to make a success of appears to be denied to them.¹⁴⁵

After issuing this threat, Wayne and Schukala were finally allocated the land. The Company administration did not want to lose settlers who intended to take up farming, but at the same time, it did strive to promote uninterrupted growth of the mining industry. Granting land on the Gold Belt seemed to be a negation of the latter, which was, as noted, solved by introduction of Gold Belt reservations.

As indicated earlier, the Company administration allocated land suspected of bearing gold deposits to the big land consortiums, a favour which was not extended to the individual farmers (land applicants). In instances where there was actual mining taking place on the land concerned, such applications were not granted. For example, Raleigh Grey’s company, the United Rhodesia Goldfields Limited, had earlier on been granted land on the Gold Belt, but kept applying for more land grants. Grey’s further land requests were denied in 1898 but he kept pleading with the administration to grant him the requested land. He opined:

You have informed me that the grant cannot be made on account of the gold properties which lie within it. I beg to submit that the fact of these gold properties does not affect this land in any greater degree than former grants which have been made to my company on the gold belt. I have no wish to interfere in any way with the gold properties which exist on the land, and I should desire for the grant to be made under the same conditions as those which were formerly made to my company.¹⁴⁶

Although Grey promised not to interfere with water flowing through the farm which was used for mining purposes, that particular piece of land in the Mazoe area could not be granted. The whole area was littered with gold claims, some of which were actually being worked on. Responding to the point why he had been granted land in the first instance, Secretary to the Administrator informed him:

that when it was agreed to give permission to the United Rhodesia Co. to peg on gold belt, it was distinctly understood, that it would not apply to any part that was being, or likely at the time, to be worked, in fact it was to apply to gold belts, which is not likely to contain payable ground.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from Russell and Hendrie to the Civil Commissioner Bulawayo, 3 September 1903.

¹⁴⁶ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from Raleigh Grey to the Surveyor General, 1 November 1898.

¹⁴⁷ NAZ S2136/2862/A Memo from the Secretary to the administrator, titled: United Rhodesia Goldfields Limited – Location of Pioneer claims, 16 April 1898.

The above statement by the Secretary sheds more light on prior land grants to land companies in the country. The areas concerned were only expected to contain gold deposits. Refusal by the administration to parcel out land in areas with known gold deposits to the land companies (who were favoured by the administration) is a significant pointer on the Company's desire to ensure uninterrupted mining development in the country.

Most of the country's minerals were found in a geological environment known as the "greenstone belt" found mostly in the central part of the country.¹⁴⁸ This mineral bearing belt also contained the country's best agricultural lands and settlers who wanted to pursue farming applied for land grants in these areas. As has been highlighted, the Company administration was reluctant to allocate land for agricultural purposes in such areas. However, towards the turn of the century when reality had dawned on most settlers that the country did not have as much gold deposits, some wanted to try their luck on agriculture. The settler population had grown to 12 596 in 1904.¹⁴⁹ Applications for land grants on the Gold Belt kept coming and this, together with the failure to find gold, precipitated a policy shift by the Company administration. As indicated, the government began promoting land settlement for agricultural purposes so as to make its investment worthwhile. This could not be achieved if good agricultural land was lying idle. Grey became the first beneficiary of this shift in policy by the Company administration. The Director for Lands and Settlement requested the Surveyor General to inform Grey that "the government propose to attach conditions to the grant of further land on the Gold Belt and that pending formal publication of which, they do not propose to register further grants on such gold belts."¹⁵⁰ This proposal marked the conception of Gold Belt reservations that were later inserted on permits of occupation for land granted on the Gold Belt, which later developed into the GBT in 1909.

In line with the policy shift delineated above, E. W. S. Montagu, Commissioner of Mines, wrote to the Secretary for Lands approving the extension of Grey's farm to include a portion of wooded hills on the Gold Belt. He noted that:

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Forbes Mugumbate, Deputy Director of Zimbabwe Geological Survey Department, Wedn esday 12 March 2014 at Harare Zimbabwe. Also see F. Mugumbate, 'Overview of Zimbabwe's mineral potential – Tip of the iceberg?', Zimbabwe Geological Survey. See also NAZ Rhodesia, 1934, Mineral Map of Southern Rhodesia.

¹⁴⁹ A. S. Mlambo, 'Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to world war II, *Zambezia*, 12, 2 (1998), 126.

¹⁵⁰ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from P. Inskipp to the Surveyor General 1 July 1898.

The provision should be made in the lease granting claimholders the right to cut wood for mining operations free of charge as if the land was still government land and that the government should be held harmless for any claims for compensation for any losses sustained by the United Rhodesia Goldfields through mining operations.¹⁵¹

This was the first permit of occupation to be issued containing such a Gold Belt clause reserving timber against cutting or removal for sale by the lessee. Although the clause allowed farmers access to land on the Gold Belt, it signified the beginning of contestations over the use of timber and water, grazing rights as well as rights of access to land between farmers and miners. C. A. Jennings, Director of Lands in 1928 noted that this reservation should not only be seen as being in favour of mining, but also as a precaution against depreciation of the assets of the land during the lease period.¹⁵² This claim by Jennings should be subjected to scrutiny. As highlighted by Musemwa, both farmers and miners were equally guilty of excessive wood cutting.¹⁵³ If the Company administration was really concerned about conservation, it should have implemented measures which prevented excessive wood cutting by both farmers and miners. It was more concerned by maximising profits as far as possible for the mining capital, and one way of doing this was to provide the sector with unlimited and uninterrupted wood supplies (miners used wood mainly for fuel as shall be shown in succeeding sections). The most efficient way of doing this was to curtail competition for wood by the fledging farming sector. This was a deviation from the initial policy whereby miners were supposed to pay for wood cut on private land. The clause was made part of the permit of occupation from 1904 onwards. Miners' access to free water was also maintained in the new Gold Belt reservations.

From 1905 the Company administration was granting land to farmers on the Gold Belt and the Gold Belt reservations were attached to the permit of occupation. This opened up the Gold Belt area to farmers and a number of applications for land in the area were processed and approved by the Lands Department. Meanwhile, there was an increase in the number of farms from 300-400 in 1903 to 900 in 1904.¹⁵⁴ R. Reimer applied for land and was granted a farm under the Gold Belt permit of occupation on 14 November 1905.¹⁵⁵ As clarified by Inskipp who became

¹⁵¹ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from E. W. S. Montagu (for Commissioner of Mines) to the Secretary, Department of Lands, 11 October 1901.

¹⁵² NAZ S2136/2862/A Titles to land on the Gold Belts of Southern Rhodesia. The rights of miners and farmers by C. A. Jennings, Director of Lands, 9 February 1928.

¹⁵³ Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources'

¹⁵⁴ J. A. Mackenzie, 'Commercial farmers in the governmental system of colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989, 2.

¹⁵⁵ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from R. Reimer to the Surveyor General, 13 November 1905.

a member of the Legislative Council for Mazoe, under the Gold Belt permit of occupation, claimholders had the right to wood free of charge and trading stores could only be erected on the farm with government's special permission.¹⁵⁶ A similar explanation was given to Henry Middleton, Engineer for the Bernhein (Mazoe) Gold Mines, by the Secretary for Mines when he had asked the following question "For instance when Smith of South Mazoe has completed payment for his farm and gets his deeds, he expects to be able to be charging the mining companies a royalty for any wood cut on his land. Shall we be compelled to pay such a royalty?"¹⁵⁷ This seemed logical under normal circumstances. Farmers were supposed to derive profits from their investment after all. Yet the Company administration decided otherwise. This new piece of legislation and other laws enacted during the era of Company administration were approved by an executive which consisted of the most able and senior Company officials.¹⁵⁸ It therefore, reflected the Company's bias towards mining interests. Although farmers were also represented in the Legislative Council, their voices were usually suppressed as evidenced by their failure to push successfully for an amendment of the mining law.

From 1903 onwards, measures were taken to rejuvenate the mining industry and return it to profitability after the 1903 collapse of the London market for Rhodesian mining shares.¹⁵⁹ It was around the same time that small independent miners were allowed to operate without floatation because many of them struggled to get companies registered before operations commenced. This move coincided with the opening up of the Gold Belt area to farmers and the subsequent issuance of the Gold Belt permits of occupation. The independent miners were undercapitalised and wanted to make maximum use of the free wood so as to minimise production costs to the barest minimum. Therefore, they presented the most vociferous challenge each time farmers complained about depletion of wood and water resources on their farms. The Chamber of Mines, a representative of big mining capital added a voice to the challenge on what they considered to be their rights. The organisation was formed in 1895 as two separate chambers for Matebeleland and Mashonaland had merged to form a single representative body in 1904.¹⁶⁰ The formation of a chamber of Mines was first put forward by the Chamber of Commerce (which had been formed in 1894). This was in respect of a new

¹⁵⁶ NAZ S2136/2862/A Inskipp to R. Reimer, 6 April 1906.

¹⁵⁷ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from the Secretary for Mines to Henry Middleton, Engineer Bernhein (Mazoe) Gold Mines, 16 February 1906.

¹⁵⁸ Gann, *History of Southern Rhodesia*, 144.

¹⁵⁹ I. R. Phimister, 'The reconstruction of the Southern Rhodesian gold mining industry, 1903 – 1910', *Economic History Review*, 29, 3 (1976), 465–481.

¹⁶⁰ Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups', 19.

mines legislation which was put on the table and a provisional committee was formed in Bulawayo in June 1895. A second body, the Salisbury Chamber of Mines was formed at the end of June 1895 mainly because mining concerns in Mashonaland feared that they might be misrepresented by the Bulawayo chapter.¹⁶¹ The Chamber of Mines did not stand for interests of small miners. They were represented by the Smallworkers and Tributors Associations formed after this group of miners were legalised, the first one was formed in 1907 in Gwelo and was followed by others in mining centres like Gatooma, Hartley and Penhalonga.¹⁶² The farmers' representative body, the Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU) championed the farmers' concerns and challenged the Company's discriminatory policies. RAU was formed by a union of nine different farmers' associations from different districts in 1904 who merged at the invitation of the Mashonaland Farmers Union to form a united representative body. The three Matebeleland unions did not join for fear of domination by the Mashonaland union. This showed the differences between settler farmers emanating from differences in agricultural activities. By 1911 the number of affiliate associations had risen to 29 up from 9 who had registered when it was formed in 1904. By this time, agriculture had registered significant growth, B. S. Schutz notes that between 1904-1911 agricultural growth had more than doubled "involving 879 males in the earlier year and 2067 in the latter one." In addition to this, the agricultural proportion of the total population increased at a faster rate than any other occupational class amongst whites.¹⁶³ The big land companies were represented by the Landowners and Farmers Association. This organisation, besides its name, did not represent the interests of small farmers.

Land Grants Under the Gold Belt Title

The first formal (GBT) was issued in 1909. This was despite the fact that Company Directors had visited the country in 1907 and recommended the development of white agriculture so as to realise the country's full productive capacity. In their report, the Directors stated that the Company intended "to stimulate in every possible way the opening up and steady development of the mineral and agricultural resources of the country."¹⁶⁴ In 1908 the Company administration adopted the WAP¹⁶⁵, intended to stimulate the development and further growth

¹⁶¹ Lee, 'politics and pressure groups', 18.

¹⁶² Lee, Politics and pressure groups, 23.

¹⁶³ B. S. Schutz, 'European population patterns, cultural persistence and political change in Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, 1 (1973), 6.

¹⁶⁴ Declaration of policy issued at Bulawayo on 19/10/07 by the Visiting Directors, contained in the BSAC Directors' reports and accounts, 31/03/07.

¹⁶⁵ R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann 1977), 10.

of settler agriculture in the colony. The growth of agriculture was promoted based on a variety of imported maize seed, tobacco, wheat, sorghum and groundnuts.¹⁶⁶ Changes adopted included the reconstitution of the Department of Agriculture under the directorship of Dr Eric Nobbs in 1908 and the establishment of two research stations in 1909,¹⁶⁷ among many other innovations. The success of the new agricultural policy lay behind its ability to lure into the country many immigrants, who could then settle on large farms in the high potential areas and work on the land. It is paradoxical that the Company administration introduced the GBT on land situated in the country's Gold Belt, yet it anticipated an inflow of new immigrants to foster the growth of settler capitalist agriculture. The land title for areas containing the country's prime land (the Gold Belt area) had a number of disabilities with regards to land, timber, water and grazing rights. This course of events reflected the attitude of the Company administration towards agriculture and the general direction to where it intended to steer the country's economy. Mining retained its favoured position and agriculture still played second fiddle. This was despite the growth levels registered by agriculture during these early years.

On the eve of the enactment of an amendment to the Mines and Mineral Ordinance in 1908, a number of applications for farm land were made in the Hartley District by Messrs Campion Bros., A. G. Land, G. C. Woodforde, C. Watkins and C. E. Charter. The Mining Commissioner's report regarding these applications stated that "As far as I am aware there are at present no working claims situated on the ground applied for."¹⁶⁸ This report triggered a conversation with the Secretary for Mines who kept enquiring if there were any claims being worked on the land applied for and surrounding areas. This was in spite of the first pronouncement made by the Mining Commissioner. Upon such further probing, the Mining Commissioner revealed that he anticipated pegging of claims on land applied for very soon. This prompted the Secretary for Mines to affirm that "I view this activity in farming in Hartley District with considerable suspicion as mining is so active there and I recommend the holding over of applications there until we know how legislation is going to turn."¹⁶⁹ This recommendation had the effect of locking up agricultural land that had been applied for and

¹⁶⁶ M. Rukuni, 'The evolution of agricultural policy, 1890 – 1990' in M. Rukuni et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution revisited*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe publications, 2006), 36.

¹⁶⁷ H. Weinmann, 'Agricultural research and development in Southern Rhodesia, under the rule of the British South Africa Company, 1890 to 1923', University of Rhodesia, Department of Agriculture, Occasional paper number 4, 1972.

¹⁶⁸ Memo by the Secretary, Estates office to the director Land settlement titled: Application for farms in the Hartley district, 11 May 1908.

¹⁶⁹ NAZ S2136/2862/A Memo by the Secretary, Estates office to the director Land settlement titled: Application for farms in the Hartley district, 11 May 1908.

was lying idle in the district. The insistence by the Mines Secretary on the issue can be used to depict the Company administration's stance on agriculture. Instead of promoting settlement of new farmers by granting their land requests, they were being turned down. In this particular case, it was happening in the very year that the WAP had been launched (1908).

This action by the Mines Secretary was criticised by C. D. Wise, the Director for Land Settlement. He represented the few civil servants who dared to go against Company policy. Wise's main argument was based on the fact that the Mining Commissioner for Hartley had earlier on stated that there were no claims on the land applied for. In his view, the move to hold up land was not healthy for the development of a robust agricultural sector. He argued that "Further am I to understand that you recommend that the whole of the land in Hartley District should be locked up pending legislation? Having in view the number of settlers coming up that would be a serious step to take."¹⁷⁰ Agricultural development had been adopted in an attempt to bolster settlement, yet the Company administration retained and further entrenched policies that discouraged new settlers from taking up land.

Miner-farmer differences had become more acute mainly because of the operations of the Gold Belt Title. There was a growing desire by the farmers to enjoy full liberty in the use of timber resources on the farms. On the other hand, miners were not willing to give in. The Visiting Company Directors in 1907 hoped to put an end to the tension between the two sectors. Jameson and Birchenough, two of the Visiting BSAC Directors had hopes of seeing the introduction of a uniform title to land ownership. The two believed that granting a universal title would facilitate settlement. In 1910, Jameson was still determined to address farmers' concerns regarding the GBT. He therefore, asked a farmer to compile measures that could be taken to improve the title, without affecting miners in any way.¹⁷¹ Jameson wanted to hear farmers' sentiments and determine the need for a universal land title in the country. A memorandum containing farmers' views on how best to improve the mining law was drafted and it included the following points: There was a growing need amongst farmers for miners working on farming land to pay rent direct to farmers, not to the government. By so doing the government would stop encouraging miners to peg more claims on farm land. All farmers were supposed to receive half claim licences as was happening under the Victoria Agreement. The

¹⁷⁰ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from C. D. Wise (Director, Land Settlement) to the Secretary for Mines, 13 May 1908.

¹⁷¹ Letter to Sir Williams 29 November 1910.

memorandum also had a proposition that farmers be granted permission to take proceeds from timber sales and to use water from streams on pegged ground. Prospecting and timber cutting was to be prohibited within fenced paddocks and within half mile of the homestead without the owner's consent.¹⁷² Such demands did not cause any changes but they did indicate to the Directors how much the farming community detested the GBT. The Company administration did not, however, use the farmers' grievances in moulding new mining laws.

Land grants on the Gold Belt were therefore, from 1909 onwards, based on the GBT. For example, an application by J. R. Chiseolm for a farm in Victoria was granted on Gold Belt terms. When granting the land request, the Acting Mining Commissioner stated that "Provided wood and water are reserved for the mining industry in this region, I see no objection to the alienation of the land."¹⁷³ Company officials were always hoping that one day major gold deposits might be struck, Mining Commissioners' reports on land allocations that were made in Gold Belt areas reveal that the hope for a second Rand never went away. Referring to the application for farm Redmond in the Victoria district, the Mining Commissioner for the district reported that "It is common knowledge that this district has only been very superficially prospected and new discoveries may be made any day."¹⁷⁴ Basing on reports received from prospectors that some areas in Ndanga district, which had been earmarked for ranching, had a distinct possibility of discovery and exploitation of minerals in the future, the Mining Commissioner maintained that "Cannot some expert opinion be engaged before the whole area is given over to ranching without reservation as regards wood and water."¹⁷⁵ Such sentiments point to the ambitions of administrative authorities to push for thorough prospecting in the hope of striking rich mineral deposits. They were only prepared to promote agricultural development in an area only after its mineral potential was thoroughly examined.

Company policy on settlement

The Company administration embarked, as has been noted, on a drive to lure new immigrants who could start up farming in the country. A number of initiatives were put in place to ensure

¹⁷² Memorandum addressed to Dr Jameson, titled landowners' rights.

¹⁷³ NAZ S2136/2862/A Report, upon an application for 15 000 Morgen of land near the Mara by Chambers and Plant by Acting Mining Commissioner, Victoria, 11 April 1910.

¹⁷⁴ NAZ S2136/2862/A Mining Commissioner (Victoria) Report on the application for Farm Redmond.

¹⁷⁵ NAZ S2136/2862/A NAZ S2136/2862/A Further report on the unsurveyed land, Ndanga District, by the Acting Mining Commissioner, Victoria.

the success of this project including the inauguration of a number of settlement schemes.¹⁷⁶ However, the Company administration aspired to build a British dominated settler community as depicted by the exclusionist settlement schemes that were intended to lure the ‘desired’ (British) settlers, and discriminated against Afrikaner settlers coming from South Africa as will be delineated in this section. In 1905, the administrator reported to the Legislative Council that:

The company is desirous of assisting as far as may be expedient, the settlement of suitable immigrants upon its unalienated lands, and with that view is preparing a scheme under which considerable funds will be provided for the purpose. The main objects will be to obtain settlers of the agricultural class with sufficient capital to ensure the beneficial occupation of the land, and to assist them by some preparation of their holdings prior to arrival, and by skilled advice while they are gaining experience on the conditions under which farming is carried on in the country.¹⁷⁷

The urgent need for more settlers was also noted by Godfrey Munay, the Government Agriculturist and Botanist, and he proposed a rather different approach. He advocated for the settlement of smallholder farmers rather than the established trend in the country of parcelling out huge tracts of land to large farmers. He noted thus:

Unfortunately, the best land in the country has been allotted in large farms but the time is ripe for a change. A place must be found for the small holder who if he is prosperous is the real wealth and backbone of the country. The large farmer thinks in pounds and neglects shillings – the small holder looks to the shillings for his livelihood.¹⁷⁸

The smallholder farmer was likely to make a home out of his farm. The Company administration, however, acted otherwise. It pursued actions and policies that were not in any way attractive to the potential settlers. Some scholars on the country’s agrarian history like Rukuni¹⁷⁹ mention the state’s desire to settle farmers on the most fertile soils but they neglect the fact that some of the finest agricultural land in Rhodesia (referred to by Rukuni as the high potential areas) lay in the vicinity of Salisbury, Mazoe, Hartley and Umtali. Such areas coincidentally constituted most of the country’s Gold Belt in Mashonaland. This land was therefore either closed to settlement or being issued under the unattractive Gold Belt permits of occupation, as has been demonstrated.

¹⁷⁶ V. E. M. Machingaidze, ‘The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia.’ His thesis elaborates on the various schemes put in place to foster the development of settler agriculture in the country. Also see K. Larsen, “‘You Rhodesian are more British than the British’: The development of white national identity and immigration policies and restrictions in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1965”, PhD Thesis, University of Western Australia 2013.

¹⁷⁷ H. W. Milton quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 26 April 1905.

¹⁷⁸ NAZ L2/2/187 Memorandum on closer settlement in Southern Rhodesia by Godfrey Munay (Government agriculturist and botanist).

¹⁷⁹ Rukuni, *Zimbabwe’s agricultural revolution revisited*.

The Company administration welcomed and helped settle immigrants who possessed what it considered to be the requisite capital. It was, at the same time, unhesitant to turn down applications for assistance by settlers who were facing difficulties in establishing themselves as vibrant commercial farmers, even if they had already taken up land. Considering the minimum capital requirement of £700, it appears as if they looked more at the money when selecting settlers. Wise noted in a special report that: “I can only repeat that a great deal will depend on the selection of men, and only those who have had experience in farming should at all events at present be accepted as settlers. Taking men without experience is a risk for the company and a risk for would be settlers.”¹⁸⁰ From this report it appears as if farming experience counted more than anything else. But when it came to the real issue, men who had the requisite farming experience and had actually taken up farms were denied any kind of assistance and instead had their land taken away. A classic example was the case of F. E. Sedman who held a farm and had spent his savings on clearing the land for cultivation and labour costs. His application for state assistance was turned down by Wise. Sedman enquired:

If the Charter Company want men to settle and cultivate and civilise this country, why not give the men that have been in the country a number of years and who are acclimatised and who understand the nature of the climate and its population of different natives a chance and who would be only too glad to settle and make a home for their friends and relations, with a little assistance at first, to be paid back by instalments?¹⁸¹

Sedman had been in the country and possessed the requisite experience, yet his application for assistance was turned down. Sedman’s case took a dramatic and unfortunate turn when he wrote to the press discouraging potential immigrants from taking up land in Southern Rhodesia. Writing to the editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail* he said that, if published, his story:

would probably help some of the unfortunate men already in South Africa and open the eyes of other intending immigrants from home and who have a little or no capital what they have to expect if such capital is lost through no fault of their own, but through the disadvantages of this country as regards farming etc. including no rains, fever, ticks and all pests.¹⁸²

He had actually issued a warning to potential immigrants that Southern Rhodesia was not the best destination to invest their £700. Instead, he offered the following alternative:

¹⁸⁰ NAZ T2/29/54/1 Special report for possible publication, by C. D. Wise.

¹⁸¹ NAZ T2/29/54/1 Letter from F. E. Sedman to C. D. Wise, 26 November 1906.

¹⁸² NAZ T2/29/54/1 Letter from F. E. Sedman to the editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail*.

A man in England with £700 capital would be better off to stay there and buy 3 acres instead of coming to a new country (namely Southern Rhodesia) and to speculate it in farming, or try to, against all the disadvantages of South Africa, unless they want to work for all their lives to benefit the company and future generations.¹⁸³

This negative publicity was not good in any way for a country that was on a recruitment drive for new settlers. This almost coincided with R. Cross's vicious attack on the BSAC's policy of occupation titles that had major disabilities for farmers holding land on the Gold Belt. His article titled, *Straight talk from a leading expert* published in the *Queenstown Daily Press* was also published in the *Bulawayo Chronicle*. Cross, a farmer from Queenstown in the Cape Colony, advised the BSAC administration as follows:

I am not in a way interested in Rhodesia or likely to be, but if the Chartered Company does not take steps to give more favourable and secure titles to the land, which will induce people to take up the vast stretches of unoccupied land, Rhodesia will remain a wilderness. To make a country you must have population, and the soil worked, and this too before gold mining.¹⁸⁴

Such publications had a negative impact on the country's settlement policy. They had the potential of dissuading people from settling.¹⁸⁵ Such negative publicity was not good for a country attempting to invite more settlers to come and commence farming. Especially considering that Southern Rhodesia had to attract settlers who also had the option to emigrate to more developed countries like Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. The country's GBT was the worst enemy for it had the potential to scare away potential settlers. It was however, serving the miners' interests by providing free access to timber, water and pasture land. In this regard, the Company's primary economic concern, mining, was well catered for.

Apart from the capital requirements and agricultural experience expected from settlers emigrating to Southern Rhodesia, the settler administration aspired to build a settler society dominated by British settlers throughout the period under study. It was this ethnic bias which contributed significantly in shaping the country's demographic structure. It was during the first thirty years of colonial rule that Southern Rhodesia's settler society was moulded. The settlers constituted of Europeans of different nationalities, the dominant being the British settlers followed by Afrikaner settlers. The settler community was transformed from being "a

¹⁸³ NAZ T2/29/54/1 Letter from F. E. Sedman to the editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail*.

¹⁸⁴ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 10 August 1907.

¹⁸⁵ Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources.'

temporary miners frontier to a family oriented farming and trading society.”¹⁸⁶ Although the composition of Southern Rhodesia’s settler community kept shifting and shuffling, it generally kept the form established during the time of Company administration until about 1965.¹⁸⁷ There was a desire amongst the early settlers to create a country which “mirrored the image of Britain in terms of its demographic composition and economic health.”¹⁸⁸ It was this desire which led to the development of a settler identity which promoted the superiority of British settlers (over indigenous Africans and non-British settlers). The majority of the settlers were British-born or British South African so they promoted their home country’s brand of civilisation.¹⁸⁹ The ultimate result of this “racial chauvinism” was a general dislike of non-British settlers, especially Afrikaners who were perceived as a major threat to the creation of a “white man’s country.” This drive to recruit good quality settlers from Britain failed to yield the intended consequences. It blocked would-be settlers who could have made Southern Rhodesia their home and it ultimately obstructed the desire to build a white men’s country.¹⁹⁰

Afrikaners entered Southern Rhodesia at various junctures of the country’s history. They were part of a predominantly British Pioneer Column which crossed the Limpopo into Rhodesia in 1890. Thereafter, G. Hendrich notes that some more Afrikaners went to Southern Rhodesia in search of improved living conditions and job opportunities.¹⁹¹ This was mainly through treks, the most famous of which was the Moodie Trek of 1892. Most of the Afrikaners settled in the Enkeldoorn and Melsetter areas. Although their numbers were inferior when compared to the

¹⁸⁶ B. S. Schutz, ‘European population patterns, cultural persistence and political change in Rhodesia’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, 1 (1973), 9.

¹⁸⁷ A number of scholars have examined the fluid and transient nature of Southern Rhodesia’s settler population. See J. Brownell, *The collapse of Rhodesia, population, demographics and the politics of race*, (London: I. B Tauris, 2011); R. Bickers, *Settlers and expatriates: Britons over the seas*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); K. Law, ‘The white Rhodesians: Settlers or expatriates’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 2 (2011), 389-392; J. Bonello, ‘The development of settler identity in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1914’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), 341-361; A. S. Mlambo, “‘Some are more white than others’: Racial chauvinism as a factor in Rhodesian immigration policy, 1890 to 1963”, *Zambezia*, 17, 2 (200), 139-160; A. S. Mlambo, ‘Building a white man’s country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War Two’, *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 123-146; A. S. Mlambo, *White immigration into Rhodesia: From occupation to federation*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002); R. S. Roberts, ‘Settlers’, *Rhodesiana*, 39 (1078), 55-61.

¹⁸⁸ S. Maravanyika and F. D. Huijzenveld, ‘A failed neo-Britain: Demography and the labour question in colonial Zimbabwe c.1890-1948’, *African Nebula*, 1, 1 (2010), 18-33.

¹⁸⁹ Benello, ‘The development of settler identity’, 354.

¹⁹⁰ See Mlambo, ‘Some are more white than others’ and Larsen, ‘You Rhodesians are more British than the British’.

¹⁹¹ G. Hendrich, ‘Allegiance to the crown: Afrikaner loyalty, conscientious objection and the Enkeldoorn incident in Southern Rhodesia during the Second World War’, *War and Society*, 31, 3 (2012), 230. For a detailed discussion of Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia see G. Hendrich, ‘A History of Afrikaner Farmers in Southern Rhodesia (1890-1980)’, PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2010; W. Hodder-Williams, ‘Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A partial portrait’, *African Social Research*, 18 (1974), 611-641.

British settlers, Afrikaner settlers became a crucial component of the white community in the country. They were predominantly a rural population and Rhodes “encouraged them to immigrate to Southern Rhodesia particularly to develop the agricultural industry.”¹⁹² Immigration flows (and the country’s immigration policies) for both British and Afrikaner settlers kept changing and dictated Southern Rhodesia’s demographic complexion. Schutz notes that “in 1911 the total population of Southern Rhodesia was published as 701 077 of whom 21 606 were Europeans. The European population represented 3. 06 percent of the population or a ratio of 33 Africans to one European.”¹⁹³ The majority of the European population were South African born whites consisting of a smaller number of adherence of the Dutch Reformed Church (Afrikaners) when compared to Anglicans (English speaking). The table below gives the various religious categories that immigrants belonged to.

Table 1: Showing religion by percentage¹⁹⁴

Year	% Anglican	% Dutch Reform	% Presbyterian	% Methodist
1904	41, 53	15, 35	10, 91	5, 33
1911	44, 67	13, 79	11, 15	6, 89

The period between 1911 and 1921 was marked by a change in the country’s demographic make-up characterised by a rise in the proportion of Afrikaner immigrants. Schutz notes that “The absolute number of Dutch Reform members increased from 3256 – 13. 8 percent of the European population in 1911 to 6537 – 19. 4 percent of the population in 1921.”¹⁹⁵ These figures continued to change over time but English speaking settlers maintained their numerical and political superiority as shall be demonstrated in succeeding chapters.

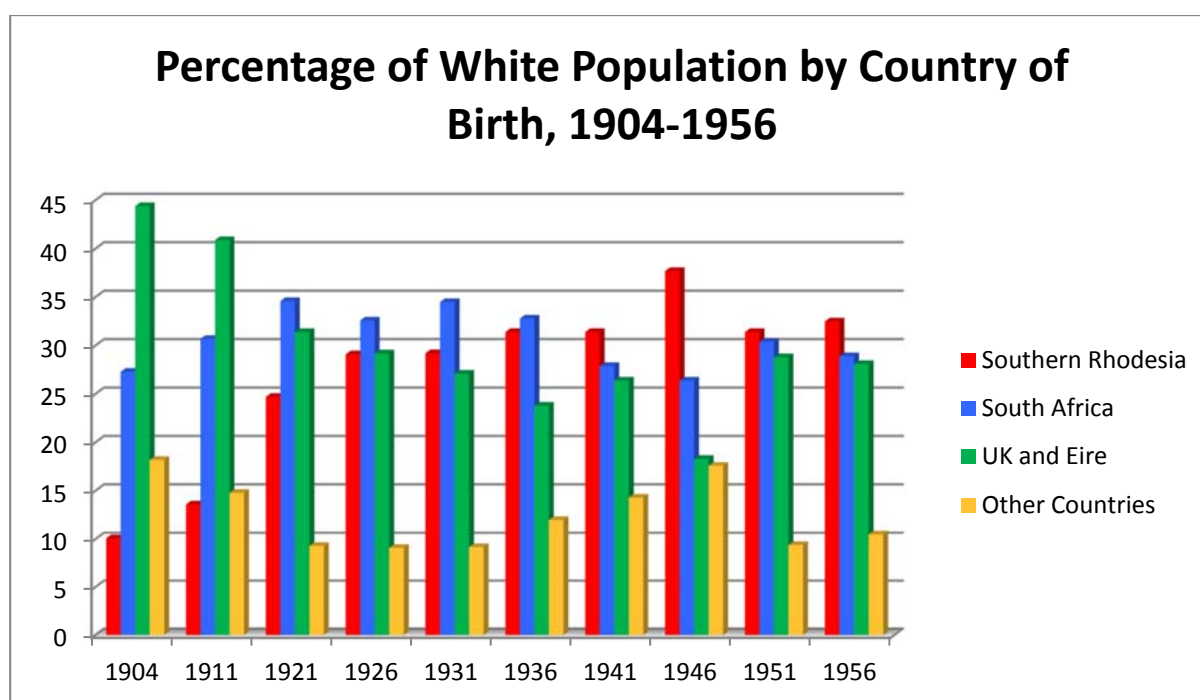
Immigration and emigration continued and there were always shifts in the country’s settler population as shown in the graph below.

¹⁹² Hendrich, *Allegiance to the crown*, 230.

¹⁹³ Schutz, ‘European population patterns’, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Schutz, ‘European population patterns’, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Schutz, ‘European population patterns’, 8.

Graph 1: White population by country of birth, 1901-1056 (%)¹⁹⁶

The settler population did not reach the anticipated levels because of the high turnover. R. Roberts made the following comment regarding this scenario:

The most striking and persistent feature of “settlement” in Southern Rhodesia is that, for every hundred migrants arriving, between sixty and eighty were always leaving.....As a “settlement”, white Rhodesia has been a sort of select suburban-cum-gentlemen-farming frontier outpost of Britain and English speaking South Africa, to which many “settlers” always intended to return.¹⁹⁷

As a result of this population structure, the settler population was not homogeneous. The same applied to the settler farming sector. As already noted, the majority of Afrikaner immigrants went into farming. These Afrikaner farmers in due time played a significant role in the country’s overall agricultural industry.¹⁹⁸ Very few trekked towards Salisbury and most of them settled in the Rusape, Odzi, Marandellas tobacco districts, Bikita, Buhera, Charter, Gutu and in the uplands of the Eastern districts. They thus came into contact with mostly British South African farmers who had flocked into Southern Rhodesia. Relations between British and Afrikaner settlers were amicable at first but started deteriorating after the 1896 Jameson Raid

¹⁹⁶ A. S. Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002), p. 3

¹⁹⁷ R. S. Roberts, ‘The settlers’, *Rhodesiana*, 39 (1979), 55-61.

¹⁹⁸ Hendrich, *Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia*,

and the South African war (1899-1902). Hendrich argues that the Afrikaner minority was in a “relatively friendly coexistence with the dominant English-speaking population of a British colony, although unsympathetic political attitudes... and fear of Afrikaner nationalism often hampered relations.”¹⁹⁹ For him, Afrikaners were not politically assimilated into the mainstream white population until 1965, instead they clung to a more separatist identity. The British on the other hand feared numerical domination by the Afrikaners hence the ploy to block their entry into the country in favour of British immigrants. Authorities in Rhodesia also viewed the Afrikaner culture as inferior to that of the British.²⁰⁰ These differences thus characterised relations amongst the settler farmers. The settler farming community was more heterogeneous, fissured by these ethnic divisions.

Contestations over wood and water

The relaxation of the mining law in 1903, which allowed farmers to occupy land in the Gold Belt area, coincided with a move by the Company administration which enabled small independent miners to operate without floatation. Such actions by the administration set the farmers and the miners on collision course. Miners required wood for use as fuel in their mining operations. In the main mining districts, there was wood cutting on both settler and African land and J. McGregor argues that it was worse on the latter.²⁰¹ Free wood for fuel and mining timber was crucial for mining operations and miners defended their right to timber on the Gold Belt. For the small miners “unfettered access to water, wood and grazing could make the difference between profit and loss.”²⁰² The same applied to the farmers, access to timber was crucial as is noted by McGregor that “sale of timber had always been easy money and an important side-line on the farm and indeed, in bad years it could make all the difference between profit and loss.”²⁰³ Neither of the two sides was willing to lose access to wood and this resulted in a prolonged legal struggle over wood rights. Farmers challenged the administration’s policy which favoured miners as provided by the Gold Belt reservation clause in the land titles. Such favouritism can also be discerned from a reply that the Administrator received from the London office after he informed the Company board about the numerous challenges levelled against Gold Belt reservations by farmers. Part of the reply read:

¹⁹⁹ Hendrich, ‘Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia’, from abstract.

²⁰⁰ See Hodder-Williams, ‘Afrikaners in Rhodesia’.

²⁰¹ J. McGregor, ‘Woodland resources: Ecology, policy and ideology; an historical case study of woodland use in Shurugwi communal area Zimbabwe’, PhD thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, 1991, 43.

²⁰² Phimister, *Economic and social history of Zimbabwe*, 36.

²⁰³ McGregor, ‘Woodland resources’, 42.

“Supposing agriculture was seriously impeded, we should all be delighted for it would necessarily mean a very large and flourishing mining industry.”²⁰⁴ Such statements revealed the company’s intransigent stance regarding the country’s economic development.

The move therefore intensified the tussle over water and timber. Water was a pre-requisite for most, if not all agricultural ventures. Miners on the other hand required water for their mining mills. In 1903, Colonel Heyman, a member of the Legislative Council for the Midland District, moved to include this clause in the mining legislation: “Provided that should the claimholder or claimholders desire to expropriate all or any of the water on private land they may do so on payment of compensation, the amount whereof to be fixed by arbitration in default of agreement.”²⁰⁵ If this was ratified, farming men argued, it would guarantee an uninterrupted water supply to the mines and they would not close down. Heyman’s argument hinged on the fact that “The agricultural industry depended upon the mining industry for its successful development and if the mining industry had an obstacle put in the way of successful mining it must materially affect the prospects of the agricultural industry.”²⁰⁶ Colonel Napier, member of the Legislative Council for the Western District, moved to support the motion, he said “farmers looked upon the water as an asset of the farm and this was the point they had fought upon since 1895.”²⁰⁷ He thus supported the move to make miners pay for the water they used in their operations. In this way, the miner would not be blocked from using water to the detriment of the industry. Napier proceeded to argue that “it was better for the mines to pay a large amount for water than to be deprived of it altogether.”²⁰⁸ Farmers from Matebeleland, a water scarce region, were the ones spearheading this campaign to have miners pay for the water that they used.

The restrictions on water usage by farmers were viewed as a major obstacle with the potential to push potential settlers away. The question to be answered was whether Southern Rhodesia was going to be populated by mining men or farmers. If these restrictions were maintained, then the door was being shut for men who would be willing to take up land and commence farming, this was highly likely if the Company administration continued to issue the Gold Belt permit of occupation. F. Myburgh echoed similar sentiments in 1907:

²⁰⁴ A1/5/5 Wilson to Fox, 20 August 1903.

²⁰⁵ Col. Heyman quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, Tuesday 30 June 1903.

²⁰⁶ Col. Heyman quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, Tuesday 30 June 1903.

²⁰⁷ Col. Napier quoted in the Legislative Council debates, Tuesday 30 June 1903.

²⁰⁸ Col. Napier quoted in the Legislative Council debates, Tuesday 30 June 1903.

If they wanted to encourage bona fide farmers to settle in this country, not men of the Salvation Army type, but men who were prepared to come into the country with a certain amount of capital to settle down, not necessarily for the actual money that they could make out of a farm, but to make their home in the country. If they wanted to encourage such men and they were the men they required – those men would have no encouragement if they felt the title to the farm which they might purchase was so insecure.²⁰⁹

The Mines and Minerals Act Number 10 of 1904 deprived the farmer of his water. Myburgh added that expropriation of the farmer's water was tantamount to expropriation of his farm.²¹⁰ Besides the use of water, there was also the problem of the inter-mingling of stock belonging to the miner with that of the farmer. Napier highlighted a scenario whereby more than eight prospectors could come onto a farm, each with his own cattle. It was highly likely that the stock might have picked some disease along the way, and this will be passed on to the farmer's cattle. This was in view of the quarantine regulations instituted to contain the spread of bovine diseases that had decimated the country's herd in the past few years.²¹¹ This general fear was shared by farmers who were in the process of rebuilding their herds.

The Administrator supported mining interests. This was a major challenge confronting farmers, dealing with an administrative system that supported one sector at the detriment of another. He argued that he did not even see the insecurity in the tenure system that was being referred to by farming men in the House. The basis of his argument was the fact that “the history of the colonies which were developing more as the result of mining than agriculture was that the mines should take precedence.”²¹² Milton went on to compare Rhodesia's mining law to the situation prevailing in the Transvaal where a farmer should be prepared to leave once a mineral was discovered on his land. Montagu, the Secretary for Mines had earlier on written to the Lands Department arguing against the payment of water used by miners. His point was that “if the proposed new legislation takes place were by a farmer has to be compensated by a miner for water the latter desired to use we may anticipate a good many applications for farms on gold belts with the hope that the acquisition of which will lead to compensation.”²¹³

²⁰⁹ Myburgh quoted in the legislative Council Debates, 14 may 1907.

²¹⁰ Myburgh quoted in the legislative Council Debates, 14 may 1907.

²¹¹ See W. Mwatwara, 'A history of state veterinary services and African livestock regimes in colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1896-1980', PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2014.

²¹² Milton quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 14 May 1907.

²¹³ Letter from Montagu (secretary for mines) to Secretary Department of lands 27 July 1903.

Opposition to water and timber restrictions by the farming community was on the rise and miners remained defensive. At the 1906 RAU Congress farmers registered their discontent towards the state's attitude of always standing in the miners' corner. Trollip, a farmer, drew the attention of the congress to the sort of standing order in the country that whenever there was an objection raised by a farmer as against the mining community, a law was passed to compel the farmer to part with what he was unwilling to part with.²¹⁴ The Company administration always came to the miners' aid. This was despite the fact that a number of schemes had been put in place to promote the growth of settler agricultural in the country. These did not however, disadvantage miners in any way.

It seemed the state wanted to maintain the dominance of the mining industry at all cost. In 1908, the Chamber of Mines passed a crucial resolution stipulating that "in the opinion of this chamber all titles to land situated in Mashonaland gold belts must contain full reservation of wood, water and grazing for the free use of the mining industry."²¹⁵ This resolution was issued when the passing of an amendment of the mining law was drawing closer. It clearly defined the mood prevailing amongst the miners. They were not willing to give in on the farmers' demands. A farmers and miners conference was held in March 1908 to try and reconcile the differences of the two groups in line of the proposals made by the Visiting Directors. However, the Mining Act Amendment Number 15 of 1908 did not do much to alter the status quo. The pro-miners' legislation was further entrenched and farmers lost out on their demands. The only change introduced by the legislation pertained to access to timber by farmers. It provided for the reservation by the Mining Commissioner of wood not exceeding fifty percent for use by the farmer.²¹⁶ The clause only worked when the farmer concerned had genuine need for the wood, in which case he was supposed to make an application to the Commissioner of Mines for that wood to be reserved against cutting by miners. This was not the end: the struggle persisted with each group trying to win concessions that would improve the conditions for its members.

It should be noted that applications for the reservation of timber (in line with the latest amendment of the mining law) were made by farmers and Mining Commissioners, in certain instances supported such applications. For instance, the Mining Commissioner for Bulawayo

²¹⁴ Trollip quoted speaking at the Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress, 1906.

²¹⁵ Chamber of Mines Resolution 1908.

²¹⁶ Mines and Minerals Amendment Act Number 15, 1908.

recommended wood reservation for Edmonstone of Gwanda. Edmonstone had written to the Mining Commissioner, who in turn forwarded the application to the Secretary for Mines saying:

I enclose copy of a letter from Edmonstone of Gwanda complaining that his farm Mjeni is being cleared of timber for mining purposes thereby depreciating its value. I beg to recommend that some reservation be made as in the case of Mr Fynn.²¹⁷

This case also presented a somehow unique scenario whereby the Mining Commissioner, being a true advocate of Company interests, supported a farmer. He argued for the protection of farmers' land against uncontrolled wood cutting and proposed that if possible, a charge should be levied for wood removed by mining companies. He wrote to the Secretary for Mines arguing that:

Is it now time the BSAC should impose their charge for cutting timber on their land. If they did so a reasonable refund could be made to the farmer in a case like this after he has obtained his title. I have been often on the point of writing on this subject as I am of opinion the charge would be a fair and reasonable one.²¹⁸

Here the Mining Commissioner was challenging the principle behind the Gold Belt reservations providing miners with free wood. He noted the unfairness characterising the title and the need by the administration to drop it for a fairer title. Some more applications for reservation of wood were made by farmers in line with the amended legislation. There were some farmers who appeared to have taken the reservation clause as an excuse to gain access to wood. For instance, Stanley Pyne of Everton Farm in Rusape, he wanted some wood on his farm to be reserved from cutting. In presenting Pyne's case to the Secretary for Mines, the Mining Commissioner for Umtali District stated that "He wishes the 500 acres on Everton reserved, his reasons being that he requires this reservation for shelter purposes and wind breaks and domestic use. He stated that there is no cutting in the immediate vicinity but fears that there may be."²¹⁹ His farm had not even been subjected to cutting, yet he was already applying for reservation.

Small miners, however, still wanted unfettered access to wood and they interpreted the 1908 Amendment to mean that farms were being given out on the Gold Belt with full right to wood. This was raised by Forbes in the House in 1910 on behalf of the Smallworkers Associations,

²¹⁷ NAZ M3/1/2 Letter from the Mining Commissioner Bulawayo to the Secretary for Mines, 6 May 1908.

²¹⁸ NAZ M3/1/2 Letter from Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo to Secretary for Mines, 11 May 1908.

