

Sir William Milton: a leading figure in Public School Games, Colonial Politics and Imperial Expansion, 1877-1914

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*Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at
Stellenbosch University*



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March 2013

Declaration

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March 2013

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Abstract

This investigation is aimed at providing a better understanding of William Milton's influence on society in southern Africa over a period of more than thirty years. In the absence of any previous detailed work, it will serve to demonstrate Milton's importance in restructuring the administration, formulating policy and imposing social barriers in early Rhodesia – factors that will contribute to the research undertaken by revisionist writers. It will also go some way towards answering Lord Blake's call to discover exactly what the Administrator did and how he did it.

Milton's experiences at the Cape are seen as being essential to an understanding of the administration he established in Rhodesia. Through examining this link – referred to by historians but not as yet explored in detail – new knowledge will be provided on Rhodesia's government in the pre-First World War period. The Cape years will offer insight into Milton's working relationship with Rhodes and his involvement in the latter's vision of the region's social form and future. They will also shed light on Milton's attitude towards people of colour.

Cricket and rugby are key themes running through Milton's life. The study will illuminate much about the creation of South African sport at a time when the public school games ethic was important in the nature of empire. Milton made an enormous but controversial contribution to the playing of the games, club culture, facilities, administration, international competition and who was eligible to represent South Africa.

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Preface and Acknowledgements

‘Where a score or so of our sons are found there is found cricket,’ observed the famous writer, Anthony Trollope, in a publication that he edited in 1868 and entitled *British Sports and Pastimes*.¹ It was a year in which W.G. Grace played possibly his finest innings – 134, all run, for Gentlemen against Players on a dreadful pitch at Lord’s – and Aboriginal workers from Wimmera sheep stations made history as the first cricketers from Australia to undertake an official tour of England. It was also the year that one of Trollope’s relatives – thirteen-year-old William Henry Milton – entered Marlborough College. In time, the young Milton demonstrated ability in sport and probably read Trollope’s book. It is a publication that provides interesting comment on the period, although Milton might have been surprised to discover that football was not included. According to Trollope, the game was ‘without an acknowledged code ... we by no means grudge to football the name it has won itself, but it has hardly as yet worked its way up to a dignity equal with that of hunting and shooting, or even with that of cricket and boat-racing’.²

It is well known that team games gained in popularity in the latter part of the nineteenth century, largely because of the input of the public schools. Headmasters believed that the culture of athleticism not only instilled discipline and produced ‘gentlemen’, but helped train men for the purpose of serving Britain overseas. It was through the medium of games at Marlborough that Milton learnt many Victorian virtues and the basic requirements of imperial command. His headmaster in his last years, Dean Farrar, saw the educational value of sport in ‘playing out tenaciously to the very last a losing game, ready to accept defeat but trying to the very end to turn it to victory.’³ Milton would be groomed to fit the mould of colonial recruit and, several years after leaving school, he joined the influential movement of young men from public school and ancient university who maintained and developed the Empire. They settled in distant outposts where, says Richard Holt in *Sport and the British*, their games were ‘not so much a luxury as a necessity, a means of maintaining morale and a sense of shared roots, of Britishness, of lawns and tea and things familiar’.⁴

Central to this dissertation is an investigation into the role played by Milton in the global diffusion of British ball games during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the Cape, his sporting prowess made an immediate impact on both cricket and rugby, whilst his

¹ Anthony Trollope (ed.), *British Sports and Pastimes*, London, 1868, 290

² Trollope, *British Sports and Pastimes*, 2-3

³ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford, 98

⁴ Holt, *Sport and the British*, 208

administrative qualities gained the attention of the British colonial political and sporting elite. Milton emerged as the dominant personality at the Western Province Cricket Club, from where he controlled a game that served as a potent symbol of exclusivity. It was on the club's behalf that he organised the first tour by an English team, an enterprise which promoted the concept of Empire but also reinforced his understanding of sport's potential value for identity-building. This latter development became clearly apparent when arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes paved the way for Milton to head British expansion into the northern hinterland. As Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, Milton recruited sportsmen for public office; established playing facilities; chaired sports' committees and used his influence to safeguard the future of the imperial games through structuring white education along the lines of the English public school system.

In order to understand the part Milton played in the dissemination of the games ethic, it is necessary to situate it within both southern African history and the broader imperial and global context. In the countries where Britain wielded her greatest authority – namely those that constituted her Empire – it was cricket and rugby that were seen to prevail. They were the games that would give rise to the lengthy tours and keenly anticipated 'Tests' involving the mother country and her dominions. Cricket made an early start, owing its existence in far-flung territories to sailors, soldiers and settlers amongst others. A match was played in the port of Cambay in 1721, with the first cricket club outside Britain being formed in Calcutta in 1792⁵. The game went on