²¹⁹ NAZ MU2/3/23 Letter from Mining Commissioner for Umtali to Secretary for Mines, 4 June 1909.

protesting on the alleged action of the BSAC in granting timber rights to farmers on farms within the Gold Belt.²²⁰ This was in reaction to the several reservation orders that had been granted since the new amendment was ratified. They saw these reservations as a challenge to their established right over all wood on Gold Belt farms. The Secretary for Mines assured Forbes that all the reservations made had been carefully adhered to, with regard especially to working mines and where claims were pegged.²²¹ Some farmers too had misinterpreted the new amendment and thought that it granted them a new title which gave them exclusive rights over all timber. They therefore thought that they were now empowered to charge mine owners for wood cut on their farms. A farmer, G. A. Peacocks wrote to P. J. Jensen of Arcturus Mine that:

Having been informed by Mr Atherstone of Lands Department, that since the grant of new title issued to me some two months ago, I have the right to charge for all wood cut on my farm such being the case, I shall expect payment for any or all wood cut in future.²²²

Mr Jensen was perturbed and he immediately sought clarification from the Mining Commissioner. One of his major worries was that:

As I hold a permit to cut timber and wood for the Fiona Mine free of charge on Peacocks farm, will the government meet any charge there may now exist? The amount of capital invested in Fiona on the supposition of free wood and water will otherwise be considerably lowered in value, and may even prevent it ever being worked as a producing mine.²²³

The Mining Commissioner, however, allayed his fears by assuring him that there was only a single form of GBT issued by the BSAC. Such instances reveal the significance of free wood for both farmers and miners.

Reservation of wood against cutting by miners on occupied Gold Belt farms was reaffirmed by the Mines and Minerals Ordinance Amendment Number 26 of 1914. Farmers were deeply dissatisfied and militated for absolute authority over all wood on their farms. This was reflected by a resolution that was made by the RAU at their annual congress in 1915 that:

this Congress is of the opinion that after a farm on the Gold Belt has once had its wood cut off by the mines for fuel etc, it should thereafter become exempt for further servitudes in that respect, and that the owner of such farm should thereafter be given his timber rights over the farm.²²⁴

²²⁰ Forbes quoted in Legislative Council Debates, 19 May 1910.

²²¹ Secretary for Mines quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 19 May 1910.

²²² NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from G. A. Peacocks to P. H. Jensen (Arcturus Mine), 1 June 1908.

²²³ NAZ S2136/2862/A Letter from P. H. Jensen to the Mining Commissioner, Salisbury, 3 June 1908.

²²⁴ NAZ N3 33/9-11 Letter from the Secretary of the RAU to the Secretary of the Mines and Works Department, 15 July 1915.

The state could not be moved on this point because it wanted the guarantee of miners' timber access to be retained in the country's mining law. Rather, the Secretary for Mines referred RAU to a clause in the 1914 amendment which provided for a simple court of arbitration "to consider and settle questions which may arise between a landowner and a prospector, as to whether or not ground is open to prevent the entire cutting of wood on an occupied farm."²²⁵ This clause did not bring any desired change for the farmers. They were still supposed to make applications for reservations to the Secretary for Mines.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 stimulated the demand for base minerals, especially chrome, required for making munitions. This boosted chrome production in Southern Rhodesia as producers sought to meet the international demand for the mineral. The mining process for chrome ore was different from the manner gold was mined. The extraction of chrome ore on the surface was done by means of trenches and shallow excavations, damaging land and destroying trees in the process. What made chrome mining more destructive was the nature and size of the claims pegged when compared to gold mining. The Secretary for Mines explained the differences between base minerals and gold locations in a letter to the Administrator in 1916:

At present a base mineral location is 30 claims equivalent to 60 acres, but this size was arranged many years ago as the mining industry contended that to place base mineral locations on the same basis as gold locations, viz 10 claims of 20 acres, would restrict the industry as base minerals occurred in different nature of deposit to gold and were not so valuable.²²⁶

Farmers quarrelled with the miners on two different fronts. First, the long established battle against the Gold Belt restrictions on their land titles, then the destruction caused by base minerals mining. In 1923 the Secretary for the RAU wrote a letter to the Secretary for Mines urging "the government to amend the mining laws affecting base metals, to prevent the destruction of trees and herbage on the large tracts of land without compensation to the landowner."²²⁷ Nothing was done in this regard because the state was generating a lot of revenue from base minerals mining at the time.

²²⁵ NAZ N3 33/13-15 Letter from the Secretary for Mines to the RAU, 2 August 1916.

²²⁶ NAZ N3/33/15 Letter from the Secretary for Mines to the Secretary Department of Administration.

²²⁷ NAZ N3/33/15 Letter from Secretary for RAU to the Secretary for Mines and works, 14 March 1923.

Farmers did not give up the fight. They continued to pressure the administration to effect meaningful changes on the country's mining laws. This was reflected through the various resolutions made by different farmers' associations calling for the repeal of the GBT. The RAU Congress of 1921 noted that this form of title had outlived its usefulness. The following resolution by the Hartley Farmers Association was also part of the Congress' agenda:

That the administration be asked to introduce legislation altering all present and future titles so that in every case the holder of such titles shall be permitted to sell the timber on his land for his own benefit for industrial and other purposes on receiving the permission of the Director of Land Settlement and the Mining Commissioner of his district, with the right of appeal to the Administrator if such permission should be unreasonably withheld.²²⁸ The Congress resorted to making resolutions calling upon the administration to curb the destruction of trees, for the miners to provide compensation to landowners and the need for the payment of mining grazing fees. Responding to these resolutions, the Secretary for Mines was candid in stating the state's position; he said "I have the honour to inform you that after consideration of resolutions number 1 and 2 the government are not prepared to introduce legislation to amend the mining law on the lines indicated."²²⁹ The Administrator added weight to this statement by saying that it made no use to forward the resolutions for discussion by the Chamber of Mines and the Smallworkers Associations. He showed his support for the miners by unequivocally stating that "They would naturally object to any alteration of the law in the sense proposed, and in view of the dependence of the whole country on the mining industry, I find all the objections would have to be upheld."²³⁰ The administration considered mining as the country's chief economic activity. Around this same time (1920), Henry Joseph Filmer, who later became Manager for the Pangani Asbestos Mine, entered the country from South Africa. The story of his train journey provides a crucial pointer to the significance accorded to the mining industry. Upon discovering that he did not have a passport or any other document, the Plumtree Border officials denied him entry into the country. At that point, Davies, a Bush Tick Mine Engineer he was travelling with remarked: "What, a man coming to open up our asbestos industry, you are going to stop him coming into the country?"²³¹ Upon further inquiry on the kind of job that he was intending to undertake, he was allowed into the country. Although settler agriculture had by this time been developed into a viable enterprise, farmers' concerns continued to be neglected.

²²⁸ NAZ N3/33/10 Provisional agenda for Annual Congress to be held at Bulawayo on March 17 1921 and succeeding days and the replies to resolutions passed at the 1920 Congress held at Gwelo.

²²⁹ Letter from the Secretary for Mines to Rhodesia Agricultural Union Secretary, 30 June 1921.

²³⁰ Letter from the Administrator to the Secretary for Mines and Works, 20 June 1921.

²³¹ NAZ ORAL/FI4 Henry Joseph Filmer (1889-1974), Manager at Pangani Asbestos Mine.

The government could not be seen to be capitulating to farmers' demands at that particular time when the two sides were involved in a political debate on whether Southern Rhodesia was to be granted Responsible Government or to be joined to the Union of South Africa as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Miners' roads on Gold Belt farms

Farmers and miners clashes on the Gold Belt were either centred on the resources highlighted above, or were concerned about miners' right of access on the farms. There were misunderstandings over roads or lines of rail made usually by miners across farming land. Miners needed to transport wood cut from the farms to their mining locations. Also, some mines were located far away from main railway lines and so they needed to construct smaller lines of rail connecting their mines to the main railway line for easier transportation of minerals and machinery. Problems started when such smaller lines were also supposed to pass through farming land, thus presenting a major cause for conflict with the farmers whose land was involved. Conflicts of this nature were common and they were presided over by Mining Commissioners of the various districts. Mining men argued that farmers presented major obstacles in their operations by blocking the only available roads, passing through their farms, for use by miners. Mennie, a wood contractor cutting wood at Brooksville Farm, complained to the Mining Commissioner for Umtali that the farmer refused him permission to continue using the only available road across the farm as the agreement between the two had been terminated.²³² Informing the Secretary for Mines on the dispute the Mining Commissioner added that "The contractor now claims a right of way by this road as, owing to hills etc, there is no other available route. I now propose visiting the ground again to settle the dispute if possible without recourse to law."²³³ He later wrote to the farm owner informing him that:

If this is the case I must inform you that, under your farm title, all timber on your land is available for bona fide mining purposes free of charge, also that access to such timber must not be interfered with – in other words the right to any timber on your farm or in its vicinity carries the right of way thereto, provided, of course that you are not prejudiced thereby.²³⁴

²³² NAZ MU2/3/23 Letter from Mining Commissioner for Umtali to the Secretary for Mines and Works, 1 December 1914.

²³³ NAZ MU2/3/23 Letter from Mining Commissioner for Umtali to the Secretary for Mines and Works, 1 December 1914.

²³⁴ NAZ MU2/3/23 Letter from the Mining Commissioner to J Haslam, Brooksville Farm, 6 December 1914.

The ruling was made in favour of the miner and his contractor. Although the Registrar of Claims later said that a wood contractor did not have any rights whatsoever, as a wood contractor, he only derived rights from being an agent of a mine. The ruling made by the Mining Commissioner was made to stand.

Another case reported at the RAU Congress in 1915 had clearly laid bare the bias of Mining Commissioners in the settlement of cases of this nature. A mining company intending to ferry its minerals to the main railway line had commenced surveying of the line and started actual work on it without consulting owners of the land over which the line was passing through. One of the farmers objected to the line going over his farm, resulting in the matter being taken to the Mining Commissioner for Gwelo. Without hearing evidence from either of the two sides, he decided that the mining company had the right to take its line over the land without paying farthing compensation.²³⁵ The line passed within a few yards to an orchard and was very close to the farmer's house. The farmer concerned was not happy with the manner the case was adjudicated.

It was further revealed that the same mining company had reneged on its initial promise of giving the owner of the farm first call to supply vegetables to the mine and a monetary payment of £300. The mining company had made this promise to the farmer as compensation for allowing the railway line to pass through his farm. This might have been a deliberate move by the company knowing well that the Mining Commissioner was going to settle the dispute in its favour. Trollip contended that such cases were unjust and further argued that "when a mining company got any advantage from a farmer, it should be prepared to pay for it."²³⁶ Farmers were not happy with the manner in which the Mining Commissioners had handled the cases and the RAU Congress made the following resolution at their 1915 congress:

That this Congress is of the opinion that applications by mining companies and mine owners for permission to lay and work light railways over private lands and similar applications affecting the owners of land, should be referred for decision to arbitration in terms of the Lands and Arbitration Clauses Act, 1882 as provided for under section 5 of the Mining Law Amending Ordinance, No. 26 of 1914, instead of being decided as at present provided for under section 171 of the Mines and Minerals Ordinance 1903.²³⁷

²³⁵ Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress, 1915.

²³⁶ Mr Trollip speaking at the Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress in 1915.

²³⁷ NAZ N3/33/9 Letter from the Secretary of the RAU to the Secretary department of Mines and Works, 15 July 1915.

Their major argument was that if the matter had been dealt with by arbitration, not the Mining Commissioners, a decision could have been made that the mining companies should pay compensation for the land that they used. Allen stood to argue that the matter involved a vital principle and could affect any farmer whose land was in the vicinity of a mining area.²³⁸ According to Allen “It was not a matter of penalising the mining company but it was a question of an ordinary payment for value received.”²³⁹ Farmers were no longer comfortable having Mining Commissioners adjudicating in any other disputes that involved farmers and miners. Mining Commissioners were biased towards miners hence the need for neutral arbitration by the farmers.

Conflicts of this nature were not limited to farmers and miners only. Miners also quarrelled amongst themselves, not only for gold claims, but also on issues related to roads. A miner could block a fellow miner’s intention to construct a road passing through the former’s claims. An example of a conflict of this nature was reported to the Mining Commissioner for Umtali by the Manager of the Bartissol Gold Mining Company Limited. He claimed that Little (a claim holder) had stopped his men from making a small deviation from the main road, the latter had been made impassable by the heavy rains.²⁴⁰ The road was mainly used to transport timber from Tshituku forest. The slight deviation was supposed to pass through Little’s claims but he had objected to the move and stopped men sent by Bartissol Mine from working.²⁴¹ Such disputes between farmers and miners as well as between miners themselves were very common in the country’s main mining areas. Mining Commissioners and in some instances Civil Commissioners presided over the disputes with the sole aim of harmonising the parties concerned. Farmers continued challenging the use of Mining Commissioners in the settlement of farmer-miner disputes. The government did not change the system since it ensured that miners’ interests were protected against the farmers.

²³⁸ Mr Allen speaking at the Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress in 1915.

²³⁹ Mr Allen speaking at the Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress in 1915. Also NAZ MU/2/2/3 Secretary of Mines to Mining Commissioner, Umtali, 9 December 1908; NAZ MA4 R1/1 Mazoe Farmers Association.

²⁴⁰ NAZ MU1/1/9 Letter from The Bartissol Gold Mining Company Ltd to the Mining Commissioner for Umtali. See also NAZ M3/8/3/2 Heartland and Fletcher to Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo, 27 July 1899; NAZ M3/8/3/8 J. D. Graham (Manager, Sabi Ophir Mining Company) to Mining Commissioner, Umtali, 14 June 1897, also includes conflicts sparked by prospectors encroaching and pegging claims already pegged.

²⁴¹ NAZ MU1/1/9 Letter from The Bartissol Gold Mining Company Ltd to the Mining Commissioner for Umtali

Conclusion

The chapter has highlighted the evolution of Gold Belt reservations on land granted to farmers in gold bearing areas. The system entrenched the administration's favouritism of mining interests as the country's major economic activity. The chapter argued that conflicts between farmers and miners were not a result of any attempts to foster environmentalism nor were they driven by farmers' and miners' desire to control the means of production as previously presented by existing literature on miner-farmer relations. Rather, the conflicts were a direct result of how the Company administration intended to structure the colonial economy from the onset. The ever-shifting policies of the administration, as represented by legislation and pronouncements by the administrative officials such as Mining Commissioners, the Administrator and Company Directors, were the major sources from which conflicts emanated as has been demonstrated in the chapter. As shall be demonstrated in succeeding chapters, the nature of the state policy and its intentions on the country's economy continued to dictate the nature of farmer-miner relations. Its role as arbiter kept changing over time and this significantly influenced how the state interacted with the different interests. By highlighting the manner in which the BSAC planned to structure the colonial economy, the chapter has revealed the ensuing relationship between farmers and miners in the country. It has also dealt with the various controversies surrounding this land holding title (GBT) in relation to the overall Company's land settlement policy. The chapter has shown that, although the Company adopted a formal settler agricultural policy from 1908 onwards, it never lost interest in mining. Settler agriculture certainly received concessions which were not availed to the indigenous African agricultural sector, but mining remained the favoured child.

CHAPTER THREE

‘He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune?’ Administration, representation and taxation in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923.

Upon being granted a Royal Charter by the British government, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) hastily embarked upon effective occupation of the territory north of the Limpopo River and commenced prospecting for gold. Cecil John Rhodes set up a government led by the Company to administer both Mashonaland and Matebeleland as well as to facilitate the building of railways and telegraphs, develop commerce and to explore the country’s mineral resources as stipulated in his application for the Charter.²⁴² This Company administration presided over Southern Rhodesia’s affairs until the Charter was terminated in 1923. It grappled with numerous setbacks in its attempts to develop a colonial economy, initially based on mining as discussed in the previous chapter. This was notwithstanding the criticism and challenges from the growing, but disillusioned settler population which was already calling for the dismantling of Company rule soon after 1900.

A body of scholarly work exists on how Southern Rhodesia attained Responsible Government in 1923. Literature on the subject has covered aspects on the voting pattern in the 1922 referendum and South Africa’s interest in incorporating Southern Rhodesia into the Union.²⁴³ Other historians have chronicled this phase of the country’s history by focusing on the political careers of prominent figures in the fight for Responsible Government in Southern Rhodesia.²⁴⁴ Three historians in the last generation have explored on intra-racial relations by focusing on white farmers and the state in Southern Rhodesia.²⁴⁵ This literature provides the current basis

²⁴² J. S. Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The early days of the British South Africa Company*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 311.

²⁴³ J. D. Fage, ‘The achievement of self-government in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923’, PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1949; M. A. G. Davies, ‘Incorporation in the Union of South Africa or self-government: Rhodesia’s choice in 1922’, Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1963; P. R. Warhurst, ‘Rhodesia and her neighbours 1900 to 1923’, PhD Thesis University of Oxford, 1970; M. Chanock, *Unconsummated Union: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1900-1945*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

²⁴⁴ D. Lowry, ‘White women’s country: Ethel Tawse Jolie and the making of white Rhodesia’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23, 2 (1997), 259-281; J. P. R. Wallis, *One man’s hand: The story of Sir Charles Coghlan and the liberation of Southern Rhodesia*, (London: Longman, 1950).

²⁴⁵ J. A. McKenzie, ‘Commercial farmers in the governmental of colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980’, PhD Thesis University of Zimbabwe, 1989; A. Selby, ‘Commercial farmers and the state: Interest group politics and land reform in Zimbabwe’, PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006; R. Pilossof, *The unbearable whiteness of being: Farmers’ voices from Zimbabwe*, (Cape Town: Cape Town University Press, 2012).

for understanding issues on land, agriculture and the state in Southern Rhodesia. This chapter contributes to this existing historiography by tracing settler discontent with the BSAC administration in Southern Rhodesia during the period of Company administration. It argues that, apart from clamouring for changes in the administrative system as presented by M. E. Lee,²⁴⁶ there was an ever-growing desire by the elected members of the Legislative Council to have administrative power ceded to representatives of the tax paying settlers by the BSAC. Settlers had been granted representation in the Council in 1898 and by 1913 they had majority representation.²⁴⁷ This was, however, not complemented by administrative power and therefore failed to placate the settlers. They contributed to the country's revenue and there were indications that the Company administration would bequeath to the succeeding settler government (after expiry of the Charter) a debt of past expenditure. Elected members thus continuously demanded an influential administrative role as shall be demonstrated by this chapter.

The chapter joins a historical conversation on law and the state in colonial Africa. Existing literature has confined law in colonial Africa to be a platform of engagement between Europeans and Africans.²⁴⁸ This thesis adds an equally important dimension by focusing on the role of law in shaping the contours of contestation between key settler interest groups in Southern Rhodesia. C. Palley's²⁴⁹ (1966) publication on Southern Rhodesia's constitutional history presented a detailed discussion on the evolution of the country's constitution. However, Palley's emphasis was on Britain's role in Southern Rhodesian constitutional development as well as a discussion of various government institutions in the second part of the book.²⁵⁰ This chapter concentrates on the significance of the Legislative Council in challenging the BSAC's

²⁴⁶ M. E. Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups in Southern Rhodesia, 1890 to 1923', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1974.

²⁴⁷ In 1898 the Legislative Council consisted of five Company nominees and four elected settler representatives. A 1903 Order in Council increased the number of Legislative Council members on both sides to seven. The Company's Directors who visited the country in 1907 recommended a cut in the number of nominated members from seven to five, a move ratified by a 1911 Order in Council. Then by a proclamation (No. 47 of 1914) provision was made for an automatic increase in the number of elected members to a maximum of fifteen, on the basis that there should be one member for every 792 voters on the roll. In the 1914 elections there were twelve elected members and in the 1920 elections there were thirteen. See C. Leys, *European politics in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), 12.

²⁴⁸ See K. Mann and R. Roberts, *Law in colonial Africa (eds)*, (London: James Currey, 1991); G. H. Karekwaivanane, "'It shall be the duty of every African to obey and comply promptly': Negotiating state authority in the legal arena, Rhodesia 1965-1980", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 2 (2011), 333-349; G. H. Karekwaivanane, 'Legal encounters: Law, state and society in Zimbabwe, c.1950-1990', PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2012.

²⁴⁹ C. Palley, *The constitutional history and law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1965 with special reference to Imperial control*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

²⁵⁰ Palley, *The constitutional history*, vii.

continued hold over power. Through exploring debates in the Legislative Council on the significance of tax payment in relation to lobbying for settler rule, the chapter challenges M. Moore's argument on the prominence of taxation issues on the public political agenda in southern countries. Moore argues that taxation issues have been far less prominent on the political agendas in the south than within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.²⁵¹ Moore's template is not applicable to Southern Rhodesia's case where debates about taxation, representation and administration formed the basis of agitation against Company administration and ultimately contributed to the attainment of Responsible Government in 1923.

Scholars who have written on the subject have argued that settlers were always appealing for increased representation in line with the growing settler population.²⁵² Although almost an historiographical truism, this chapter makes extensive use of Legislative Council debates to reveal that settler representatives themselves aspired for real political power to be granted to the country's settlers rather than merely paper representation. Besides the various pressure groups which constituted the core of Lee's study, the Legislative Council was the single most important constitutional platform available for the settlers to challenge Company rule. The chapter begins by analysing the nexus of representation, administration and taxation highlighting the need for more administrative power by the settler representatives. It briefly outlines attempts by the country's settlers and their representatives in the Legislative Council to terminate chartered rule. The chapter proceeds to give an example of how the Company administration manipulated the flaws in the legislative system to dodge resolution of important matters such as its claim to be the legal owner of the country's land resource. The Company promoted mining interests at the expense of farming and commercial interests. This rift was manifested when settler representatives demanded the amendment of the country's mining laws with very limited success, as Chapter Two explained. The chapter then considers the politics in the period from the end of the First World War to 1923. It highlights how the settler representatives attempted to extricate the country from the hands of Company rule by making repeated calls to the Imperial government to transfer power from the BSAC to the tax paying

²⁵¹ M. Moore, 'Taxation and the political agenda, north and south', *Forum for Development Studies*, 31, 1 (2004), 8. Also see M. Moore, 'Between coercion and contrast: Competing narratives on taxation and governance' in D. A. Brautigam et al (eds), *Taxation and state building in developing countries: Capacity and contrast*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁵² S. Maravanyika, 'Soil conservation and the white agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe, c.1908-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2013); Leys, *European politics*; Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups'.

settlers. The chapter therefore uses the divisions in the Legislative Council as a lens to examine the intra-settler struggles in the settler community. These also mirrored on the existing state-farmer-miner differences that characterised interaction of the triad in the period of Company administration and after.

Representation and taxation: Elected members in a BSAC dominated legislative council

After conquering King Lobengula and his Ndebele State in 1893, the BSAC was granted permission by the imperial government to administer the territory.²⁵³ Consequently, an Order in Council was issued in 1894 and it provided for the appointment of an administrator to govern the country with the aid of a Council made up of Company appointees.²⁵⁴ With this arrangement, the Administrator and his Council were placed under the supervision of the London Board, which had the final say on all vital matters concerning government of the territory. Appointed members of the Council represented and served Company interests and this left no one to represent the varied interests of the emerging farming and commercial interests. Lee discussed the emergence and development of various pressure groups that aspired to fight for settler interests since there was no settler political representation in the Council.²⁵⁵ Settler discontent on the absence of elected members scored early success when the Company granted sectional representation through an 1898 Order in Council.²⁵⁶ Settler representation initially set at four members, was finally brought to par with that of Company representatives in 1903 after the Settler Representative Association had made a direct appeal to Rhodes against settler under-representation in the Legislative Council.²⁵⁷ This equality was only on paper because in reality elected members could not outvote the nominated representatives on crucial policy issues. Strict instructions were dispatched to the Company from the colonial office stating that “For as long as the Company bore the expense of governing the country, there must be no chance of the official members being outvoted by the elected members.”²⁵⁸ Whenever a stalemate was reached on discussions in the Council, the Administrator used his casting vote to ensure victory for Company interests (when the elected representatives had an equal number

²⁵³ For an exploration of this development see S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ‘Mapping cultural and colonial encounters in Zimbabwe, 1880s-1930s’ in B. Raftopoulos and A. S. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history of Zimbabwe from pre-colonial period to 2008*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009).

²⁵⁴ P. F. Horne, *Southern Rhodesia*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 125; Mckenzie, ‘Commercial farmers in the governmental of colonial Zimbabwe’.

²⁵⁵ Lee, ‘Politics and pressure groups’.

²⁵⁶ R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), 140.

²⁵⁷ Selby, ‘Commercial farmers and the state’, 43.

²⁵⁸ NAZ A3/20/4 Colonial Office to the British South Africa Company, 3 December 1902.

of representatives with the appointed members), and he could veto any issue that contradicted the interests of the BSAC.

The BSAC had a firm hold over the country's affairs and controlled political as well as economic affairs. The following examples can be cited to show the level of control that the Company had on the country's affairs. Sir E. L. Guest, a lawyer who held various senior ministerial positions in the government including Minister for Air during the Second World War, highlighted the extent of the Company's control by noting that it "dictated what you were to have for breakfast."²⁵⁹ Guest arrived in Southern Rhodesia from Kimberly where he had also experienced a company (De Beers), dominating the whole system. Upon arrival in Southern Rhodesia, he realised that there existed a similar scenario with the BSAC having absolute control of the country's affairs. This dominance resulted from a combination of factors. One of the major sources of the Company's dominance was a reliance of the bulk of the country's population for employment opportunities on the BSAC or associate companies such as Willoughby's Consolidated and the Gold Fields (which also supported the BSAC's agenda).²⁶⁰ Patrick Fletcher (Agriculture Minister in the 1940s) highlighted an example of a case where the BSAC manipulated the railway company for its own advantage. He noted that a train transporting voters (for the 1914 election) to Bulawayo suddenly developed a 'hot box' and stopped outside Bulawayo. One of the voters travelling on that train was an ex-engine driver so he went to check with the driver, he realised there was no 'hot box' after all on the engine.²⁶¹ This was a strategy to delay voters so that they could arrive in Bulawayo after polls had closed. This was just one example of how the Company utilised the position of authority to its favour.

The country was being run by a commercial company which had a dual mandate, first as a business that was supposed to generate profits for its shareholders, and then as a government to preside over all administrative matters. It was not the Company's desire to incur losses as a result of its administrative mandate in Southern Rhodesia and therefore all funds advanced to the administrative side were classified as a debt to be offset by future revenues. This scenario was challenged by Percy Ross Frames, elected representative for Mashonaland, who in 1902 moved a motion that "The time has arrived when the British South Africa Company should

²⁵⁹ NAZ ORAL/GU1 Ernest Lucas Guest (1882-1972). Interviews conducted at NAZ (interviewer's office) and Old Mutual Building (interviewee's office), 1962.

²⁶⁰ NAZ ORAL/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher, Interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

²⁶¹ NAZ ORAL/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher, Interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

contribute a definite sum to the revenue of this territory, in proportion to the property and interests which the said Company has in this country, for the good government thereof.”²⁶² The Company was thus expected to make a contribution towards the country’s administration. Immigrants who had settled in the country and commenced various business and employment ventures were making a huge contribution towards the country’s revenue, assisting the Company in the process. Indigenous Africans were subjected to coercive taxation “characterised by arbitrary assessment, coercive collection and the absence of any representation for taxpayers in policy decisions.”²⁶³ They contributed a significant portion towards the same. For example, out of a total revenue of £435 000 collected in 1903/04, Africans had contributed £130 000 through taxes.²⁶⁴ In spite of such contributions, Africans were at the receiving end of the administration’s repressive and oppressive laws and remained at the periphery of the administrative system.

During these early days of colonial rule, the country’s expenditure surpassed accumulated revenue and thus left a huge deficit. Frames noted that “the revenue from 1897 to March 1902 had been roughly £77 000 and the expenditure £1 695 000 leaving a deficit of £1 618 000 which had been advanced but not contributed by the Chartered Company as a commercial concern.”²⁶⁵ The settler population which constituted mostly, as stated by the Administrator, of wage earners made a contribution to this collected revenue.²⁶⁶ These settlers, who were still recovering from the economic depression of the recent past years, could not be expected to cover the deficit through further taxation. The Company was therefore expected to make a definite contribution towards the country’s revenue and ameliorate this problem. The administration, however, rejected this proposal, arguing that such a move could only be considered when the country’s revenue and expenditure had balanced.

The country’s economy was still at an embryonic stage and therefore the income of most settlers was still constrained. Yet the settlers still managed to contribute towards the country’s revenue. This was raised by Herbert Longden, member of the House for the Midlands district during one of his lengthy presentations in the Legislative Council in 1907 on the disadvantages

²⁶² NAZ ZG2 Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates, 21 November 1902, 144. (Henceforth referred to as Legislative Council Debates).

²⁶³ Moore, ‘Between coercion and contract’, 40.

²⁶⁴ L. H. Gann, *A history of Rhodesia: Early days to 1934*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 210.

²⁶⁵ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates, 21 November 1902, 144.

²⁶⁶ Report on the Administration of Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1900.

of Company administration and the limitations that it imposed on the country's nascent economy and its settler population. He opined:

Was it not extraordinary that in a country like this, with its small population, with its small resources as yet almost wholly undeveloped that the people were nevertheless able to provide the revenue, which was now exceeding over half a million necessary for the purpose of carrying on the government and although able to do all that they had no voice whatever in the administration and only a semblance of representation in the administration.²⁶⁷

Settler agitation had succeeded in the granting of representation in the Legislative Council, a move which gave them an opportunity to express their views and criticise the manner in which the Company was running the country. Although settlers were accorded a platform to register their discontent, such criticism of the administration by elected members in the Council counted for nothing because it could simply be outvoted by the nominated members using the Administrator's casting vote as well as his veto power.

The country's white population, which numbered 12 596 in 1904,²⁶⁸ was therefore left with no voice in the actual administration of the country. The seven elected members were mere figureheads in the Council because their presence did not make a difference. The other seven members, nominated by the Company, usually acted in unison since they were subjected to a whipping system which made it mandatory for them to pursue and sustain specific arguments suggested by the Administrator. In most cases this was done to protect the commercial interests of the Company – with no regard to the proper administration of the country for the benefit of the general populace. The scenario was made worse, as Longden noted, because opinions of the elected members “were free, and because they were free, they were sometimes divided” while arguments of the appointed members were “consistently and obediently unanimous and they recorded their votes with the reliability and the sureness of a mechanical automaton.”²⁶⁹ The BSAC administrative system thus dictated its own terms and its success was guaranteed by the country's legislative system that was tilted in its favour. It thus became imperative (in settler eyes) to dismantle this form of government and replace it with a more representative government which placed real administrative authority in the hands of the settler population as shall be discussed in succeeding sections.

²⁶⁷ Longden quoted in the Legislative Assembly Debates, 6 May 1907, 23.

²⁶⁸ A. S. Mlambo, 'Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to WWII', *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 126.

²⁶⁹ Legislative Assembly Debates, 6 May 1907.

It became increasingly difficult for the elected members of the Legislative Council (as well as the electorate) to trust the Company administration. The London Board supervised the administrative system and made sure that its desires were fulfilled. Gordon Forbes, who was an elected member of the Legislative Council for the Western District, argued that the Company's administrative structure was:

Controlled by a Board whose business it was to look after the commercial side of the Chartered Company. They must endeavour to make a success of the business; therefore, when the interests of this country clashed in any shape or form with the interests of the company they could expect nothing else but that the interests of this country should go to the wall.²⁷⁰

Under such circumstances, settler interests were sacrificed for policies that promoted and provided a safeguard for the Company's commercial interests. This argument can be used to justify the continuation of the Gold Belt Title (GBT) despite continued calls for its repeal by farming interests, both inside and outside the Legislative Council from 1905. Administrators feared that its repeal would negatively affect the country's mining industry by scaring away international mining capital which might have entertained hopes of investing in the country's mining sector, as Chapter Two noted. Thus elected members and the various sections of society that they represented wanted to get rid of the Company administration. They hoped to replace it by whatever form of government which was directly responsible to the people. Responsible Government featured prominently in many Legislative Council debates as the most preferred form of administration, by the elected members to take over from Company rule.

As noted, elected members could freely put forth their views even if they contradicted motions raised by fellow elected members. Differences certainly existed between the various groups of settler interests represented in the Legislative Council. Raleigh Grey, an elected member of the Council for the Northern District was a classic example of an elected member who decided on some occasions to support the Company nominees in the Legislative Council. His company, Rhodesia Lands Limited, owned vast tracts of land as well as successful mining ventures such as the Jumbo Mine. He could therefore not be classified as an ordinary farmer representative, since his personal circumstances differed from average settler farmers whose interests were being suppressed by the Company's actions. Rather, he could have easily qualified as a

²⁷⁰ Gordon Forbes, elected member of the Legislative Council for the Western District quoted in Legislative Council Debates, 6 May 1907, 27.

nominated member because of his land and mining interests. Grey's sentiments in the House were pro-big business, he argued against the idea of Responsible Government on the basis that no one in Southern Rhodesia was ready to take up a full time government post. His main concern was how those elected "were going to carry on as businessmen if they were called upon to take over the government and all sit in their offices on purely government business from one end of the year to the other?"²⁷¹ Contrary to what had been said by his fellow elected colleagues, he argued that the representation system in use was satisfactory and that the only improvement needed was an addition of a few more elected members in line with growth of the settler population. This revealed the heterogeneity of the elected members: they did not share homogenous concerns, an attribute synonymous with the settlers themselves who had different interests shaped by various factors.

Attempts to terminate Company rule

Despite the insignificance of settler representation in the Legislative Council, it provided a forum to call for the termination of Company rule and its substitution with a new form of government. Debates on the termination of Company rule became a centre of discussion in the Legislative Council. Failure of calls for abrogation of the Charter demonstrated the strong grip of the Company on the country's administration and the futility of the representation granted to the country's settlers. A number of factors had resulted in the development of an anti-Company government sentiment in the country during that time. G. Goldie, a financial representative of the BSAC Board, sent a memorandum to the Legislative Council in which he stated that his investigations (on the Company's instigation) had revealed that Southern Rhodesia's expenditure was in excess of £7.5 million, he further noted that this was a debt to the BSAC for which the settlers were liable.²⁷² He therefore proposed that the settlers be granted administrative power on condition that their new government was immediately saddled with this debt. This sparked indignation with the cross section of the country's settler society.²⁷³ The ultimate result was a conference of representatives of the country's people convened in Salisbury in July 1904. The Salisbury conference was marked by heated arguments and the Company administrators dismissed it as a sham – mainly because of the resolutions adopted by the delegates. One of the main resolutions was "That it is desirable that the administrative

²⁷¹ R. Grey, member of the Legislative Council for the Northern District, quoted in Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates, 6 May 1907.

²⁷² Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, 160.

²⁷³ For a detailed discussion see Hone, *Southern Rhodesia* and Blake, *History of Rhodesia*.

rights of the Chartered Company should cease as soon as they can be relieved of the responsibility for any deficiency between revenue and expenditure.”²⁷⁴ Delegates from the extreme side of the conference selected a delegation that went to England to present settler grievances to the London Board. These were drawn from all sectors experiencing the heavy handedness of Company administration. They also tabled a request for scrapping of the 30 percent share clause on mining, reduction of railway tariffs especially for farm produce, an absolute majority of the elected members in the Legislative Council as well as repudiation of all past budget deficits once settler majority was in control.

In 1907, Longden raised a motion in the Council that “in the interest of the country the British South Africa Company ought to be relieved of its administrative responsibilities in Southern Rhodesia and the administration entrusted to a government adequately representative of the people.”²⁷⁵ Apart from the resolution adopted at the 1904 conference which revealed the settlers’ desire to relieve the Company of its administrative duties, no attempt had been made to push for a change of government through a constitutional channel in the Legislative Council. This can be attributed to a realisation by the elected members of the futility of trying to call for something which the nominated members, with the backing of the London Board, would vehemently oppose and ultimately destroy using their majority in the House. Presenting his motion, Longden said that continued silence by elected representatives of the people on the issue was bound to be misinterpreted by the Chartered Company as a reflection of people’s contentment with the *status quo*.²⁷⁶ This argument does not downplay the significance of protests to Company administration outside the Legislative Council such as that exhibited at the 1904 Salisbury conference. It, however, illuminates the significance of the Legislative Council in the country’s government system. It reveals the unwillingness of elected members to continue under the dominance of Company authority.

Longden made attempts to demonstrate that the view on the change of government was shared by many other settlers who had registered their discontent on various forums. He made reference to the 1904 Salisbury conference as an example of such platforms where dislike of continued Company administration had been voiced. He also referred to the High Commissioner’s visit to Southern Rhodesia in October 1906. In every town visited by the High

²⁷⁴ Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, 163.

²⁷⁵ Longden, *Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates*, 1907.

²⁷⁶ Longden, *Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates*, 1907.

Commissioner he was met by various deputations from the people and public bodies whose grievances converged on the fact that “the country could make no true progress as long as the Chartered Company had the control over their affairs.”²⁷⁷ Company administration was accused of breeding national uncertainty. This was not good for Southern Rhodesia’s economic well-being. The GBT, which was given to farmers who purchased land in areas with high mineral potential, for instance, dissuaded potential immigrants from considering taking up land and commencing agricultural production. These complications could only be resolved by relieving the BSAC of its administrative duties. This view had been discussed in the Council during debates on the GBT discussed in Chapter Two.

The Company’s claim to land ownership

The previous chapter highlighted the significance attached to land by the administration. It therefore maintained its hold and control over the country’s land resources to further its commercial interests. The Company’s claim to land ownership and failure by the country’s legislature to resolve the dispute is a good example of how the BSAC took advantage of its superior position in the Legislative Council to sustain the claim until its final resolution in 1918. Control over land allowed the BSAC to promote its commercial interests anchored on uninterrupted exploration and exploitation of gold deposits as well as unhindered land sales. This claim to land ownership was, as emphasised by the Treasurer in 1906, based on the conquest of the Ndebele after the 1893 war of disposition.²⁷⁸ Thus, the Company controlled all the land in its commercial as well as administrative capacity, a scenario which sparked conflicts with settlers.²⁷⁹ The country’s settlers detested this Company attitude of promoting its commercial interests while neglecting the country’s development.

The Company was not willing to relinquish its control over land and it advanced different explanations to justify its claim to land ownership. When it was contesting the 1918 Privy Council verdict, which granted land ownership to the Imperial government, the BSAC stated that when it had inquired from the colonial office in 1898 asking to have all administrative

²⁷⁷ Longden, Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates, 1907.

²⁷⁸ Legislative Council Debates, 1906.

²⁷⁹ See A. Mseba, ‘Law expertise and settler conflict over land in early colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1923’, *Environment and Planning A*, 48, 4 (2015), 665-680; R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977); S. Maravanyika, ‘Soil conservation and the whit agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe, c.1908-1980’, PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2013; H. V. Moyana, *The political economy of land in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Mambo Press, 1984); J. Alexander, *The unsettled land; state making and the politics of land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).

expenditure not met by revenue to be charged against the country and to constitute a public debt. The reply from the colonial office on the 18th of July 1898 stated that the Secretary of State:

Must decline to pledge His Majesty's government in advance to acknowledging anything in the nature of a public debt, or of a charge on the administration as distinguished from the company itself, which has been placed in possession of all the assets of the country.²⁸⁰

The key phrase in this letter was 'all assets', which was interpreted by the Company to be referring to all the country's assets chief amongst which was the land and minerals. The argument here was that the Company was made, by the Imperial government, to believe that it owned land in the country. Land was even used as a guarantee when the BSAC raised capital on the London market. It raised £4 292 937 between 1896 and 1906.²⁸¹ All this while, the BSAC noted:

the company naturally placed before its shareholders what had been officially stated by the crown with regard to "all the assets of the country," including the land, the company's possession of which constituted an essential part of the security which was being offered to the public in return for its money, and laid great stress upon that possession.²⁸²

The struggle as to ascertain the rightful land owner between the Company and the country's settlers raged on until it was halted by a 1918 Privy Council ruling as shall be illustrated in succeeding sections. The struggle in turn ignited new conflicts over land tenure legislation and the control of funds derived from land. The Company appropriated such moneys derived from land sales and quit rent to its commercial enterprise a move which infuriated settlers who preferred to have such funds expended solely for administrative purposes.

It was on the basis of this control over land and the desire to ensure prosperity of the mining venture that the Company initially did not issue land for farming purposes on the Gold Belt. A shift in this policy saw the crafting of Gold Belt reservations for farmers who purchased land in areas deemed to contain the country's richest gold deposits. This land title became a major cause for concern and sparked the miner-farmer controversy as discussed in the previous chapter. Apart from the land title issued for land in the mining areas, the administration had

²⁸⁰ CAB 24/ 160 Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Letter from the British South Africa Company to the Colonial Office, 23 November 1922.

²⁸¹ British South Africa Company to the Colonial Office, 23 November 1922.

²⁸² British South Africa Company to the Colonial Office, 23 November 1922.

parcelled out vast tracts of land to the big land companies who held on to the land for speculative purposes (as demonstrated in Chapter Two). Selby observed that “Speculative land purchases by the British South Africa Company and other land consortiums such as Willoughby’s Consolidated preceded most settler farming and dominated land control in terms of quality and quantity.”²⁸³ This land lay idle and could not be accessed by incoming settlers who wanted to start farming and make productive use of the land. Jameson, who had presided over the extensive land handouts, acknowledged that, by pursuing this course of action, the Company had erred. He made this confession in 1907 when he visited the country as part of the delegation of Company Directors:

As regards these concessions – the Company have to a certain extent locked up the country, and I must confess that in those early days I was principally responsible for a great many of them. Grants were then given to companies on condition that they introduced so much money in the country to keep it going. That time has passed and I do not think there will be any complaint of any future grants. I may tell you that the Chartered Company are more sick of them than anybody else.²⁸⁴

It also resulted in settler discontent over the manner in which the land revenue was being appropriated especially after 1907 when land transactions were transferred to the Company’s commercial side.²⁸⁵ The ultimate result was a growing desire by the settler population to gain control of the country’s Legislative Council so that they could challenge the Company dominance and influence change on such crucial matters as the ownership of land. The Legislative Council (in which settlers had been granted representation in 1898) became a major platform to register settler discontent and demand for more power for the settlers so that they could challenge the Company’s monopoly. Longden raised an objection to the country’s constitution which enabled the BSAC, through the administration to “promote its commercial interests in the country to the detriment of the rights of people.”²⁸⁶ This included enormous land grants that were made to the large landowning companies who – in turn – held on to the land for speculative purposes, obstructing the development of farming ventures in the process. There was a growing need to curtail Company dominance in the Council and replace it with settler hegemony over administrative affairs.

²⁸³ Selby, ‘Commercial farmers and the state’, 35.

²⁸⁴ P. F. Hone. *Southern Rhodesia*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 187.

²⁸⁵ See R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977).

²⁸⁶ NAZ ZG2 Southern Rhodesia, Legislative Council debates, 7 May 1907.

Elected members in the Legislative Council challenged the Company's claim to own the land on a number of occasions. The Company considered the land as one of its precious investments and any challenge to the claim was criticised vigorously. It should be emphasised that although the land ownership issue generated intense debate in the Council, the legislative body could not reach common ground as the Company always defended its position. It was during such crucial debates that deficiencies of the country's legislative system were exposed. Elected members could challenge the Company nominees on the issue, make elaborate presentations supporting their views but at the end of it all the nominated members always emerged victorious.

Longden challenged the Company's claim to be the legitimate owner of all of the country's land resources in 1905. Contrary to the Company's rhetoric of basing their land title to the Royal Charter, he argued that "the Chartered Company was prepared to arrogate to itself powers which it did not lawfully possess."²⁸⁷ The Company was on the defence and employed all sorts of arguments in trying to justify its title to land ownership. C. Tredgold, the Attorney General, challenged such arguments and even contended that it did not lie in the hands of the inhabitants of Southern Rhodesia to refute the Chartered Company's title to land. He was supported by F. J. Newton, the Treasurer, who went as far as quoting a fellow Company man, the late former Attorney General Kotze, who had "pronounced a very decided opinion that by both the Charter and the legislation of the country, the land and mineral rights belonged to the company."²⁸⁸ After a lengthy debate session, the Council failed to reach any agreement on this question of land ownership and a vote was called for, after which both sides were at par with six votes each. Under such circumstances H. W. Milton, the President, gave his vote against the motion arguing that the motion on land ownership was not within the province of the Council and the motion was thrown away.²⁸⁹ Although the BSAC granted equal representation to the elected members, that equality was not bearing anything positive. This is one of the many instances when the administrator used his casting vote in favour of the nominated members. Representation granted to the settlers therefore carried no weight as the will of the Chartered Company continued to prevail at the expense of the elected representatives.

²⁸⁷ Longden, Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council Debates, 23 May 1905, 28.

²⁸⁸ F. J. Newton quoted in Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, May 1905.

²⁸⁹ Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, May 1905.

Revenue and expenditure

Another source of conflict between the Company administration and the elected members of the Legislative Council concerned the country's revenue and expenditure. The dual nature of the BASC made it a difficult task to distinguish between the Company's revenue and money which was supposed to be directed to treasury. When the BSAC Directors visited the country in 1907, settlers hoped that they would provide a lasting solution to this problem which had been exacerbated by the transfer of all land transactions to the Company's commercial side. The visiting Directors however failed to provide useful remedies to this, and many other grievances presented before them by the country's settlers. Rather they proposed minor reforms which were mere palliatives and they failed to tackle the major points of conflict between the Company and the settlers. It was strange, as argued by Longden that such a serious matter remained unresolved and remained a subject of debate in the Legislative Council soon after the Directors' departure. Settler representatives questioned the manner in which the Company was allocating revenue to its administrative and commercial accounts. The source of the problem, as was noted by Gordon Forbes was "because a certain portion of the money was derived from assets which were distinctly the property of the Company. But the greater proportion of it the people claimed, belonged to the revenue of the country."²⁹⁰ For example, before 1907 funds realised from the inspection of mining claims were credited to the country's revenue account. This was changed after 1907 when the same money was treated as the Company's private revenue. Such funds which, elected members argued were supposed to be used in financing the country's development, were now being used for the Company's benefit. On behalf of the elected members, Forbes therefore challenged the principle employed by the Company in diverting funds that were supposed to finance the country's fledging industries (especially farming) for private company use.

After 1907 the Company administration made changes to its budget system and allocated to the Company income that had all along been considered as administrative revenue. This development raised more questions, which required immediate answers from the administration. For instance, the following case can be cited for the 1906/07 financial year. In that particular year, the gross revenue of Southern Rhodesia amounted to £539 912 and the expenditure was £501 989, leaving a surplus of £37 923.²⁹¹ Yet the Company claimed over

²⁹⁰ G. Forbes, Legislative Assembly Debates, 6 May 1907.

²⁹¹ NAZ S/BR 501 British South Africa Company Accounts Reports, 1907.

£70 000 for their commercial side and left the country with a deficit. Again in his budget statement presentation for the year 1908, the Treasurer noted that the country had shown a surplus of £10 000 but at the same time highlighted that some of the money belonged to the Company in its private capacity.²⁹² After the deductions were made, the country was again left with a deficit. Elected representatives argued that the Company administration was short-changing the country and the majority of the settlers for its selfish commercial interests. Charles Patrick Coghlan, who had moved to Bulawayo in 1900 to practice law and became a vigorous campaigner for Responsible Government, was first elected to the Legislative Council in 1908 representing the Western electoral district,²⁹³ challenged the actions of the BSAC of turning administrative revenue into commercial revenue and vice versa as they wished. He argued that “any tariff authorised in an ordinance was taxation unless there was something in the ordinance which stated it had to be specifically devoted to private purpose such as the 30 percent clause or royalty upon gold won.”²⁹⁴ This distinction was necessary as a move to stop the Company from deriving benefits through the country’s resources while at the same time retaining absolute administrative authority over the same settlers that it was ‘fleecing’. Criticism of the system was not only confined to the elected members of the Legislative Council. Even the Company’s Auditor-General opposed the new system and pointed out that “revenue collected under administrative ordinances ought to accrue to the administrative funds.”²⁹⁵

Settlers and their representatives considered it correct for the Company to collect all the royalty on minerals. However, it was not entitled to appropriate other revenues that were again connected to mining. Such revenues as observed by Hone “were collected purely in the form of taxation and the licences and certificates were stamped with the government stamp to the value of the amount paid.”²⁹⁶ Hone further notes that the administrative stamp:

Was an acknowledgement that the tax was for the purposes of administration, and was a statutory obligation imposed because the country had a certain expense in maintaining good government and in the protection of the claim holders, the cost of which was defrayed out of public revenue.²⁹⁷

²⁹² NAZ S/BR 501 British South Africa Company Accounts Reports, 1908.

²⁹³ K. Jeffreys (ed), *An Irish empire?: Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1998), 196.

²⁹⁴ C. Coghlan, Legislative Council Debates, 22 June 1908, 87.

²⁹⁵ E. Tawse Jollie, *The Real Rhodesia*, (London: Hutchinson and Co Paternoster Row, 1924), 42.

²⁹⁶ Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, 176.

²⁹⁷ Hone, *Southern Rhodesia*, 176.

After all this income related to mining had been appropriated to the commercial side of the Company, expenditure for the Mining Department was charged against the country. This practice was criticised by Coghlan. His argument hinged on the fact that people in the Mining Department acted more as “collectors for the British South Africa Company for the Company’s private purpose”²⁹⁸, – yet the country was charged for their upkeep. Representation in the Legislative Council enabled the elected members to challenge the Company’s administration of the country’s financial resources. They however could not force through amendments to the system since this was deemed an attack on the Company’s commercial interests and therefore was not tolerated. Representation alone without real administrative authority was not benefiting the settlers. This conflict over revenue conforms to M. Moore’s theoretical underpinnings on taxation. Moore’s core proposition is that political regimes are the outcome of conflict and tension between the elite who control the state and societal actors who desire to restrain this power and ultimately gain political power for themselves.²⁹⁹ Revenue is central in this tussle. The fight to control revenue between the BSAC and the settlers in Southern Rhodesia was a typical case which fits Moore’s scenario. The struggle continued throughout Company administration and was crucial in the achievement of Responsible Government.

The arbitrary appropriation of revenue to the commercial side of the Company emanated from the porous boundary between the Company’s assets and revenue, and that which belonged to the country (and was therefore supposed to cater for administrative expenditure). Another elected member, Colonel Grey, proposed that the Company should revert to its old budget system which gave the Treasurer use of land revenue and inspection payments. He argued that “the people of this country had just as good a case in regard to those monies as the British South Africa Company.”³⁰⁰ Since the Company Directors had failed to solve this problem, elected members resolved to refer the matter to the High Commissioner as well as the Secretary of State for Colonies. The administrative officials were not prepared to give in on this settler request but at the same time, did not like the matter to be taken to the colonial office. Opposing this motion to refer the matter to the High Commissioner, the Treasurer said that it did not serve neither the BSAC nor the country’s settlers to have other South African colonies say “There are the public of Rhodesia at loggerheads with the British South Africa Company

²⁹⁸ Coghlan, Legislative Assembly Debates, 22 June 1908.

²⁹⁹ M. Moore, F’ How does taxation affect the quality of governance?’, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Working Paper 280, 2007, 11.

³⁰⁰ Colonel R. Grey, Legislative Assembly Debates, 22 June 1908, 89.

again.”³⁰¹ The following resolution was however adopted by the Legislative Council in line with Grey’s proposal:

The Council therefore requests that its respectful request be conveyed to His Excellency the High Commissioner through the Honour the Administrator, that the matter in question be inquired into and be decided upon by His Majesty’s government without delay.³⁰²

Settler representatives hoped that the British government would provide a solution to this problem which had been brought about by the Company’s desire to promote its commercial entity. The manner in which the BSAC handled the matter exhibited the power that the Company Directors had over the country’s affairs. It revealed that the centre of administrative power lay in London and that no matter what the elected members attempted to do, their representation did not count for much under the prevailing administrative system headed by the Company. The overall result exposed the Company’s insincerity in finding a lasting solution to the problem regarding the differences on the interpretation of commercial and administrative revenue. Commenting on the settlers’ vulnerability to the Company’s abuses, Coghlan declared:

The people of this country were like men fighting with their hands tied behind their backs. Everything they did was open to the Directors of the British South Africa Company but the people knew nothing about the representations made by the Directors to the Secretary of State.³⁰³

The BSAC had taken advantage of its position of authority to disadvantage the settlers in their plight to have the Company’s position on revenue and expenditure revised. The Secretary of the BSAC had presented the matter to the Under Secretary of State for Colonies differently from what had been discussed in the Legislative Council. Instead of asking for the intervention of the colonial office, he presented the Company’s angle of the dispute that “In the view of the Company, the issue cannot be advantageously discussed until a change was contemplated in the present system of administration.”³⁰⁴ The Secretary of State concurred with the Company’s view and again the settlers’ case was dealt a blow. By adopting this strategy, the BSAC managed to buy time and secure its hold on the country’s financial resources while settler agitation continued.

³⁰¹ The Treasurer, Legislative Assembly Debates, 29 June 1908.

³⁰² Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly Debates, 29 June 1908, 113.

³⁰³ Coghlan, Legislative Assembly Debates, 27 May 1929.

³⁰⁴ Secretary for the British South Africa Company to Under Secretary of State for Colonies, 6 February 1909.

Political developments after 1910: Enhanced call for settler authority

As provided by clause 33 of the Royal Charter granted to the BSAC in 1889 to administer Southern Rhodesia, the Company's administrative mandate was due for review after the first 25 years of chartered rule. The country's settlers considered a number of alternative forms of government to succeed Company administration. The main options considered were full Responsible Government, Crown Colony government, entering the Union of South Africa and continuation of chartered rule. It had always been Rhodes' dream for union with the Cape Colony and Natal as a counterpoise for Transvaal (only after Responsible Government).³⁰⁵ Prospects for incorporation became even brighter when, in 1908, the South African colonies invited Southern Rhodesia to send delegates to a Convention organised to consider unification or federation.³⁰⁶ The invitation coincided with Coghlan's election to the Legislative Council. Coghlan was determined to ensure the country's inhabitants were represented at the Convention because he feared that the Company was going to consider its commercial interests only and thus ignore the country's political future.³⁰⁷

The Convention was held in October 1908 and Southern Rhodesia's delegates were Coghlan for the elected members while Milton (the Administrator) and Mitchell represented the elected members. The three were only allowed to speak but could not vote. Being a British colony, Southern Rhodesia anticipated that Natal and the Cape colony would emerge dominant from this assembly. This scenario could have facilitated Southern Rhodesia's immediate entry into the Union. However, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State gained a disproportionate advantage in the allocation of parliamentary seats.³⁰⁸ This victory of the Afrikaner republics convinced Coghlan that time was not yet ripe for Southern Rhodesia to join the Union.³⁰⁹ The Union of South Africa's colonies (achieved in favour of the Afrikaner colonies) in 1910 widened the rift between British and Afrikaner settlers in that country as well as in Southern Rhodesia. The Company wanted to get the best price for the colony and negotiations for a possible deal with the Union government were underway in 1910. However when "the Union ministers refused to accept a lock, stock and barrel round figure deal the directors of the

³⁰⁵ R. Blake, *A history of Rhodesia*, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), 166. Section 150 of the South African Constitution had provisions for the incorporation of Southern Rhodesia into the Union. See Chanock, *Unconsummated union*, 44.

³⁰⁶ J. P. R. Wallis, *One-man hand: The story of Sir Charles Coghlan*, (London: Longmans Greens and Co., 1950), 100.

³⁰⁷ See Willis, *One man's hand*.

³⁰⁸ Blake, *History of Rhodesia*, 167.

³⁰⁹ If Southern Rhodesia joined the Union at this stage, it was going to be a major disadvantage to the country's British settlers.

Company decided that the ‘grapes were sour’³¹⁰ and pulled out of the deal. The Company needed more time to negotiate a better deal with the Union government and this was only possible if it could secure extension of the Charter when the first 25 years elapsed in 1914. The Company, which had all along been making union negotiations made a sudden turn and created a “Union bogey”³¹¹ to ward off any form of support for Union while attracting support for a continuation of chartered rule after 1914.

Meanwhile, preparations for the post-1914 era were under way. A political association initially known as the Rhodesian Political Association (later renamed the Rhodesian League) was formed in 1912. Its major objective was the achievement of representative and then Responsible Government.³¹² Although founded by non-farmers, the League soon became a farmer organisation and three executive members of the Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU) (Fletcher, Jobbling and Hull) were signatories to the organisation’s manifesto which was launched in November 1912.³¹³ They proposed a representative government completely weaned from the control of the BSAC to take over the reins of power. As noted at one of the League’s meetings, such a government was to be one “under which the people would have the control of legislation, taxation and finance, the full power to manage their own affairs, while they would be free at any time to undertake the additional responsibility of executive administration”³¹⁴ In making such proposals, the League had hopes of dismantling the Company’s hold over the country’s administrative authority. It represented those elements of settler society who, although paying tax, their opinion was not given full consideration in the crafting of the country’s laws and policies. The proposed form of government reflected a need by the country’s settlers of something more than mere representation in the Legislative Council but with no authority to effect amendments to the country’s laws using their majority representation in the Council.

The League provided evidence showing that it was no longer necessary to continue with Company administration at a time when the country’s population was able to make a meaningful and sufficient contribution to the country’s revenue needs. Therefore, the League argued that it was “neither desirable nor fit that a large and powerful corporation owning

³¹⁰ NAZ CO 8/1/1 Charles Coghlan. The Union intrigue.

³¹¹ NAZ CO 8/1/1 Charles Coghlan. The Union intrigue.

³¹² *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 10 May 1912.

³¹³ NAZ RH 7/1/1 Rhodesian League.

³¹⁴ NAZ RH 7/1/1 Rhodesian League meeting held in Bulawayo on 15 October 1912.

enormous interests in Rhodesia should retain any direct control over the finances or legislature of the country.”³¹⁵ To buttress their argument on the the settlers’ ability to meet the country’s financial requirements, the League referred to the administrative surpluses made in the financial years 1911 to 1913 as proof. The following figures were cited:

Table 2: Showing administrative surplus for the three years from 1909 to 1911³¹⁶

Year ended:	Revenue surplus in £
1909	27 318.13.1
1910	73 130.15.1
1911	136 224.12.0
Total:	236 674.0.2

This revenue was derived from taxes levied on the country’s various economic ventures constituted mainly of farming and commercial enterprises. Africans also made a contribution towards the country’s revenue through the various taxes such as the hut tax. It was very unfortunate that those who provided this surplus did not have any control over its use. This had sparked a debate (over the distinction between administrative and commercial revenue) which remained outstanding for the duration of the Company administration period. Besides increased representation in the Legislative Council, the League wanted more than that. Its ultimate goal was the granting of Responsible Government to Southern Rhodesia when the appropriate time had arrived.

However, when it was almost time for the 1914 election, divisions emerged within the Rhodesia League over the form of government to be adopted when the Royal Charter expired in 1914. This split resulted in the formation of a Common Platform whose manifesto was signed by Fletcher, Jobbling, Moffat, Mickle, Wilson McChlery, Bertin and Leggate.³¹⁷ This document became the rallying point for their election campaign and one of their major policy objectives was:

³¹⁵ NAZ RH 7/1/1 Rhodesian League.

³¹⁶ NAZ RH 7/1/1 Rhodesian League.

³¹⁷ NAZ MA15/1/1 J. M. McChlery. Legislative Council Elections 1914, Manifesto.

To make a definite and immediate move to obtain a form of Responsible Government suitable to Southern Rhodesia by urging the Imperial Government as an initial step to assume provisional control of the Executive, preliminary to arranging with the British South Africa Company the price to be paid for such public works and buildings as would be required and framing a constitution in conformity with the wishes of the people.³¹⁸

This was heavily criticised by Coghlan, Grey, Napier, Mitchel and Eyles who all supported the continuation of Company administration until such a time when the country was “ready” to be granted Responsible Government status.³¹⁹ The pro-Charter members won representation in the Legislative Council, while those who supported the Common Platform Manifesto lost the 1914 election.

The election result reflected on the desire of the electorate for a continuation of Company administration. This was considered the most tactical move considering the prevailing circumstances. It was however considered a step towards self-government. In line with this development, on 14 May 1914 Coghlan moved that:

This Council is of the opinion that under the existing conditions a continuation of the administration of the British South Africa Company is necessary in the interests of the territory and humbly prays to His Majesty that no change be made in the present form of administration.³²⁰

It was also stipulated that this action should not in any way, affect the people’s right to self-rule at the appropriate moment. This was a unanimous opinion by the elected members reflecting the position of the electorate. Consequent to this motion, the Secretary of State for the Colonies issued an extension of the Charter. Part of the amended clause 33 made the following provision:

...should the time appear to be ripe for such a step during the ten years which would elapse before, under the terms of the Charter, His Majesty’s right of review would again become exercisable and that, if during these ten years the inhabitants of Southern Rhodesia find that they were financially and in other respects strong enough to assume, with the concurrence with His Majesty’s government the burden of administration and should express through the Legislative Council their desire to assume that burden, they (the Directors) would be most willing that effect should be given to that desire.³²¹

³¹⁸ NAZ MA15/1/1 J. M. McChlery. Legislative Council Elections 1914, Manifesto.

³¹⁹ Lee, ‘politics and Pressure groups’, 137.

³²⁰ Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 14 May 1912, 311.

³²¹ Dispatch from the Secretary for the Colonies read in the Legislative Council by the Clerk, 8 October 1914, 777.

This revision of the Royal Charter was crucial because it granted the country's settlers and their legislative representatives the power to push for the termination of Company rule at a time they deemed most appropriate. It also provided the elected members a chance to make effective use of their majority in the Legislative Council by invoking the Supplemental Charter (revised Clause 33 of the Royal Charter) and requesting the Imperial government to grant self-rule to Southern Rhodesia. The Supplemental Charter also made reference to the need for the country's financial independence. This had been a thorny issue for some time and had been the centre of numerous debates in the council. The revised Charter provided for the elected members to prove, at the moment the request for Responsible Government would be made, that the country's settlers had financial self-sufficiency, a point which has all along been ignored, as shall be highlighted in the next section.

This was not the first time this demand for enhanced settler authority was made (by the Rhodesian League) in Southern Rhodesia. As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, similar calls had punctuated Legislative Council debates in the previous years with elected members challenging the Company's dominance of the country's administrative as well as financial affairs. Majority settler representation that had been proposed by the Company Directors when they visited Southern Rhodesia in 1907 did not bring any phenomenal changes to the manner in which the BSAC administered the country. The Directors had recommended a reduction of the number of nominated members from seven to five. The administration delayed the implementation of the Directors' recommendation and this prompted Coghlan to resurrect the issue in the Council in 1910. He repeatedly condemned the Company's failure to implement the promise made in 1907 and argued that "If the promise of the Company was not to be relied upon, the majority of elected members which existed today was no safeguard to the people."³²² The elected members were supposed to represent and promote settler interests in the Council but the administrative system that was in place made this task a difficult one. Increased representation was granted, recommended by the Directors, was then ratified by a 1911 Order in Council which however intimated that the appointed members, though a minority "must maintain the position of the Company in fiscal matters as now secured by the existing rules and regulations of the Legislative Council."³²³ This meant that it was only the Administrator who had the prerogative to introduce fiscal matters for debate and eventual amendment by the

³²² Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Assembly Debates, 8 June 1910.

³²³ Legislative Council Debates, 8 June 1910.

Council. This arrangement guaranteed protection of the Company's financial interests even after settler representative majority was further increased to 12 in 1914. Majority representation did not translate into enhanced authority because the appointed members of the Council maintained their powerful position even after the reduction in the number of their Legislative Council seats. Grey formed the Southern Rhodesia League to counter calls that were being made by the Rhodesia League against continued dominance of the BSAC in the country's administration.

Culmination of the land ownership dispute

The 1914 war suspended the country's active internal political life. No significant political move or announcement was made since the war broke out in 1914. The Company had secured an extension of the Charter and the 1914 farmer-miner conference had resulted in discontentment on both sides. The 1914 Mines and Minerals Act Amendment failed to end farmers' disgruntlement over miners' privileges. Meanwhile the Company's Statement of Policy of 1913 had outlined a new land settlement scheme. This sparked outrage which resulted in the Mazoe and Midlands Farmers Associations repeatedly pushing the RAU to petition the administration to deal with the land ownership issue first. According to Lee, the farmers' opinion was that "no satisfactory land settlement scheme would be undertaken without first solving the land ownership issue."³²⁴ Protest against this proposed land settlement policy had contributed immensely in the resolution passed at a RAU meeting calling for a new form of government to replace the Company.³²⁵ The Company's new scheme aimed at transferring land settlement from the commercial side of the Company and recommended control by a Board (controlled by the Company). If this scheme was approved, it could also have meant an acceptance of the Company's claim to land ownership as was noted by the Colonial Secretary that:

The contention of the Company in this regard has been disputed by elected members of the Legislative Council, and, as I understand, by a large number of settlers in the country. It has never been, nor is it now, accepted by His Majesty's government.³²⁶

In the wake of all the opposition and contestations surrounding the proposed scheme, the Secretary of State submitted the land dispute to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1914 for determination. Farmers were bent on pushing the Company administration out of

³²⁴ Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups', 130.

³²⁵ NAZ Proceedings of a RAU Special Congress, 14 April 1913.

³²⁶ CO 417/526 Secretary of State for the Colonies to High Commissioner, 1 January 1914.

power as testified by the events of 1917. The country's settlers and farmers were elated after a ruling on the land issue was made by the Privy Council. It ruled that the land resources in the country were not owned by the Company as a private possession but belonged to the Crown.³²⁷ The Privy Council made a further declaration that the Company could claim, after termination of the Charter, the accumulated administrative deficit. The next section will show the significance of this ruling by the Privy Council on the country's political developments with particular reference to Company-settler contestations over the country's revenue, administrative authority and representation in the Legislative Council.

The road to self-rule

In July 1917 the Responsible Government Association (RGA) was formed as a reaction, mainly by farmers, to continued Company administration. Farmers wanted Southern Rhodesia to be granted Responsible Government urgently and curb any attempts by the Company administration to join the Union of South Africa. The idea to form the organisation was mooted at a political meeting held soon after a RAU Congress held in Salisbury in July 1917.³²⁸ The association's main objective was the attainment of Responsible Government in Southern Rhodesia at the earliest opportunity.³²⁹ Although it was initially mainly constituted by farmers, membership was open to anyone who shared the association's objective as stated in the constitution. Most of the founding and prominent members were, or had been RAU's executive members. They included Fletcher (one time president of the RAU and a Hartley farmer, Leggate who was the RAU president in 1919.³³⁰ One of the chief campaigners for the Responsible Government movement was Ethel Tawes Jollie, the widow of Archibald Ross Colquhoun who was Rhodes's first Administrator for Mashonaland.³³¹ She was a founder and influential member of the RGA. Jollie became a legislator and made significant strides in criticising Company rule and mobilising settlers to swell the ranks of the RGA. Coghlan joined the RGA in 1919 and was quickly elected President of the association. Coghlan fervently fought Company machinations for Union with South Africa. Newton, the former Treasurer also joined and became an influential member of the party.³³² The RGA made a strong appeal to elements of Southern Rhodesia's settler community for varied reasons. Farmers and small

³²⁷ Blake, *History of Rhodesia*, 177; Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups', 18.

³²⁸ Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups', 158.

³²⁹ NAZ RH9/1/1/19 Responsible Government Association Constitution.

³³⁰ L. H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early days to 1934*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), 236.

³³¹ Lowry, 'White women's country', 259-281.

³³² Gann, *Southern Rhodesia*, 236.

miners feared losing their labour to the Union while junior civil servants viewed the Union policy of bilingualism as a threat to their prospects of promotion. Many in the commercial sector feared and did not like the Union's tax policies which disadvantaged the provinces.³³³ The cultural and language difference between Afrikaners and the English was also another reason why English speaking Rhodesians detested Union. It should be noted that not all Afrikaner settlers in Southern Rhodesia favoured union, some only sought better economic opportunities in Southern Rhodesia and distanced themselves from the campaigns for union with South Africa. A Rhodesian Afrikaner wrote to the *Rhodesia Herald* stating that: "We as Dutch settlers have come to Rhodesia for our own good...there is no need to stir up ill-feeling by saying that we are all in favour of union when we are not."³³⁴ Such a sentiment reveals that divisions also existed amongst the Afrikaners. They also had different ideologies and visions for the country's political future.

In the same year that Coghlan was appointed President of the RGA, a significant political development occurred in South Africa which had direct implications on Southern Rhodesia's politics. Jan Smuts succeeded Botha as Prime Minister. Smuts had a good relationship with British mining interests cultivated during his days as Defence Minister when he crushed European strikes on the Rand.³³⁵ Smuts' rise to power therefore presented an opportunity for the BSAC Board to strike a better bargain with the new Union leader. As a result, prospects for Southern Rhodesia entering the Union were enlivened and a Rhodesia Unionist Association (RUA) was formed in 1919 to champion this cause and challenge the RGA which had made inroads in campaigning for Responsible Government. The RUA's Chairman was Longden, who was a Bulawayo lawyer just like Coghlan.³³⁶ The RUA enjoyed support from the mining companies, senior civil servants and wealthy professional men. Mining companies for instance expected to benefit from South Africa's more developed mining industry and reduced rail tariffs as noted by H. J. Filmer that "It seemed so absurd that we were paying the chartered company railage from Balla Balla to Mafikeng much higher than the total railage to Durban on the South African railways (Mafikeng to Durban)."³³⁷ The two parties, with clearly divergent ideologies contested in their quest to determine the form of government that was going to take over from the Company administration.

³³³ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 23 April 1920.

³³⁴ Letter to the editor, *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 September 1912.

³³⁵ Gann, *Southern Rhodesia*, 234.

³³⁶ Blake, *History of Rhodesia*, 179.

³³⁷ NAZ ORAL/FI4 Henry Joseph Filmer (1888-1974)

The 1918 Privy Council ruling on the land issue amplified RGA's hopes of dislodging the BSAC from power and ultimate realisation of a long cherished settler goal of Responsible Government. As argued by B. Mtshali, after the 1918 ruling "the company lost the economic motivation to govern since this now entailed intense liability."³³⁸ The RGA capitalised on this development and perfected and magnified their argument on the need to give administrative authority to the country's settlers by granting Responsible Government. This was emphasised by a unanimous resolution carried by the party's executive that:

This meeting of the executive of the RGA reaffirms the principle that the immediate grant of Responsible Government for Southern Rhodesia, for which the country is in every respect fitted, is the form of administration best suited to the present requirements of the country and that no alternative should be permitted to prevent or delay the accomplishment of this object. That accordingly the executive urges the people of the country to unite in supporting the association in the next election in their demand for the immediate fulfilment of the promise of self-government given in the Supplemental Charter.³³⁹

The period after the Privy Council ruling was followed by stagnation as the Company was no longer willing to expend more financial resources to keep the country running. R. Hodder-Williams summed up the prevailing scenario by highlighting that:

The British South Africa Company lost its enthusiasm for development work and the whole period between the end of the war and Responsible Government in 1923 is marked by local demands and complains being met with bland responses of regret. Mails were held up, schools were closed, road improvements were delayed, medical officers were not immediately replaced, in other words, caution prevailed.³⁴⁰

This worked in favour of the Responsible Government movement. This situation assisted the recruitment drive of the RGA as the electorate lost faith in the Company administration and its calls for Union.

This lack of enthusiasm did not extend to land transactions. It seems as if the Company wanted to benefit from land transactions while it still had political power. On 1 January 1919 the Company issued a new set of rules regulating land grants in the country.³⁴¹ The RGA criticised

³³⁸ B. Mtshali, *Rhodesia: Background to conflict*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967), 61.

³³⁹ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 2 September 1919.

³⁴⁰ R. Hodder-Williams, *White farmers in Rhodesia, 1890-1905: A history of the Marandellas district*, (London: MacMillan Press, 1983), 94.

³⁴¹ NAZ L2/2/139 Leaflet A/7 issued on 1 January 1919.

the Company's handling of land transactions under the new regulations and made the following resolution at a meeting held in Gwelo:

That this meeting of the executive of the Responsible Government Association calls upon the elected members to draw the attention of the High Commissioner to the fact that large blocks of land belonging to the Crown are being granted away since the judgement of the land case and at the same time settlers with limited but sufficient capital are being met with unsympathetic treatment and are consequently leaving the country.³⁴²

The Director of Land Settlement denied such claims and even challenged the RGA to substantiate its claims with evidence. However, his response pointed to a shift from what used to be the norm prior to the land ruling. He stated that there were no major changes "with the exception that the financial requirements of the company have been, if anything, more stringently enforced as regards later grants of ranching land."³⁴³ The timing of the policy changes raised questions and in a way substantiated claims that were made by the RGA.

Towards the 1920 Legislative Assembly elections the call for Responsible Government kept growing louder. There was a growing desire for the Imperial government to facilitate the transfer of administrative power from the BSAC to the settler population. Gauging by the nature of debates in the Council over the past years, Coghlan concluded that change was both "desirable and inevitable."³⁴⁴ The country's settler population had grown (33 620 settlers in 1921)³⁴⁵ and their contribution towards administrative revenue was paramount in aiding the country's fiscal stability. He therefore argued that "where the people of a country were obliged to have the affairs of the country conducted at their own expense they might as well have the conduct of those affairs in their own hands, rather than in the hands of another body."³⁴⁶ This had always been the desire of the elected members, but as highlighted in the previous sections, the Company administration had responded by granting majority representation in an attempt to pacify them. This did not kill the desire for self-rule amongst the settlers which kept strengthening especially after the RGA was created. The forthcoming Legislative Council election in 1920 was earmarked to be the litmus test in determining whether the electorate was ready for Responsible Government.

³⁴² *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 2 September 1919.

³⁴³ NAZ L2/2/139 Director of lands to the Acting Commercial Representative (Bulawayo), 22 September 1919.

³⁴⁴ Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 14 May 1919.

³⁴⁵ Mlambo, 'Building a white man's country', 126.

³⁴⁶ Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 14 May 1919.

Elected members therefore invoked the Supplemental Charter arguing that, it alone had propositions for the most appropriate and suitable form of government to replace Company administration (Responsible Government). This revision to the original Royal Charter provided that a majority in the Legislative Council could successfully demand the formation of a Responsible Government. Heyman presented a petition drawn by settlers from the various constituencies represented in the Legislative Council calling for the beginning of negotiations for a Responsible Government in the country. It stated that:

We the undersigned being residents in your constituency, wish to draw your attention to the fact that the British South Africa Company has already approached the Imperial government as to the settlement of its affairs, without any intimation of intentions of the people of this country, and that in other directions there are evidences that our future is under discussion. Under these circumstances we feel that instead of waiting for the election of a new Council and its first session, which probably cannot take place for a year, the people of Rhodesia ought to make some expression of their own views and expressions at once and through the effective channel open to them, the Legislative Council; and we therefore hope that you will do your best to secure in the present Legislative Council the passing of a resolution in favour of an immediate appeal to the Imperial government in terms of the Supplemental Charter.³⁴⁷

This petition had been prepared by RGA members. In their opinion, it was a representation of the majority of the country's settlers. Although the RGA enjoyed considerable support throughout the country, a true reflection of settler opinion on the preferred form of government could only be obtained through an election.

In the Legislative Council election that was contested in 1920 the RGA won 12 out of the 13 seats resoundingly. The only member of the opposition who won the 13th seat was R. A. Fletcher, he represented the opposition on the constitution delegation and was later on appointed Minister of Agriculture when H. U. Moffat became Premier.³⁴⁸ The association was now in a stand to request for Responsible Government. Accordingly, on 12 May 1920, Coghlan moved the following motion in the Council:

This absolute majority of the whole number of members of the Legislative Council of Southern Rhodesia humbly prays the king's most Excellent Majesty in Council to establish forthwith in Southern Rhodesia the form of Government known as Responsible Government which this territory urgently requires for the proper development of its resources and the freedom and prosperity of its people.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Legislative Council Debates, 14 May 1919, 400.

³⁴⁸ See NAZ ORAL/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher, Interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

³⁴⁹ Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 12 May 1920, 47.

He further stated that the country's settlers had made contributions towards administrative revenue in the form of various taxes. This was clear testimony that they had the capacity to finance the administration of the country when the BSAC was no longer in the picture. In addition to this, Newton (the former Treasurer), stated that the country possessed ample resources (land and minerals) for the provision of additional revenue. This countered threats of possible bankruptcy (if a settler government replaced the Company) that were being touted by the RUA to promote its agenda for Southern Rhodesia's incorporation to the Union of South Africa. It should be noted that by this time the country's revenue collection capacity had been significantly enhanced by the opening of the Income Tax Department (ITD) in 1918. Created by the War Taxation and Excess profits Duty Ordinance No. 20 of 1918 to assist in financing the war effort, the ITD went on to mobilise more revenue for the country even after World War I as shall be demonstrated in the next chapter.³⁵⁰

Arguments presented by settler representatives in the Council in Support for the grant of Responsible Government had a nationalistic appeal regarding the need for the people of Rhodesia to be in control of their affairs. The development of this nationalist feeling can be traced back to the early colonial period. In 1907 the Mashonaland Progressive Association declared that "We are Rhodesian and Rhodesia belongs to us and we have every intention of developing our country after our fashion and without interference of neighbours."³⁵¹ The RGA members in the Council demonstrated this kind of sentiment: first, by outright refusal to be joined to South Africa and second, by emphasising their ability to provide administrative revenue. Coghlan argued that "The people out of whose pockets roughly a million and a quarter were being raised in revenue today were not spending the money."³⁵² That money was being spent by the BSAC. The Responsible Government could simply substitute the Company and perform administrative duties using that same revenue made available by the country's settlers.

Alfred Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, took time to endorse the request made by the Legislative Council to consider granting Responsible Government to Southern Rhodesia. This delay revealed his support for the country to be joined to the Union of South Africa. The elected members remained adamant and made reference to the 1920 election which

³⁵⁰ See E. J., Davies *Rhodesian Taxation Guide*, An analysis of the provisions of the War Taxation and Excess Profits Ordinance for Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury: Statutory Accountant 1930); NAZ ZBU 3/1/1 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the conduct or Management of the Income Tax Department. 1946.

³⁵¹ Hodder-Williams, *White farmers in Rhodesia*, 86.

³⁵² Coghlan quoted in the Legislative Council Debates, 12 May 1920, 58.

had reflected the overall position of the majority of the country's settler population regarding their desired form of government. Consequently, the Imperial government appointed the Rhodesia Committee chaired by Earl Buxton on 7 March 1921. Its terms of reference included the determination of a practical procedure and timeframe for the granting of Responsible Government.³⁵³ The committee made a recommendation that a better expression of opinion would be obtained by a referendum not a general election. The committee also supported the argument that was made by elected members concerning the country's financial fitness and its ability to meet administrative expenditure.³⁵⁴ Setting up of this committee was a positive development for the RGA and their representatives in the Council. Unlike other earlier consultative processes to determine solutions for the country's troubles, the Buxton Committee reported in a very short space of time (one month). Campaigns by both the RUA and the RGA intensified, leading to the 1922 referendum. The RGA won with 8 774 votes cast in favour of Responsible Government while 5 989 voted for Union.³⁵⁵

Conclusion

The chapter has considered the ever-growing settler desire to be weaned from the BSAC which administered the country from 1890 to 1923. Taking into account the significance accorded to increased settler representation in the country's legislative council, the chapter has examined the nature and functioning of this legislative system. It argued that settler demands exceeded what existing literature on the subject has presented. The chapter engaged with the historical conservation on law and society in colonial Africa, and highlighted that law and state policies provided an arena of contestation not only between Europeans and Africans, but also amongst settlers themselves. A close examination of the Council's debates on crucial political and economic matters such as land, taxation and administrative power, shows that the elected settler representatives actually wanted administrative authority to be transferred from the BSAC (which also had commercial interests) to the country's settlers. As argued in the chapter, the main justification for their demand rested on the fact that the settler population was making an important contribution towards the country's revenue through various taxes and therefore, had a right to make decisions on important administrative matters. This casts doubt on the applicability of Moore's assertion that taxation issues do not feature prominently on the political agenda in southern countries like they do in the OECD countries.. Representation in

³⁵³ NAZ A12/1/6 Buxton Committee.

³⁵⁴ NAZ A12/1/6 Buxton Committee.

³⁵⁵ Blake, *History of Rhodesia*, 187.

the Legislative Council had failed to bring about this position since the nominated members and the Directors of the BSAC made all decisions. The majority representation granted to settlers did not satiate their desires. As shown in the chapter, it only worked to the settler's advantage when Coghlan used this majority to demand (successfully) for the consideration of Responsible government negotiations in 1920.

Chapter Four

‘Killing the goose which lays the golden eggs?’: Responsible Government and miner-farmer relations in Rhodesia, 1923-1945.

Southern Rhodesia’s mining law became a major subject of controversy the moment settler agriculture started gaining a foothold from 1897. This was after the realisation by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) Administration that the much vaunted second Rand did not lie in the country as discussed in Chapter Two. The BSAC therefore started promoting the development and growth of white settler agriculture. This policy shift sparked farmer-miner antagonism, which became more pronounced after 1903 when the Gold Belt area was opened by the Company administration for occupation by farmers. Restrictions on wood cutting and water usage were added to land holding titles issued to farmers who purchased land from 1904 onwards. The Company administration had to keep under constant check the numerous and vociferous challenges levelled against it for this biased land title. The Gold Belt restrictions were viewed by settler farmers as a menace to the growth of the nascent white agricultural sector. As Chapter Two showed, the cessation of Company rule in 1923 did not bring closure to this farmer-miner tussle. But it did bring prospects of change for the farmers and anxiety for mining capital, which felt the new dispensation threatened their interests.

This chapter focuses on miner-farmer relations in the post-1923 period. It delineates the protean nature of state policy in dealing with sectorial interests of the two foremost sectors of the country’s economy, highlighting how agriculture eventually toppled mining from the apex position by 1945 – both economically and politically. The chapter begins by chronicling a shifting mind set amongst senior government officials as they began to advocate openly for a replacement of the Gold Belt Title (GBT) with a more equitable land holding title. Engaging existing historiography on colonial agriculture, the chapter discusses the implications for the mining sector of changes implemented by the state in an attempt to cushion settler farmers from the impact of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Mining in general and gold mining in particular remained the chief revenue source for the colony before 1945 and the settler government was bent on extracting more from this sector as indicated by the levying of a Gold Premium Tax (GPT) on gold producers. The chapter will demonstrate how this tax system was detested by gold miners and how it ultimately led to a marked decline in gold mining by 1945.

Scholars have presented Southern Rhodesia's mining and agricultural history and political history in this period from various angles. The country's early history was written by colonial historians (settler apologists) who glorified the colonisation process.³⁵⁶ C. Leys' study on Southern Rhodesia's politics presented a homogenised settler society.³⁵⁷ His argument has sparked criticism as it flattens differences between settler factions and presented settler-state relations as largely amicable and fairly unchanging.³⁵⁸ This chapter joins this debate by providing a more nuanced study of state-farmer-miner relations, which demonstrates that they were factionalised, fractious and friable. A previous revisionist challenge was offered by I. R. Phimister's (1975) doctoral thesis (and subsequent articles) on the mining history of Southern Rhodesia, which devotes an entire chapter to factors that led to the rise and fall of mineral production.³⁵⁹ His heterodox perspective challenged colonial historiography by contesting earlier notions on colonial land and labour laws. He argued that the underlying factor for a successful mining venture in the country was profit maximisation and cost minimisation and highlighted how this was achieved through the use of cheap African labour (by both big mining companies and small miners). One of his main conclusions was that reduced gold production in the 1940s was the result of a decline in the number of small miners instanced by the ever rising mining costs during the war period. This chapter augments and extends Phimister's fundamental argument and contends that a combination of government's fiscal measures, especially the mining tax policy, obstructed development and growth of bigger gold mines, which led to the significant decline in the country's gold output by 1945. This is important because of the implications the mining tax policy on big mining companies, which were the worst affected. In this regard, the chapter illuminates on the centrality of taxes in underwriting the state's capacity to carry out their goals and shape state-society relations in the process.³⁶⁰ There are also more recent studies, by a new generation of environmental historians who use a

³⁵⁶ L. H. Gann, *A history of Rhodesia: Early days to 1934*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965); L.H. Gann and M. Gelfand, *Huggins of Rhodesia*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1964).

³⁵⁷ C. Leys, *European politics in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959).

³⁵⁸ See D. J. Murray, *The governmental system in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970); J.A. McKenzie, 'Commercial farmers in the governmental system in colonial Zimbabwe, 1963-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989; P. Mosley *The settler economies: Studies in the economic history of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1900 to 1963*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); R. Pilosoff, *The unbearable whiteness of being: Farmers' voices from Zimbabwe*, (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2012).

³⁵⁹ I. R. Phimister, 'Economic history of mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953', PhD Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1975.

³⁶⁰ D. A. Brautigam, 'Introduction: Taxation and state building in developing countries' in D. A. Brautigam et al (eds), *Taxation and state building in developing countries: Capacity and consent*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1. Also see M. Moore, 'Taxation and the political agenda, North and South', *Forum for development studies*, 31, 1 (2004), 7-32.

completely different approach from Phimister. Such studies by M. Musemwa³⁶¹ (2009) and V.C. Kwashirai³⁶² (2006) focus on farmer-miner struggles over the use of natural resources on the Gold Belt. Musemwa's work illustrates how settler farmers and miners clashed over land, timber and water rights on the Gold Belt, while Kwashirai discusses how settler farming and mining caused environmental degradation and threatened the state's efforts at conservation in the Mazoe District. The two studies constitute a useful historiographical intervention on the subject of intra-racial conflicts over natural resources amongst Southern Rhodesia's settlers. Though stressing the prominence of the miner-farmer conflict, these studies, however, do not illustrate the state's role and attitude towards the resolution of this dispute and its implications on the country's economy. This chapter will attempt to contribute key pieces to the mosaic by examining previously unexamined perspectives through analysing the views of senior politicians and government officials on the subject coupled to actual policies which affected the interaction of farmers and miners. It illustrates how this represented a shifting policy framework from that which prevailed in the pre-1923 period. This chapter goes beyond the farmer-miner dichotomy over natural resources by adopting a broader scope which brings on board the state and the economy.

Responsible Government and the improving position of settler agriculture

The state that emerged after the 1922 Referendum was confronted with several fresh challenges. The fundamental obligation of the new government involved balancing up the different sectorial interests (mainly farmers and miners' interests) as well as the development of a broader settler colonial voice, beyond the mining sector. Enhanced autonomy brought about by self-rule provided the emerging state with an opportunity to design policies that could tackle problems bedevilling the colony's political economy with limited external interference. The post-1923 era therefore witnessed the emergence of a centralised state bureaucracy, notable for its developmental ambition for the colonial economy³⁶³, as well as the desire to suppress growth of African agriculture so as to eliminate competition for white agriculture. The prevailing scenario after 1923 exhibits what S. S. Eriksen described as the two major

³⁶¹ M. Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources: The farmer-miner dispute in colonial Zimbabwe, 1903-1939', *Environment and History*, 15 (2009), 79-107.

³⁶² V. C. Kwashirai, 'Dilemmas in conservation in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1930', *Conservation and Society*, 4, 4 (2006), 541-561.

³⁶³ J. Alexander and J. McGregor, 'Introduction: Politics, patronage and violence in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 4 (2013), 749-763.

dimensions for state formation which are domestic sovereignty and administrative capacity.³⁶⁴ Effective administrative machinery enabled the post-1923 government to strengthen its tax collection capacity, mainly from the mining sector. This was an attempt by the settler government to strengthen the state's position, the fiscal theory of state formation states that "strong states emerge when the ruling regime is compelled to expand its revenue base."³⁶⁵ The state also fostered the incorporation of the Rhodesian Agricultural Union (RAU) in the administrative system to strengthen its position as shall be demonstrated in the chapter.

The impact of the attainment of white settler government in 1923 on the country's economic policy has been presented differently; some scholars argue that it brought no real change to the government's view on mining and agricultural policies. D. J. Murray (1970) labels the prevailing scenario after 1923 as a bequest of the BSAC on which the new government made no radical changes by noting that "as far as agriculture was concerned the transition from chartered government to settler government involved no fundamental change either in policy towards agriculture or in the administrative system."³⁶⁶ M. Loney has argued that Responsible Government status gave the settler state enhanced independence in determining its own political and economic affairs.³⁶⁷ This view has been challenged by I. R. Phimister³⁶⁸ and C. Stoneman³⁶⁹ who both give precedence to the influence of international capital and the nature of the world economic system in determining the course of economic policy for the new government. Finding that the evidence overwhelmingly supports the latter argument, this chapter will demonstrate that, indeed, it was the firm grip of international capital on the local economy that delayed the new government from implementing radical changes to mining and agricultural policies. Therefore, this chapter will argue that government's inclination towards farmers' interests started to gain momentum in 1923 and that it was actually the impact of the international economic recession on agriculture that pushed the state to make radical adjustments favouring this sector and at the same time disadvantaging the mining sector. A number of factors had colluded in strengthening the farmers' position after 1923. They now had better representation in the House of Assembly and cabinet after the Unionist defeat in the

³⁶⁴ S. S. Eriksen, 'State formation and the politics of regime survival: Zimbabwe in theoretical perspective', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 23, 2 (2010), 316-340.

³⁶⁵ M. Moore, 'Taxation and the political agenda, North and South', *Forum for Development Studies*, 1 (2004), 7-32.

³⁶⁶ D. J. Murray, *The governmental system in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 59.

³⁶⁷ M. Loney, *Rhodesia: White racism and imperial response*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), 12.

³⁶⁸ I. R. Phimister, 'Accommodating Imperialism: The Compromise of the Settler state in Southern Rhodesia, 1923-1923', *Journal of African History*, 25, 3 (1984), 279-294.

³⁶⁹ C. Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the prospects of Zimbabwe', *World Development*, 4, 1 (1976), 25-58.

1924 election where Charles Coghlan's Rhodesian Party got 26 of the 30 Legislative Council seats. They used this majority to their advantage in many instances to push for measures that favoured agricultural development. Farmers had also, by this time, developed into a formidable political constituency whose grievances could not be ignored by government. Their representatives had also amassed political clout because of improved organisation which enabled them to amplify the farmers' voice and their political relevance which had significantly contributed to the success of the Responsible Government vote in 1922. They utilized all this to their favour, V. E. M. Machingaidze notes that "[t]hus the numerous measures taken by the government to lay a foundation for settler capitalist agriculture, must be seen not only in the context of the government's desire to develop the industry but also in the context of Rhodesia Agricultural Union's (RAU) political power and influence."³⁷⁰ Although the change was not radical, 1923 marked a turning point in the government's attitude characterised by attempts to please farmers and at the same time appease miners. The Responsible Government period saw an inclination of government support towards the farmers, a development that had a direct impact on the mining industry as shall be demonstrated in this chapter.

When the settlers took the reins of power in 1923, agriculture and mining constituted the major pillars of the colonial economy. Although the dream of a Second Rand in Southern Rhodesia had failed to materialise, as discussed in Chapter Two, the mining sector still continued to generate the bulk of state's revenue and hence offered a firm foundation for the colonial economy. The Mining Industry Commission of 1945 emphasized this fact by stating that:

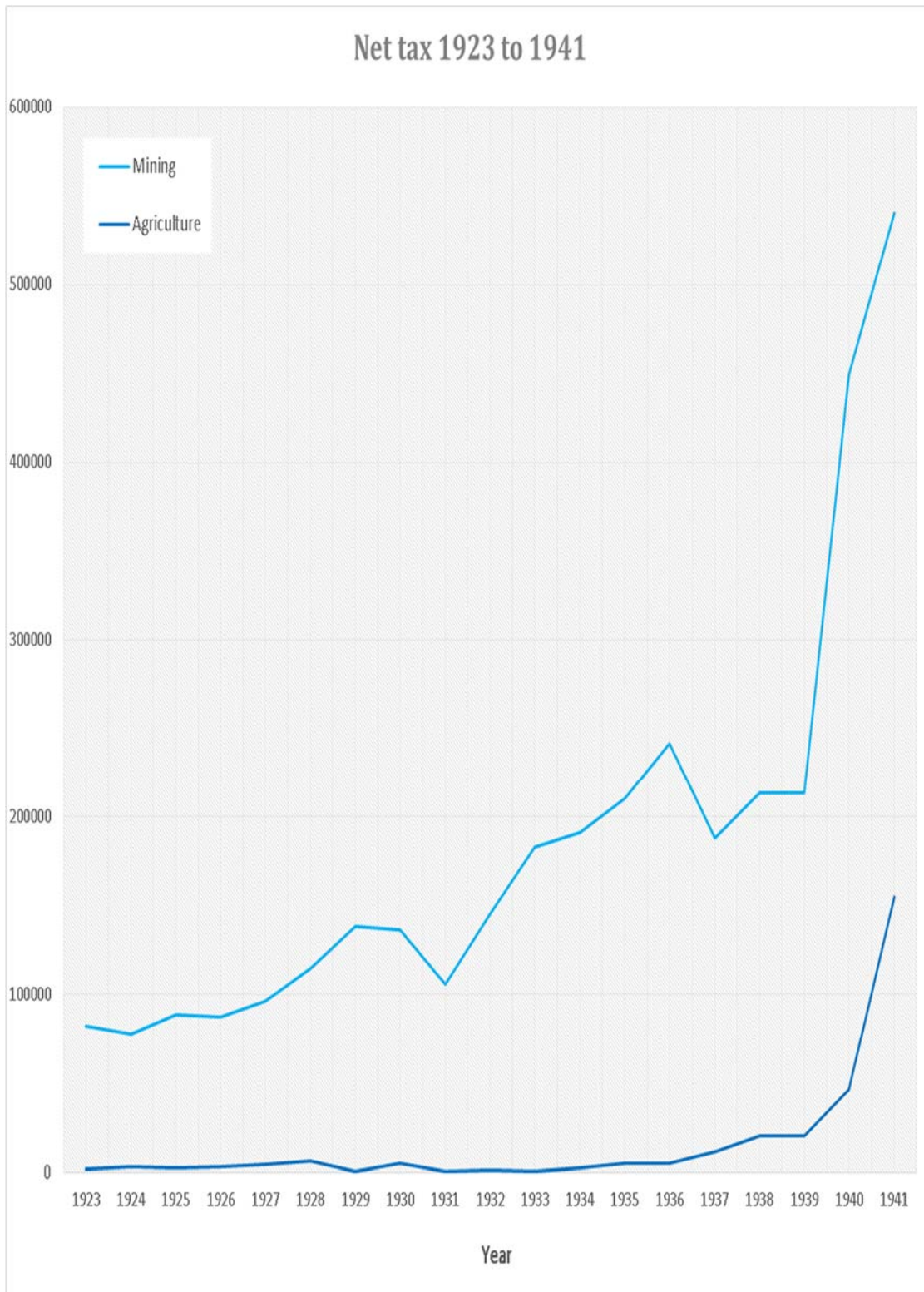
Gold production with its unique marketability has always exerted a stabilising effect in maintaining the exports of the colony. The unprecedented growth in the Rhodesian National Income from 1932 – 1939 was due to the large growth in the exports of the territory, and the increase of those exports was due to the increased production of gold.³⁷¹

Reports of the Commissioner of Taxes from 1919 to 1944 reveal that the mining industry always had the highest amount of taxable income assessed as highlighted in the graph below.

³⁷⁰ V. E. M. Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the State', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1980, 70.

³⁷¹ Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry of Southern Rhodesia 7 November 1945, The Hon. Leslie B. Fereday, Minister of Mines.

Graph 2: Net tax derived from agriculture and mining from 1923 to 1941³⁷²



³⁷² Southern Rhodesia, *Reports of the Commissioner of Taxes, 1919 to 1948*, presented to the Legislative Council.

Mining remained the largest source of income tax throughout the period (up to 1944) while agriculture was responsible for most losses which were set off by income from other sources. The position for agriculture only changed when the impact of the depression no longer weighed heavily on the sector from 1938. When the war broke out in 1939 the position for agriculture improved significantly until it reached the apex position in 1945.

The mining industry also occupied this prominent position in the Union of South Africa as was highlighted by C. W. De Kiewiet:

Here was an industry which feared neither locusts nor cattle diseases, neither drought nor summer floods. Its product always commanded a ready sale in the financial centres of the world. War or peace, deflation or inflation - none seemed to affect the demand. Under an international gold standard there existed a constant and reliable demand for gold at established prices. Even the compromised position of the international gold standard after the Great War did not alter the favoured position of gold.³⁷³

In light of such similarities regarding the significance of gold mining in the two countries, Southern Rhodesia drew lessons from the more established and prosperous South African mining industry. Southern Rhodesia made use of South Africa's labour control systems and structured its mining laws along similar lines as the Union.³⁷⁴ The settler government, and the BSAC administration before it, always attempted to create the best environment for the prosperity of mining capital and even provided crucial development services through the Geological Survey Department. This department was revamped after 1923 as the new government sought to make new mineral discoveries and make mining in the colony a profitable venture with an ability to lure more foreign capital. Its work, as noted by the Director in 1926 "consisted of a systematic geological mapping to complete the geological summary of the country, reconnaissance surveys and the geological examination of mining properties and new mineral discoveries."³⁷⁵ Such renewed efforts by the government were a positive development because they resulted in the discovery of new and important mineral deposits such as Chrome Ore in the Great Dyke area³⁷⁶, Platinum near the Ngesi River³⁷⁷ and numerous new Gold discoveries that boosted the profile of the country's mining sector and made it a major attraction to investors. Although it never reached the levels anticipated by the pioneer settlers, gold mining came to constitute what has been referred to as the 'golden goose' on

³⁷³ C. W. De Kiewiet, *A history of South Africa*, (London: Oxford university Press, 1941), 156.

³⁷⁴ C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1903-1933* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980).

³⁷⁵ Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Director, Geological Survey for the year 1926*, (C.S.R. 16 – 1927)

³⁷⁶ Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Director, Geological Survey, 1924*.

³⁷⁷ Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Director, Geological Survey, 1925*.

several times by members of the Chamber of Mines and the Smallworkers and Tributors Association during meetings held to discuss the impact of the GPT on the mining sector.

Settler agriculture, on the other hand, played an important complimentary role as it developed as the second leg on which the colonial economy stood. This sector was intended to be a useful prop mainly in the promotion of white settlement in the country, especially after the adoption of a formal White Agriculture Policy (WAP) in 1908. Although the interests of white settler farmers had always played second fiddle to mining interests during Company rule, as delineated in chapter 2 and 3, the growing political importance of farmers went a long way in strengthening their position as an interest group.³⁷⁸ In this regard, D. J. Murray notes that “By 1918 the Rhodesia Agricultural Union had 46 affiliated associations and about 1 200 members.”³⁷⁹ By 1921, the influence of white farmers had been further enhanced as they constituted the largest single group (25 per cent) of white income earners.³⁸⁰ The country’s settler population in 1921 was 33 620.³⁸¹ Settler Agriculture had registered significant growth as shown in the table below.

³⁷⁸ J.A. McKenzie, ‘Commercial farmers in the Governmental System of Southern Rhodesia, 1963-1980’, PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989, p37.

³⁷⁹ D.J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 67.

³⁸⁰ R. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977),

³⁸¹ A.S. Mlambo, ‘Building a white man’s country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II’, *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 126.

Table 3: Growth of white agriculture 1904-1922³⁸²

Year	No. of farms	Total Acreage (in 000 acres)
1904	545	33. 2
1911	1470	132. 1
1914	2040	183. 4
1915	2145	202. 9
1916	2178	249. 0
1917	2222	229. 0
1918	2351	205. 4
1919	2373	211. 1
1920	2395	237. 3
1921	2427	228. 0
1922	2337	266. 6

The state, both the Company administration and settler government, sponsored and promoted this development of white settler agriculture to promote immigration of more settlers into the country. V. E. M. Machingaidze's thesis is very useful in chronicling the role of the colonial state in promoting settler agriculture.³⁸³ This was despite ethnic fissures which characterised the sector emanating from the continued immigration of British and Afrikaner farmers as discussed in chapter two. This was further entrenched by the 1922 voting pattern which gave British settlers an upper hand over their Afrikaner counterparts (most of whom desired union with South Africa). The settler government favoured British settlers to immigrate and take up land in Southern Rhodesia. There was a perennial fear that continued immigration of Afrikaners would result in the 'poor white problem' which had plagued South Africa. K. Larsen notes that "The Rhodesian government introduced new immigration policies and free passage and land settlement schemes as well as a child migration scheme and the result was an increase in the number of British men and women migrating to the colony."³⁸⁴ The farmers were

³⁸² I. R. Phimister, *An economic and social history of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988), 61.

³⁸³ Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia'.

³⁸⁴ K. Larsen, "'You Rhodesian are more British than the British': The development of a white national identity and immigration policies and restrictions in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1965", PhD Thesis, University of Western Australia, 2013, iii.

therefore not a homogeneous entity. They however had more representatives in the Legislative Council and J. A. Edwards observed that, before the years of the depression, the Legislative Assembly often resembled the RAU in another guise.³⁸⁵ In 1930, out of the 30 House of Assembly members, 13 were, or had been farmers at one point or the other.³⁸⁶ Eddie Cross, Member of Parliament for Bulawayo North constituency in the current Zimbabwe parliament made the following remark when commenting on the complexion of Rhodesia's as well as Zimbabwe's parliament: "Some things never change."³⁸⁷ Farming interests still dominate the legislative council like they did during the colonial period. Farmers also constituted a major proportion of the electorate and, therefore, their claims and demands could not be easily brushed aside by politicians as they been before 1923.

Farmers' lobbied the government to come to their rescue in the wake of difficulties precipitated by commodity price shifts on the international market and in the adjustment of legislation such as the country's mining law which had a clause favouring miners at the expense of farmers. John Lourie, a former commercial farmer (farmed in the years 1963-2000), although not well versed with details of farmer-miner conflicts registered awareness of the unfairness of the country's mining law during the colonial period.³⁸⁸ The coming of Responsible Government brought high hopes and expectations for the farming sector. Machingaidze sums this up by stating that "With the advent of the new settler government in October 1923, headed by Sir Charles Coghlan, settler farmers looked forward to an aggressive agricultural policy, while settlers in general hoped to see an end to the British South Africa Company's monopolies in mining and railways. These hopes were not entirely satisfied."³⁸⁹ Nevertheless there were other equally important considerations preventing the settler government from hastily implementing the anticipated agricultural reforms. First and arguably foremost, the constitution adopted in 1923 was designed mainly to "protect the rights of capital, prevent discriminatory legislation against Africans without imperial sanction, and stop Southern Rhodesia from passing laws incompatible with the more general interests of the Imperial connection."³⁹⁰ Such provisions

³⁸⁵ J. A. Edwards, 'Southern Rhodesia, the Response to Adversity, 1935 to 1939', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1978, 34.

³⁸⁶ M. C. Steele, 'The foundations of a native policy in Rhodesia, 1923-1933', PhD Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1972, 35.

³⁸⁷ Interview with Eddie Cross, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Member of Parliament for Bulawayo North Constituency, Ambassador Hotel in Harare, 15 April 2014.

³⁸⁸ Interview with John Lourie, a former commercial farmer in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the years 1963-200, Avondale Harare, 17 April 2014.

³⁸⁹ V. E. M. Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia', 47.

³⁹⁰ L. H. Gann and M. Gelfand, *Huggins of Rhodesia*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 62.

guaranteed the protection of private capital. Most mining concerns in asbestos, coal, railway system and the country's mineral rights were all foreign owned. The settler government only took action when it became politically expedient to do so from 1929.

The 'Gold Belt Title' and the fight to control resources

This section explores the gradual shift of government officials' attitude on the highly contested GBT. The company administration had, for the duration of its reign, supported miners' rights as embodied in the title. Once the settler government was in power the major farmers' representative body (RAU) did not waste time in approaching the new Ministry responsible for mines requesting the amendment of the GBT clause in the Mines and Minerals Act. The clause had privileged miners' access to water, timber and grazing rights. The clamour by farmers resulted in the crafting of proposed amendments to be considered if a new title was to be adopted. These stipulated among other things, that timber beyond the primary needs of miners could be disposed of and that farmers should have the first right to take water required for household use, for livestock and for irrigation purposes.³⁹¹ This request and the proposed amendments, viewed as being radical by the mining fraternity, stirred H. U. Moffat, the new Mines Minister into action for he started to dig deeper into the controversial land title. Representatives of the mining industry (Chamber of Mines, Chamber of Mines Salisbury and the Rhodesian Smallworkers and Tributors Association) drew up a petition to Moffat in March 1924 challenging requests by farmers for the amendment of the GBT, a move they argued, if approved could threaten development of the mining industry. Their petition emphasised among other issues that:

Due respect should be given to the Gold Belt Title considering that the gold areas were originally set out for mining purposes alone and in very isolated cases was land granted for farming purposes on the Gold Belt. Farmers began accessing land from 1892 after they raised concern that land on the Gold Belt happened to be suitable for agricultural purposes as well as arguing that it contained rich agricultural land and they could produce grain for consumption by the mines. Thereupon farms were allotted on the Gold Belt, but on special conditions reserving, inter alia, all timber and water required for bona fide mining purposes.³⁹²

Moffat's response and intervention in this clash between farmers and miners over the GBT, clearly highlights a shift in the government's attitude from being sympathetic to the needs of

³⁹¹ NAZ S480/77H Letter from H. U. Moffat to Secretary to the Premier.

³⁹² NAZ S480/77H Mining industry petition to the Premier, 1924.

miners to one that endeavoured to introduce a new policy framework. Reacting to the mining industry petition the Minister observed that:

It was naturally impossible to issue the BSAC's form of title after the 1st of October last, since the company had ceased its function of administration and consequently certain modifications were demanded on the advent of the new government in order that the issue of deeds could be proceeded with.³⁹³

Similar sentiments were to be echoed by A. M. Hutchinson, a farmer, who stated in 1933 that the title was given by the BSAC, a commercial company and thus it should be repealed in its entirety.³⁹⁴ Up to 1924, 400 GBTs had been issued in Mashonaland and 47 in Matebeleland.³⁹⁵ The petition submitted by the miners' representatives treated the entire country as a homogeneous entity and thus concealed variations that existed on the applicability of the GBT. Such inconsistencies in the petition were laid bare and criticised by the Mines Minister who argued that not all farms in Mashonaland situated on the Gold Belt were held under the GBT and that in Matebeleland most of the Gold Belt areas were pegged from end to end as farms, many of which were held under the Victoria Agreement Compromise Title.³⁹⁶ The Minister of Mines launched an investigation which aimed at establishing the real legal underpinnings for the enactment of the title, he enquired from the BSAC:

Whether there was any declaration of policy by the company that the land on what was considered to be Gold Belt was not to be sold referring, if possible to applications from farmers expressing their willingness to take an inferior title on the Gold Belt and quoting, if possible, any instructions issued by the company to the Estates Office on this subject.³⁹⁷

This was obviously intended to counter the argument raised by miners that farmers had taken up land on the Gold Belt with full knowledge of the implications that the GBT clause had on the utilisation of resources on the farms concerned.

As Premier, Coghlan also set up consultations on the best way forward in dealing with the farmer-miner differences and he requested the Mines Minister to devise the best way of resolving the issue for the good of the country's economy. Responding to the Premier's request, the Minister of Mines made proposals on the way forward regarding the GBT, he recommended

³⁹³ NAZ 480/77H Memorandum titled: Title deeds to land in Southern Rhodesia.

³⁹⁴ NAZ S246 Conference between miners and farmers, October 1933.

³⁹⁵ NAZ 480/77H Letter from the Director, Department of Lands to the Minister of Lands and Public Works, 22 June 1927.

³⁹⁶ NAZ 480/77H Letter from H. U. Moffat to Secretary to the Premier.

³⁹⁷ NAZ 488/77H Letter from the Secretary for Mines and Public Works to the General Manager of the British South Africa Company, 26 September 1927.

discontinuation of this title and introduction of a uniform title for the whole country. He wrote to the Premier saying “I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending that the alienation of land under Gold Belt permit and/or GBT be discontinued. In my opinion it is a blot on the colony’s land titles which should be remedied as soon as possible.”³⁹⁸ The struggle between farmers and miners concerning land titles on the Gold Belt thus, took a new turn after 1923 with the Mines Minister, an influential member of government, advocating for the introduction of a uniform land title to replace the controversial GBT. He also recommended control of wood cutting on Gold Belt farms and that such authority should be vested in the Lands Department, in the same manner cutting in the reserves was controlled by the Chief Native Commissioner.³⁹⁹ In addition to this, he highlighted that it was no longer necessary to give a prior right to land and grazing to miners as this had been abused. This shift in the attitude of the Minister was an important pointer on the direction government policy was going to take in the future.

Although not representative of overall government policy, these proposals were crucial for they won the support of key figures in the political and administrative realm of the colony. The Attorney General for example supported the Minister’s proposals entirely and stated that “I agree almost entirely with the propositions and recommendations of the Minister. There can be no question but that the reservations in the Gold Belt Title constitute an unfair blot on their ownership.”⁴⁰⁰ Leggate, the former Minister of Agriculture, also registered his pleasure following the Minister’s recommendations.⁴⁰¹ The two officials made reference to earlier arrangements for the introduction of a uniform land title for the colony that had gained currency when BSAC Directors visited the country in 1907. This had actually become the main point of departure for the Mines Minister when he was campaigning against continuation of the GBT. Leggate proceeded to use his own personal experience in explaining why, in his opinion, GBTs had continued to be issued despite them being outlawed in 1907. He noted thus:

Those to whom the titles were issued would, as a result, be newcomers, who knew nothing of the disputes and agreements which had taken place, and without this knowledge considered they had no option in the matter. I myself came to this country in the year 1910, shortly after this agreement, and got a Gold Belt Title to my farm. I sent home particulars of the title I had got, and surprise was expressed to me that I had taken up any land in the country at all. Once however, one comes into the country and

³⁹⁸ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923-1930. Letter from Mines Minister to the Premier, 7 January 1929.

³⁹⁹ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923 – 1930. Letter from the Minister of Mines to the Premier on amendments to the mining law, 27 July 1929.

⁴⁰⁰ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923 – 1930. Notes by the Attorney General on farmers and miners.

⁴⁰¹ NAZ 480/59B Memorandum by Leggate, 6 May 1929.

spends a good deal of money looking for land – I had already spent a hundred pounds looking for land before I was offered a GBT – one is rather reluctant to leave the country and go elsewhere.⁴⁰²

This use of deceit by the government in its attempts to attract settlers⁴⁰³ was heavily criticised for being a major hindrance stalling the farmers' progress. P. S. Brocklehurst, a farmer from Umvuma stated that:

The young man coming out here, who probably does not go thoroughly through his title deeds finds that there are roads through his farm for which he has to provide all material and the cattle of the road gangs have to be allowed to graze on the farm. When he wants to sell that farm he has to point out this disadvantage, which reduces the value of the farm. It affects him as far as the bank is concerned too. Also, he has to pay quit rent on the land taken up by the road or outspans.⁴⁰⁴

This land title was now deemed anachronistic since agriculture was now developed. Gold Belt reservations had been developed when mining was still considered the country's main economic activity. The settler government was therefore, encouraged to do away with the old legislation as a move to bolster the immigration and settlement of more whites who would then take up commercial agriculture.

When the Company Directors visited the country on the eve of the official launch of a White Agricultural Policy (WAP) in 1907, available evidence reveal that they actually wanted a uniform land title to be introduced in the country. Dr. Jameson, one of the Directors said that "We mentioned when you were here before the question of a universal land title throughout the country. The general title will be based on the law as passed by the Legislative Council."⁴⁰⁵ Birchenough was also quoted saying that they "wanted to give as attractive a title as possible to the farmers and settlers....to give the farmer everything that they should give him consistent with the getting of the minerals out of the ground. They began by giving the farmer in his title everything that a farmer had in an ordinary civilised community."⁴⁰⁶ This mindset amongst the Directors had considerably influenced the drafting of a policy proposal by the BSAC in 1907 which outlined a universal land holding title for the entire country. In light of this background,

⁴⁰² NAZ 480/59B Memorandum by Leggate, 6 May 1929.

⁴⁰³ For more on the need for government to attract more settlers see A. S. Mlambo, 'Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II', *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 123-146; A. S. Mlambo, 'Some are more white than others: Racial Chauvinism as a factor in Rhodesian immigration policy, 1890 to 1963', *Zambezia*, 17, 2 (2000), 139-160.

⁴⁰⁴ NAZ S1246/S30 (C) Complete evidence of witnesses, farmers. P. S. Brocklehurst, Farmer, Umvuma, 21 January 1924.

⁴⁰⁵ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923 – 1930. Mines Minister to the Premier, 7 January 1929.

⁴⁰⁶ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923 – 1930. Mines Minister to the Premier, 7 January 1929.

the Minister of Mines deemed the GBT as indefensible, even research that was done by the Ministry on the mining laws of other countries revealed that no other country except Southern Rhodesia had mining laws that gave miners a prior right to wood. The following examples from the survey can be cited:

Western Australia: The holder of any mining tenement is not allowed to fell trees without the consent of the owner or occupier.

Nigeria: No European occupation – as farmers I mean. “The Lessee has the right to cut.....within his lease, any but protected trees. Royalty is payable

Queensland: The miner may cut necessary timber on crown lands. He may not cut on private land without the owner’s permission.

Tanganyika: In respect of private land “a mining lease.....shall not confer on the lease the right to cut timber on the lands the subject of the lease.”⁴⁰⁷

It was therefore considered a necessity to align land laws in the country with what was happening in other countries the world over. The confusion caused by the GBT was a root cause of many problems and disputes between farmers and miners in the country. Moffat thus recommended the discontinuation of GBTs and that any land deemed necessary for mining to be reserved for that purpose and not alienated at all.

In addition to these efforts by the Minister of Mines to create a rough and ready equilibrium between farmers and miners, two conferences had been convened in 1925 and 1926 to iron out differences regarding use of timber, grazing and water rights on Gold Belt farms.⁴⁰⁸ These two conferences failed to resolve the differences since miners were not willing to give up on what they considered to be their constitutional right. Musemwa’s study uses the 1925, 1926 and 1933 conferences as a window to examine farmer-miner conflicts in the country. His conclusion on the role of the state is that “The state which was better positioned to be the ultimate arbiter, prevaricated for most of the time and left the farmers and miners to sort out their differences.”⁴⁰⁹ The position of the state did not remain static. Consideration should be given to shifting mind sets amongst senior government officials in the post-1923 period because they ultimately resulted in a 50 per cent timber reservation for Gold Belt farmers. Although it did not take sides during these farmer-miner conferences, the government of the day made real attempts to deal with the controversial GBT as has been demonstrated in this section. This was

⁴⁰⁷ NAZ S480/58B Disputes: Farmers versus miners 1923 – 1930. Letter from the Mines Minister to the Premier, 7 January 1929.

⁴⁰⁸ M. Musemwa, ‘Contestation over resources’. He discusses what transpired at the Farmer-Miner Conferences in 1925, 1926 and 1933.

⁴⁰⁹ Musemwa, ‘Contestation over resources’, 99.

in line with changes being effected on other landholding titles in an attempt to lure more settlers into the country and boost agriculture.

Voices could also be heard from some miners calling for an amendment of the mining law to one which recognised the importance of an uninterrupted development of agriculture as a crucial arm of the colonial economy. An example of such ‘progressive’ elements within the mining sector was an old prospector who wrote to the Minister of Mines in 1924, emphasising that it was imperative for the country to have a uniform land title and that, government should not be threatened by mining people who were reacting to proposed amendments to the mining law. His major argument hinged on the fact that if wood on farms had belonged to farmers, they could have acted more responsibly. Unavailability of free wood could not be taken as enough justification for failure by investors to consider taking up mining claims in the country. He observed:

In the past free wood has been scandalously wasted both by companies and small workers – usually the companies gave out wood contracts – where wood was free the contractor allowed his boys to cut anything and everything and usually about two feet above ground, thus mating hundreds of cords of wood (the stumps he cut for firewood timber which should have been (according to Gold Law) reserved for mining timber; he cut down huge trees logged off the branches suitable for his contract and left huge logs lying to waste. The small worker in addition to above, went one worse, taking up a gamble, he erected his mill, started cutting timber, his property failed, and the timber (cut and corded), remained in the veld, to be burnt by the first veld fire that came along.⁴¹⁰

In this regard, he accused both small miners and big mining companies of wasting wood resources which could otherwise be used by tobacco farmers or preserved for posterity. Highlighting the need for a concerted effort in building the colonial economy, T. Haddon, a miner, wrote to the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines stating that “I strongly favour a uniform title to land and also oppose the continued inclusion of present day servitudes in new titles, which servitudes operate inequitably and are not of such general necessity as may have at one time appeared to be the case.”⁴¹¹ These are examples of the few miners who advocated for the revision of the mining law. The majority of miners did not want the GBT clause to be tempered with.

⁴¹⁰ S480/77H Copy of a letter sent to the Honourable Minister of Mines and Works by an old Rhodesian prospector. He had been prospecting and mining in Southern Rhodesia since 1895. He once worked for mining companies, but then spent of the time prospecting and mining on his own. 24 February 1924.

⁴¹¹ NAZ S480/91 Minutes of a meeting of the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Incorporated, on Gold Belt Titles.

Great Depression and shifting government policy

Farmer-miner relations provide a useful lens for examining how the colonial economy, mainly predicated on agriculture and mining, fared over time and influenced overall state policy. Unlike gold mining, agriculture had a fitful experience characterised by booms and busts throughout the Great Depression, up to World War II. A price rise resulted in increased production whereas a decline in commodity prices spelled doom for local production. The agricultural sector was prone to such price shifts in the first decade of settler government. A higher cotton price on the international market in 1923 resulted in increased production of the commodity in the country so much that production reached 6 803 bales by 1926.⁴¹² Agricultural pests however reduced production to 639 bales in the following year. Effects of this sudden decline were covered by tobacco production which was on the rise.⁴¹³ S. C. Rubert notes that in the 1922/23 season, 388 farmers grew 2 540 943 lbs. of tobacco, production further increased to 5 313 168 lbs. produced by 676 farmers in the 1925/26 season.⁴¹⁴ Apart from the prevailing higher international price for the commodity, other stimulants to tobacco production were the imperial preference granted to Rhodesia's tobacco in 1919 and 1925, the construction of a tobacco processing plant by the Imperial Tobacco Company in Salisbury as well as effects of the 1924 Wembley Exhibition which generated a lot of interest for Rhodesian tobacco in Britain. All these factors pushed most farmers flocking into the country to take up tobacco farming. The overall result was overproduction of the crop which coincided with a fall of the international price forcing most tobacco farmers into bankruptcy at the end of the 1927/28 season. According to Machingaidze:

After the disaster of the 1929 crop, which eliminated 700 growers in 1930, production fell to half a million pounds (weight). The problem of overproduction had indeed been solved but at a cost to the exchequer and to the farming which seemed crippling. Nearly all the progress of the previous ten years was wiped out in one season. Many of the hopefuls who had immigrated returned to the United Kingdom with all their capital lost, and all but a score of those who remained abandoned tobacco.⁴¹⁵

The prevailing circumstances pushed government to take remedial action that could at least keep the financial nostrils of the tobacco farmers above water.

⁴¹² Noaks, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 28 April, 1931.

⁴¹³ D. J. Murray, *The governmental system*, 70.

⁴¹⁴ S. C. Rubert, *A most promising weed: History of tobacco farming and labour in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1945*, (Athens: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1998), 6.

⁴¹⁵ Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia', 183.

Tobacco, a crucial component of the country's agricultural sector, had succumbed to overproduction; millions of pounds of Southern Rhodesia's tobacco lay unsold in Britain. The Parliamentary Committee on tobacco reported that there were about 11 500 000 lbs. of unsold Rhodesian tobacco in the United Kingdom, and in Rhodesia itself there was another estimated 9 000 000 lbs. as at 31st December 1928, and 1928/29 production though very much reduced, added another 7 000 000 lbs. to the stocks.⁴¹⁶ The 1928 tobacco crush convinced Southern Rhodesia's government officials that there was need for state involvement in the marketing of the crop so as to restore order in the sector. Rubert notes that "The government recognised that if the disastrous cycles of expansion and retrenchment were to be stopped it was absolutely necessary that it intervene and assume the responsibility for regulating the industry."⁴¹⁷ The government was therefore left with no choice but to save the tobacco farmers from the effects of the debacle by extending credit facilities through the Land Bank and the Tobacco Co-operative Warehouse to pay advances to planters and enable them to export their crop.⁴¹⁸ The state expended a lot of money in this exercise, F. Clements and E. Harben note that "Directly or indirectly, the tobacco industry cost the Rhodesian Government over half a million pounds (sterling), a contribution all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the total annual revenue in those days was only around two and a half million pounds (sterling)."⁴¹⁹ All this did not help improve the farmers' position and therefore, a series of laws intended to redeem tobacco farmers were enacted, and they included the Tobacco Sale and Export Control Act of 1930 which was superseded by the Tobacco Marketing Act of 1936, Tobacco Levy Act of 1933, Tobacco Reserve Pool Act of 1934, the Tobacco Research Act of 1935 which established the Tobacco Research Board. The Government also replaced the Tobacco Control Board with the Tobacco Marketing Board and mandated the compulsory selling of all tobacco at Marketing Board operated auction floors.

Most farmers who abandoned cotton and tobacco went into maize production. This intensified problems bedevilling the maize sector, which was already suffering because of overproduction resulting from the increased number of maize farmers and a dwindling local market. The economic downturn, triggered by a world economic recession in 1930 saw agricultural commodity prices on the international market plummeting, further exacerbating Southern

⁴¹⁶ Report of the select committee on the Position of Tobacco, 13 June 1929.

⁴¹⁷ Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed*, 8.

⁴¹⁸ Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia', 219.

⁴¹⁹ F. Clements and E. Harben, *Leaf of gold: The story of Rhodesian tobacco*, (London: Methuen, 1962).

Rhodesia's problems. The League of Nations summed up the world agricultural crisis as follows: "It is the lowness of prices that constitutes the agricultural crisis. It is becoming difficult to sell products and in many cases prices have reached a level at which they are scarcely if at all sufficient to cover the cost of production."⁴²⁰ This state of affairs impacted negatively on the maize farmers who had all along been clamouring for controlled production to deal with the problem of a shrinking local market. The maize price on the international market dropped from a high of 11s a bag to 5s. 10d. in 1930 and to a low of 3s. 4d. in April 1931.⁴²¹ This massive fall in maize prices pushed the government to support the enactment of the Maize Control Act in 1931 to facilitate organized marketing of all maize under the pool system. The government also seem to have been prompted into action by the mounting political pressure from RAU who had sponsored Noaks' (Secretary of the RAU) candidature in a parliamentary by-election for the Mazoe constituency in 1930.⁴²² This piece of legislation marked a turning point in state-farmer relations as the government now widened its sphere of direct responsibility to include ensuring that maize farmers received sufficient income for them to continue farming; furthermore the government accepted the responsibility for marketing.⁴²³ It heralded a new era in the manner that government related with the various sectors of the economy, especially on matters that threatened its hold on power.

Difficulties in the marketing of agricultural commodities, sparked by overproduction, dwindling local markets and low international prices, were not confined to Southern Rhodesia. Parallels can be drawn from the scenario prevailing in the Union of South Africa. Unlike in Southern Rhodesia where farmer-miner relations were characterised by animosity when settler agriculture was still at an embryonic stage, farmers and miners in South Africa were co-operating for their own mutual benefit. Depicting this relationship, R. Morrell notes that "The mines required a regular cheap supply of agricultural products, particularly maize, to feed their labourers who were housed in the compounds. The maize farmers on the other hand, had access to a reliable market for their crops."⁴²⁴ This economic symbiosis characterised miner-famer relations in South Africa in the first two decades of the twentieth century and has been

⁴²⁰ League of Nations Economic Committees Report 1931. Quoted in 'Report on Agricultural Position', *The Countryside*, January 1934.

⁴²¹ C. F. Keyter, 'Maize control in Southern Rhodesia 1931-1941: The African contribution to white survival', *The Journal of Central African Historical Association*, 34, 8 (1977), 3.

⁴²² For a detailed discussion on the politics surrounding the passing of the Maize Control Act, see Murray, *governmental systems*.

⁴²³ Murray, *The governmental system in Southern Rhodesia*, 75.

⁴²⁴ R. Morrell, 'The disintegration of the Gold and Maize Alliance in South Africa in the 1920s', *The Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21, 4 (1988), 619-635.

described by S. Trapido as the “gold and maize alliance.”⁴²⁵ However, it collapsed from the mid-1920s in the wake of declining international maize price, which left the home market more profitable. Morrell gives an incisive chronicle of the soaring miner-farmer relations and how this ultimately led to a disintegration of the gold and maize alliance.⁴²⁶ When maize production exceeded demand, maize farmers lobbied the state for assistance in maize marketing to raise the price. This was contrary to the demands of miners who were against any attempts made by the state to subsidise maize production. This action by the state resulted in increased agitation by the miners. Maize was being sold at a loss but the settler state intervened, a development which incensed miners.

The impact of maize control legislation on miners in Southern Rhodesia has surprisingly escaped detailed exposition in existing literature. This is despite the fact that the mining sector constituted a major proportion of the maize consumer base in the country. The home market was more remunerative than the foreign market so miners automatically became an important stakeholder. G. Arrighi discusses the Act using his class struggle analysis reaching a conclusion that the Act was framed in the context of competition between African and European maize producers.⁴²⁷ Closely related to this is Edwards’ argument that the law was crafted on strict racial lines in an attempt to cushion white maize producers from African competition.⁴²⁸ Keyter discusses how the Act’s clause on the rake-off came to be regarded as the African contribution to white survival.⁴²⁹ This body of literature succeeds in highlighting the differences between Mashonaland maize producers and those in Matebeleland. This chapter demonstrate how the Act succeeded in widening the rift between maize farmers and miners as it presented a major challenge to the sectorial interests of the latter. The Maize Control Act will thus be used as a lens to study the farmer-miner conflict and the state’s response.

Section 7 of the Maize Control Act (1931) had a provision stipulating that the producer was not obliged to surrender to the Maize Control Board “his reasonable requirements for consumption by himself, his servants, employees and stock.”⁴³⁰ This provision made it possible for miners and individuals to keep maize that they produced for their own use. Many other

⁴²⁵ S. Trapido, ‘South Africa in a contemporary study of industrialisation’, *Journal of Development Studies*, 7, 3 (1971), 309-320.

⁴²⁶ Morrell, ‘The disintegration of the gold and maize alliance in South Africa in the 1920s’.

⁴²⁷ G. Arrighi, *The political economy of Rhodesia*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 32.

⁴²⁸ Edwards, ‘Southern Rhodesia, the response to adversity’, 35.

⁴²⁹ Keyter, ‘Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia’, 4.

⁴³⁰ *Southern Rhodesia Law Statute, Maize Control Act, 1931*.

mine owners therefore, sought exemption from the operations of the Act under this clause. The Chairman of the Maize Control Board even noted that:

A number of large mine owners were not growers but had secured exemption of their maize requirements from the operations of the act under the terms of section 9 of the Act by entering into contracts of purchase before the Act came into force; and it soon became evident that a number of the remaining mines proposed to secure a like exemption under the terms of section 7 by financing farmers to grow maize for them.⁴³¹

If this were allowed to happen then the Board could have suffered imminent collapse by losing the entire mining market. To address this shortcoming, an amendment No. 25 of 1933 to the Act was ratified and it read as follows “a producer may retain his reasonable requirements for consumption by himself, his dependants, farm servants, farm employees and farm stock.”⁴³² The addition of the word ‘farm’ automatically disqualified the miner from being a beneficiary under that clause; he was thus disallowed to grow maize for his own personal use.

Miners challenged this piece of legislation and labelled it a major obstacle to their operations. A number of bigger mines in the country owned farms where they grew maize which they used to feed their African labourers. This was used as a cost cutting mechanism in a mining environment where profitability constraints were the order of the day. Addressing delegates to the 1933 Miners’ Conference, Burnett gave an example of such mines: “The Cam and Motor and the Sherwood Star applied for leave to use maize grown on their own farms, farms which were purchased at a time considerably prior to the Act being brought into force.”⁴³³ The logic behind such an argument was that such farms were acquired before the Act and therefore, their operations were in no way intended to counter it.

L. Stone of the Salisbury Chamber of Mines reiterated the significance of the mining industry to the colonial economy, highlighting that it paid more tax and thus, it constituted the backbone of the national economy.⁴³⁴ It appeared that the fairest thing to do was to allow this vital sector to grow its own maize for feeding labourers. Miners did not favour a position whereby they were called upon to subsidize agriculture all the time. The government was doing a lot for the farmers and yet the miners bore the brunt. Stone opined that “The farmer is being spoon fed all

⁴³¹ NAZ S246/121 Notes of conference of mining representatives held at the Legislative Assembly Buildings, Salisbury, Thursday and Friday, 19th and 20th October 1933. Letter from Mr Jacklin, Chairman of the Maize Control Board.

⁴³² *Southern Rhodesia Law Statute, Maize Control Act (Amendment No. 24), 1933.*

⁴³³ NAZ S246/121 Notes of conference of mining representatives held at the Legislative Assembly Buildings, Salisbury, Thursday and Friday, 19th and 20th October 1933.

⁴³⁴ NAZ S246/121 Notes of conference of mining representatives.

the time and escapes taxation, yet this is done.”⁴³⁵ Hussey of the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines added that “The legislation was introduced to enable maize to be sold in London at a loss. Supposing that they now get a substantial profit on the London market, will they give us a bonus on mealies we buy in this country?”⁴³⁶ The government’s move to support agriculture, both maize and tobacco, sparked sectorial squabbles as the taxpayers from other sectors were discontented and challenged government’s position in this regard. Edwards summed up the scenario by stating that “Urban voices claimed that townsmen and taxpayers were subsidising rural laziness and that the new policy raised the consumer’s cost of living.”⁴³⁷ Commercial people also detested the maize Control Act “because it controlled a commodity that at different times they had been in the habit of getting for as little as 4s bag.”⁴³⁸

Consequently, the mining industry continued to fight against the concept of subsidies on all agricultural products in general and maize in particular. This was intensified when calls were made for an extension of the time frame for the operation of the Maize Control Act. The Chamber of Mines and the Rhodesian Mining Federation joined forces in denouncing the re-enactment of this Act. In a letter to the Minister of Agriculture, the organisations argued that:

As you will doubtless be aware this chamber in conjunction with other representative bodies of the mining industry has always opposed the fixation by Government of an artificial price for locally consumed maize as a policy which is detrimental in its effects not only to the mining industry and other industries but also the efficiency of maize growers themselves.⁴³⁹

The concept of maize control had initially been agreed to mainly because it had been proposed to be a temporary measure intended to prevent the local maize price from falling below the international parity. The objective was to give maize farmers time to move over to another branch of farming which could be carried on profitably. Neither of the two was happening, maize producers actually increased production so as to continue enjoying the benefits of control. The RAU and other farmers’ associations therefore, continued to make resolutions supporting the continuation of the maize control system. In its place, miners were calling for the adoption of a suggestion made by Forester and Clay in their comments on the Report of the Maize Inquiry Committee calling for the restriction of acreage under maize and withdrawing

⁴³⁵ NAZ S246/121 Notes of conference of mining representatives.

⁴³⁶ NAZ S246/121 Notes of conference of mining representatives.

⁴³⁷ Edwards, ‘Southern Rhodesia, the response to adversity’, 35.

⁴³⁸ NAZ ORAL/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher, Interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

⁴³⁹ ‘Shall Maize Control Continue?’, *The Smallworker*, December 1935, 17.

as far as possible from the unremunerative export trade.⁴⁴⁰ If the Act was to be maintained, then mining companies suggested that they be placed on the same basis by the Maize Control Board as individual farmers who owned mines since the latter were permitted by a special resolution of the Maize Control Board to use for their mine requirements maize they produced.⁴⁴¹

The mining industry was being handicapped by the maize control system. Davies pointed out that the country was exporting maize at a loss while the increase in the internal price added to the cost of production for the gold mines.⁴⁴² The burden exerted on the mining industry by the Maize Control Act was viewed as a form of indirect taxation which was unfair in its nature. The Joint Mining Conference called for uniformity and fairness in the extension of subsidies by noting that “While your committee realises the importance of keeping farmers on the land, we feel that any assistance given to them should come to the people as a whole and not only to one section.”⁴⁴³ It was deemed unfair that the entire burden of assisting the maize farmer should be carried by the mining community.

Farmers engaged in cattle ranching were not spared by the problems bedevilling tobacco and maize growers. Suggestions had been made during the early stages of the depression for maize growers to use their crop as cattle feed so as to realise better returns on their investment after selling the cattle. Such ideas however, remained utopian for the cattle industry was severely affected by the foot and mouth disease around that same time. The Union of South Africa, which was the major cattle market for Southern Rhodesia, imposed trade quotas limiting the number of beasts that Southern Rhodesia could export to that country.⁴⁴⁴ Such marketing constraints combined with low cattle prices on the international market caused by the depression, brought Southern Rhodesia’s cattle trade to its knees. In line with what was happening in other branches of farming, the government intervened to save the country’s stock

⁴⁴⁰ ‘Shall Maize Control Continue?’ 17.

⁴⁴¹ NAZ S482/349/39/1 Joint Conference of Representatives of the Chamber of Mines Salisbury, Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, Bulawayo and the Rhodesia Mining Federation held at Gwelo on the 7th of October 1936.

⁴⁴² ‘Shall Maize Control Continue?’, 18.

⁴⁴³ ‘Shall Maize Control Continue?’.

⁴⁴⁴ For more on the cattle industry and the Great Depression, see N. Samasuwo, ‘There is something about cattle’: Towards an economic history of the beef industry in colonial Zimbabwe with special reference to the role of the state’, PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2000; W. Mwatwara, ‘A history of state veterinary services and African livestock regimes in colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1896-1980’, PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2014 and G. Hove, ‘The State, ‘Farmers and dairy farming in colonial Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), c.1890-1951’, PhD Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2015.

raisers from their impending demise by passing the Cattle Levy and Beef Bounty Act in 1935. This piece of legislation extended the system under which the government, on the advice of the Cattle Advisory Board made a levy on cattle slaughtered within the colony in order to pay a bounty on cattle exported.⁴⁴⁵ Edwards notes that £87 000 was paid in such bounties up to February 1936 making it possible to export 80 000 cattle.⁴⁴⁶ In as much as the cattle levy assisted the cattle ranchers in the country, it was heavily detested by the mining industry, especially the small miners. Mine owners slaughtered cattle on a regular basis mainly to provide rations for their labour and, therefore, they were supposed to pay the required 10s per beast. This came as an unforeseen addition to the miner's operational costs and ate into his profit. With cattle and meat prices rising on the local market, the cattle levy worsened the burden for miners, in July 1937, the Rhodesian Mining Federation had submitted a resolution "that the government is respectfully requested to remove the 10s levy on slaughter cattle as this levy is not serving the purpose anticipated."⁴⁴⁷ The response from the Department of Agriculture emphasised the fact that government was determined to support the cattle ranchers no matter the cost. This position was well articulated in a response by the Minister of Agriculture when he argued that:

I have to advise you that no decision has yet been taken by the government on the subject of the continuance or otherwise, after the 31st March next, of the 10s levy on slaughter cattle. I would point out, however, that there is no direct evidence to support the statement that this levy is not serving the purpose anticipated. Aided by the fund so derived, export of beef and beef products has been proceeding from the colony during the last three years on a very considerable scale and has resulted in removal of a considerable portion of the surplus cattle in excess of local requirements which then existed.⁴⁴⁸

Continuing with this system meant that the small worker out in the bush would continue suffering. It should be highlighted that the miners' representatives in the Chamber or in the Federation sometimes misrepresented the position and opinion of the mining interests. A shining example of such a scenario was at the Mining Conference of 1937 where Burnett and Gardner (form the Smallminers and Tributors Association) attended the conference representing small workers but ended up defending and justifying the continuation of the Cattle Levy arguing that cattle farmers were supposed to be helped until such a time when cattle prices on the international market improve. They were now championing the cause for the Cattle

⁴⁴⁵ Murray, *The governmental system of Southern Rhodesia*, 85.

⁴⁴⁶ Edwards, 'Southern Rhodesia, The response to adversity', 39.

⁴⁴⁷ NAZ S246/93 Proceedings of the Mining Conference held at Gwelo, Tuesday 2 March 1937.

⁴⁴⁸ NAZ S246/93 Proceedings of the Mining Conference held at Gwelo, Tuesday 2 March 1937.

Owners Association of which Burnett was the President and Gardner was a member of the executive. This shows that even the small miners were not a homogeneous entity. Fissures existed between individual miners and between the miners and their representatives; these were fuelled by differences in objectives and interests of the individuals.

The assistance extended to farmers during the economic slump in the agricultural sector formalised a suddenly symbiotic relationship between the settler farmers and the state. The government acted in consultation with farmer representatives thus making the RAU an integral part of agricultural administration in the country. The Dairy Control Board was established in 1933 and eventually state intervention featured in all white agricultural enterprise except poultry and egg production.⁴⁴⁹ A Farmers' Debt Adjustment Board was also created in 1935 to assist farmers who were at the verge of losing land to creditors with debt repayment.⁴⁵⁰ There was close co-operation between the farmers and the government and the latter was always informed on constraints affecting agriculture and helped in crafting solutions. This scenario ensured a wider support base from representatives of farmer interest in the House of Assembly and of farmers as voters. Machingaidze notes that the "Union exercised great political influence in settler politics and the Government was constantly looking over its shoulders lest it alienates itself from the settler farmers."⁴⁵¹ The farmers on the other hand were also keen on maintaining a good relationship with government and they always invited the Prime Minister or Minister of Agriculture to attend all of the RAU's congresses. In 1936 a member of the Bromley Farmers Association proposed that "at future congresses the Minister of Government or official concerned should not have the right of being the final speaker to resolutions."⁴⁵² This proposal was shot down by other farmer representatives attending the meeting arguing that an alteration in this procedure would be considered discourteous and might create a rift between farmers and the government, a development which could have had a boomerang effect and reverse all the farmers' gains to date.

All this could not conceal the heterogeneity characterising the farming community in Southern Rhodesia. Although the RAU succeeded in exhibiting a semblance of unity, differences

⁴⁴⁹ Murray, *The governmental system of Southern Rhodesia*, 61.

⁴⁵⁰ W. Dopcke, 'The survival of capitalist agriculture during the Great Depression: The role of the Farmer's Debt Adjustment Board', *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, 32 (2013), 45-62.

⁴⁵¹ Machingaidze, 'Development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia', 130.

⁴⁵² NAZ S982/20/1939 Rhodesia Agricultural Union. Minutes of a meeting of the Central Executive of the Agricultural Union held on the 21st and 22nd of January 1936.

between farmers were inevitable due to the diversity of the main products grown and the county's geographical variations. Such differences manifested, for instance, as already alluded to, when the Maize Control Act was promulgated. The Central Executive of the RAU admitted this lack of unity in 1935 by stating that "Outside areas consider that their views and requirements are being disregarded, and that only interests of those close to the centre are considered."⁴⁵³ The Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture echoed similar sentiments when he noted the lack of cohesion and co-operation between the Central Executive and various farmer representative organisations. Instead of the Central Executive voicing concerns of the farming community as a whole, it was being by-passed by Farmers Associations and they sought audience with government straight away, he wrote:

An example of the situation is the recent receipt in this office of some eight resolutions adopted at the Annual Congress of the Matebeleland Agricultural Union held in Bulawayo on the 17th of October, which congress both the Hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Lands were asked officially to attend. In submitting these resolutions, the Matebeleland Agriculture Union gives no indication that they are tentative and subject to confirmation by the Central Executive, or that the Central Executive has been previously consulted in any way on these questions. Similar positions arisen also with the Victoria District Farmers' Association and the Macheke Farmers Association.⁴⁵⁴

The government was more comfortable dealing with a sufficiently representative Central Executive which expressed the concerted opinion of the entire farming community. The Ministry even offered more funding for the RAU as an incentive for unity. This kind of farmer organisation was finally achieved in 1942 with the creation of the Rhodesia National Farmers Union (RNFU). This was in addition to the cultural cleavages which continued to characterise the sector. This was fuelled by the immigration of settlers who were not of British origin (Germans, Italians, Afrikaners). The settler government was mainly against the settlement of Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia as already discussed. Afrikaner language, religion and civic culture was different to that already established in Southern Rhodesia and thus, Afrikaners were not deemed the 'right type' of settlers by colonial officials. Afrikaner immigrants therefore tended to settle in tight, self-contained communities such as Enkeldoorn (becoming an Afrikaner stronghold in a predominantly English speaking country).⁴⁵⁵ Between 1936 and 1941,

⁴⁵³ NAZ S982/20/1939 Rhodesia Agricultural Union. Letter from Central Executive of Farmers to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands Unions, 2 November 1935.

⁴⁵⁴ NAZ S982/20/1939 Rhodesia Agricultural Union. Letter from H.C. Mundy, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to the Secretary for the Central Executive of Farmers Unions, 18 November 1935.

⁴⁵⁵ K. Larsen, "'You Rhodesians are more British than the British': The development of a white national identity and immigration policies and restrictions in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1965", PhD Thesis, University of Western Australia, 2013, 12.

B. S. Schutz notes that the Afrikaner population was effectively reduced from 17.8 per cent of the European population to 14.8 per cent.⁴⁵⁶ The exclusionist settlement policy was paying dividend in this regard, overall, it militated against the dream of a white man's country since it stopped other potential settlers (non-British) from immigrating into Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁵⁷

Mining taxation in the Depression era

Mining in general and gold mining in particular sustained the economy during a time when performance in the agricultural sector was at its lowest ebb. Edwards describes the period from 1931 as an era of mining boom, characterised by an upsurge in gold prices on the London market as well as a rejuvenation of demand for base minerals instanced by the rearmament exercise.⁴⁵⁸ In the early stages of the depression the British government depreciated its currency to boost export trade and abandoned the gold standard.⁴⁵⁹ On 12 October 1931 Southern Rhodesia followed suit making her goods cheaper. This placed her in a better position than the Union of South Africa which maintained the gold standard for some time. This propped up the gold mining industry and spared it from the ruin inflicted on other economic sectors by the great depression. Gold prices rose and there was increased activity as many whose fortunes in agriculture had been eroded sought to make it in gold prospecting.⁴⁶⁰ The graph below shows the average price of gold in the period 1920 to 1940.

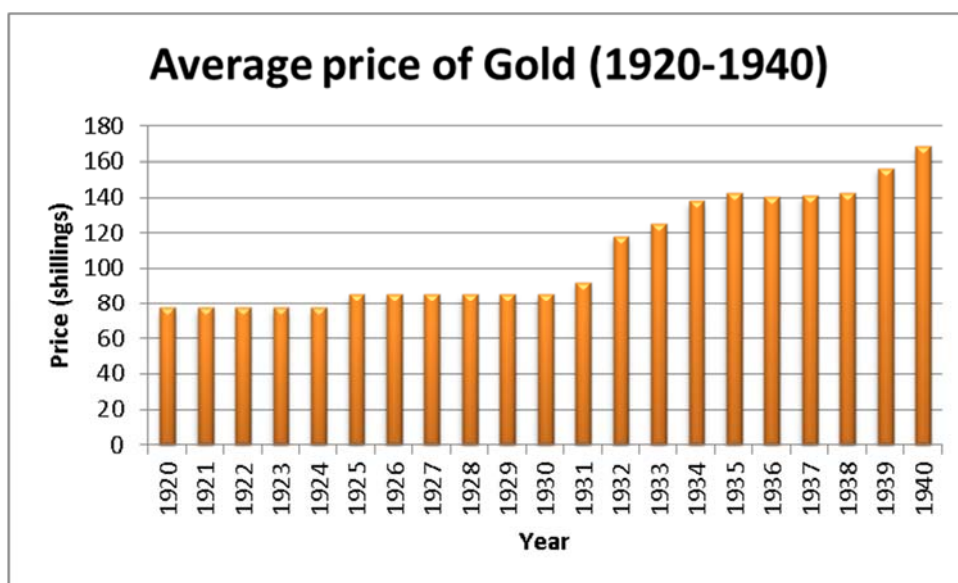
⁴⁵⁶ B. S. Schutz, 'European population patterns, cultural persistence and political change in Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, 1 (1973), 8.

⁴⁵⁷ See A. S. Mlambo, 'Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II', *Zambezia*, 15, 2 (1998), 123-146.

⁴⁵⁸ Edwards, 'Southern Rhodesia, the response to adversity', 82.

⁴⁵⁹ L. H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early days to 1934*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 286.

⁴⁶⁰ Statistics on gold mining and the gold standard, in NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister titled, Effects of gold price on grade of ore treated by the large mines, 4 November 1939.

Graph 3: Average Gold prices for the period 1920 to 1940⁴⁶¹

Big mining companies sought to increase their production by working on low grade ore that had hitherto been unprofitable. The collapse of the agricultural sector also resulted in labour flocking to seek employment in the gold mines, enabling mine owners to enjoy the benefits of cheap labour thereby minimising their operational costs.⁴⁶² Rising gold prices contributed to the remarkable recovery of the colonial economy during the decade before the Second World War.⁴⁶³ Under these circumstances the colonial government was keen on increasing the revenue flow and the highly paying gold mines were the only source from which treasury could tap since agriculture was under strain from the depression.

Gold mining was doing very well and the colonial government gave full consideration at that particular time to meet the financial difficulties confronting the colony by widening its tax bracket mainly on this sector. The first major hurdle towards this desire was that some of these big mining companies were registered in the United Kingdom and therefore, whatever income tax collected was supposed to be shared with that country. This difficult scenario was brought about by a clause in the country's Tax Act which stipulated that:

Income tax paid in the territory upon the same part of a tax payer's income as charged with income tax in the United Kingdom is refunded to the tax payer there, under section 43 of the Imperial Finance Act, 1916, upon production of proof of payment here.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ NAZ S3292/34/5 Production and sales: Average price of gold 1920 to 1940.

⁴⁶² Phimister, 'Economic history of mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953', 152.

⁴⁶³ *The Mining Journal*, 11 November 1939.

⁴⁶⁴ Report of the Commissioner of Taxes for the year ended 31 March 1920.

This issue of reciprocal tax relief was crucial and provided the basis of engagement between the colonial government and international mining capital. As demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, the settler government had been conciliatory in dealing with international capital but, 1930 brought a significant change in government's attitude towards mining. A good example of this tussle that can be cited was the government's refusal to invoke the clause on reciprocal tax relief for Turner and Newall's subsidiary company, African Asbestos Mining Company Limited (AAMCo.). The Chairman of Turner and Newall launched a complaint to the High Commissioner in 1932 that:

We are put in the unfortunate position of being refused reciprocal relief in the case of the African Asbestos Mining Company Limited on the technical ground that the African Asbestos Mining Company Limited is assessed to income tax in Southern Rhodesia, but the shareholders, namely Turner and Newall Limited, who own the whole of the ordinary share capital are assessed to income tax in England.⁴⁶⁵

In his letter to Southern Rhodesia's Treasury, Downie noted that none of the Dominions was reciprocating except for India and that had the AAMCo. been established in India instead of Rhodesia, it could have been awarded with the relief that it sought.⁴⁶⁶

This engagement between the government and Turner and Newall shows how big mining capital attempted to use the colonial office in the United Kingdom to assist them influence colonial governments in Africa to implement policy changes in the mining sector. Such changes were intended to directly benefit international mining capital. The Secretary for Treasury for Southern Rhodesia outlined the differences in the territorial tax laws for the United Kingdom and Southern Rhodesia by stating that:

You will see that there are certain important differences of principle between our law and that of the United Kingdom, e.g we do not tax dividends in the hands of shareholders, we tax the company before the declaration of dividends and although shareholders may claim relief from the United Kingdom in terms of the Finance Act of 1920, they have no such claim on us. We tax only income derived from sources within the colony whereas the net of the United Kingdom is much wider.⁴⁶⁷

Granting the relief was not an option, it would have entailed upsetting the country's tax laws in an attempt to accommodate the wishes of mining capital. It also had the undesired

⁴⁶⁵ NAZ S881/623/4528 Turner and Newall. Letter from the Chairman, Turner and Newall to H.W. Downie, High Commissioner for Southern Rhodesia, 14 September 1932.

⁴⁶⁶ NAZ S881/623/4528 Turner and Newall. Letter from Mr Downie to Mr Fynn (Treasury, Southern Rhodesia), 12 October 1932.

⁴⁶⁷ NAZ S881/623/4528 Turner and Newall. Letter from the Secretary for Treasury to Mr Downie, 28 February 1933.

consequence of significantly cutting a considerable amount of revenue which the country desperately needed.

In an endeavour to improve its revenue prospects the government made an instantaneous reaction to the rise in the gold price on the London market through the promulgation of the Gold Premium Taxation Act in 1932 which enabled it to levy a Gold Premium Tax (GPT) on all gold produced in the country. The GPT, defined as a tax on turnover (output), there were also instances where it constituted a tax on loss,⁴⁶⁸ aimed to appropriate the excess profits accruing to the gold miners and deemed by the government to be fortuitous. This introduced a levy of 15 per cent on monthly outputs exceeding 300 ounces from mines realising more than 2.5 dwts. per ton.⁴⁶⁹ Levying this tax on gold miners to prop up the colonial economy ignited a lot of resentment from the gold producers who were against, first and foremost, the principle of sectorial taxation targeting a single sector while the agricultural sector was being spared. The amount of tax paid was determined by the price of gold on the last day of each month and this made it difficult for gold producers to determine liabilities in advance. A Joint Mining Conference of 1936 included on its list of resolutions the point that “In the first place the conference respectfully wish to point out that they wish to disagree with the policy of singling out the gold mining industry as against other industries for differential taxation, on a higher basis.”⁴⁷⁰ Apart from the GPT, the mining sector was also subjected to the payment of income tax and royalty. Miners had anticipated a repeal of the latter once ownership of the mineral rights had been transferred from the BSAC to the government. Royalty payment, however continued to weigh down on the mining sector and coupled with the GPT, became a major bone of contention between government and the mining industry and went a long way in determining their relations.

Mining representatives held periodic meetings and conferences plotting the way forward and drafting ways of dismantling the government’s vicious taxation grip. Resolutions adopted at such meetings were deemed to be the official position of the entire industry, although it should be noted that there were other discerning voices of individual miners who had diverging opinions or whose views were sacrificed on the altar of uniformity of the industry as shall be

⁴⁶⁸ S916 Taxation, 1944 to 1945. Letter from L. D. Fereday (Minister of Mines) to the Prime Minister, 4 March 1944. Gold Premium Tax.

⁴⁶⁹ Phimister, ‘History of mining in Rhodesia’, 158.

⁴⁷⁰ NAZ S482/349/39/1, Joint Conference of representatives of the Chamber of Mines Salisbury, Chamber of Mines Bulawayo and the Rhodesian Mining Federation held at Gwelo, 7 October 1936.

highlighted. The operation of the GPT and royalty ate into the mining companies' profits, especially the low grade mines and the result was so bad that the government tasked the Low Grade Committee to ascertain the genuineness of the miners' plight in this regard. Although the government appeared to be paying a deaf ear to the industry's tax concerns, the 1937 Mining Conference resolved to continue knocking and keep the matter before the government.⁴⁷¹ This was after a vehement resolution adopted at the second conference held in 1936 calling for a complete abolition of the GPT at the earliest possible date.⁴⁷² At this conference Burnet of the Salisbury Chamber highlighted how bad the situation had become by giving figures of tax paid by the bigger mining companies as documented in Table 1.

Table 4: Tax paid by five big companies in the first six months after the introduction of the Gold Premium Tax⁴⁷³

Mine	Tax paid in six months (includes premium tax and royalty)
Cam and Motor	33%
Sherwood Star	44, 98%
Bushtic	27, 12%
Lonely	37, 3%
Wanderer	36, 65%

The government was now taking a significant portion from profits made by mining companies, a position that was to be continuously challenged by the mining industry.

The government attempted to deal with this problem of mining taxation and thus tasked the 1937 Commission into the Taxation of Low Grade Mines, to look into the issue and make recommendations on the way forward. The Commission's main proposition was the scrapping

⁴⁷¹ NAZ S246/93, Proceedings of the Mining Conference held at Gwelo, 2 March 1937.

⁴⁷² NAZ S482/349/39/1, Joint Conference of representatives of the Chamber of Mines Salisbury, Chamber of Mines Bulawayo and the Rhodesian Mining Federation held at Gwelo, 7 October 1936.

⁴⁷³ NAZ S246/93 Proceedings of the Mining Conference held at Gwelo, 2 March 1937.

of premium tax and a reversion to use of an income tax system based on the actual profits made. Repeated protests from the mining industry however, resulted in the government succumbing and it repealed the hated tax in 1937. The Committee's report noted the overall opinion of witnesses pointing to the fact that "The system of taxation as a whole is inequitable in incidence and that the cumulative effect of the different taxes is to retard the development and expansion of the mining industry."⁴⁷⁴ The mining industry hated and wanted government to do away with the GPT, royalty and claim licences. The report noted that the general opinion of the industry was that the GPT was wrong in principle and objections were raised on the following points:

Owing to the high exemption limit of 300 ounces, the burden of the tax is concentrated upon a comparatively small number of producers. In arriving at the monthly profit on which the tax is based, no allowance is made for depreciation or capital redemption. The tax is based on a formula which discriminates against low grade mines. The tax being levied on a monthly basis causes expense and inconvenience in the preparation of returns to those who are liable to it. Losses made in any one month are not permitted to be set off against the profits of subsequent months.⁴⁷⁵

The committee's report also highlighted the implications on the mining concerns of Royalty payment. The report defined royalty not as a tax but "compensation paid to the owner of mineral deposits for the right of exploiting them."⁴⁷⁶ This payment weighed heavily on low grade mines than it did on higher grade mines, the following figures were cited as an example:

Total value of monthly output.....	£10 000
Profit derived therefrom before payment of Royalty.....	£1 000
Royalty at 2,5% of value of gross output.....	£250

The royalty in this case represented 25 per cent of gross profit and 33.5 per cent of the net profit. This scenario was compared with another example intended to represent the case of a mine producing an output of the same value from rich ore and paying royalty at a higher rate:

Total value of monthly.....	£10 000
Profits derived therefrom before payment of Royalty.....	£5000
Royalty at 5% of value of gross output.....	£500. ⁴⁷⁷

Royalty in the second case represented 10 per cent of the gross profit. These two cases clearly revealed how royalty payment was undercutting profit margins for low grade mines. Combined with the GPT, the two led to the closure of many gold mines. The GPT was subsequently

⁴⁷⁴ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the taxation of low grade mines, 24 February 1927.

⁴⁷⁵ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the taxation of low grade mines, 24 February 1927.

⁴⁷⁶ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Taxation of Low Grade Mines, 24 February 1937.

⁴⁷⁷ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Taxation of Low Grade Mines, 24 February 1937.

abandoned in 1937, although the move by the government may not entirely be attributed to the report by the 1937 Commission, it perhaps arguably added weight to the validity of the mining industry's concerns.

The Second World War and the reintroduction of the Gold Premium Tax

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 was followed immediately by an empire-wide call to all countries under the crown for a concerted effort to ensure victory. Southern Rhodesia was supposed to contribute towards the war effort in the same manner as it had done during the First World War. There were major dynamics at play regarding the country's political economy at this particular time. These went a long way in influencing the course of events. Farmers were recovering from the effects of the depression and still struggling to find markets for agricultural products. The war situation however, turned around misfortunes of the industry overnight. The country's agricultural sector was not only expected to meet local food requirements increased by stationing of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) and prisoners of war, but was also supposed to make a contribution to the war effort by exporting maize, tobacco and beef/cattle to areas in need. The war situation instanced an increased demand for strategic minerals and gold resulting in the price of gold leaping from 148s to 160s per fine ounce on 1 September 1939 and reaching a record 168s per fine ounce on 5 September 1939.⁴⁷⁸ Instead of this sudden rise in the gold price contributing to the continued and sustained growth of the sector, it actually spelt doom and caused its decline as shall be demonstrated in this section. Manufacturing industry also got a shot in the arm after the curtailment of import supplies of manufactures when hostilities erupted in 1939. The urban population propelled by the EATS, RAF personnel; internees and refugees (mainly Germans and Italians) expanded the market for manufactured products. South Africa remained the major source of immigrants. There was an increase in the proportion of British immigrants compared to Afrikaners, this was mainly because of the progressive strengthening of Afrikaner nationalism which ultimately resulted in Afrikaner nationalists emerging victorious in 1948. The state moved to support the emerging Import Substitution Industrialisation,⁴⁷⁹ offering various incentives chief amongst which were the tax holidays to manufacturing companies which were later on detested and contested by gold miners.

⁴⁷⁸ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Memorandum titled, Outline of the history of the Gold Premium Tax: Southern Rhodesia, 5 November 1944.

⁴⁷⁹ A. S. Mlambo, E. S. Pangeti and I. R. Phimister, *Zimbabwe: A history of manufacturing 1890 to 1995*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000).

Gold miners quickly made adjustments in response to the new price in an endeavour to return a consistent annual profit. Just like what had happened during the First World War and the depression period, they started working on low grade ores. In an important memorandum to the Prime Minister, the Mines Minister stated that:

This is the normal policy of any such concern and fluctuations in the market price of gold are reflected in the grade of ore sent to the mill, and in the ore taken into or released from ore reserves. This policy has a marked influence on the life of a mine, as any appreciable rise in the price of gold, provided that this is not offset by a corresponding increase in production costs, enables a competent management to take into reserves and to crush a lower grade of ore than was hitherto economically treatable.⁴⁸⁰

Gold miners sought to derive as much benefit as they could from the prevailing high gold price. This goal was not realized due to a government directive which forbade fortuitous profiteering as a result of the war situation. In this regard, government reintroduced the Gold Premium Taxation Act on the 11th of September 1939 empowering it to appropriate the proceeds of gold above the basic price of 150s.⁴⁸¹ The Minister of Mines was granted authority to review the price paid to gold producers over time and in relation to rises in the cost of production. In this guise the GPT represented a war tax with which government intended to finance the war effort. It was this fiscal move by government which the Mining Commission of 1945 apportion blame for the decline of gold production. Miners could not even concentrate on low grade ore because, as stated by the commission:

If however, the tax is not an income tax but a tax on the product – even this policy of working low grade ore may not be practicable, because such a tax by reducing the value of the low grade ore automatically excludes the whole or portion thereof from the range of ore which can be profitably extracted.⁴⁸²

Under these circumstances most gold producers were forced to cease operations since the premium tax was taking away most of the profits made.

The immediate response by small workers to the re-enactment of the GPT was creation of the Freedom Press in December 1939. The Freedom Press was a vocal miners' press which claimed to represent interests of small miners. It aimed to foster unity and spread information to all

⁴⁸⁰ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister, titled: Effects of gold price on grade of ore treated by the large mines, 4 November 1939.

⁴⁸¹ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Notes on gold buying business in Southern Rhodesia.

⁴⁸² Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Mining Industry of Southern Rhodesia 7 November 1945, The Hon. Leslie B. Fereday, Minister of Mines.

members of the Mining Federation who could not attend all meetings because of distance.⁴⁸³ The Freedom Press adopted a more confrontational stance in challenging the principle of the GPT which it referred to as ‘gold theft by the government.’ In their inaugural protest open letter they made the following statement:

The unpatriotic attitude of the non-mining community fills us with disgust. They are prepared to let the young men fight and the gold mines pay. We do not question that the war must be paid for. We will even pay 20/- in the pound and go on paying provided the money is spent efficiently on defeating Hitler, and not squandered. But we demand that the other industries do their share equally, in fact, an equal income tax on profits irrespective of how they are made.⁴⁸⁴

Apart from other industries contributing to the war effort, the Freedom Press voiced a major concern of the entire gold mining industry that other minerals, enjoying more profits as a result of the war situation should also contribute towards financing that war, they stated this in one of their numerous letters in 1940 that:

The price of gold has risen approximately 15% since the war, whereas the price of asbestos has risen over 25%. The interest return of asbestos output is £99 000. 25% of this amount is due to increased price on account of the war. Therefore, the Asbestos Corporation contribution to the war effort should be £24 750 instead of which it is nil.⁴⁸⁵

Many District Small Workers Associations supported the Freedom Press in challenging the mining policy pursued by government. The Kwekwe Miners and Farmers Association even proceeded to attack the Royalty Review Committee (RRC) labelling it a useless body, only created to provide jobs for pals. The state had created the RRC to assess the position of mining companies that qualified to apply for exemption from the harsh tax. This Committee, however, was unpopular and was accused of throwing away genuine cases where exemption was really needed and thus contributing to the decline of gold production. The Association further noted that the government’s policy on gold should move from one based on strangulation and confiscation to encouragement and co-operation.⁴⁸⁶

The role of the gold mining sector as the lynchpin of the colonial economy continued although during the Second World War period, government’s over reliance on proceeds from gold sales ended up choking the industry as it led to curtailment of development work and operations on many mines. A number of factors militated against successful and profitable mining ventures

⁴⁸³ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Letter from The Freedom Press, 30 December 1939.

⁴⁸⁴ Letter from The Freedom Press, 30 December 1939.

⁴⁸⁵ Letter from the Freedom Press, 17 February 1940.

⁴⁸⁶ Letter from the Freedom Press, 17 February 1940.

and the improved gold price could have redeemed the industry had it not been for the effects of the GPT. The war situation triggered increased production costs and labour shortages, all of which were diminishing mining profits. Most development enterprises in the country and all the subsidies that were being extended to agriculture during the depression period had been financed by revenue generated by the mining sector. Government was prepared to go that far in assisting farmers stand on their feet when their fortunes had been eroded by the great depression. The same could however, not be said for the mining sector when it was reeling under the effects of the GPT. Government was fully aware of the significance of continued gold production if the colony was to adequately finance its war effort, yet it was not prepared to assist mines that were facing production constraints. This was highlighted by the Mines Minister while defending government's position during a meeting with representatives of small miners. His argument was "Now you may say that for the prosecution of the war it is necessary to produce gold. The production of gold is of very great importance to the prosecution of the war, but I do not think we have yet got to the stage when the state should subsidise uneconomic production."⁴⁸⁷ Such pronouncements resonated with the Prime Minister's statement in the following year. Responding to calls by mining representatives in the House of Assembly for the government to aid gold miners in 1941, the Prime Minister gave an important hint on government's position regarding this request, he noted thus: "So do not let us get morbid about gold, important though it may be there must be a limit to the extent to which the other taxpayer's money should be used for the benefit of individuals engaged in the gold mining industry."⁴⁸⁸ Such a statement was paradoxical – after all, the gold mines had sustained the country's budget and all sectors had actually benefited more from revenue generated by mining enterprise. Therefore, concluding that gold miners were thriving at the expense of tobacco farmers and merchants was erroneous and can be used to best explain how government's attitude towards mining had radically changed.

It did not take much time for the ruinous effect of the GPT on the mining sector to show. Even principal government officials were raising alarm and informing the Mines Minister on the negative implications the tax had. The Registrar of Claims wrote to the Minister a month after the tax was reintroduced explaining that government was the sole beneficiary of the improved

⁴⁸⁷ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Report of a meeting between the Minister of Mines and a deputation from small workers, 13 March 1940.

⁴⁸⁸ *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 26 May 1941, 764.

gold price and miners themselves were struggling, he gave the following scenario as an example:

If the view is adopted that the price of gold before the 3rd of September was 148/6, around which it has been for the month of August, then the premium becomes the difference between that figure and 168/-, that is 19/6, reduced by charges to 16/6. Of this amount the producer is receiving 1/6 at the basic price of 150/- and the government receives 15/-. This means that the government takes 92% of the excess profit accruing to the producer, on account of the present war conditions.⁴⁸⁹

Such observations and advice on the tax policy pushed government to make some changes in an attempt to improve the condition of gold miners. An amendment to the Act in 1940 allowed for a premium refund to small miners so as to lessen the burden for this class who were already under strain from the high productive costs instanced by their inability to stock provisions before the war. In addition, the basic price paid to producers was raised to 152s in January 1940, to 154s in June 1940, to 156s in March 1941 and to 159/6 in April 1944.⁴⁹⁰ All these changes were necessitated by the ever increasing cost of production caused by war conditions and clamouring by the mining sector for government to do away with the war tax and royalty completely for the two were causing a severe decline on the fortunes of the industry.

Towards the end of the war, even the Mines Minister had accepted that the tax had inflicted harm on the industry and was in the forefront calling for its repeal. Arguing that the tax was justified when it was introduced, it had outlived its usefulness since it was now causing more harm than good. Many Mines had ceased operations and many others had their production levels severely reduced. He opined that other allied leaders were preparing for post-war conditions and it was vital that Southern Rhodesia followed suit and its first port of call was to be a revision of its mining tax laws.⁴⁹¹ He further noted that, "I am convinced that many of the remaining mines which will inevitably close down in the near future, under our existing policy, can and will be saved if we take reasonable steps now."⁴⁹² The Minister made a very important criticism of government policy when he stated that, "Some new manufacturers are being allowed certain relief from taxation. Surely this is not in any sense parallel with our treatment

⁴⁸⁹ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Letter from the Registrar of Claims to the Minister of Mines and Public Works, 4 January 1940.

⁴⁹⁰ NAZ ZBN 2/1/1 Memorandum titled, Outline of the history of the Gold Premium Tax: Southern Rhodesia, 6 November 1944.

⁴⁹¹ S916 Taxation 1944 – 1945. Letter from L. D. Fereday (Minister of Mines) to the Prime Minister, 4 March 1944.

⁴⁹² Letter from L.D. Fereday (Min of Mines) to the Prime Minister, 4 March 1944.

of the mines, and I suggest that our policy for the mining industry need some adjustment.”⁴⁹³ The nascent manufacturing industry was offered incentives to boost production just like what had happened to the agricultural sector during the depression years and in both cases, gold miners did not receive adequate government support. The tax, together with the 1942 Excess Profits Tax significantly contributed to the resignation of J. Smits, the Finance Minister.⁴⁹⁴ He vehemently opposed the two and consequently left office after failing to put up with the ruinous effect of the policies on the country’s economy.

The Mining Federation engaged the Minister of Mines on the subject of mining taxation and attempted to push government to change its policy of using gold revenue to finance the war, but ignoring developmental needs of the sector. Some delegates at the meeting denied being responsible for the mass meeting which denounced government’s policy and called for this meeting with the Minister. Stowe for instance even denied that he had any links with the Freedom Press. This stance revealed that not all miners supported the Freedom Press and the existence of genuine fears of victimisation by the state. The small workers however, maintained that they were lock, stock and barrel against government’s mining policy and called for the removal of the GPT and its replacement with an income tax.⁴⁹⁵ They even pleaded with the Minister to present their case in the House of Assembly since they did not have proper representation. The meeting also laid bare the fact that miners no longer had faith in the country’s legislature. The Minister however tried to reassure them that the House of Assembly did not work on a partisan basis. Similar calls for the removal of the GPT were also being made by the Chamber of Mines, *The Rhodesia Herald* reported in 1944 that “The mining representatives reiterated the urgent necessity for the GPT to be abolished and for the full London market price of gold to be paid to producers, also for the tax on mines to be based on normal income tax rates.”⁴⁹⁶

Evidence submitted to the Mining Commission noted the GPT as the major cause in the decline of gold mining. The number of gold producers had fallen from 1574 in 1939 to only 770 producers in 1943, meaning that 50 per cent of the country’s gold mines had ceased operations during the war. Meanwhile, agricultural production was registering considerable growth as a

⁴⁹³ Letter from L.D. Fereday (Min of Mines) to the Prime Minister, 4 March 1944.

⁴⁹⁴ NAZ ORAL/FE2 L. B. Fereday (1889-1971), Salisbury, May-August 1971.

⁴⁹⁵ NAZ S472 Gold Premium Tax 1939. Report of a meeting between the Minister of Mines and a deputation from small workers, 13 March 1940.

⁴⁹⁶ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 5 March 1944.

result of renewed growth ignited by the war conditions. Revenue generated by agricultural production surpassed mining revenue for the first time in the country's history in 1945. Meanwhile, base minerals mining registered significant expansion during the war period, unlike gold production which was on the decline. Agriculture also registered tremendous growth during the same period and the state did not attempt to assist gold producers using money generated by other sectors.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the protean nature of government policy in its engagement with farmers and miners since the inception of Responsible Government in 1923. The chapter has used state-miner-farmer relations to explore Southern Rhodesia's history in the first two decades of Responsible Government. It has gone beyond earlier works describing miner-farmer contests over natural resources and instead demonstrated how the state that emerged after Company administration interacted with the country's fledging primary industries and how this in turn shaped the country's political economy. The chapter has thus outlined the ever-shifting government policies and responses by farmers and miners. A departure by the new government from policies favouring the mining sector, which had been the norm during the time of Company administration, characterised the country's political economy as the settler government was inclining more towards farming interests in the post-1923 era. Considering the significance of the two sectors to the colonial political economy, the government was caught up in a dilemma between supporting farmers whose political stature had been greatly enhanced after 1923, or favouring miners whose contribution to the national purse provided fiscal stability. Farming and ranching generated losses that were offset by mining and other sectors until about 1940 when new and better paying markets were opened up for Rhodesia's farm produce by the war. Government officials, however, sought political support first as highlighted by their supporting farmers who had been significantly affected by the depression, by redeploying financial resources generated by the mining and other economic sectors. Although the country's mineral resources could neither match the levels anticipated by pioneer settlers, nor be compared to the Rand, this chapter has illustrated that gold still remained central to the growth and development of Southern Rhodesia's colonial economy.

The chapter has also demonstrated how the government's fiscal policies hindered sustained growth and ultimately led to a decline of gold mining by 1945. Through levying a premium tax on gold producers, first between 1932 and 1937 and then during the World War II, government

was able to cushion cattle, maize and tobacco farmers from effects of the great depression and to finance the war effort. This was, however, to the detriment of gold producers, especially those working low grade ores, most of whom thus severely reduced production or were forced to curtail operations altogether. These policies pursued by the settler government almost “killed the goose” which had long laid golden eggs. By its own admission, government had succeeded in running down gold mining, whose revenue generation capacity was for the first time overtaken by agriculture in 1945.

CHAPTER FIVE

“It is nobody’s baby so why should I worry?” – Farmers and miners in the era of formal conservation, 1939 to 1961.

The year 1939 was a watershed in Southern Rhodesia’s history. Not only did it witness a fillip to the country’s economy through war-inspired growth, but it also saw novel attempts by the state to institute an official conservation policy.⁴⁹⁷ Development and growth of the agriculture and mining sectors, the country’s twin drivers of economic activities since the pioneer days, had been the main vectors of environmental degradation. By examining miner-farmer relations in the post-1939 period, this chapter will demonstrate how this move by the government of Godfrey Huggins to adopt a formal conservation policy through the enactment of a Natural Resources Act of 1941, reshaped the miner-farmer controversy that had raged since the 1890s. It focuses on how state initiatives to conserve the country’s natural resources, and how the changes in the country’s mining sector, impacted on the state-farmer-miner relations up to 1961.

Previous chapters have highlighted how the government’s desire to develop the colonial economy resulted in the promotion of legislation that encouraged rapacious cutting of timber by the mining sector. Settler farmers, especially those on the Gold Belt, although guilty of similar crimes, protested against this privilege enjoyed by miners with very limited success. The only useful concession that the farmers secured was a 50 percent timber reservation for agricultural use by a 1935 amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act. This amendment on the mining law, together with better financial concessions extended to settler farmers by the settler government to cushion them from the effects of the great depression, indicated a shifting policy by the new government, as discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter will examine the factors leading to the passage of the Forest Act in 1949, which aimed at controlling timber cutting by miners. Subsequent miner-farmer interaction and the state’s response shall be examined in the light of changes that had occurred within the country’s economy, with particular reference to

⁴⁹⁷ The evolution of a formal conservation policy in the country has been discussed by a number of scholars. See, for instance, S. Maravanyika, ‘Soil conservation and the white agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1908-1980,’ PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2013. See also I.R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, (London: Longman, 1988).

contestations over the mineral as well as agricultural significance of land in areas were the two overlapped.

Apart from an examination of the impact of formal conservation in Southern Rhodesia on Africans, there is limited scholarly work directly related to the new policy framework and its implications on white settler farmers and miners. Available literature has examined the implementation of conservation initiatives either on settler farms or African reserves. Literature dealing with the Forest Act focuses mainly on how it affected Africans. S. Maravanyika deals with the eviction of the Shangwe people from the Mafungautsi State Forest. He examines their response which involved squatting in demarcated areas, poaching and illegal harvesting of forest production.⁴⁹⁸ Again using the case of Mafungautsi Forest Reserve, E. Mapedza traces Southern Rhodesia's forest policy focusing on its 'oppressive nature.'⁴⁹⁹ J. McGregor's study on woodland resources in Shurugwi documents the impact of deforestation "on strategies of woodland use and management in Zimbabwe's communal areas."⁵⁰⁰ Her study is indispensable for anyone studying the subject of forestry and provides a useful background on the development of Southern Rhodesia's forest policy. It however, does not say much on how the Forest Act impacted on miner-farmer contests over access to timber. She argues that during this period there was improved availability of coal, timber and electricity which reduced the need for timber.⁵⁰¹ Although this was true for some miners, timber remained a critical resource for undercapitalised miners who could not afford the new energy sources as shall be illustrated by this chapter.

There are also scholars who have looked at the history of natural resources management in the country.⁵⁰² W. Beinart (1984) argued that "the set of ideas and prescriptions associated with conservationist thinking, although partly generated outside the region, were invoked, elaborated and applied in specific contexts, first in relation to settler, then also peasant

⁴⁹⁸ S. Maravanyika, 'Local responses to colonial evictions, conservation and commodity policies among Shangwe communities in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe 1963 to 1980', *African Nebula*, 5 (2012), 1-20.

⁴⁹⁹ E. Mapedza, 'Forest policy in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe: Continuity and change', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 33 (2007), 833-851.

⁵⁰⁰ J. McGregor, 'Woodland resources: ecology, policy and ideology; an historical case study of woodland use in Shurugwi communal area, Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, 1991, 1.

⁵⁰¹ McGregor, 'Woodland resources', 50.

⁵⁰² A. Chingwenya and D. Manatsa, 'The history of natural resources management in Zimbabwe: A chronicle of how sustainable resource management has remained an elusive concept', *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 9, 2 (2007), 102-115; J. C. Murombedzi, 'Precolonial and colonial conservation in Africa and their legacy', IUCN, Harare, 2003.

agriculture.”⁵⁰³ This argument has over the years been subjected to rigorous scrutiny by scholars who argue that the reverse is actually true.⁵⁰⁴ S. Maravanyika⁵⁰⁵ (2013) and M. Musemwa⁵⁰⁶ (2015) trace the development of environmentalism with particular reference to the white settler community. Musemwa’s article is the only study to date which provides more detail on the impact of the Natural Resources Act (1941) on settler farmers and miners. However, his study focuses more on miners’ access to timber after the Forest Act was promulgated in 1949. This chapter goes beyond Musemwa study by tracing the impact of formal conservation policy on miner-farmer interaction. It will also demonstrate how changes in the mining sector in the 1950s extended the farmer-miner tussle to include contests over land. The chapter will thus elaborate on the state’s role as a referee in terms of property rights. It argues that the enactment of the conservation and forest legislation represented attempts by the colonial state to pose as a “neutral and disinterested arbiter”⁵⁰⁷ regulating sectorial interests to ensure uninterrupted growth of the colonial economy.

The 1939 Natural Resources Commission

It is imperative to give a brief background to the passing of the 1941 Natural Resources Act. From the days of Company administration, no policy existed to promote conservation on settler farms.⁵⁰⁸ The same applied regarding the mining sector. The state placed emphasis on making the colonial project profitable in line with the desires of pioneer settlers who had anticipated finding a second Rand in the country. The slow build-up of awareness to the environmental degradation caused by settler agriculture and mining, as well as overstocking and soil erosion in African reserves culminated in the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the Preservation of the Natural Resources of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia by the Huggins government in 1938. Meanwhile, Southern Rhodesia’s economy had not been spared from the

⁵⁰³ W. Beinart, ‘Soil conservation, conservationism and ideas about development: A southern African exploration, 1900-1960’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11, 1 (1984), 82.

⁵⁰⁴ I. R. Phimister, ‘Discourse and discipline of historical context: Conservationism and ideas about development in Southern Rhodesia, 1930-1950’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12, 2 (1986), 263-275; J. McGregor, ‘Conservation, control and ecological change: The politics and ecology of colonial conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe’, *Environment and History*, 1, 3 (1995), 257-279; E. Kramer, ‘A clash of economies: Early centralisation efforts in colonial Zimbabwe, 1929-1935’, *Zambezia*, 15, 1 (1998), 83-98; Mwatwara, ‘A history of state veterinary services.’

⁵⁰⁵ S. Maravanyika, ‘Local responses to colonial evictions, conservation and commodity policies among Shangwe communities in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe 1963 to 1980’, *African Nebula*, 5 (2012), 1-20.

⁵⁰⁶ M. Musemwa, ‘*Sic utere tuo ut alienam non laedas*: From wanton destruction of timber forests to environmentalism: The rise of colonial environmental and ‘sustainability practices in colonial Zimbabwe, 1938 to 1961’, *Environment and History*, 22, 4 (2016), 521-559.

⁵⁰⁷ B. Berman, *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya: The dialectic of domination*, (London: James Currey, 1990), 28.

⁵⁰⁸ Maravanyika, ‘Soil conservation and the white agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe’, 173.

impact of the great depression. Agriculture was the worst affected and for the decade spanning from 1929 to 1939, the sector reeled under effects of the economic recession.⁵⁰⁹ Mining on the other hand benefited from favourable conditions brought about by the depression, especially high international gold prices which prevailed when Britain went off the gold standard in 1931. The state relied on revenue generated by the sector to restore fiscal stability. Maize and tobacco production as well as other branches of agriculture were sustained by heavy state subsidies through facilities like the Land Bank and the Farmers' Debt Adjustment Scheme, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Legislation such as the Maize Control Act (1931) was even passed to assist farmers through the depression years. Despite all these efforts to restore profitability of the agricultural sector, very little was being done by the government of the day to contain the increasingly evident problem of soil degradation which was also suspected to be contributing to the problem of low agricultural productivity. This section shall provide the contextual basis for the chapter by highlighting evidence collected by the Natural Resources Commission, leading to the Natural Resources Act of 1941.

There were few government officials from the Agriculture Department and conservationists who had raised alarm and warned successive governments on the dangers of soil erosion and the excessive cutting of trees caused mainly by agricultural and mining activities. L. Cripps, leader of the Rhodesia Agricultural Union, had noted the problem of soil erosion as early as 1909 and the *Rhodesian Agricultural Journal* issued its first bulletin on soil erosion by M. Watt in 1913.⁵¹⁰ Tobacco farmers, driven by a 'get rich quick' mentality, did not realise the importance of production per unit area and kept increasing acreage.⁵¹¹ This process involved clearing vast tracts of land to create the required farming land and destroying woodlands in the process. This was in addition to the timber cut for curing flue cured tobacco, usually without replacement. Miners enjoyed a legal right to timber for use as fuel and mining timber, enshrined in the Mine and Minerals Act (1904) and its subsequent amendments. This right was, all along detested and contested by farmers as a major handicap to *bona fide* farming activities. As highlighted in Chapter Two, this conflict over timber and farmers' disgruntlement over agricultural land spoiled by mining activities constituted the heart of the miner-farmer controversy.

⁵⁰⁹ For a detailed discussion of the impact of the economic depression see, V.E.M. Machingaidze, 'The development of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the state, 1908-1939', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1980).

⁵¹⁰ Natural Resources Board, 25 Years of Conservation in Rhodesia

⁵¹¹ Maravanyika, 'Soil conservation and the white agrarian environment in colonial Zimbabwe', 174.

Meanwhile, environmental degradation was not only limited to white settler farms. Although colonial officials blamed African methods of farming for the ecological disaster in the reserves, the root cause lay in colonial policy itself. The Native Affairs Department which was responsible for development in the African areas embarked on a policy shift after 1923, deviating from its earlier view that “reserves were temporary enclaves which would vanish as the peasantry was drawn into the exchange economy.”⁵¹² This changed after 1923 when the new government sought to pursue a new policy based on separate development, this policy shift entailed pushing more natives into the reserves. According to McGregor, this policy shift was necessitated by successful evasion of tax payment by the Africans in the reserves.⁵¹³ This change in policy resulted in an influx of Africans into the reserves and resulted in overcrowding which triggered land degradation and reduced yields for the Africans. The colonial government, instead blamed African methods of production for this state of affairs and launched the extension and the centralisation programmes in 1927 and 1929 respectively in an attempt to increase the reserves’ carrying capacity through improved agricultural output.⁵¹⁴ The new policy was further entrenched by a more oppressive and segregationist land policy, the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, which:

divided the country’s 96 million acres into 49 million acres for settlers (who were a tiny minority) 29 million acres for Africans (who formed the vast majority) and the remainder was either unassigned to any racial group or was designated game reserve or state forest.⁵¹⁵

This land law increased the number of Africans in the reserves causing further environmental deterioration. The colonial policies of extension and centralisation, spearheaded by E. D. Alvord, failed to yield desired results and environmental degradation and overstocking worsened. There was therefore a perceived need to solve this – to find a solution to this problem in the African reserves.

⁵¹² E. Punt, ‘The Development of African agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the inter-war years’, Masters Dissertation, University of Natal, 1979, 43.

⁵¹³ McGregor, ‘Woodland resources’, 83.

⁵¹⁴ For more on extension and centralisation see, E. Kramer ‘The early years: Extension services in peasant agriculture in colonial Zimbabwe, 1925-1929’, *Zambezia*, 14, 2 (1997), 159-179; McGregor, ‘Woodland resources’; Mwatwara, ‘A history of state veterinary services.’

⁵¹⁵ V. E. M. Machingaidze, ‘Agrarian change from above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African response’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24, 1 (1991), 588.

Unlike the Company administration, the post-1923 government attempted to reconcile the two sectors but failed. The two successive governments were driven as much by the profit motif and paid no regard to the environmental degradation caused by agriculture and mining. The government had not passed any restrictive legislation to combat the degradation. It was only in 1939 that the Huggins government paid heed to calls being made by officials in the Department of Agriculture concerning the looming disaster if the farmers' and miners' abuses, as well as environmental deterioration in the reserves were not halted. Native Department officials also raised alarm and noted the deteriorating environmental conditions in the African reserves. A. C. Jennings, Assistant Director of Native Lands, registered his concern by stating that:

For some years past I, also, have been greatly concerned about the deterioration which I have seen going on from one end of the country to the other, consisting of the destruction of timber, the mis-use of natural vleis or sponges, overstocking and general destruction of pasturage.⁵¹⁶

In this case Jennings was blaming Africans for the land degradation as well as overstocking in the reserves, ignoring the fact that the overcrowding in these areas was a result of the land policy pursued by the colonial government.⁵¹⁷ Jennings went on to criticise the right to timber enjoyed by mining companies by noting that “the rights of an individual will have to be curtailed in the interest of the national well-being.”⁵¹⁸ Miners had a prior right to cut timber for their operations and Jennings' was blaming this miners' privileged and uncontrolled access to wood as one of the major cause of excessive deforestation. Such sentiments resonated with what R. McIlwain, a Water Court Judge, had also written in 1937:

I have lived in this colony for nearly forty years and the most painful experience has been to witness the wicked waste of the natural resources of the country. This wealth must, in my view, be regarded as a trust belonging to the country as a whole and should not be destroyed or impaired by those into whose temporary charge it comes.⁵¹⁹

His sentiments pointed to the need for a monitoring and regulatory mechanism to oversee natural resource utilisation by the settler farmers, miners and the Africans. White farmers enjoyed guaranteed individual tenure, and miners, a constitutional right to access timber on Gold Belt farms and in the reserves. There was a growing need for the government to play the role of arbiter on property rights and ensure sustainable use of resources for the benefit of the

⁵¹⁶ NAZ ZAZ 1/1/1 Letter from the Native Land Office to R. McIlwain and Water Court Judges, 23 August 1937.

⁵¹⁷ M. Rukuni et al (eds), *Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution revisited*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2006); R. Palmer, *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977).

⁵¹⁸ NAZ ZAZ 1/1/1 Letter from the Native Land Office to R. McIlwain and Water Court Judges, 23 August 1937.

⁵¹⁹ NAZ ZAZ 1/2/1 Natural Resources Commission, General Correspondence, Letter from R. McIlwain to the minister of Justice titled 'Conservation of the country's natural wealth, 24 August 1937.

colonial economy. The government therefore adopted a policy shift by appointing the Commission to Enquire into the Deterioration and Preservation of the Natural Resources of Southern Rhodesia in 1938. Chaired by R. McIlwaine, the Commission's mandate was to investigate:

How the resources of the colony were being wasted through soil erosion, destruction of trees, grasses and other vegetation, whether taking place in the course of farming and mining operations or otherwise, overstocking and improper or undesirable methods of farming or treatment of the land.⁵²⁰

The Commission was supposed to make recommendations on how best to handle the situation and avert an ecological disaster in the country. It carried out interviews across the country and collected information on the problem confronting the country.

Evidence presented to the McIlwaine Commission expanded on the problem of environmental degradation facing the country and the need for immediate remedial action before more damage was done. R. H. B. Dickson, former Member of Parliament in Southern Rhodesia, blamed the recklessness that characterised use of timber by both farmers and miners. Explaining the prevailing scenario concerning access to timber by both farmers and miners, Dickson observed that:

It means there is very little incentive for the landowner to preserve the timber because he never knows when that timber is going to be taken. In opposition to that the miner gets the timber free. So a state of mind is set up, vulgarly speaking, the landowner thinks "it is nobody's baby so why should I worry" It is a state of mind. A psychological effect.⁵²¹

As noted, miners were given a prior right to cut timber lying on farms located in Gold Belt areas. Since the trees were on land belonging to farmers, they could have even embarked on preservation of the trees. Both farmers and miners wasted the country's natural assets in a quest to derive more profits from their enterprises, a situation that was compounded by the absence of any restrictive legislation. K. Edwards, Forest Officer in the Forestry Department under the Agriculture Ministry, blamed white commercial farmers and labelled them as chief culprits in destroying timber resources. According to Edwards the farmer "is mining the soil and increasing the destruction of forests in order to get more agricultural land for his crop."⁵²² Both

⁵²⁰ Natural Resources Act, 1941, 2.

⁵²¹ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. R. H. B. Dickson, Former Member of Parliament for Southern Rhodesia.

⁵²² NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr E.J. Kelly Edwards, Forest Officer.

settler farmers and miners were indeed cutting more timber in the pursuit of their different commercial enterprises. It was difficult at this particular stage to determine who was causing more damage because of the non-existence of statistical data regarding actual amounts of wood cut. Transportation of mining timber from the woodlands also contributed immensely to soil erosion. This was exacerbated by the fact that most miners moved their timber during the rainy season and therefore, created numerous tracks in the process as the original ones were easily rendered impassable by the rains. These old roads used to move timber away usually developed into huge dongas due to erosion.⁵²³

This excessive deforestation and soil erosion was said, by a number of informants to be affecting the rainfall pattern since it resulted in siltation of the major rivers. The argument behind this reasoning was that forest areas facilitated infiltration and therefore, their presence promoted the development of a permanent water table accessible even during the dry season. McGregor however questioned the correctness of such theories that tried to explain the relationship between deforestation, hydrology and the climate, arguing however, that their alarm strengthened the basis for intervention.⁵²⁴ The most likely solution that was forwarded for this problem was afforestation. Since indigenous timber was proving to be insufficient for curing Virginia tobacco, Edwards suggested that it was high time tobacco farmers considered “the production of fuel as a necessary part of ordinary tobacco operations.”⁵²⁵ Eucalyptus was considered to be the best form of substitute for indigenous timber, although burning more readily than indigenous timber, it had the advantage of growing faster and yields per acre were much higher than it was for indigenous timber. The few tobacco farmers who planted timber tended to relegate the practice to be an off season activity, not central to the entire farming operation.

Witnesses who gave evidence before the Commission were drawn from agriculture as well as the mining fraternity as well as government officials. The Commission wanted to get a balanced opinion from the two sides. Witnesses from the mining industry, defended miners’ timber rights as laid down in the original Gold Belt Title (GBT) (1904), arguing that – since mining

⁵²³ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr W. E. Thurlow, Bindura. Engaged in both mining and farming.

⁵²⁴ J. McGregor, ‘Conservation, control and ecological change: The politics and ecology of colonial conservation in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe,’ *Environment and History*, 1, 3 (1995), 257-279.

⁵²⁵ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr E. J. Kelly Edwards, Conservator of forests.

was the country's prime economic activity – it ought to be supported through unlimited access to timber. A. Harworth, Manager of the Phoenix Prince Mine in Bindura, opined that “As a mine becomes established and a reasonably long future is assured then power supply by the Electricity Supply Commission (ESC), or power from coal, can replace the earlier stage of power from wood.”⁵²⁶ His major argument was that small mines were supposed to be allowed access to timber until such a time when they were fully developed because they lacked the requisite capital with which to switch to other sources of fuel like electricity and coal. This was contrary to views shared by the Commission's chairman who registered displeasure at the fact that most mines that were being opened up proved to be failures yet they continued to use timber.⁵²⁷ Such mines inflicted harm on the country's resources yet they had shorter lives and therefore, could not benefit the country more. D. Abrahamson, a small miner, argued against this notion completely. He believed small miners were supposed to be given unlimited access to timber, mainly because they had limited capital resources and also because they were not a loss to the country. He said “There are seven hundreds of these small workers and that is what the country is living on today.”⁵²⁸ Although individual small miners were not making much profit, the country benefited more from their production. Abrahamson equated their position to that of the maize grower who, during the depression years, grew maize at a loss but was saved by the state's imposition of a forced price. The country benefited more from fresh money generated through exporting mineral and this is what was considered important. Even if an individual small miner incurred losses, he was sacrificing for the country's benefit. Such arguments by witnesses representing the mining industry showed that the sector was not willing to relinquish its timber rights. It became necessary for the state to assume the position of referee between the settler farmers and miners and regulate, through legislation, the use of the country's timber resources.

The Natural Act of 1941 and the birth of the Natural Resources Board

⁵²⁶ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr A. Haworth, Manager of Phoenix Prince Mine, Bindura.

⁵²⁷ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr R. McIlwaine, Chairman of the Natural Resources Commission.

⁵²⁸ NAZ ZAZ 2/1/1 Evidence to the Natural Resources Commission. Mr D. Abrahamson, Shamva. He had been in Rhodesia for thirty two years, during that time he engaged in both farming and mining. During this particular time he was into small working.

The McIlwaine Commission Report was presented to parliament in April 1939 and it “substantiated the need for positive remedial and preventive action to combat the growing dangers of soil erosion and impoverishment.”⁵²⁹ The Commission noted in its report that:

The conservation of the natural resources of the country is the concern of every member of the community. Those who, during their short lifetime are encountered with the handling of the land or other assets of the country should not be denied the right to use it reasonably, but they should be regarded as trustees neither entitled to mistreat, squander or destroy it regardless of the consequences to future generations.⁵³⁰

The Commission’s report contained recommendations that were supposed to be implemented with haste so as to curb further wastage and deterioration of the country’s natural resources. It was on the basis of such recommendations that the Natural Resources Act was enacted in August of 1941. The Act was to become the overriding legislation for the protection of all natural resources in the country. To ensure a successful conservation programme, McIlwaine stated in a memorandum that:

The commissioners were of the opinion that the carrying out of such of their recommendations as the government might adopt, and the consideration of the problems to which they directed attention, were of such vital importance to the colony and concerned so many interests that, in order to avoid the danger of these questions being overlooked or obscured, owing to a variety of causes, they recommend that a standing body should be set up to deal with these questions and all matters touching natural resources. The name suggested for this body is the Natural Resources Board.⁵³¹

Such recommendations by the Commission resulted in the creation of a Natural Resources Board (NRB) that was to preside over the conservation of the country’s resources.

The Board became a trustee of the country’s resources which included water, soil, minerals, vegetation, animal and fish life. All the members were appointed by government. It had wide-ranging powers for it could subpoena witnesses and issue orders to landowners, occupiers and users of land restricting or prohibiting the use of resources whenever necessary in adherence to conservation rules.⁵³² Mainly because of the diversity of subjects coming under its purview, the Board had direct access to ministers directly concerned with the question under consideration.⁵³³ Its main functions were to exercise general supervision over natural resources,

⁵²⁹ Natural Resources Board, 25 Years of Conservation in Rhodesia.

⁵³⁰ Natural Resources Commission Report,

⁵³¹ NAZ S14/A/348 Natural Resources Commission. Memorandum by the Chairman of the Natural Resources Commission.

⁵³² Natural Resources Board, 25 Years of Conservation in Rhodesia.

⁵³³ S14/A/388 Natural Resources Commission. Natural Resources Commission, Memorandum to accompany second draft Bill, 7 May 1940.

to advise government on the nature of legislation and policies relating to conservation and proper use of the resources.⁵³⁴ The Board's first objective was the improvement of soil fertility. No further delay could be permitted while soil and water, the life blood of the country was being drained away.⁵³⁵ The Board was going to be assisted by a network of Intensive Conservation Area Committees (ICACs), made up of various landowners in the country. These became the Board's principal executive agents since they were in direct contact with land occupiers. The first ICAC was formed in the Inyazura district in 1944 and by 1958 all European farming areas had been incorporated within Intensive Conservation Areas ICAs.⁵³⁶ I. R. Phimister argues that it was the desire to improve the country's food production capacity that pushed government from its gradualist approach towards soil conservation practices.⁵³⁷ In this regard the 1942 drought had been serendipitous for it led to an intensification of conservationism in an attempt to boost food production to improve self-sufficiency during the war period. It was only in 1949 that the NRB turned to the mining industry and timber cutting. It took close to a decade for the Forest Act to be enacted. Its promulgation was going to interfere with the mining industry. Considering the significance of the mining industry around 1941, when the Natural Resources Act was passed, tempering with the industry's timber supplies could have had a negative impact on the industry as well as the country's contribution towards the war effort.

The Forestry Act of 1949

Formal conservation legislation was extended to incorporate the mining sector in 1949 when the Forest Act was promulgated. Access to timber resources had been a major concern for white settler farmers, miners and Africans residing in the reserves. Miners had enjoyed privileged access to timber at the expense of their farming counterparts and Africans. This miners' privilege, however, did not stop settler farmers and Africans from cutting trees to get timber for the curing of flue cured tobacco, for domestic purposes and for construction of huts by Africans. The Forest Act was thus intended to ensure controlled cutting by miners and settler farmers. Wood cutting in the reserves was governed by the Native Reserves Produce Act of

⁵³⁴Natural Resources Board, 25 Years of Conservation in Rhodesia.

⁵³⁵ S14/A/388 Natural Resources Commission. Natural Resources Commission, Memorandum to accompany second draft Bill, 7 May 1940.

⁵³⁶ Natural Resources Board, 25 Years of Conservation in Rhodesia.

⁵³⁷ I. R. Phimister, 'Discourse and the discipline of historical context: Conservation and ideas about development in Southern Rhodesia 1930 to 1950,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12, 2 (1986), 263-275.

1929 which stopped Africans from cutting trees for anything else except for their subsistence needs.

Africans were not on the side-lines when this facet of the miner-farmer controversy unfolded. Although they did not get more land allocated to them by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA), quite a number of Africans remained on land belonging to Europeans as rent-paying tenants. In the year 1930, when the LAA was passed there were 919 000 Africans in Southern Rhodesia, 587 000 lived in reserves, 300 000 lived on Crown land and 220 000 lived in urban areas.⁵³⁸ The LAA stipulated that such Africans, living on land belonging to white farmers were supposed relocate into reserves by 1937. As noted by Kramer, H. U. Moffat was following advice from the Native Department to end the labour and rent tenancy system.⁵³⁹ Usually these African tenants paid their rent by providing labour to the landowner for a specified number of days in year, while others paid their rentals in monetary value. The number of such Africans, residing on European owned land was therefore progressively reduced. In this regard, claims by some white farmers that Africans were also responsible for causing soil degradation through excessive cutting of trees should be scrutinised. For example, A. R. Syfret claimed that he failed to find suitable farmland in the Umtali district mainly because most of the land, occupied by African tenants was in a very bad state. He complained to the Department of Agriculture in 1938 that:

Practically all the indigenous timber had been cut. The use of sledges had encouraged soil erosion. The owner does not farm this farm. He told me that 96 tenants each paid £2 a year rent. For this amount they were allowed to plough up as much land as they could, and take as much water as they wanted. The result is that quite a good farm has been ruined.⁵⁴⁰

Although Africans needed wood for domestic purposes, they did not cause extensive damage comparable to what settler farmers and miners did. Syfret might have just used Africans as a scapegoat. Very small clashes with African mine employees cutting wood for firewood were reported after the Forest Act was passed.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁸ E. Tawse Jollie, 'Native land tenure in Africa', *American Geographical Society. Pioneer Settlement Co-operative Studies*, 14 (1932), 185.

⁵³⁹ E. Kramer, 'The early years: Extension services in peasant agriculture in colonial Zimbabwe, 1925-1929', *Zambezia*, 14, 2 (1997), 163.

⁵⁴⁰ ZAZ 2/2/1 Natural Resources Commission. Letter from A. R. Syfret to the Secretary, Department of Agriculture about farms in the Umtali District, 26 October 1938.

⁵⁴¹ A memorandum by D. E. McLoughlin, an Agriculturist, to the Natural Resources Commission criticised methods used by Africans in their agricultural pursuits. He provided a list of African practices such as use of sleighs poor and narrow tyred vehicles, ploughing across contours and use of haphazard and uncontrolled land. He argued that such bad practices had caused the deterioration of most of the white owned land that was occupied

Farmers in the major tobacco producing districts of the colony which included Lomagundi, Mazoe, Salisbury, Mrewa, Marandellas and Makoni were blamed for what has been termed wholesale destruction of timber by the Senior Inspector of Lands in 1938.⁵⁴² As a result many tobacco farms were cleared of timber. A common practice that was noted amongst tobacco farmers was the stumping of fresh land every year mainly to obtain timber with which to fire their tobacco barns and also to clear virgin land as advance preparation for the succeeding tobacco crop. The situation became so serious that even the sheltered timber belts were cleared in order to secure fresh timber and soil, thus exposing vast tracts of land to destructive agents.⁵⁴³

The wastage of the country's timber resources emphasized the need to add upon the authority of the NRB, control over not only owners and occupiers of land but over users as well. Although the Board could succeed in compelling landowners to stop wasting their resources "the person who has no stake in the land and is simply exploiting its resources for commercial gain needs different treatment and should be brought under a measure of control."⁵⁴⁴ McIlwaine therefore, observed that "More comprehensive legislation is, however, urgently necessary to provide for the protection and control of the forest resources of Southern Rhodesia."⁵⁴⁵ Similar sentiments were echoed by the Conservator of Forest's annual report for 1948 that the forestry bill should be passed into law without delay for the benefit of both farmers and miners.⁵⁴⁶ The Forest Act No. 37 was promulgated on the 12th of August 1949 and came into force on 9 December that same year. Modelled along well established forest laws of the Commonwealth, it provided for "the setting aside of demarcated forests and nature reserves which are free from servitudes and which may not be withdrawn or alienated without the consent of parliament."⁵⁴⁷ The most important feature of the Act was the recognition of indigenous forests as "part of the

by Africans. In a letter to R. McIlwaine, F. Gillward (Senior inspector of lands), 20 October 1938, also raised similar complaints and stated that Africans must be stopped before they cause more harm to land belonging to white farmers.

⁵⁴² ZAZ 2/2/1 Natural Resources Commission. Letter from F. Gillward (Senior Inspector of lands) to the Chairman of the Natural Resources Commission, 20 October 1938.

⁵⁴³ ZAZ 2/2/1 Natural Resources Commission. Letter from F. Gillward (Senior Inspector of lands) to the Chairman of the Natural Resources Commission, 20 October 1938.

⁵⁴⁴ NAZ S955/295 Natural Resources Board. Memorandum by the Chairman of the Natural Resources Board, Notes on Conservation policy.

⁵⁴⁵ NAZ S955/295 Natural Resources Board. Memorandum by the Chairman of the Natural Resources Board, Notes on Conservation policy.

⁵⁴⁶ NAZ S/FO668 Report of the Chief Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1948 Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1949 C.S.R. 22 – 1949.

⁵⁴⁷ NAZ S/FO668 Report of the Chief Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1949 Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1950 C.S.R. 22 – 1950.

land” – farmers were granted a 50 percent wood reservation. This clause was designed to end the contention between farmers and miners emanating from miners’ rights to free timber. Prior to 1949, landowners had little incentive to protect their timber reserves for they did not know when the wood might be taken away by miners. However, the Act’s provisions in this regard were still far from eliminating the struggle for wood, as shall be highlighted. The Act however empowered the state with regulatory authority which enabled it to superintend over the use of the country’s wood resources for mining and agricultural purposes.

The Forest Act was intended to foster the preservation of timber just like a similar piece of legislation passed in 1913 in the Union of South Africa. However, the ultimate objectives of the two laws differed. A. Grundlingh discussed operations of the Act (South Africa) in relation “to a particular group of poor whites who eked out an existence in the Southern Cape forest belt.”⁵⁴⁸ This Act provided for the registration of all woodcutters working in the indigenous state forests, with each registered wood cutter expected to work on his wood allotment only. It also created a Woodcutters Board which could strike off the register names of woodcutters who failed to adhere to the woodcutting rules. The 1913 Act set in motion the elimination of woodcutters, a process which was ultimately achieved by the Woodcutters Annuity Act of 1939. By this Act, woodcutters “were granted an annuity of £25 and at the same time forfeited the rights to work in the forests.”⁵⁴⁹ Forest legislation in South Africa was intended to reduce and ultimately curtail wood cutting whereas similar legislation in Southern Rhodesia was only intended to control the cutting of timber (by miners) without necessarily taking away that right.

Section 13 (2) of the Act aimed at eliminating conflicts between farmers and miners over the latter’s access to roads or power lines on privately-owned farms. There were cases as discussed in Chapter Two, when farmers could block miners’ access to roads for the transportation of felled timber. This section stipulated that:

The Mining Commissioner may, after consultation with the owner of a private protected forest, authorise a miner to cut, fell use and remove any forest produce if such forest produce interferes with the development work or the erection of buildings for mining purposes.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁸ A. Grundlingh, “‘God het ons arm mense die hautjies gegee’: Towards a history of the ‘poor white’ woodcutters in the southern Cape forest area c.1900-1939”, History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987, 1.

⁵⁴⁹ Grundlingh, ‘God het ons arm mense die hautjies gegee’, 17.

⁵⁵⁰ Forest Act 1949.

Although the Act provided for the Mining Commissioner to consult the landowner first before ruling on a misunderstanding, it failed to meet the expectations of landowners who had been clamouring for such cases to be handled by a neutral arbitrator, not the Mining Commissioner. The Act also provided for the creation of Mining Timber Permit Board (MTPB)⁵⁵¹ which was expected to regulate the cutting of mining timber.

The Mining Timber Permit Board and controlled timber cutting

Section 15 of the Forest Act dealt with the control of mining timber rights and provided for the establishment of a Mining Timber Permit Board (MTPB). The timber board was to be chaired by G. M. McGregor who was the Assistant Chief Conservator of Forests.⁵⁵² It also consisted of a senior member of the Department of Mines, an officer appointed by the NRB and a nominee appointed jointly by the Chamber of Mines and the Rhodesian Mining Federation and a permanent secretary.⁵⁵³ Farmers were not represented on the Board. Overall, miners retained their original right over timber usage. However, the new system that was brought about with the coming of the MTPB introduced a control mechanism intended to curb uncontrolled cutting of indigenous timber for mining purposes. McGregor clarified the position of the new Board during its inaugural meeting that “it was not the purpose of the Mining Timber Permit Board to hinder the mines but nevertheless to safeguard the natural resources of the country.”⁵⁵⁴ The protection of indigenous timber had thus been incorporated within the framework of the NRB and for the first time in the country’s history, a formal attempt had been instituted to control what all along had been perceived as an unquestionable right by miners to timber. The next section discusses whether the good intentions of the timber board were achieved and to what extent they succeeded in silencing farmer protests over wood cutting by miners.

Operations of the Mining Timber Permit Board

Miners were only allowed to cut indigenous timber after obtaining a special permit from the MTPB granting them such permission. A miner wishing to cut timber was supposed to make an application to a Mining Commissioner of the concerned district. It therefore became a punishable offence to cut wood without a valid permit and defaulters were prosecuted as shall

⁵⁵¹ Hereafter referred to as the timber board

⁵⁵² NAZ S2731/5 Mining Timber Permit Board, Minutes, 24-4-50 to 26-1-53. Annual Report for the Mining Timber Permit Board for the year ending December 31st 1950.

⁵⁵³ S/FO668 Report of the Chief Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1950 Presented to the Legislative Assembly, 1951 C.S.R. 22 – 1951.

⁵⁵⁴ S2731/5 Mining Timber Permit Board, Minutes, 24-4-50 to 26-1-53. Inaugural meeting of the Mining Timber Permit Board held on the 24th of April 1950.

be highlighted. The Mining Commissioner issued out a temporary permit which remained valid until confirmed, amended or cancelled by the Board. The Board could only cancel a temporary permit if the taking of timber was going to result in undue damage to the locality or adversely affect the timber supplies of the country as a whole. A permit could also be suspended or cancelled for failure by miners to adhere to the set conditions. In addition to this the MTPB also had powers to: instruct relevant officials to examine places from which timber was being cut, take evidence and conduct investigations to facilitate the suspension, cancellation or refusal of permits and to determine the validity of a permit, place from which timber may/may not be cut, quantity and class of timber to be cut as well as the method to be used in cutting the timber.⁵⁵⁵ The MTPB held monthly meetings where all permit applications were considered. Powers granted to the Board (as stated above), placed it in a better position to deal with the miner-farmer conflict which previous governments had failed to resolve since the occupation days. The formal conservation policy therefore had some potential, at least on paper, to minimise clashes between miners and farmers over wood cutting.

The MTPB's timber application system was not implemented immediately; a twelve months reprieve was extended to all applicants who were already engaged in mining prior to the promulgation of the Forestry Act. This was clarified when a report was made to the MTPB of a miner who was not following the set parameters when cutting wood. Blackburn, a landowner in the Gatooma district had his complaint forwarded by the Mining Commissioner to the MTPB. Responding to the complaint, J. Rademeyer, Secretary of the MTPB stated that: Since the miners concerned were operating before December 1949, they do not come under the jurisdiction of my Board until December next. If this cutting has been carried out by the miners concerned in contravention of mining regulations, it is purely a case of Mr Blackburn or the offenders.⁵⁵⁶ Blackburn's instant report to the Timber Board showed that farmers were hoping for an immediate solution to their problems with miners over timber cutting. Farmers were anticipating a quick solution to the problem that had confronted them for the past fifty years. The report by Blackburn showed farmers' confidence in the newly crafted control system, although they were not part of the Board.

⁵⁵⁵ Annual Report of the Mining Timber Permit Board for the year ending December 31st 1950.

⁵⁵⁶ S2731/5 Mining Timber Permit Board, Minutes, 24-4-50 to 26-1-53. Letter from J. Rademeyer, Secretary of the Mining Timber Permit Board, to the Mining Commissioner, Gatooma, 28 June 1950.

The Board registered awareness of the significance of the mining industry to the country's economy but at the same time it remained committed to reducing wastage of the country's timber resources by the sector. Inspection of timber cutting was necessary especially when it was being done by timber contractors, except in instances when the timber contractor happened to be the landowner.⁵⁵⁷ The appointment of an Inspector was therefore necessary to facilitate a comprehensive execution of the Board's mandate. Available manpower could not perform the required tasks fully as highlighted in the Board's 1951 annual report that:

In the case of the first few applications received, various government officials, particularly soil conservation and forest officers were consulted. While they cooperated as far as possible, it soon became clear that they had neither the time nor the transport to report on more than occasional cases.⁵⁵⁸

The lack of an inspector remained a major handicap affecting the operations of the Board. The temporary permits issued had to be extended by six months pending the appointment of an inspector.⁵⁵⁹ This delay was actually retrogressive. It had the potential to reverse all the momentum gathered since the constitution of the MTPB. It meant that miners could violate the set rules governing the cutting of wood on farms and go unpunished because of the lack of a thorough monitoring mechanism. The appointment of an inspector was supposed to be expedited if the timber board was to live up to its expectations in the enforcement of set regulations guiding timber cutting by miners.

Wood contractors in the Que Que district were already manipulating this loophole in the system. Prior notified the Board of what was happening in the area because of the absence of an inspector, he noted that:

At a meeting of the committee of the executive of the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines held on the 16th instant the matter of the issue of permits by the Mining Timber Board came up for discussion. A member from Midlands stated that he considered the inspection of timber cut by contractors in the Que Que area was very necessary as only a portion of the timber which was cut under permit for the mines was actually going to the mines. The balance being retailed in the Que Que Township.⁵⁶⁰

The appointment of an inspector was expected to improve compliance by the miners and their wood contractors to permit conditions. Without an inspector the Board served no purpose except for the collection of statistical data on the timber requirements of the mining sector in

⁵⁵⁷ Sixth Meeting of the Mining Timber permit board held on the 25th of September 1950.

⁵⁵⁸ Annual Report for the Mining Timber Permit Board for the year ending December 31st 1950.

⁵⁵⁹ Tenth Meeting of the mining Timber Permit Board, held on the 29th of January 1951.

⁵⁶⁰ Tenth Meeting of the mining Timber Permit Board, held on the 29th of January 1951.

the country. An Inspector for the Board was finally appointed in 1951, to the delight of the MTPB members. In an attempt to deal with a practice by some wood contractors who were selling wood to non-mining clients, the timber board imposed a condition compelling wood contractors to display their names on vehicles that they used to transport wood.⁵⁶¹

Even when the MTPB was in full operation proposals were being made for the Timber Board to issue timber permits for longer periods than the official twelve months. Such proposals succeed in showing that the mining community was not willing to relinquish timber rights that they had enjoyed since the days of Company administration. The Mining Commissioner for Gatooma district wrote to the MTPB stating that:

I have been asking applicants who have established mines and who consider that the area for which a permit is required will supply their needs for many years, to ask for permits to cover “the life of a mine” as there is no suggestion in the Act that the validity of permits is to be restricted to a 12 months period.⁵⁶²

The Rhodesian Mining Federation had also inquired from the MTPB if the duration of mining timber permits could be extended to a lengthy timeframe. This might have been an attempt to create loopholes in the system and evade constant monitoring and review of timber permits by the Board. The MTPB’s response to such queries was quick and crafted in a manner intended to promote adherence to the set conditions governing the cutting of mining timber. At its February meeting in 1951, the MTPB endorsed Ayles’s suggestion to reward miners who had good reports with permits valid for an indefinite period.⁵⁶³ It was within the Board’s powers to alter the duration of timber permits, but for the maintenance of good conduct by miners, renewable permits with one year validity allowed it to monitor the system better. There is no known report of a permit that was renewed with a new validity period beyond the normal twelve months.

As early as 1950 the Conservator of Forests reported that the timber board was scoring successes as there was a marked improvement in the methods of timber felling for fuel purposes.⁵⁶⁴ In the first 9 months of 1951, permits were issued covering approximately

⁵⁶¹ Eleventh Meeting of the Mining Timber Permit Board, held on the 26th of February 1951.

⁵⁶² NAZ S2731/5 Mining Timber Permit Board, Minutes, 24-4-50 to 26-1-53. Letter from the Mining Commissioner, Gatooma to the Secretary, Mining Timber Permit Board, 5 January 1951.

⁵⁶³ Eleventh Meeting of the Mining Timber Permit Board, held on the 26th of February 1951.

⁵⁶⁴ Report of the Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1950.

1 183 000 cubic feet⁵⁶⁵ and in 1953 permits of timber covering 2 191 827 cubic feet⁵⁶⁶ were issued. In addition, intensified publicity campaigns by the NRB, ICAs and the Department of Conservation and Extension (CONEX) led to a growing observance of the of Section 24 of the Forest Act which called upon owners of private land to notify the Minister of Mines and Lands before cutting wood for sale.⁵⁶⁷ However, conflicts over wood cutting did not come to an end even after the establishment of the timber board. Around the same time when the initial success of the MTPB was being acknowledged, reports were also being received from farmers concerning bad cutting practices by miners. In 1950, S. Jackson of Marandellas complained to the timber board about bad cutting of timber on his farm by Mssrs Umtali Tributors Limited.⁵⁶⁸ The matter had been referred to the Mining Commissioner for Salisbury who had adjudged that Jackson was entitled to payment since his farm was not on the Gold Belt. A case had also been reported in the same year of a miner cutting wood in an African reserve and the Native Department. The MTPB could not deal with this particular case since it involved the Native Department.⁵⁶⁹ This inability of the MTPB to deal with miners accused of taking timber from the reserves was a major weakness and presented a loophole for miners to continue cutting wood in such areas with impunity.

It became possible to calculate mining timber requirements and make plans for the future regarding afforestation because of the permit system. By 1953 most mines cutting timber had been issued with permits. It was also in this year that the Forestry Commission was created for the purpose of considering of “all matters and questions arising out of or relating to general forest policy and the making of reports and recommendations thereon to the Minister, (Minister of Mines, Lands and Surveys).⁵⁷⁰ Offenders did not go unpunished; out of the 708 cases reported in 1953, 560 were concluded after offenders paid different fines. Persistent bad cutting of timber by wood contractors led to the cancellation one permit while two temporary permits were not confirmed in 1953.⁵⁷¹ The timber board was determined to deal with non-conforming miners and intended to use this licence cancellation to serve as an example to other miners and wood contractors involved in similar practices.

⁵⁶⁵ NAZ S/FO668 Report of the Chief Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1951.

⁵⁶⁶ Report of the Chief Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1953.

⁵⁶⁷ Report of the Conservator of Forests for the year ended 1951.

⁵⁶⁸ Eighth Meeting of the Mining Timber Board Held on the 27th of November 1950.

⁵⁶⁹ Third meeting of the Mining Timber Permit Board held on the 26th of June 1950.

⁵⁷⁰ First annual report of the Forestry Commission, April 1954 to June 1955.

⁵⁷¹ First annual report of the Forestry Commission, April 1954 to June 1955.

A successful timber cutting control system was a leap towards the resolution of farmer-miner disputes. Uncontrolled timber cutting by miners on, especially Gold Belt farms had been the major source of friction between the two groups so its resolution was likely to ease the tension. A peaceful coexistence of farmers and miners demanded many other concessions from both parties of which a resolution of the dispute over timber cutting was just, but a part of. The NRB congratulated the MTPB in 1956 for the successful reduction of wasteful exploitation of timber resources for mining purposes.⁵⁷² This showed that the timber board was registering some successes in the execution of its mandate. Miner-farmer conflicts related to timber cutting were thus being reduced through the control system.

Expansion of base minerals mining and its implication on miner-farmer relation

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 had resulted in major structural shifts to the country's economy, as noted in Chapter Four. Gold mining received an impetus after a devaluation of sterling in September 1939, resulting in a price rise of approximately twenty shillings an ounce.⁵⁷³ This increase in the price of gold however, did not benefit gold producers because of the levying of a Gold Premium Tax on gold produced by the state. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the tax led to the closure of many big mining companies because the government was taking away the bulk of the profits to finance the war effort. This was in line with Huggins' declaration during the 1939 election campaign that "no one as far as within reason and as far as it was humanly possible to do so would be allowed to make a bigger income during the war than they had previously enjoyed."⁵⁷⁴ This was just an excuse by the government to appropriate money from the mining industry. The overall result was a major decline in gold production and by 1945 the export of agricultural products replaced gold exports from being the country's top revenue earner. Agriculture had been exempted from the war tax mainly because prices of agricultural products were under control since the onset of the economic recession.

Base minerals mining in the country was also boosted by the outbreak of the war and replaced gold mining in the post war period as the major mining activity. After the curtailment of shipments from the Far East sources, Southern Rhodesia was inundated with requests for such

⁵⁷² Report of the Natural Resources Board for the year ending 1956.

⁵⁷³ I. R. Phimister, *An economic and social history of Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988), 219.

⁵⁷⁴ Southern Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates, Volume 20, 30 April 1940.

minerals as chrome, tungsten, tin, tantalite and mica from the United Kingdom, United States of America and South Africa. D. Johnson argues that the Mines Minister viewed the rise in demand for the country's base minerals as an opportunity to place the industry on a firmer footing ahead of gold.⁵⁷⁵ The minister noted that:

Our future, so far as it concerns minerals depends, I believe, not on gold but on base minerals. Hitherto, the successful development of base minerals has been retarded by overwhelming factors – high railway rates, lack of local markets for absorption of local products fabricated from raw materials and completion from non-British countries.⁵⁷⁶

Various mechanisms were put in place to ensure the development of the country's base minerals mining which included among others, loans to finance successful development. These minerals were mainly needed to make metals and alloys used in the manufacture of armaments. Development of this sector, which was sparked by the war, did not lose momentum even in the post-war period. Base mineral exports continued to play a significant role in the country's economy. Base mineral prospecting and mining therefore, became a major issue affecting the country's conservation initiatives and thus impacted on miner-farmer relations.

The war period also resulted in the development and expansion of the country's manufacturing industry. This was mainly due to the influx of foreign immigrants (from South Africa and Europe)⁵⁷⁷ and the development of import substitution industrialisation. Mlambo summed up the factors leading to the development of a manufacturing sector in the country by stating that:

The Second World War and its impact on the Rhodesian economy, in combination with specific economic policies and strategies adopted by the colonial state to deal with the economic challenges posed by the war resulted in the relatively rapid growth of the country's manufacturing sector which transformed the economy from heavy dependence on agriculture and mining to a diversified one.⁵⁷⁸

Such changes to the country's economy reverberated to all sectors as there was a need to keep abreast with the latest developments. The Electricity Supply Commission (ESC) was reorganised in an effort to increase electricity generation to keep up with the expanding manufacturing, as well as the base minerals mining sector. The development of a robust mining

⁵⁷⁵ D. Johnson, 'The impact of the Second World War on Southern Rhodesia, with special reference to African labour, 1938 to 1948,' PhD Thesis, University of London, 1989, 143.

⁵⁷⁶ NAZ S 1952 letter from Minister of Mines and Public Works to Minister without Portfolio, 10 February 1942.

⁵⁷⁷ A. S. Mlambo, *White immigration into Rhodesia: From occupation to federation*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002).

⁵⁷⁸ A. S. Mlambo, 'From Second World War to UDI, 1940-65,' in A.S Mlambo and B. Raftopoulos (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), 78.

industry, especially base minerals mining was encouraged because it also led to a further development and expansion of secondary industry in the country.

These shifts in the country's mining industry also had a bearing on the relationship of farmers and miners. Methods of extraction for base minerals were not similar to gold production, neither were the claim sizes of gold similar to base minerals claims. Claims for the latter were more expansive and thus covered more land that farmers claimed could have been used for agricultural production. The country's mining laws had been crafted mainly to cater for gold production, which however, did not reach the anticipated levels. The country's base minerals industry attracted bigger mining companies with huge capital outlays who also purchased bigger mineral claims. The Doma ICA forwarded the following resolution on base minerals mining to the 1956 ICACs Conference:

That this conference views with increasing concern the operations of the very one-sided mining laws as a result of which some farmers are being forced into using land for cropping on erodible slopes due to more suitable arable land having been pegged.⁵⁷⁹

L. Honey, the Secretary for Lands and Mines, told the same conference of ICACs in 1956 that such big companies "...particularly those interested in base minerals which, by virtue of the size of the claims tended to spoil a large acreage of land. Big companies could however afford to buy land which then became their property."⁵⁸⁰ Such concerns were being raised in light of the conservation discourse. The operation of big mining capital was in this way contributing to land degradation by confining farmers to areas prone to erosion after taking away all suitable arable land for mining purposes. The main argument behind such ideas was that the mining law had been crafted during the days of the small miners and therefore it was due for review in the wake of changes occurring in the mining sector. The big mining companies usually acquired huge mining claims to be used for many years to come; this was done to keep competitors at bay. Although serving the mining sector well, the practice was affecting farming activities.

Even the miners acknowledged the structural changes that had happened to the country's economy and were not resisting farmers' proposals to alter the country's mining legislation. The miners themselves were aware of the fact that farmers detested the manner in which prospecting and mining were being done on private land with very little consideration of the farmers' opinion. This was made clear when the Chamber of Mines president stated that:

⁵⁷⁹ Report of the 8th Annual Conference of the ICACs, 1956, 18, 19 July 1956, Gwelo.

⁵⁸⁰ Report of the 8th Annual Conference of the ICACs, 1956, 18, 19 July 1956, Gwelo.

It seems the farmers' main objection to prospecting and pegging on reserved land is what appears to be the right of miners to apply direct to the Mining Affairs Board. I think I can say the mining industry would be prepared to agree that negotiations should in the first place be between landowner and miner, as long as there is the ultimate right of the miner to appeal to an independent court if private negotiations fail.⁵⁸¹

It was the miners' right of commencing prospecting without prior notification to the landowners against which the farmers were battling against. The issue received more attention and dominated the debate for amending the Mines and Minerals Act spearheaded by a working party as shall be discussed in the next section.

In an effort to promote the processing of base minerals in the country and promote secondary industry growth, the government imposed a premium tax on all unprocessed base minerals sold outside the country. This was also a move by treasury to increase the country's revenue considering that gold was no longer as lucrative as it used to be. This move by government was heavily criticised by miners as being unfair. A. H. Gilmour, President of the Chamber of Mines argued that:

We appreciate the difficulties of the Minister of treasury but consider that an unfair advantage has been taken of our industry which I think I am correct in saying is the only one in the colony which is subjected to direct taxation on the value of its product irrespective of the profit margin of the individual mining propositions.⁵⁸²

Base minerals producers were being subjected to similar treatment as that meted out to gold producers during the Second World War. The Chamber of Mines argued that even if the government continued levying the tax on the sector, it was not likely to achieve the intended results because of two major obstacles. These were, first the marketing of processed mineral in the face of strong competition from established processors overseas and the ever rising cost of electric power in the country. Under such circumstances, it was difficult to move away from wood to other more efficient but expensive sources of fuel such as electricity.

For a country advancing the discourse of conservationism entailing protection of timber resources, provision of electricity at affordable tariffs could have been a useful remedy. In Southern Rhodesia the case was different. Use of electricity remained a preserve of the highly capitalised mining companies, and even for them, the ESC could raise the tariffs at any given time. This was cited as one of the major reasons hindering investors to come and commence

⁵⁸¹ The Chamber of Mines Journal, volume 1, No 1, May 1959.

⁵⁸² The Chamber of Mines Journal, volume 1, No 1, May 1959.

mining operations in the country. F. Elliot of the Chamber of Mines highlighted this concern by the mining industry:

It is so disheartening to say the least of it, after entering into a long term price agreement and basing mining costs on such an agreement, to find the tariffs can be considerably increased every few years although a company has faithfully carried out its side of the bargain regarding its consumption of power. Uncertainty regarding power charges is not the atmosphere in which to encourage outside capital to invest in an already speculative undertaking such as mining and it will pay the government to remove this uncertainty as soon as possible.⁵⁸³

It was even suggested by the mining industry that the ESC should consider providing electricity at a loss to miners to promote growth of the country's economy. The base minerals were so strategic to the country's economy in the period after WW II for their exploitation influenced what was happening in all other sectors of the economy. More importantly it was the activities of base minerals miners that pushed the Mines Minister to put in place a working party to look into the amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act as shall be discussed in the next section.

The Mineral Resources Committee and farmer-miner conflicts

The NRB had in place various mechanisms and committees meant to deal with the problem of environmental degradation caused by agriculture and mining and in the process, end the contests over timber. The NRB made attempts to utilise the context of conservation set out by the Natural Resources Act to deal with farmer-miner conflicts. One of such committees which was intended to be a major vehicle through which the colonial state sought to deal with the miner-farmer tussle (and its spin-off deleterious effects on the environment) was the Mineral Resources Committee (MRC). The Intensive Area Conservation Committees shall also be considered later in the chapter, but it was the MRC which played the most crucial role as will be demonstrated in this section. Established in October 1949, the committee's major function was "to advise the Board on matters concerning the mineral wealth of the colony and to enable it to carry out its obligations to exercise a general supervision over minerals."⁵⁸⁴ It was made up of officers drawn from the Mines Department, the Geological Survey Department and the NRB itself.

One of the most important recommendations made to the NRB by the MRC concerned the conservation of the country's gold resources. Informed by this proposal, the NRB

⁵⁸³ The Chamber of Mines Journal, volume 1, No 1, May 1959.

⁵⁸⁴ Annual Report of the Mineral Resources Committee for the year ended 1956.

recommended to the Mines Minister in 1858 that marginal gold producers were supposed to be subsidised to enable lower grade ore to be mined.⁵⁸⁵ This was in line with difficulties bedevilling the gold mining sector during the period emanating from a fixed price regime. Earlier on, concern had been raised by A. M. McGregor, a geologist who had observed that:

Very few mines have been discovered within the last 40 years and the prospects of finding new important producers are too small to be depended on. The gold resources on which southern Rhodesia must rely are in the existing mines.⁵⁸⁶

He proposed that the mining policy of the country should be structured in such a way that it could avoid the ripping of most of the better grade ore first leaving behind low grade ores. This had also happened when the premium tax on gold was operational during WWII. The NRB noted that:

In the gold mining industry where the price of the final product is fixed the proportion of low grade ore mined must decrease with the increase in the cost of production and it is unlikely that the low grade ore will ever be mined with the resultant loss to the colony of a valuable natural resource.⁵⁸⁷

Gold miners were expected to conserve the actual gold reserves by engaging in planned exploitation. Conservation practices were not only limited to timber resources but also included the actual minerals as recommended by the MRC.

The MRC made attempts to devise ways to obviate conflicts between farmers and miners arising from the mining law. It therefore, repeatedly asked farmers and miners to approach any difficulties constructively from the standpoint, not of sectional interest, but of national good.⁵⁸⁸ For instance it recommended an amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act in 1953 to avoid waste of timber on gold belt farms cleared during the course of bona fide farming operations.⁵⁸⁹ The MRC encouraged dialogue between farmers and miners as a way of reaching common ground and therefore, it promoted farmer-miner meetings where various concerns of the two industries were discussed. It was during such meetings that grievances from both sides were discussed with an intention to reach a compromise. Representatives from the RNFU, Chamber of Mines and the Rhodesian Mining Federation compiled their grievances and sent them for consideration by the MRC.

⁵⁸⁵ Report of the Natural Resources Board. CSR 4 1958 Presented to the legislative Assembly in 1959.

⁵⁸⁶ NAZ S3139/8 1944 to 1946 Statement on the Conservation of gold resources by A. M. McGregor (geologist) submitted to the Mining Commission.

⁵⁸⁷ Report of the Natural Resources Board. CSR 4 1958 Presented to the legislative Assembly in 1959.

⁵⁸⁸ Report of the Natural Resources Board. CSR 4 1954 Presented to the legislative Assembly in 1954.

⁵⁸⁹ Annual Report of the Mineral Resources Committee for the year ended 1954.

African mine labour residing on mine compounds situated on private land were sometimes a source of conflict between farmers and miners. In certain instances, these mine labourers cultivated their own small plots on prohibited land. The MRC made attempts to eliminate this problem in an attempt to maintain good relations between the farmers and miners. Consequently, in 1954 the MRC negotiated an agreement under which miners could apply for permission for their mine employees to cultivate Crown land falling within their mining claims under proper safeguards.⁵⁹⁰ Such land was to be subjected to frequent monitoring by CONEX to ensure adherence to conservation principles. African employees also cut timber for firewood on land belonging to farmers. The also MRC recommended to the NRB to encourage the use of coal by mine employees for cooking and heating purpose.⁵⁹¹

In addition to dealing with matters concerning the mining industry, the MRC also deliberated on farmers' grievances brought before it. These included a call by the farmers for the appointment of a Royal Commission to work towards the enactment of a new mining law.⁵⁹² The need for such new legislation had been necessitated by conflicts between farmers and miners sparked by prospecting of minerals, especially base minerals, on reserved ground. An example of such conflicts occurred when M. J. de Vos had pegged and registered Rea claim situated upon R. Smith's farm at Wollendale. The claim was cancelled in February 1954 and registered by Smith as Malabar Reef but he did not do any development work leading to the forfeiture of the claim.⁵⁹³ De Vos pegged the claim again saying it had good prospects, his solicitor, Mr Gray argued that the area was not suitable for farming.⁵⁹⁴ This was contrary to Smith's argument that the area suited his proposed farming operations and that the mine was situated in his farm compound where five of his African labourers billeted. Smith also made known his intentions to work on the mineral claim himself in the future and he labelled de Vos a trespasser.

The major grievance that can be discerned concerned the mineral value as well as the agricultural value of the land. The above case was ruled in de Vos's favour setting a precedent

⁵⁹⁰ Annual Report for the Mineral Resources Committee for the year ending 1954.

⁵⁹¹ Report of the Natural Resources Board for the year ended 31 December 1958.

⁵⁹² Annual Report of the Mineral Resources Committee for the year 1955.

⁵⁹³ S2751/4 Mining Affairs Board Minutes – 1955. Minutes of the 61st meeting held in Salisbury, 11 February 1955.

⁵⁹⁴ S2751/4 Mining Affairs Board Minutes – 1955. Minutes of the 61st meeting held in Salisbury, 11 February 1955.

that farmers did not wish to see being carried forth. Farmers became even more determined to protect surface rights on their land, miners were therefore, expected to pay compensation for using land that otherwise would be have been used for agricultural purposes. T. Mitchell, a farmer, told the Rhodesia National Farmers Union (RNFU) Congress of 1958 that “We are asking for the proper and complete control of prospecting which is going to save the farmer an immense amount of trouble in the future if we can obtain it.”⁵⁹⁵ He further stressed that “we are not going to make our farms become worthless.”⁵⁹⁶ Farmers’ intentions were not to stop mining nor were they claiming to be compensated for minerals extracted from their land. Mitchell proceeded to note that:

We do not own the mineral rights therefore; we are not arguing on the lines that we must receive compensation with regard to the value of the mineral in the ground. We want to put forward a completely just argument that we can justify in every way. We want compensation to be complete to take in every possible facet of compensation.⁵⁹⁷

Farmers were not willing to back track on this issue of compensation. It was argued that compensation would restore value lost through land being worked by miners. C. E. A. Bunn, a member of the Macheke Farmers Association, proceeded to draw parallels to circumstances prevailing in the Union of South Africa where farmers were compensated for loss of farming land.⁵⁹⁸ Farmers vowed to protect their farm land and promised to continue safeguarding their rights as a duty to posterity.

The need for the appointment of a Royal Commission to deal with the problem of compensation for land lost to miners was reiterated in 1955⁵⁹⁹ and in 1956⁶⁰⁰ by various ICAs attending annual conferences of the ICAC for the two years. The Minister of Mines however set up a working party that was expected to look into the farmers’ grievances. It consisted of miners as well as farmers’ representatives tasked to investigate the problems raised by farmers and propose recommendations for their solution. Any amendments to the mining law were therefore stalled pending the working party’s report. The working party was thus consulted farmers and gathered all the practices enunciated in the mining law were deemed to be unfair and oppressive by the

⁵⁹⁵ NAZ F324/1084/F3 RNFU Congress Resolutions. Rhodesia National Farmers Union Annual Congress Report June 1958.

⁵⁹⁶ NAZ F324/1084/F3 RNFU Congress Resolutions. Rhodesia National Farmers Union Annual Congress Report June 1958.

⁵⁹⁷ NAZ F324/1084/F3 RNFU Congress Resolutions. RNFU Annual Congress Report June 1958.

⁵⁹⁸ NAZ F324/1084/F3 RNFU Congress Resolutions. RNFU Annual Congress Report June 1958.

⁵⁹⁹ The 7th Annual Conference of Intensive Conservation Area Committees, 1955, replies to resolutions. From R. D. Spitteler, Secretary to NRB to Secretaries of all ICA Committees. 22 February 1956.

⁶⁰⁰ NRB, ICA Annual Conference 1956, Addenda to Agenda.

farming community. Eddie Cross noted that during this particular time, the government's concern on the determination of primary land use functions intensified.⁶⁰¹ For the first time in the country's history consultations were being made for the sole intention of improving the Mines and Minerals Act, something that was never attempted in the pre-1939 period. The inauguration of a formal conservation dispensation in 1941 therefore brought an opportunity for the elimination of farmer-miner differences. Input from the two industries was to be considered and incorporated in the framing of a new mining law for the country.

The RNFU submitted a list of grievances for the consideration of the working party. These grievances included, inadequate compensation for deprivation of the use of land occupied by mining claims, timber rights granted to miners and excessive pegging of land.⁶⁰² In considering these grievances, due regard was given to the significance of the mining industry, especially base minerals mining which was expanding and providing a lot of revenue for the government as well as promoting growth of secondary industry. The working party's interim report was by and large informed by two major changes that had happened to the country's economy and these were:

The great expansion of base mineral pegging and mining activity and falling off in the number of gold producers and the increased cost of all aspects of mining. A similar expansion of farming activity coupled with more intensive and more expensive methods of cultivation and conservation calling for greatly increased capital outlay.⁶⁰³

Basing on these structural changes in the country's economy, the working party proposed two schemes for possible compensation to be paid to farmers for their land that was used for mining purposes by the various mining companies in the country. One of their recommendations stipulated that compensation in the form of a fixed rental per acre (payable in advance) for the deprivation of use of land. Under this provision the farmer had the right to appeal to government for a rise in the amount paid as compensation after the claim had been held for two years. Rentals of this nature were only to be paid to farmers in respect of beneficially occupied land.⁶⁰⁴ This recommendation applied to smaller mine operations that did not have longer life spans. Miners were expected to convince the Mining Affairs Board of the probable presence

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Eddie Cross, Movement for Democratic Change Member of Parliament for the Bulawayo North Constituency, Ambassador Hotel in Harare, 15 April 2014.

⁶⁰² Interim Report prepared by the Working Party set up by the Minister of Mines to consider the amendment of the Mining Law.

⁶⁰³ Interim Report prepared by the Working Party set up by the Minister of Mines to consider the amendment of the Mining Law.

⁶⁰⁴ Interim report of the working party set up by the Minister of Mines to consider the amendment of the mining law.

of an economic mineral deposit. If the land concerned did not contain the expected mineral deposit the mineral venture was deemed to be an expensive one. Farmers were therefore expected to reap financial rewards for loss of their land to mining interests.

For larger mines with a comparatively longer life span, the working party's report recommended the creation of a new form of tenure to be known as a mining lease. This form of title was to be granted after the discovery of a substantial mineral discovery that could be exploited for a period extending beyond five years. The primary objective of granting this form of lease was the merging of individual claims into one title.⁶⁰⁵ This was to be approached at an individual level since mines dealt with in this category were large-scale, having a longer life span of at least five years. Consideration had been given to the importance of the mining industry when the working party made the recommendations. The question concerning the mineral or agricultural significance of land had been tackled head on and these recommendations were expected to substantially deal with miner-farmer disagreements on the matter.

Mining men on Intensive Conservation Area Committees

ICACs were the government's major agents in the implementation of the conservation policy. Their formation was spelled out by the Natural Resources Act as highlighted in the previous section. They became a very useful and convenient forum for members of the farming community to discuss major points of conflict with miners in the country. This was done in the spirit of combating land degradation caused by miners, as well as a way of finding common ground with the mining sector in an attempt to end the rift between the two industries. Although miners were not part of the committees when they were started, farmers always discussed mining concerns. The Gatooma ICAC for instance, registered its discontent at the manner in which government had handled conflicts between farmers and miners, they noted in 1946 that:

Another point which is a great handicap to the landowner is the refusal of the government to enforce the carrying out of the mining law. Roads made by the miner in the old days and today are one of the main erosion bugbears that will have to be coped with in this district – and we farmers feel that the expense of recovering the gullies made by the old roads should not be a charge on us at all.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ Interim report of the working party set up by the Minister of Mines to consider the amendment of the mining law.

⁶⁰⁶ NAZ F 151/ICA/GAG Gatooma Group ICA File 1945 to 1952. Letter from the Acting Secretary for the Natural Resources Board to the Director, Irrigation Department, 31 January 1946.

This was the result of sheer ignorance of the mining law by miners as well as the nature of the mining law itself, which required some amendments to keep it abreast with latest developments in the country's economy. Some of the offenders were also small workers with very limited financial resources and "were therefore, not worth powder and shot."⁶⁰⁷ John Lourie substantiated this claim by stating that small miners usually left open pits and roads after realising that a claim was not productive.⁶⁰⁸ The Mineral Resources Committee made a recommendation to the NRB for the inclusion of representatives of mining interests on ICAs in areas where there was mining activity.⁶⁰⁹ This proposal was accepted at the 1954 annual conference of the NRB. It was expected to reduce friction between miners and farmers considerably. Although their work encompassing both agriculture and mining cannot be compared to that of the MRC, they represented a useful initiative within the context of conservation, which made attempts to deal with the farmer-miner controversy. They succeeded in facilitating dialogue between the farmers and miners which was useful in cultivating some understanding of the operations of the two industries, something which was non-existent in the pre-1939 period.

By the year 1956, it was estimated that there were about 30 mining men sitting on ICACs throughout the country and the NRB noted in 1956 that this inclusion of mining men on ICAs was paying dividend as indicated by the helpful co-operation between ICACs, the Mining Department and CONEX.⁶¹⁰ The inclusion of Mining men on the ICACs in some instances assisted in ending conflicts between farmers and miners before they were even reported to the NRB. There were some problems in Umvukwesi over chrome mining, miners were concerned with the way chrome miners were conducting their activity and a conflict ensued.⁶¹¹ The problem was amicably resolved by the conservation committee in the area and the chrome miners agreed to certain conservation proposals proposed by the ICA.⁶¹²

The 1961 Mines and Minerals Amendment Act

⁶⁰⁷NAZ F 151/ICA/GAG Gatooma Group ICA File 1945 to 1952. Letter from the Acting Secretary for the Natural Resources Board to the Director, Irrigation Department, 31 January 1946.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with John Lourie, former commercial farmer (1963-2000), Avondale in Harare, 17 April 2014.

⁶⁰⁹ SRG2 Report of the Natural Resources Board. CSR 4 1954 Presented to the legislative Assembly in 1954.

⁶¹⁰ Annual Report for the Natural Resources Board for the year ending December 1956.

⁶¹¹ F151/ICA/MAZ Mazoe Group ICA File 2. Group conservation and extension quarterly report – Mazoe group July, August, September 1957.

⁶¹² F151/ICA/MAZ Mazoe Group ICA File 2. Group conservation and extension quarterly report – Mazoe group July, August, September 1957.

The new Mines and Minerals Act and Mining Regulations No. 38 which came into effect on the 1 November 1961 spelt the dawn of a new era for farmers and miners in Southern Rhodesia. The Act was crafted in a new environment of friendliness created by the various agents (such as ICACs, NRB and the MRC) set up by the state to foster the preservation of the country's natural resources. The basis for the new law was laid by a Working Party set up by the Mines Minister in 1959 to examine the Mines and Minerals Act and come up with recommendations to be considered in amending the country's mining law. Although the major recommendations made by the Working Party (discussed in the previous section) were not accepted by both farmers and miners, its creation and composition was a step in the right direction. It facilitated dialogue by the representative bodies of the two economic sectors, the Chamber of Mines and the RNFU, until they reached a compromise on the form the amended law was supposed to take. The new law significantly eradicated the farmer-miner conflict, it eliminated the use of mining timber permits in cases where agreement would have been reached by the concerned farmer and miner. It also provided for a 50 percent reservation of indigenous timber for the land owner and the miner A clause in section 5 stipulated that:

A prospector or miner shall be entitled in the exercise of prospecting or mining rights in the area of the reservation to cut and use for his own purposes such indigenous wood or timber and no more within that area as may be necessary for clearing purposes and shall pay for such indigenous wood or timber at such tariff rate as may be prescribed.⁶¹³

The 1961 Act was a result of major sacrifice and extreme compromise by both farmers and miners. The emerging diversified post-WWII economic environment in the country had made the two protagonists, farmers and miners to bury the hatchet and cooperate for their mutual benefit. The Act did not satisfy all the disgruntled elements on either side, but overall, it succeeded in forging some form unity. Eddie Cross contended that the amended mining law although upheld as being progressive, created an uneasy truce between the two sectors because conflicts continued well into the post-colonial era. His argument was based on the fact that farmers felt that they got the "short hand of the stick" since they felt like they were not adequately protected by the mining and environmental legislation.⁶¹⁴ The new amendment de-escalated miner-farmer tension, the two sectors managed to achieve what all along seemed impossible.

⁶¹³ Mines and Minerals Act No. 38, 1961.

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Eddie Cross, Movement for Democratic Change Member of Parliament for the Bulawayo North Constituency, Ambassador Hotel in Harare, 15 April 2014.

Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the implications of the adoption of a formal conservation policy by the state on miner-farmer interaction. It has contributed a new dimension to existing historiography which mainly focuses on how the Forest Act led to the eviction of African farmers who resided on areas that were declared as forest reserves.⁶¹⁵ As demonstrated by the chapter, the Forest Act also affected intra-settler relations as the government effectively regulated farmers and miners activities ultimately leading to the 1961 amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act. By providing a brief background to the development of formal conservation in Southern Rhodesia, the chapter laid a foundation for a discussion of the interaction of farmers, miners and the colonial state in the post-1939 period. The promulgation of the Natural Resources Act of 1941 ushered in an era punctuated by initiatives aimed at curbing environmental degradation which had been triggered by settler agriculture, mining activities as well as the government's repressive land laws in African areas. The chapter has demonstrated that the era of formal conservation reshaped farmer-miner relations as the legislative instruments and control measures that were brought about by the new dispensation created committees such as MRC and the MTPB. Such committees as has been argued created a new platform of engagement as they attempted to bring to an end excessive cutting of indigenous timber for mining and agricultural purposes, thus narrowing the rift between farmers and miners in the process. The post-1939 period was also characterised by structural changes in the country's economy which, together with conservation discourse facilitated the eventual enactment of the 1961 Mines and Mineral Act which, for the first time in the country's history succeeded in achieving a compromise between farmers and miners. The study has therefore demonstrated how the introduction of formal conservation policies saw the state assume the role of regulator of property rights in its attempts to ensure the prosperity of capital.

⁶¹⁵ Maravanyika, 'Local responses to colonial evictions' and Mapedza, 'Forest policy in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe.'

CHAPTER SIX

African labour for settler agriculture and mining in Southern Rhodesia, 1906 to 1948.

The incorporation of indigenous Africans into the settler capitalist system as labourers was not easily accomplished in British colonial Africa. Southern Rhodesia is a classic case where the development of a vibrant and successful colonial economy heavily depended on the use of cheap African labour. This prime resource remained scarce from the time of colonial occupation (1890s) and, therefore, successive governments expended a lot of effort in attempts to secure adequate labour for the country's fledging primary industries and later on secondary industry. Previous chapters dealt with the interaction of the state, settler farmers and miners, highlighting the numerous contestations which characterised the relationship of the triad. This chapter provides previously absent facets in the explanatory model by introducing indigenous Africans, who, as labourers, constituted a major subject of contestation between the settler farmers and miners during the colonial period. The chapter will start by giving a brief overview of the labour supply situation at a time when the colonial economy was still at an embryonic stage. It will then explain the conflict surrounding the financing of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) which was discussed by the 1925 conference, highlighting how this created a rift between farmers and miners before giving a brief overview of African labour distribution and direction up to about 1948.

The procurement of cheap labour, first for the gold mines and then for settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia has attracted serious scholarly attention over the years, with particular focus on the methods employed by the colonial administration to ensure an adequate supply of cheap African labour for the budding capitalist sector. G. Arrighi's seminal paper⁶¹⁶ (1970) provided a benchmark on labour historiography. He challenged W. J. Barber's whiggish and triumphalist economic model which credited the development of capitalism in Southern Rhodesia for advancing the position of Africans.⁶¹⁷ He argued that, Barber and Lewis conceived "of the underdevelopment of the African peoples as an original state which the

⁶¹⁶ G. Arrighi, 'Labour supplies in historical perspective: A study of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia,' *Journal of Development Studies* 6, 3 (1970), 197-234.

⁶¹⁷ W. J. Barber, *The economy of British Central Africa* (London: Longman, 1961).

development of a capitalist sector gradually eliminates.”⁶¹⁸ Arrighi promoted the significance of extra-economic forces in the mobilisation of African labour for the capitalist sector. Arguing in a similar vein, A. H. Jeeves and J. Crush discuss how state intervention facilitated growth of settler capitalist agriculture to rival African production.⁶¹⁹ Use of state power to prop up the white agricultural sector was also common in Southern Rhodesia and it took the same form to that prevailing in South Africa. D. Johnson expanded on the use of coercion and state power for the recruitment of labour for Rhodesia’s agricultural sector in the post-depression era.⁶²⁰ I. R. Phimister also disproves the Lewis-Barber contention of unlimited labour supplies in Southern Rhodesia during the early years of colonial rule by highlighting that Africans did not have prospects of becoming labourers mainly because of the profitability of their agricultural enterprise.⁶²¹ By focusing on the experiences of mine and farm labourers, C. Van Onselen⁶²² and a generation later S. C. Rubert⁶²³ presented an important dimension to Southern Rhodesia’s labour history by discussing the experiences of mine and farm labourers, an aspect that had all along been neglected by scholarship. Another group of scholars has situated Southern Rhodesia’s labour dynamics within a regional perspective by discussing labour flows within the Southern African region.⁶²⁴ Conforming to the argument on the diverging sectorial interests of farmers and miners discussed in previous chapters, this chapter will explore the squabbles over access to cheap indigenous, as well as migrant African labour for use by settler farmers and miners. The chapter seeks to demonstrate that, apart from land and timber resources, cheap African labour constituted a subject of contestation between settler farmers and miners in the period 1906 to 1953. After the creation of the Central African Federation in 1953, African

⁶¹⁸ Arrighi, ‘Labour supplies in historical perspective’, 199.

⁶¹⁹ A. H. Jeeves and J. Crush, ‘Introduction’ in Jeeves and Crush (eds), *White farms, black labour: The state and agrarian change in Southern Africa, 1910-1950* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997), 2.

⁶²⁰ D. Johnson, ‘Settler farmers and coerced African labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1936-46,’ *Journal of African history* 33, 1 (1992), 111-128.

⁶²¹ I. R. Phimister, ‘Peasant production and underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1914’, *African Affairs*, 73, 291 (1974), 217. See also K. Rennie, ‘white farmers, black tenants and landlord legislation: Southern Rhodesia 1890-1930’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 1 (1978) 86-98; C. Bundy, ‘The emergence and decline of a South African peasantry’, *African Affairs*, 71, 285 (1972), 369-388; C. Bundy, *The rise and fall of the South African peasantry*, (California: University of California Press, 1979).

⁶²² C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1903-1933* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980).

⁶²³ S. C. Rubert, *A most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1945* (Athens: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1998).

⁶²⁴ B. Paton, *Labour export policy in the development of Southern Africa* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995); F. P. Bonner, J. Hyslop and N. Van der Watt, ‘Rethinking worlds of labour: Southern African labour history in the international context’, *African Affairs*, 88, 2-3 (2007), 137-167; F. E. Sanderson, ‘The development of labour migration from Nyasaland, 1891-1914’, *Journal of African History*, 11, 2 (1961), 259-271 and E. P. Makambe, ‘The Nyasaland African labour “ulendos” to Southern Rhodesia and the problem of the African “highway-men”, 1903-1923: A study in the limitations of early independent labour migration’, *African Affairs*, 79, 317 (1980), 548-566.

labour ceased to be a problem as major districts in the country started recording surpluses and influx control mechanisms were put in place to limit the number of northern immigrants entering the country to seek employment.

Earlier period: Labour for emerging capitalist economy

Hopes by the pioneer settlers to discover gold deposits in Southern Rhodesia comparable to those found on the Rand remained a pipe dream as discussed in Chapter Two. Reality soon dawned on the British South Africa Company (BSAC) administration that the country did not have phenomenal gold deposits as portrayed by earlier newspaper reports and propaganda campaigns that aimed at boosting investor confidence on the London Market.⁶²⁵ After this realisation, mining companies began to slowly move away from speculative tendencies and embark upon actual mineral production.⁶²⁶ This move was however supposed to be complimented by an abundance of cheap African labour to minimise operational costs and at the same time ensure maximum profits from mining enterprise in the country. On the other hand, European agriculture in the colony did not develop at the same time as gold mining did and its hope for success was also hinged on the availability of cheap African labour. This scenario was also prevalent in the entire sub-region and farmers became a major competitor for the available labour resources with mining capital.

The labour situation in Southern Rhodesia must therefore be situated within the broader regional context characterised by fierce competition for labour between richer South Africa's Transvaal mines and Southern Rhodesia.⁶²⁷ Southern Rhodesia's Company administration made attempts to mobilise labour for the nascent mining sector and as early as 1895, provincial labour bureaux were formed to direct the flow of labour to the mines.⁶²⁸ This early attempt was hit by financial constraints and the effect of the 1896 uprising (when the administration committed most funds to suppress the rebellion), which ultimately brought the bureaux to their knees. This was followed by the creation of the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia in 1899 which managed to supply 6 000 workers to Matebeleland mines in the first six months of 1899.⁶²⁹ These earlier efforts assisted mining companies with labour at crucial moments. It

⁶²⁵ I. R. Phimister, 'History of mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953,' PhD Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1975.

⁶²⁶⁶²⁶ I. R. Phimister, *An economic and social history of Zimbabwe: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988), 22.

⁶²⁷ For a detailed discussion of the regional labour politics see, B. Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*.

⁶²⁸ Phimister, *Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 22.

⁶²⁹ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 78.

must however be noted that such supplies were not reliable and fluctuated seasonally. These earlier efforts were in addition to the labour that was supplied to the mines by the Native Department. Africans were not willing to take up jobs and therefore, the Native Department used compulsion to recruit labour for the mines. Soon after the South African war (1899-1902), competition for Rhodesia's African labour was resumed by the more resourced Witwatersrand gold mines and Rhodesian authorities reorganised recruitment with the aid of government funds and set up the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) in 1903.⁶³⁰

Historians have dealt with the development of the colonial economy in Southern Rhodesia and elaborated on the prevailing situation in the first two decades of colonial occupation as discussed in Chapter Two.⁶³¹ A notable feature of the early colonial economy was the development of a mining sector in the absence of a settler agricultural sector. This created a complex relationship between the Company administration, mining capital and Africans, in the wake of an emerging capitalist system and its extensive labour requirements. It was very difficult for the undercapitalised mining companies to attract African labour, settler farmers faced much serious problems as shall be highlighted in this section.⁶³² Indigenous Africans enjoyed financial independence derived from selling their agricultural produce, an occupation far more remunerative than working in mines. A Compound Inspector commented in 1903 that "The high price of grain was spoiling the local labour market and a woman cultivating one or two acres could make as much money in one month than her husband in three."⁶³³ The Native Commissioner for Matobo also noted that Africans enjoyed a pleasant life as peasants and were therefore not willing to be engaged as labourers in the emerging capitalist system.⁶³⁴ The scattered nature of Southern Rhodesia's mines as well as the proliferation of small independent miners after 1903 provided a ready market for Africans' meat and grain, in the process spoiling labour supplies for the emerging mining sector.

⁶³⁰ Gann, *A History of Rhodesia*, 179.

⁶³¹ V. E. M. Machingaidze, 'The role of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the state to 1939,' PhD Thesis, University of London, 1980, B. Raftopoulos and A. S. Mlambo (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Weaver Press 2012).

⁶³² Phimister, 'Peasant production and underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia', 217.

⁶³³ NAZ LO1/2/25 British South Africa Company Minutes of 22 July 1923. Report by the Inspector of Native Compounds for the year ended 31 March 1903.

⁶³⁴ NAZ NBE1/1/2 NC Matobo and Malema Districts, 1901.

Under such circumstances it became increasingly difficult to convert African peasant⁶³⁵ producers to become full time labourers on European farms and mines. Mechanisms were put in place to try and push them to move out of the reserves and seek work, but this met limited success. Commenting on the prevailing situation in 1904 the Chief Native Commissioner wrote that:

To accustom the native of this country to steady work is a task which will take years to accomplish; more particularly as they have no desire to become rich. Their one idea is to obtain money to pay tax which can be obtained in two months, and then return to their homes, and loll about in idleness and drinking beer.⁶³⁶

Such pronouncements by colonial officials emanated from a misunderstanding of the Africans' work regime which was characterised by seasonal variations in the intensity of work done, as well as the division of labour amongst the males and females at different times of the year. Peasant production was sustainable and the few Africans who sought work in the capitalist sector only committed for a few months so as to earn money with which to pay tax before returning to work on their land during the wet season, from October to April every year. Consequently, Europeans were always complaining about the lack of a regular supply of labour, F. E. Sanderson summed this up by stating that:

unless under some form of direct or indirect compulsion labour tended to be in short supply when it was most needed – in the months immediately before and after the advent of the rains when work in preparing village gardens for subsistence crops was at its peak.⁶³⁷

This was a major cause for concern because it affected labour supplies for the mining and agricultural sectors thus militating against the desires of the BSAC to derive profit from their investment in Southern Rhodesia. The Company's London office made suggestions for the collection of hut tax in January or December when most African labourers left wage employment to go and work on their own fields, leaving a significant labour shortfall on the farms and mines.⁶³⁸ This had the intended objective of pushing as many Africans as possible into the labour market in response to the tax squeeze.

⁶³⁵ "Peasants are those whose ultimate security and subsistence lies in their having certain rights in land and in the labour of family members on the land, but who are involved through rights and obligation in a wider economic system which includes the participation of non-peasants." J. S. Soul and R. Woods, 'African peasantries' in T. Shanin (ed), *Peasants and peasant societies*, (London: Penguin, 1971), 105.

⁶³⁶ Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year ended 1904.

⁶³⁷ Sanderson, 'The development of labour migration from Nyasaland', 261.

⁶³⁸ NAZ A1/2/8/21 Letter from The British South Africa Company, London to British South Africa Company Administrator, Salisbury, 16 December 1905.

When it became abundantly clear that the labour needs of the country's mining industry could not be met by local Africans, the Company administration looked northwards for a solution. They decided to make up for the labour deficit by bringing in migrant labourers from the northern territories where the colonial capitalist system was still undeveloped. This was after failed attempts to import labour from north Africa and Asia.⁶³⁹ The Northern territories of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia as well as Portuguese East Africa became the country's main source of labour. Ensuring a regular inflow of labour from the northern territories therefore became a major point of departure for the country's labour policy as noted by, B. Paton that "Successive administrations therefore played a curious dual role, negotiating with South Africa to control outflows on the one hand while negotiating with Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to secure maximum inflows on the other."⁶⁴⁰ Unlike indigenous labourers who worked monthly contracts, the immigrants could be engaged for longer contracts. Van Onselen aptly summed up the advantage of using migrant labour by observing that cheap foreign labour increased labour supplies during times of the year when supply was low.⁶⁴¹ In this regard most of the colonial period (1890-1953) was marked by attempts to maintain a favourable balance of labour inflows by the colonial administration

Failure to find gold in the anticipated amounts pushed the Company administration to cast its net wider and embark upon the development of settler agriculture in an attempt to make the colonial adventure profitable from 1908. A successful agricultural sector was also envisaged to lure more settlers into the country, who could take up land and start farming. Consequently, a Department of Agriculture was set up in 1903 to facilitate the development and expansion of settler agriculture. As noted in earlier chapters, a White Agricultural Policy was launched in 1908 after a visit to the country by the BSAC Directors to the colony.⁶⁴² This agricultural development also required the availability of cheap labour as highlighted by R. Hodder-Williams that "A plentiful supply of labour, cheap if possible was therefore required by those who aspired to something higher than mere subsistence farming."⁶⁴³ White farmers were therefore set on collision course with mining companies over access to cheap African labour. Relations of the two sectors did not have a harmonious history as the two also clashed over

⁶³⁹ Van Onselen, *Chibharo*, 70.

⁶⁴⁰ Paton, *Labour export policy*, 107.

⁶⁴¹ Van Onselen, *Chibharo*, 76.

⁶⁴² For a detailed discussion of the development of agriculture in the colony see, Machingaidze, 'The role of settler capitalist agriculture in Southern Rhodesia'.

⁶⁴³ R. Hodder-Williams, *White farmers in Rhodesia, 1895-1965: A History of the Marandellas district* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1983), 62.

access to water, timber and land rights as chapters 2,3,4 and 5 have shown. African labour thus became another reason for conflict between the two economic classes. The colonial administration was thus placed in the uncomfortable position of acting as the arbiter if any conflict erupted over the labour question.

When agriculture was still at this embryonic stage before 1910, most farmers were undercapitalised. Although attempts were being made to recruit farmers with start-up capital, most of the farmers lacked the requisite financial resources to facilitate the development of a successful farming venture. This was especially true for the Afrikaner settlers as noted by K. Rennie that “the treks of the 1890s into Southern Rhodesia comprised of men who had little more than possessions in an ox-wagon and debts at home.”⁶⁴⁴ Such men were not willing to pay high wages for wage labour and resorted to using the labour tenancy system. Their resistance to regularise their labour contracts by specifying the periods for which their labourers would be required sparked opposition from miners and those engaging in commerce who also wanted to have access to the same labourers being held under labour tenancy.⁶⁴⁵ The wage scale of the various industries during this particular time reveal that agricultural work paid the least wages and was therefore “less attractive than mining compounds, railways and other towns where wages were higher and excitements greater.”⁶⁴⁶ The CNC reported in 1903 that:

Farm labourers are paid from 15/- to 30/- per month. Natives on railway work from 15/- to 30/- per month. On mine work; Drill boys 35/- to 60/- per month; surface boys 25/- to 40/-; engine boys 25/- to 50/-; specially employed 70/- to 130/- and boss boys 80/- to 100/-.⁶⁴⁷

Given this scenario, it was clear that out of most of the European capitalist enterprises, farms paid the least wages and therefore, could not attract more labour. Besides the poor remuneration, treatment of labour at farms was somehow bad. After consultations with chiefs in his district, Native Commissioner for Marandellas, Ernest Morris concluded that. “It appears to me that the farmer is a far harder task master than the mine manager.”⁶⁴⁸ Farmers ended up employing the inexperienced workers who made themselves available and this affected production pattern on most farms.

⁶⁴⁴ K. Rennie, White farmers, black tenants and land lord legislation: Southern Rhodesia 1890-1930', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5, 1 (1978), 87.

⁶⁴⁵ Rennie, White farmers, black tenants and land lord legislation', 89.

⁶⁴⁶ Hodder-Williams, *White farmers in Rhodesia*, 53.

⁶⁴⁷ Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1903.

⁶⁴⁸ NAZ N/9/1/13 Report of the Native Commissioner for Marandellas, December 1910

RNLB labour for the farms or mines?

The RNLB which had been formed in 1903, initially with the intention of recruiting labour for the miners (and later farmers), did not produce the intended results. Labour woes for the miners continued because it was difficult for the Bureau to mobilise adequate labour supplies. A committee appointed to look into the country's labour problems and the Bureau's operation, reported in 1906 that "the RNLB had failed to meet the requirements of the country as an organisation for the collection and distribution of native labour for Rhodesian industries."⁶⁴⁹ As a result the Bureau was reconstituted in 1906 under the same name and mandated to recruit labour for the country's mining and agriculture industries locally and from the northern territories.

In spite of the Bureau operating, farmers continued to face serious labour shortages. Tobacco farms had extensive labour demands, and yet labour supplies were diminishing and the situation was becoming precarious with each passing day. The Secretary for Agriculture acknowledged this problem when he opined that "This is a big question with the farmers who are very much handicapped by not having a continuous supply of native labour for carrying on their operations."⁶⁵⁰ Due to limited capital, many farmers could not attract labour by matching up wages that were paid by mining companies. Under such circumstances, labour was therefore bound to take up jobs on the mines. Be that as it may, a different explanation to this scenario was provided by the Secretary for Agriculture when he stated that:

It is generally believed that a considerable percentage of labourers from the north would prefer to work on a farm at a lower wage than they can get on the mine. It seems to me the labourers recruited by the labour bureau should be given the opportunity of choosing whether they will go as farm labourers or to the mines.⁶⁵¹

The logic behind this kind of thinking was that some immigrant labourers, given a chance to choose, would opt to work on farms regardless of the lower wages being paid in this particular sector. This might have been triggered by reports of high mortality rates on mines. However, most labourers seem to have been channelled by the Bureau towards the mines, without due regard for the farmers' requirements.

⁶⁴⁹ NAZ ZAA1/1 Committee to inquire into the causes of the periodical shortage in the supply of native labour, 1906

⁶⁵⁰ NAZ T2/2/12 Labour. Letter from the Secretary for Agriculture to the Secretary for Treasury, 20 July 1908.

⁶⁵¹ Letter from the Secretary for Agriculture to the Secretary for Treasury, 20 July 1908.

Although the Bureau was supposed to recruit labour for both miners and settler farmers, there appeared to be a bias in its operations. It should be stressed that labour remained a problem, but farmers' needs appeared to have been the least priority for the Bureau. The Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU) had even stressed out the point that the "Bureau's arrangements were for recruitment of mine labour, and apparently no provision was made for farm Labour."⁶⁵² Farmers blamed the continued shrinkage of alien labour available for farmers to the RNLB. Calls were therefore made for the formation of a recruiting agency, specifically for the recruitment of farm labour, under the auspices of the RAU. This proposition was in line with a "concession made to the Matebeleland farmers by Mr Birchenough (a BSAC Director) and the Administrator of North-Western Rhodesia, to allow farmers to send a representative to that territory to recruit boys for farm work."⁶⁵³ Government responded to this proposition by granting an assurance that it would consult with the RNLB with the intention of forging an arrangement capable of meeting the farmers' requirements. Supporting this idea, the Secretary for Agriculture made the following suggestion:

As however, the farmer cannot afford to pay the same recruiting fee as the miner, naturally it is to the interest of the bureau to place all recruited labour with the mines. It seems necessary therefore to establish a separate organisation for recruiting farm labourers and I would suggest that the Native Labour Bureau and the RAU each be invited to nominate 3 representatives to attend a conference for the purpose of discussing some arrangement.⁶⁵⁴

The newly created labour recruitment agent, it was argued, would be modelled along similar lines as the RNLB, but would instead supply the labourers at a lower recruiting fee and minimum wage than that charged for mine labourers. This was hoped to increase the labour available for employment on farms and eliminate the competition of mining capital.

A farmers' deputation met up with the Administrator to register their concern on the labour problems confronting the sector. Since the new RNLB was formed in 1906, the labour problem had become acute for the farmers as they were facing a continuously "increasing acreage and fewer boys to assist them to work their land."⁶⁵⁵ The indigenous natives usually worked on the farms just for a few months before returning to their own fields. It seemed, however, that the only way that farmers were going to get enough labour was through offering better wages for

⁶⁵² Report of the Management and Finance Committee of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, 21 January 1909.

⁶⁵³ NAZ T2/2/12, Labour Letter, July 1908

⁶⁵⁴ Letter from the Secretary for Agriculture to the Secretary for Treasury, 20 July 1908.

⁶⁵⁵ *The Rhodesia Herald*, Tuesday 21 July 1908.

their workers. *The Herald* summed this up in 1908 by stating that “But after all the question would appear to be one of finance and unless the farmers are prepared to put their hands in their pockets, and put them in deeply too, they will always have the labour trouble facing them.”⁶⁵⁶ Farmers were still grappling with capital constraints and had hoped to use cheap labour to leverage their position through reduced operational costs.

A snap survey conducted in Umtali to ascertain the cause of labour shortages for farmers produced results that somehow contradicted the farmers’ claims. Native Commissioners in the Umtali district were instructed by the Civil Commissioner to encourage Africans to go out and seek work on the farms.⁶⁵⁷ This was in response to a request from the Administrator’s office which stipulated that:

His honour (the Administrator) desires that you should immediately endeavour to ascertain on what farms the most serious shortage of labour exists, and if the representations of the NCs are successful, to arrange for any natives offering to work to be distributed with strict impartiality according to farmers requirements.⁶⁵⁸

Unharvested crops, either ripe or ripening, were supposed to be given the first claim to labour before any other concerns were considered. In 1911, eleven farms that were reported to be facing a serious labour shortage in the district paid very low wages ranging from 10/- to 15/- per month.⁶⁵⁹ Given this very low pay rate, it is not surprising that farmers were facing serious labour shortages. Labour opted to go and seek work at mining companies where the wage scale was slightly higher. The Civil Commissioner reported that he interviewed 119 workers who were seeking work in the district during the month of October and they all refused to work on farms.⁶⁶⁰ One of the main reasons for their refusal was the very low wages being paid on the farms.

The 1912 labour tax and the changing circumstances

⁶⁵⁶ *The Rhodesia Herald*, Thursday 23 July 1908.

⁶⁵⁷ NAZ DT2/7/8 Umtali labour. Urgent memorandum to Civil Commissioners 20 September 1911

⁶⁵⁸ Letter from the Secretary for the Department of Administration to the Native Commissioner for Umtali, 21 September 1911.

⁶⁵⁹ NAZ DT2/7/8 Umtali labour. Letter from Civil Commissioner to Native Commissioner, Umtali, 20 October 1911.

⁶⁶⁰ NAZ DT2/7/8 Umtali labour. Letter to the Civil Commissioner for Umtali from the Native Commissioner 28 October 1911.

The RNLB ran into numerous financial difficulties during its lifespan. The Bureau started on a low financial note after recording a £2 821 loss in its first year of operation.⁶⁶¹ The RNLB was financed by the BSAC and had the commitment of financial assistance from the mining industry, but this did not come in the expected amounts. Miners continued to subsidise the Bureau's operations and this became a root cause of resentment in the future as shall be highlighted. I. Henderson described the Bureau as

An appendage of the Chamber of Mines, and therefore of the company; most of its labour was supplied to the bigger mines while the farmers and Smallworkers continued to complain of a labour shortage, and of the inferior specimen supplied to them by the Bureau.⁶⁶²

Farmers were not major beneficiaries of bureau labour in the period before 1911 as noted. This state of affairs led to the farmers' revolt of 1911-12.⁶⁶³ The dwindling supplies of immigrant labour from the north had some of its origins in the northern territories themselves. The Nyasaland government for example was considering methods of dealing with the mass exodus of its labourers in a southward direction. For instance, it was estimated that about 18 000 Nyasas emigrated (most of them clandestinely). In most instances these were never heard of again, either by the government or their families.⁶⁶⁴ Reported deaths of those working in either southern Rhodesia or South Africa were on the rise, prompting the Nyasaland government to minimise emigration of its citizens. The Nyasaland government also called on Southern Rhodesia's government to provide proper care for Nyasaland workers and discouraged the engagement of undocumented labourers by Southern Rhodesian companies. All these factors contributed to the declining supplies of northern labourers entering the country.

Around this same time, the Company administration announced its intention to improve the fortunes of the RNLB by levying a labour tax of one shilling per labourer per month to be paid by all employers. This call angered most farmers, who by this time were undercapitalised and also did not receive many labourers from the Bureau. This call by the government had been preceded by a farmers' meeting on the 11th of September in 1911 calling for the government to provide "at once a minimum number of boys, sufficient to relieve temporarily, an unprecedented crisis which otherwise will prove of the ruin of the whole farming

⁶⁶¹ Report of the Committee to enquire into the causes of the periodical shortage in the supply of native labour, 15 January 1906

⁶⁶² I. Henderson, 'White population in Southern Rhodesia', *Comparative Studies in Societies and History*, 14, 4 (1972), 387-399.

⁶⁶³ For a detailed discussion of the farmers' revolt see, Henderson, 'White population in Southern Rhodesia.'

⁶⁶⁴ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 21 July 1908.

community.”⁶⁶⁵ This tax issue revealed the fissures existing within the farmer class itself for the elected members of the Legislative Council, who represented farming interests, voted in favour of the tax. This culminated in a massive and well-orchestrated tax rebellion on February 1912⁶⁶⁶, led by farmers and smallworkers who were also against the imposition of a tax that they considered being a subsidy to bigger mining capital which received most of the Bureau labour. This rebellion was typical of D. A. Brautigam O. Fjeldstad and M. Moore’s discussion of taxation as a stimulus for rebellion.⁶⁶⁷

When the Company’s intention to impose the tax was announced, the immediate response was a revolt led by farming men such as Patrick Fletcher who argued that it was not proper for a government to tax the people for the benefit of a private company (RNLB).⁶⁶⁸ The overall leader was John McClery, a farmer who, together with six others (who included three Afrikaner farmers) published the ‘Manifesto of the seven’ which stressed the non-responsibility of the RNLB to tax payers’ money.⁶⁶⁹ All the elected members of the Legislative Council voted for the tax. In the 1911-12 wet season farmers in the country’s remote areas refused to pay the tax and in February 1912 about 2-3000 farmers confronted the Company. In May the crisis worsened and the Company administration was forced to make a compromise.

The Company administration could not allow the tax revolt to degenerate into chaos and it capitulated. An agreement was reached whereby farmers were exempted from paying the newly introduced labour tax, but continued to pay a capitation fee for RNLB labour that they got.⁶⁷⁰ This arrangement however set an unfair precedent which haunted the settler government thirteen years later. Miners continued to pay the tax and thus subsidised farmers through paying a capitation fee of £4/10 while farmers paid only £2. Henderson summarised the farmers’ position by stating that “The farmers had the best of both worlds. They continued to employ voluntary labour (some of whom were tenants on their own farms) and could tap the resources of the RNLB when they required to supplement their own supply.”⁶⁷¹ Farmers had won the battle against the miners and the state.

⁶⁶⁵ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 22 September 1911.

⁶⁶⁶ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 2 February 1912.

⁶⁶⁷ D. A. Brautigam, O. Fjeldstad and M. Moore, *Taxation and state building in developing countries: Capacity and consent*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 24.

⁶⁶⁸ NAZ ORAL/FL1 Sir Patrick Fletcher, Interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

⁶⁶⁹ Henderson, ‘White population in Southern Rhodesia’, 393.

⁶⁷⁰ *The Rhodesia Herald*, 10 May 1912.

⁶⁷¹ Henderson, ‘Populism in Southern Rhodesia.’ 395.

The RNLB was therefore reconstituted in 1912 and continued with its task of recruiting labour for Southern Rhodesia until its termination in 1933. From 1913 onwards, the Bureau supplied most of its labour to farmers while miners only took a smaller fraction. Van Onselen observed that “what Chibaro-labour had done for the mines prior to 1912, it was now called upon to do for the poorer agricultural sector.⁶⁷² This demonstrated the protean nature of state policies. On one end, it promoted the growth of mining through the Gold Belt Title which protected miners land, water and timber rights on Gold Belt farms as discussed in Chapter Two. Yet, it also facilitated the supply of African labour to the settler agriculture sector (after 1911) to promote the growth of capitalist agriculture and undermine African peasants in the process. The 1911-12 events demonstrated the homogeneity and fluidity of the settler community in southern Rhodesia. Although from one angle, a semblance of unity amongst European capital against the prosperity of African peasant production aided by the Company Administration, the European sector had numerous fissures which revealed themselves as the struggle to have access to more labourers continued to unfold.

Due to economic pressure, the number of Africans seeking work was higher than the usual which prompted some employers to take advantage of this temporary surplus to reduce wages. This however had the implications of reducing labour supplies after the resumption of normal conditions. A serious warning on the looming labour crisis confronting the country was made by the CNC in his 1920 Annual report.⁶⁷³ Reference was made to the transforming economic environment in the sub-region, characterised by growing economic activities in the northern territories which resulted in the creation of new labour markets. The development of Northern Rhodesia’s copper works can be sighted in this regard. The CNC further noted that “The native is being educated to a realisation of the demand for his labour and its economic importance; consequently, he will only offer it in that market which Promises the best return.”⁶⁷⁴ Such a development called for the improvement of conditions of service by all employers, farmers and miners as well as other sectors. It was only this improvement which could guarantee the country’s industries a continuous adequate labour supply in the wake of the latest threat as well as the ever existing attraction from the Rand Mines. Such warning however was ignored by many as subsequent events in the country, as demonstrated in the next sections will show.

⁶⁷² Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 116.

⁶⁷³ Annual Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1920.

⁶⁷⁴ Annual Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the year 1920.

The significance of Bureau labour to farmers

The significance of Bureau labour to the farms was clarified and elaborated upon by various witnesses who gave evidence to the 1921 Committee of Inquiry on the supply of African labour in Southern Rhodesia. A crucial fact emerging from the evidence provided was on the rising importance of Bureau labour for the farming community in the period from 1913 when circumstances in the recruitment and distribution of Bureau labour had been altered. As noted earlier, settler farmers became the major beneficiaries of bureau labour. It was also during this particular time that settler capitalist agriculture was undergoing significant expansion. Mining companies were no longer relying on African peasant producers for their grain and meat requirements, but turned more to European farmers. Bureau labour therefore kept operations on most farms in the country going. It should however be noted that indigenous African remained a key proportion of the labour force for both farmers and miners. They however remained temporary as they returned to work on their land in the rainy season, leaving the farmer to rely on the migrant labour more. E. G. Howman, the Native Commissioner for Lomagundi noted that in his district, “A large number of farmers do employ Bureau labour and cannot do without it.”⁶⁷⁵ For the promotion of settler agriculture it seemed imperative to maintain Bureau labour.

It did not serve the farmer best to recruit more local labourers and rely on a small number of immigrant workers. Some settler farmers even went to the extent of turning away local labourers who searched for work independently without the Bureau’s assistance. The main reason for this action, as elaborated by M. Smith, a tobacco farmer, was that:

You see that the indigenous native is a farmer and I am a farmer. The native must return to his land at the time when the crops require cultivating. His interests to him are as important as mine are to me, and he goes at the time that I must have labour. If I cannot get bureau labour for twelve months then I cannot recommend my company to go in for a large expenditure on tobacco, because at the time I want labour the indigenous labourers will go back and become a farmer instead of a labourer.⁶⁷⁶

Smith was described as one of the best employers of labour in the district by the NC, the main reason why local labourers flocked to his farm almost on a daily basis. In this regard, farmers

⁶⁷⁵ NAZ ZTF1/1/1 Commissions and committees. Native labour supply committee of inquiry, Report of evidence taken at Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

⁶⁷⁶ M. Smith giving evidence to the Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

really depended on immigrant workers and Howman described them as a great stand-by to the country. The absence of Bureau labour could have spelled disaster for the whole country's agricultural production.

In as much as this labour was so paramount to the farmers' operations countrywide, there were farmers who took advantage of the absence of a supervisory mechanism to abuse Bureau labour for their own advantage. The situation on farms was different from what prevailed on the farms where compound inspectors provided some form of inspection, which to a limited extent forced the mining companies to adhere to some of the prescribed requirements regarding the working environment, rations as well as living conditions in the mine compounds.⁶⁷⁷ It should, however, be noted that the Compound inspectors were not introduced by the Bureau and therefore, cannot be said to have provided adequate capacity to inspect. On the farms, no form of monitoring or inspection of Bureau labour existed, the Bureau did not follow up on its labourers once they were signed up. Howman opined that the Bureau was not a known personality to the workers where they could go and make reports concerning abuse and ill-treatment by the employer.⁶⁷⁸ This left Bureau labourers on farms susceptible to various abuses by farmers, who took advantage and capitalised on this loophole. It was also for this particular reason why many farmers came to like this kind of labour more.

Most of the labourers supplied by the Bureau were immigrants who signed up longer contracts of employment. This was unlike the local labourers who only worked for about a month or two before going back to farm on their own land. Farmers thus took advantage of this and allocated most of the unpopular jobs to the Bureau labour.⁶⁷⁹ For example, such work of being herd boys was highly detested by locals mainly because of its oppressive work schedule, this task was therefore, given, in most cases to Barotses. Howman described the work regime of these labourers as follows:

They have to milk the cows in the morning and again in the evening and on Sundays. Sunday is a stock day for natives to go visiting or for a beer drink but it is not so for the boy looking after the cattle. He must stay there on the Sunday morning and afternoon.

⁶⁷⁷ For more on the experiences of workers as well as their daily living conditions on the mines and farms see, Van Onselen, *Chibaro* and Rubert, *A Most Promising weed*.

⁶⁷⁸ E. G. Howman, Native Commissioner for Lomagundi district giving evidence to the Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

⁶⁷⁹ E. G. Howman, Native Commissioner for Lomagundi district giving evidence to the Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

He cannot have a free day, go out and return on the following morning, and many have not a complete day's holiday.⁶⁸⁰

If this kind of work was given to indigenous labourers who usually worked on a monthly basis, they simply left and moved to the next farm to look for another job. In this way, Bureau labour succeeded immensely in stabilising the work force on the farms. They became a crucial component of the labour system in the country's farming sector.

Some farmers were very unpopular and could not attract local labourers who knew about their behaviour. Such men did not stand a chance on the open market since they lacked the incentives with which to attract labour. Most of these farmers earned a bad reputation for many reasons, chief amongst which were poor and insufficient food given to the labourers, low wages as well as outright brutality towards the workers. If there was no Bureau to provide labourers for such men, they could have ceased operations for a lack of labourers. However, the Bureau just supplied labourers to whoever made a request, regardless of his background or bad reputation. This was one of the major reasons why the Bureau was very unpopular with employees. Howman recommended to the Committee that:

A man with a bad character, with a police record should never be given labour in any circumstances whatever. If a man is unpopular with his servants through his temperament, well the natives should not be bound to him for 12 months.⁶⁸¹

There was therefore the need (raised by Native Commissioners) to conduct thorough inspection and background check before labour could be sent out to the farms. The Bureau's habit of sending out labourers willy-nilly, although benefiting unpopular employers, was damaging the Bureau's reputation. Good treatment was a factor that labourers considered when choosing the next employer and in some instances it took precedence over a higher wage. Information about unpopular employers was spread amongst the workers by those who had worked for such employers before. The treatment of the Bureau labourer ultimately had a bearing on the country's future labour supplies. If a Bureau labourer had a lot of grievances when he returned to his country, he could simply influence his friends and relatives back home not to seek work in Southern Rhodesia, either through the Bureau or independently. In this regard, although ill-

⁶⁸⁰ E. G. Howman, Native Commissioner for Lomagundi district giving evidence to the Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

⁶⁸¹ E. G. Howman, Native Commissioner for Lomagundi district giving evidence to the Committee of Inquiry in connection with supply of native labour in Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, 30 March 1921.

treatment meted on the Bureau labourers might have had immediate short term benefits, it had the potential to ruin the country's future labour supplies, especially after the era of the Bureau.

Miner-farmer conflict over universal labour tax: The 1925 Native Labour Conference

The introduction of a labour tax payable by all employers of labour in the country in 1909 resulted in furore as farmers staged a revolt in 1911-12 declining to pay the tax which was expected to assist in financing the Bureau's operations. The main reason cited, then, by the farmers was that it was mining capital which derived more benefits from the Bureau's operations. Under such circumstances farmers were not willing to subsidise an institution which was not making any significant contribution to their own labour needs. They were successful, as highlighted in the previous section, for they were ultimately exempted from paying this tax in 1912. But however, as highlighted in the previous section, from 1913 onwards the tables had turned. Use of Bureau labourers by mining companies was dwindling significantly, whereas, agriculture, which was at that particular time expanding, made use of more Bureau labourers than before. This was despite the fact that farmers had denied to contribute towards financing the RNLB and the situation prevailing was one whereby miners were subsidising the farming sector significantly.

A RAU and Chamber of Mines meeting held in April 1925 pointed to the fact that farmers had benefited more from Bureau labour in the past decade and that this benefit had been heavily subsidised by mining capital. It was noted that "in the past ten years the mining industry had paid a total of £150 000 in excess of the amount paid by farmers and had taken 14 600 boys less."⁶⁸² It was further noted that in the year 1924 the cost of recruiting and delivering a Bureau labourer was £6.17.6, but the farming community was getting such labour at a capitation fee of £3 per head, resulting in a loss of about £4 made up at the expense of the mining industry.⁶⁸³ The mining sector was no longer comfortable with this state of affairs and made representations to the government in this regard. Such protests were done mainly by the Mineworkers Association of Gwelo which represented a considerable proportion of smallworkers and the Salisbury Chamber of Mines. They only salvaged an exemption of miners that employed less than 200 labourers (mostly smallworkers). This exemption, described by the Premier as a

⁶⁸² NAZ S1561/25 Rhodesian Agricultural Union (RAU). Meeting of the RAU and the Chamber of Mines, April 1925.

⁶⁸³ Meeting of the RAU and the Chamber of Mines, April 1925.

temporary measure was effected by a Bill passed in April 1925, which amended the Labour Tax Ordinance.

It was mainly because of such differences existing between the country's major employers of labour, mining and farming, that an all employers' conference was convened in August 1925 with the sole objective of mapping the future of the RNLB and the country's labour policy at large. The Premier had already set the parameters for any kind of discussion and conclusion to be reached at the conference by ruling out any possibility of a government take-over of the Bureau's financial burden. He had noted thus:

It is equally impossible for the government to be responsible for the financing of the bureau and at the same time leave it in the hands of people who are not responsible to the government. It would be wrong in principle to have the responsibility of providing the needed revenue and at the same time not to have the responsibility of control and of accounting to the country for the expenditure of funds devoted on behalf of the taxpayer.⁶⁸⁴

So any resolution to be reached at the conference was not expected to include government as the major stakeholder in financing the Bureau. This conclusion by the Premier was also influenced by earlier pronouncements by the colonial office against attempts by the government to be directly involved in the recruitment of labour. On this subject he noted that:

To make the bureau a government concern would be to discredit ourselves in the eyes of the Imperial Government, and lay ourselves open to a charge of forcing labour. A government institution would be equally unpopular with the natives as the present Bureau. For the same reason nowhere in the Empire is anything of the sort done.⁶⁸⁵

This was, however, more rhetorical because the government, mainly through the Native Department had, in many instances, been involved in the recruitment of labour. The government had played a crucial role in facilitating availability of labour in some cases through coercive means. Although the Chairman of the August conference tried to clarify the Premier's position and steer the course of discussions in that direction, he did not succeed. The Premier's position was vigorously challenged by delegates, mainly those who represented farming interests and hoped to see the government taking over financing for the Bureau. McChlery, a business man and member of the executive of the RAU was a vehement critic of the position presented by government. He had risen to prominence by defying the imposition of the labour

⁶⁸⁴ NAZ S253/ 409 Memorandum from the Premier to H. U. Moffat (Minister of Mines and public Works) on the meeting of various interests to consider the future of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau.

⁶⁸⁵ Memorandum from the Premier to H. U. Moffat (Minister of Mines and public Works) on the meeting of various interests to consider the future of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau.

tax on farmers in 1910. McChlery's opposition to the tax had not faded in 1925. His major argument hinged on the fact that the Bureau was a national institution, undertaking a national duty and was therefore supposed to be assisted financially by the government.⁶⁸⁶ McChlery reminded the conference that he had proposed in 1910 for the dissolution of the Bureau, and this was ignored and criticised by those in support of its continuance who argued that it had brought in more labourers and thus cannot be done away with. He elaborated his argument by stating that "I am inclined to believe the Bureau has kept out as many boys as it has ever brought in."⁶⁸⁷ It was only a matter of time before the Bureau ran its course and efforts were, according to McChlery supposed to be focused more on how to improve efficiency of local labourers, rather than looking up to immigrant workers.

In refuting the stated government position as outlined in the Premier's memorandum, Noaks of the RAU argued that the Bureau should actually be sustained by a government subsidy in the same way as other departments were benefiting from the benevolence of treasury. Noaks argued that:

I think it is in the Premier's statement that he points out that this is impossible, but surely there is a precedent which has only recently been introduced here which would cover that, that is, in the export of meat £15 000 a year was first put forward as a bonus on export, and now, I understand, a guarantee has been given to the Imperial Cold Storage Company in the event of their not obtaining a reasonable return on their capital, so that in neither of these cases did the government ask for complete control of the companies they were assisting and we feel there was no reason why they should ask for any more control than they have asked in these cases with regard to the bureau.⁶⁸⁸

Government was thus asked to exercise equality in the extension of financial resources for departments considered to be crucial for the development of the country's economy. Although acknowledging the miners' role in subsidising labour provision by the Bureau for the farming sector, Noaks was totally against the introduction of an equal universal labour tax to be paid by all employers of labour in the country and help finance the Bureau. A survey was conducted around the Mazoe, Lomagundi and Umvukwes districts, areas which employed a high number of Bureau labourers, to find out their views regarding the proposed labour tax. All farmers interviewed, except those in the Umvukwesi district, were against the extension of the labour

⁶⁸⁶ NAZ S1561/23 McChlery speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁸⁷ NAZ S1561/23 McChlery speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁸⁸ Noaks speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

tax to farmers. As argued by Noaks, the RAU felt that government should use part of the money they collected as alien tax to finance the Bureau's operations.⁶⁸⁹

Various representatives of employers of labour in the country present at the conference wanted the Bureau to continue, but differences emerged on how best to provide its finance if it was to be continued. Miners' representatives on the other hand registered their displeasure with the prevailing set up where they were being forced to subsidise the farmers' labour needs. Watson of the Mining Association of Southern Rhodesia stated that there was a genuine need to "continue with the Bureau as a national insurance for districts where labour supplies are difficult to obtain."⁶⁹⁰ He however stated the position of his association that miners were not going to pay the tax anymore. Instead he proposed that the Bureau should be revamped and its operations run on commercial lines, with all employers of labour paying a similar amount and any shortfall was supposed to be covered by the government. Similar sentiments were echoed by Burnett and Hynde who also suggested that the tax burden needed to be taken off the shoulders of the mining sector and distributed equally amongst all employers of labour.⁶⁹¹ This proposal was made on behalf of the Salisbury Chamber of Mines and the Gatooma Smallworkers Association.

The Bureau's representative present at the conference attempted to defend the Bureau's position under the barrage of criticism from all angles. Hawkesley admitted that the Bureau's capacity to secure adequate labour for the country's industries was deteriorating and as time progressed the Bureau kept recording fewer labour recruits. Labour reserves in the north were also being tapped by the developing copper works in Northern Rhodesia which, at that particular time, employed 8 000 labourers.⁶⁹² In view of the looming position whereby the Bureau was being called upon to make do only with capitation fees paid by those who used Bureau labour, the institution was facing imminent collapse. This was because the RNLB would, in such circumstances be forced to charge a capitation fee of £5/10, which was beyond the rich of many farmers.⁶⁹³ If that happened, then very few or no farmers at all were going to apply for Bureau labour, thus spelling doom for the RNLB. At that particular time the Bureau's

⁶⁸⁹ Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁹⁰ Watson speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁹¹ Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁹² Hawkesley speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

⁶⁹³ Hawkesley speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

role in bringing in extra labourers was considered crucial because such labourers filled significant gaps in the local labour market.

A representative of the railways, another employer of labour in the country also voiced his institution's desire for the continuation of the Bureau as a form of safeguard against labour shortages in the country. Chapman highlighted that the railways employed between 12 000 and 14 000 labourers and that they rarely face labour shortages similar to those confronting the country's primary industries.⁶⁹⁴ This position was made possible by the fact that the railways took good care of their labourers. Chapman added that the railways fed their employees well and made adequate provisions for medical supplies. As a result, labourers kept returning to seek employment with the railways. The railways company was implementing recommendations forwarded by Hawleskey that the only way of retaining labour and avoid labour shortages was through the extension of good working conditions to the labourers.

The 1925 meeting exhibited the raging conflict between the major employers of labour in the country, agriculture and mining. Just like conferences convened for the settlement of the miner-farmer conflict on the Gold Belt Title, it was characterised by disagreement and the government did not take a firm stance on the subject under discussion besides registering its position, a curtailment of continued government funding of the Bureau's operations. Employers representatives present at the conference finally resolved to retain the Bureau, scrapping of the labour tax that was being paid by mining companies, that the Bureau was supposed to charge a uniform capitation fee and that the RAU representatives at the conference were supposed to take the question on the levying of a universal labour tax for consideration to their organisation for deliberation.

Distribution and direction of labour

Recruitment of labour for Southern Rhodesia's industries had failed to provide adequate numbers to meet the ever increasing country's labour demand instanced by the growing economy. It became increasingly difficult to recruit adequate labour from the northern territories because of the expansion of economic activities in the northern countries, which also required more labour. Copper mining in Northern Rhodesia and tobacco production in Nyasaland in the 1930s resulted in many labourers who could have migrated southwards to

⁶⁹⁴ Chapman speaking at the Native Labour Conference held in Salisbury on the 31st of July 1925.

take up jobs in their own countries. The situation was even worse after the outbreak of World War II. Each country was expected to contribute towards the war effort, thus making labour export from the northern territories extremely difficult. Southern Rhodesia passed the Native Compulsory Labour Act in 1943 which allowed the use of coerced labour mainly for food production.⁶⁹⁵ It however appeared as if much of the labour shortages in Southern Rhodesia were a direct result of a perceived imbalanced distribution of labour in the country. Some districts experienced extreme labour shortages whilst in some districts there was actually wastage of surplus labour going on. The Acting Commissioner for native labour elaborated the concept of “maldistribution of labour”, providing a useful summary of what was prevailing in the country. He observed that:

Maldistribution is always from the point of view of the employer or the industry which is shorter than another but does not take into account the views of the worker who prefers one industry or one employer over another because of conditions of service are better or that his father and friends have worked there, or the views of the employer or industry which provides better conditions of service and went out of its way to attract labour.⁶⁹⁶

Labourers who came independently had the freedom to choose where they intended to work and the only way any employer could influence this kind of decision was through the provision of better conditions of service as well as a better wage. When farmers and miners failed to attract labour they appealed for state aid in acquiring labour to make up for the short fall. The state’s response to such calls was usually dictated by the prevailing conditions at a given time.

Considering that Southern Rhodesia was competing for northern labour with the well-established Witwatersrand Native Labour Bureau (WNLA), it was imperative for employers in the country to improve conditions of employment so as to lure more labourers who otherwise would have been taken by WNLA. This was emphasised by the President of the Chamber of Mines in 1936:

If we are to retain the smooth inflow of Nyasaland natives and increase the numbers, then undoubtedly the government and other employers of labour will have to see that conditions are improved. In the light of the Nyasaland committee’s report, I think it can safely be said that the Nyasaland government would prefer their natives to be employed

⁶⁹⁵ See K. P. Vickery, ‘The Second World War revival of forced labour in the Rhodesias’, *The International Journal for African Historical Studies*, 22, 3 (1989), 423-437.

⁶⁹⁶ NAZ S3304/17 The Native Labour Advisory Board, 1949 minutes. Memorandum by the Acting Commissioner for Native labour for the select committee of native labour, 13 January 1948.

in Southern Rhodesia than further south. But unless, we in Rhodesia, do our part, we cannot hope to be favoured.⁶⁹⁷

Good treatment of labourers was the only way that labour could be retained and avoid major shortfalls by holding on to the labour that was already available. Explaining labour shortages in relation to figures alone also proved problematic, Kenworthy argued that:

One employer when asked what his shortage is, gives as the figure his existing labour force, meaning that if he had twice as much he could double his income (This applies especially to tobacco). Another employer when he states that he is short of so many, means that unless he can procure that number he is unable to make a living. Any return, therefore, which calls upon employers to state how many more natives they would like to employ at current wages, if such workers were available, does not help us to arrive at the true shortage.⁶⁹⁸

By holding on to a few labourers over a lengthy period of time an employer stood to benefit more from the development of an efficient labour force. In this way numerical shortages could have been averted by improved efficiency of the farm or mine labourers.

Some employers of labour in Southern Rhodesia failed to take heed of warnings to stop abusing and ill-treating labour each time there was a surplus of labour. This happened in 1914 and again during the depression period. Addressing a conference on native labour in 1938, the Governor noted that:

It was a truism to say that if they wished to attract labour and keep it, they must make labour conditions attractive. During the recent depression when most employers were hard pressed, and when many natives were seeking employment, some unscrupulous people had taken advantage of the situation and underpaid and underfed their natives, giving an unfortunate name to the employer.⁶⁹⁹

What happened when the labour shortages resumed was simple: labourers shunned such employers and created shortages in the process. To try and remedy the situation, attempts were made to obtain an even distribution of labour and ensure availability of adequate labour in all districts. The Supervisor of facilities for the passage of northern natives asked the Colonial Secretary for permission to make use of the police in getting information on the labour supply situation of the colony, he stated that:

⁶⁹⁷ NAZ S482/349/39/1. Extract from the President's speech at the Annual Meeting of the Chamber of Mines, Salisbury (Incorporated) held on the 26th of June 1936.

⁶⁹⁸ Memorandum by P. J. Kenworthy, the Acting Commissioner of Native Labour for the Select Committee on Native Labour, 31 December 1948.

⁶⁹⁹ NAZ S482/20/1939 Rhodesia Agricultural Union. Rhodesia Agricultural Union. Report of the proceedings of the Conference on Native labour held at Meikle's Hotel, Salisbury, on 7 June 1938.

If regular monthly reports of the labour position were received by us from police it would be possible at that port of entry to direct labour to where it is required, may also indicate a coming shortage. I would request that arrangements may be made where by every police camp in the colony, should, on the first day of each month, without fail, dispatch by post a report on the labour situation in their respective districts.⁷⁰⁰

The police made it clear that it would be very difficult for them to re-direct labour, but committed to furnishing the Supervisor with information related to the general labour position in all districts regarding shortage, surplus or adequate labour supply for miners and farmers alike.⁷⁰¹ The Native Department had failed to perform this task adequately and hence the assistance of the police was sought after. This information was sent to ports of entry and was intended to assist officials receiving labourers in distributing and redirecting labour to areas where it was needed most.

All these efforts did not yield the intended results because Southern Rhodesia's primary industries continued to experience labour shortages. More labourers who came to Southern Rhodesia were usually in transit going southward to South Africa. The situation improved after Southern Rhodesia signed a Tripartite Labour Agreement with Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia in 1937 "which guaranteed Southern Rhodesia first call on all surplus labourers for hire in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland."⁷⁰² This was followed by the 1948 Workers Migrant Act which provided a guaranteed supply of a stabilised labour force for Southern Rhodesia while Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia's labourers would in turn benefit from family remittances as well as a deferred pay system.⁷⁰³ These inter-territorial labour agreements succeeded to some extent in warding off WNLA's access to labour from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It must however be noted that even with such legal frameworks in place, clandestine migration to the Union of South Africa continued. Negotiations and amendments continued as attempts were made to make the operations of these agreements water tight.

The Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission

⁷⁰⁰ NAZ S246/696 Rhodesia Tobacco Association: Re: Facilities for Northern Natives. Letter from the Supervisor of facilities for the passage of Northern natives (Mt Darwin) to the Secretary, the Department of Colonial Secretary 22 January 1932.

⁷⁰¹ Letter from the Commissioner of Police to the Supervisor of Facilities for the Passage of northern neighbours 17 February 1932.

⁷⁰² Paton, *Labour export policy*, 117.

⁷⁰³ G. C. Phiri, 'The Southern Rhodesia 1948 Migrant Workers Act: A solution to Southern Rhodesian labour problems or a self-defeating exercise?' Masters Dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 1995, 77.

The Rhodesia Native Labour Supply Commission (RNLSC) succeeded the RNLB which had been dissolved in 1933. It was formed in 1946 under an Act of parliament and had a similar mandate to its predecessor. L. Malaba notes that its duties included, “recruitment of foreign contract labour from bordering countries and its transportation through recognised routes, distribution of the contractees to members of the organisation according to the demand.”⁷⁰⁴ Although the RNLSC was supposed to recruit labour for both farmers and miners, the Minister of Mines stated in 1948 that, since its inception, it had been recruiting for the food production industry only.⁷⁰⁵ As a result of this bias, the number of labourers employed in the mining industry fell by 10 000 in less than one year.⁷⁰⁶ This was not a healthy state of affairs especially considering the dollar earning capacity of gold in the post war period. The Minister stated that the RNLSC was supposed to act fast to avoid disaster, he noted, “This may have the effect of closing down many mines, which with a sufficient number of natives would remain in production for many years to come.”⁷⁰⁷ Arrangements were made for the stationing of a recruiting agent for the mining industry in Nyasaland so as to improve the labour supply situation on the mines.

The RNLSC was accused by mining concerns of either failure in its mandate or overtly favouring recruiting labour for farmers and neglecting miners in the process. In a letter to Huggins, Burnett noted that:

During the past ten years the mining industry has consistently employed less labour. During this period the decrease has been 20 000. During the same period the agricultural industry has gained 60 000.” In view of these figures it is doubtful whether The RNLSC has justified its existence.⁷⁰⁸

LOHNRO limited also complained over the progressive decline in the number of Africans employed in the mining sector. The company’s general manager complained to Huggins that “The labour position on six of our mines is such that we have lost some 1350 natives out of a total of 5000.”⁷⁰⁹ The loss of labour was having a negative impact on the company’s operation and required urgent attention. It seemed as though most labour was being snatched away by

⁷⁰⁴ L. Malaba, ‘Supply, control and organisation of African labour in Southern Rhodesia,’ *Review of African Political Economy*, 18 (1980), 7-28.

⁷⁰⁵ NAZ S482/126/48 Labour in Mining Industry. Memorandum by the Minister of Mines titled Native Labour, 14 October 1948.

⁷⁰⁶ Memorandum by the Minister of Mines titled Native Labour, 14 October 1948.

⁷⁰⁷ Memorandum by the Minister of Mines titled Native Labour, 14 October 1948.

⁷⁰⁸ Letter from Digby Burnett to Godfrey Huggins, 24 November 1948.

⁷⁰⁹ Letter from LONRHO limited to Godfrey Huggins, 16 November 1948.

tobacco farmers who offered higher wages than gold miners and maize producers. All this was happening in full view of the RNLSC. It was somehow failing to effect an even distribution of African labourers to all sectors, one objective that it had been formed to achieve.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how African labour, just like land and timber resources, became a subject of contestation between settler farmers and miners in Southern Rhodesia. The chapter gave an overview of the African labour situation for the two significant industries of the colonial economy and proceeded to demonstrate how funding for the RNLB sparked conflict between farmers and miners in the period under review. The chapter has elaborated on the significance of taxation in influencing state-society relations in Southern Rhodesia. By delineating government's desire to tax farmers and miners to provide funding for the RNLB, the chapter has demonstrated the centrality of taxation issues (with regards to labour) in shaping state-miner-farmer relations in Southern Rhodesia. This chapter has elaborated on the study of sectorial interests evolving in the thesis by introducing Africans who do not feature in most studies of this nature. The chapter has shifted the focus (on taxation) matters from Africans to settlers and highlighted that Europeans were also subjected to taxation which they detested and constantly challenged. The RNLB recruited labour for the country's primary industries mainly from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and preference for the sector that received more labour always shifted as demonstrated by the chapter, in response to economic circumstances prevailing at a particular time. The chapter also explored the distribution of recruited labour across the country and how an uneven distribution of labourers resulted in shortages in some districts while others were in surplus. The chapter has thus demonstrated that labour shortages in Southern Rhodesia could not be limited to merely numerical terms only, but that several factors colluded in creating labour shortages.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

This thesis has examined state-miner-farmer relations in Southern Rhodesia from 1895 to 1961. It has demonstrated how the different policies adopted by succeeding settler governments during the period 1895-1961, both responded to and shaped the sectorial interests of farmers and miners. This protean nature of state policies towards the country's foremost primary industries was informed by different circumstances that prevailed at different junctures of the country's history. The desire by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) administration to promote its commercial interests through the promotion of a mining-led economy in the early colonial period laid the foundation of miner-farmer interaction characterised by numerous contestations. The study has delineated the role of labour, political, economic and environmental policies as well as the significance of taxation in shaping the constantly shifting state-miner-farmer interaction.

The study joins a long historiographic exchange on Southern Rhodesia's political economy. It offers a fresh contribution to the more recently emergent historiographical conversation on intra-racial relations of Southern Rhodesia's settlers. It significantly contributes to the understanding of state-miner-farmer interaction and provides, for the first time, a broader analysis which takes on board economic, political as well as environmental considerations and how these impacted on the interactions of the triad. Existing literature on farmer-miner relations has been previously confined to farmer-miner contestations over the utilisation of resources such as water and timber on Gold Belt farms and how this resulted in the development of environmentalism in the colonial period. This farmer-miner tussle over resources resulted in the excessive cutting of timber and land degradation, which has been attributed largely to the farmers and miners' cupidity by such literature.⁷¹⁰ This thesis challenges this argument by arguing that the root cause of miner-farmer contestations over the utilisation of natural

⁷¹⁰ M. Musemwa, 'Contestation over resources: The farmer-miner dispute in colonial Zimbabwe, 1903-1939', *Environment and History*, 15 (2009), 79-107; V. C. Kwashirai, 'Dilemmas in conservation in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1930', *Conservation and Society*, 4, 4 (2006), 541-561 and M. Musemwa, 'Sic utere tuo ut alienam non laedas: From wanton destruction of timber forests to environmentalism: The rise of colonial environmental and sustainability practices in colonial Zimbabwe, 1938-1961', *Environment and History*, 22, 4 (2016), 521-559.

resources stemmed from the nature of the economic policy that was crafted by the BSAC administration. Subsequent government policies, dictated by prevailing economic circumstances at a given time, continued to shape farmer-miner interactions. The government's mediating role constantly shifted and significantly influenced the nature of policies which regulated farmer-miner relations up to 1961.

The study has sought to contribute to a deeper understanding of governmental systems and white settlers in Southern Rhodesia. Recent literature by R. Pilosof⁷¹¹, A. Selby⁷¹² and J. A. McKenzie⁷¹³ on this subject has concentrated on whites and their relationship with the government (both colonial and post-colonial). Such literature has laid the groundwork in understanding the interaction of white farmers and the state and its implications for the country's politics. An earlier study by M. E. Lee⁷¹⁴ disaggregated the settler community into various interest groups during the period of Company administration and how these groups contributed to a growing voice demanding Responsible Government. This thesis has, in this vein, challenged conventional wisdom on the settler debates during Company administration, as espoused by Lee, by highlighting that settler representatives actually wanted more administrative authority rather than mere representation – as presented in existing literature. A close analysis of debates in the Legislative Council during the period of Company administration reveal that settlers requested more administrative power. The thesis has also demonstrated the significance of revenue and taxation issues in the country's political agenda. The desire by the country's tax paying settlers to be granted effective control of the country's administrative affairs has challenged M. Moore's contention that taxation issues feature prominently on the political agendas of Organisation of Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) countries than they do in the south.

After the country was granted self-rule in 1923, farmers enjoyed more state support. This thesis thus makes a new historiographical contribution by discussing farmer-miner interaction and how the allegiance of the colonial state constantly shifted between the two sectors as dictated

⁷¹¹ R. Pilosof, 'The unbearable whiteness of being: White farming voices in Zimbabwe and their Narration of the recent past, c.1970-2004', PhD, University of Sheffield, 2010.

⁷¹² A. Selby, 'Commercial farmers and the state: internal group politics and land reform in Zimbabwe', PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2006.

⁷¹³ J. A. McKenzie, 'Commercial farmers in the Governmental System of Southern Rhodesia, 1963-1980', PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989.

⁷¹⁴ M. E. Lee, 'Politics and pressure groups in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1974.

by the prevailing circumstances at a given time. Using S. S. Eriksen's analysis of state formation in Southern Rhodesia, the thesis has elaborated on the nation state which emerged after 1923 and how it instituted various policies meant to enhance the country's revenue generation capacity to improve its administrative capacity. Using miner-farmer relations as a lens, the thesis has therefore presented a nation state in Southern Rhodesia which evolved over time, beginning with a Company administration which promoted selfish commercial interests. This was revealed by the promotion of pro-mining legislation which triggered farmer-miner contestations as demonstrated in Chapter Two. The emerging settler government after 1923 was preoccupied with ways of increasing the country's revenue base, a move which resulted in its clashing with miners when it levied a Gold Premium Tax (GPT) on gold producers in 1931 and again in 1939. This revenue was used to offset deficits in the agricultural sector instanced by the international economic recession that followed the Wall Street crash in 1929. The settler state also implemented a formal conservation policy by enacting the 1941 Natural Resources Act. This resulted in the promulgation of a Forest Act in 1949, which effectively incorporated miners within the reach of the conservation efforts. The thesis has shown that this was a move by the state to act as a neutral arbiter in the enduring miner-farmer dispute. The government made subsequent attempts to regulate property rights and succeeded in mediating successfully between the two sectors. The overall result of the government's adoption of a formal conservation policy was a 1961 amendment of the Mines and minerals Act which significantly lessened miner-farmer tension.

In discussing the state-farmer-miner relations the thesis began by delineating the development of Gold Belt reservations by the BSAC in the first decade of colonialism. This, together with the Company's land policies became the basis upon which the farmer-miner contestations evolved as discussed in Chapter Two. The conflict between farmers and miners, which manifested in struggles to control land, water, grazing and timber resources, was not influenced by farmers or miners greed. Rather, it was a direct result of the Company administration's policies which favoured the mining sector. Repeated calls from farmers, for a revision of the mining law, even after the adoption of a formal White Agricultural Policy in 1908, failed to yield the expected results. The position of the Company administration, as mirrored by the pro-mining legislation (as well as the idiosyncrasies of key administrative and Company officials) culminated in the maintenance of the BSAC's commercial interests. This sparked settler discontent and resulted in repeated demands for the termination of chartered rule being made

by the settlers themselves and their representatives in the Legislative Council as demonstrated in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three argued that the granting of representation to the country's settlers in the Legislative Council failed to provide a necessary check on the Company administrative system. Settlers had petitioned Rhodes to be granted political representation in the country's legislature. Although this was granted, the Company Board in London still retained authority since it had the power to ratify all political decisions made by the administration. An analysis of Legislative Council debates has shown that as early as 1900 settler representatives in the Council began calling upon the BSAC to cede more administrative power to the elected representatives. A 1903 Order in Council brought settler representation to seven elected and seven nominated members. The Administrator retained his casting vote as well as his veto power, thereby rendering the parity useless. The situation remained the same when settlers were granted majority representation in 1908 and 1914. They could not push through an amendment successfully and could not make any proposals related to financial matters. Legislative Council debates on such crucial matters as the Company's claim to land ownership and the debate on the dispute over the appropriation of revenue either to the commercial or administrative accounts all pointed to the BSAC's firm grip on the country's legislature. Elected members were mere figureheads with no power. The chapter thus examined a growing desire by the tax paying settlers to be involved in decision making. The nexus of representation, administration and taxation was examined and the chapter argued that since the settlers were contributing towards the country's revenue, they demanded real administrative authority. This desire was elaborated and sustained by such individuals as Charles Coghlan and his Responsible Government Association (RGA). This ultimately led to the granting of Responsible Government by the Imperial government as opposed to incorporation to the Union of South Africa.

The advent of settler rule in 1923 was received with mixed feelings by Southern Rhodesia's settlers. Farmers were optimistic that Coghlan's government was going to improve their condition. Mining on the other hand feared that the new settler government was going to erase all benefits accumulated by the sector during the era of Company rule. Chapter Four explored a shifting government attitude, particularly through the lens of the criticism of the Gold Belt Title clause in the country's mining law by government officials. It was also during this period that a law governing cutting of timber by mining companies in the reserves was promulgated

in 1929. A Land Apportionment Act was also enacted in 1930 and further entrenched the significance of settler farming interests in Southern Rhodesia. Coghlan's Rhodesian Party had a majority in the Council and this worked to the advantage of settler farmers. It is not surprising therefore that when the farmers were affected by the economic recession in the 1930s they received unprecedented state support through various lending schemes. Ironically, the state failed to extend such aid and support to gold miners in the period 1939 to 1945 when the sector reeled under the effect of the Gold Premium Tax (GPT). The Minister of Mines and the Prime Minister stated at one point in 1941 that it was not the intention of the state to use revenue generated by agriculture to finance mining companies that were under strain. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, it was the gold mining sector which had provided fiscal stability when agricultural products were being sold at a loss in the 1930s. In this regard, the state's policies almost "killed the goose" which had, all along "laid golden eggs." The chapter argued that the fiscal policies pursued by government obstructed and ultimately halted development work at mining companies. Most of these ceased operations during the World War II period leading to a massive decline in gold production by 1945. Towards the end of the war, the Minister of Mines acknowledged that the country's policies had contributed immensely towards the deteriorating state of gold mining. He advocated for policy changes such as the scrapping of the GPT as an attempt to restore gold mining to its former glory.

The GPT had been introduced first in 1931 following a rise in the international price of gold. Gold mining companies were making enormous profits and the state turned towards the sector as it sought ways of restoring fiscal stability in the wake of the economic recession. The price of gold continued to rise while agriculture, which had had a fitful experience from the early 1920s, suffered a blow when commodity prices soured to unprecedented levels in 1929. Maize, tobacco and cattle farmers were operating at a loss. As illustrated in Chapter Four, losses made in the agriculture sector were offset by revenue from other sectors particularly gold mining which was still generating most of the country's revenue. This tax reduced gold mining profits considerably. Mining companies contested this unfair fiscal practice. They were against the idea of the tax being charged on the mining sector alone while farmers, who were not being taxed, actually received state subsidies after promulgation of such legislation as the Maize Control Act (1931) and its amendment (1934). Evidence collected by Commissions of Inquiry (1936 and 1945) on the impact of the GPT on gold mining singled out the tax as the chief culprit which caused the decline in gold production, especially for companies working low grade ore deposits.

Mining companies campaigned vigorously against the GPT but they failed to convince the government to make a policy shift. The tax was only withdrawn in 1937 when prices for agricultural commodities had slightly improved. Miners got a two-year reprieve before the tax was reintroduced on the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Gold prices on the international market increased and gold was more profitable. Government responded by reintroducing the tax on gold produced, leaving a very small profit for the miners. Both small miners and big mining companies resisted and petitioned the government to lower the tax since it was destroying gold production. Such calls did not yield a positive result as the government was bent on getting money to finance the war effort. A Royalty Review Committee which had been formed to assess mining companies that applied to be exempted from paying the GPT failed to assist miners that were in real need of this exemption. It was criticised by mining companies and labelled as a government's ploy to create jobs for its faithful allies. One example of an organisation formed to resist what it termed "gold theft" was the Freedom Press. It was vocal and criticised the government's move of taxing the mining industry and failing to extend relief schemes as was done for the burgeoning commercial agricultural sector when it was under strain during the Great Depression.

Using the example of the Maize Control Act, Chapter Four has thus demonstrated that miners were against the relief measures and subsidies extended to farmers who were under strain from the economic recession in the 1930s. The mining sector was a major consumer of maize and most big mining companies had all along produced their own maize to feed mine labourers. This privilege was reversed by the Maize Control Act which forced miners to buy their maize requirements through the newly created Maize Control Board at higher prices. This move was challenged by miners and they considered it as an indirect form of taxation on the mining sector that was intended to help farmers. Miners, especially small workers, protested against a fee that was levied for cattle slaughtered in the country. This was meant to keep the country's stock raisers in business during the depression.

The chapter has thus examined the how state policy towards the two sectors changed reactively (rather than proactively) as a response to prevailing circumstances. Meanwhile, the farmer-miner dispute over timber resources raged on. Continued farmer agitation had resulted in the government amending the Mines and Minerals Act in 1935 awarding farmers on the Gold Belt 50 per cent wood reservation for agricultural use. Miners and farmers' conferences held in

1933, 1935 and in 1937 were characterised by heated arguments as farmers, miners and the state quarrelled over the manner in which the state was dealing with all the highlighted issues. Overall, the chapter argued that the treatment of farmers by the state had improved significantly when compared to the pre-1923 period.

The era of formal conservation in Southern Rhodesia reshaped state-farmer-miner relations as demonstrated in Chapter Five. Timber remained a crucial source of fuel for the mining and agricultural industries alike. Although electricity generation had improved after 1945, it remained expensive and beyond the reach of many mining companies and tobacco farmers. Timber cutting by both farmers and miners therefore remained a major cause of deforestation. The mining law promulgated by the Company administration had set a precedent of quarrelling between farmers and miners. Miners were, by this time, still considering unlimited access to wood as a prior right. The Forest Act which was passed in 1949 in the context of the Natural Resources Act of 1941, created the Mining Timber Permit Board (MTPB) to regulate timber cutting for mining purposes. Although it faced operational constraints in the initial days, it later on devised a monitoring system which, for the first time in the country's history, tried to control wood cutting by miners. It was surprising though that this Board did not have any farmers on it (yet it was intended to control wood cutting on the farms). The only existing source which deals directly with the MTPB and its implications for white settlers, discusses how it regulated wood cutting by miners. This chapter goes beyond this approach and demonstrates how its operations shaped the contours of contestation between these key settler groups. The incorporation of mining men on the Intensive Conservation Area Committees (ICACs) as well as the creation of the Minerals Resources Committee (MRC) were key state initiatives devised to deal with miner-farmer clashes. Other scholars have discussed the consequences of the Forest Act on Africans who lived on areas that were designated as forest reserves. The chapter adds a new dimension to this literature by exploring the impact of the Forest Act on Southern Rhodesia's settler society, highlighting how it created a conducive atmosphere for the resolution of farmer-miner conflicts.

Chapter Five has shown how the colonial state attempted to regulate property rights through trying to minimise conflicts between farmers and miners and de-escalate chief triggers like the refusal of right of access to miners on some farms. This had been a controversial issue since the early colonial period and preceding governments had failed to find a lasting solution to the problem. Structural changes in the country's economy had brought new challenges that added

another dimension to the on-going conflicts. Base minerals mining registered significant growth during World War II, inspired by growing demands for base metals used in the manufacture of armaments. The methods of extraction and the claim sizes were all different from gold mining. Claims for base minerals were more extensive. Continued exploration and exploitation of more base minerals claims was criticised by farmers who argued that the practice was taking up more land that could have been used for agriculture. It therefore became imperative to determine the mineral or agricultural significance of a particular area before mining was commenced. The government created a Working Party made up of members from the mining and agricultural industries to draft possible remedies to this problem. It was through the working relationship between the two sectors and the compromises made by the Working Party which provided the basis of an amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act in 1961.

Farmers and miners did not clash over the exploitation of land and timber resources alone. Chapter Six has sought to demonstrate that the two groups also clashed over access to African labour. By discussing this conflict over labour, the thesis has brought Africans, who all along were missing from the scene. As discussed in Chapter Three, settlers (mostly farmers and traders) requested administrative authority to be extended to them since they were contributing towards the country's revenue. Africans also paid different taxes but were not even granted any form of political representation. Rather, they were used as labourers to prop up the mining, agriculture as well as secondary industry development in the country. Chapter Six demonstrated how funding for the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) became a source of conflict between the farmers and miners until it was terminated in 1933. In this regard, the chapter has shown how taxation had the capacity to spark revolt even amongst settlers. The chapter has used the 1925 conference as a case-study to demonstrate the divisions between farmers and miners over use and access to labour. More labour came from the northern territories and it was a difficult task to channel it to areas where it was needed most because of a combination of factors discussed in the chapter. The direction and distribution of labour was considered until 1953. Circumstances had changed during the Federation period. Labour was no longer in short supply as shown by influx control measures that were put in place to limit the influx of labour from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The thesis has thus provided a broader yet more nuanced coverage of state-farmer miner relations in Southern Rhodesia. In this regard, the thesis has made a useful contribution, to prior histories on Southern Rhodesia on this period and topic which privilege political economy

and environmental concerns, by focusing on the centrality of taxation and offering new insights on intra-settler studies. It has shown that the relationship of the three was not static but was ever-changing as dictated by political and economic circumstances at particular moments. Further research on the subject should be conducted for the period starting from 1961 to 1980. Research of this nature is crucial since it would cover the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period and the rule of Ian Smith's party. The British Government sought non-violent ways to end UDI and adopted a policy of economic sanctions. These were calculated to disrupt economic activity, so as to breed dissension and dissatisfaction in the white demographic, who would then compel a return to the negotiating table to move towards a more mutually tolerable form of self-government. Under such sanctions, however, Rhodesia's minerals still found their way onto the international market.⁷¹⁵ Research on how farmers and miners were involved in sanctions busting and the position of the state will make a useful contribution to historiography. Again, this was the time of the liberation war in the country. Many European farmers died in the war, and some areas were cordoned off, halting farming and mining enterprise in the process. Research of the subject in this period will surely break ground on new historical seams.

⁷¹⁵ R. Coggins: "Wilson and Rhodesia: UDI and British policy towards Africa", *Contemporary British History*, 20, 3, 2006, 363-381.

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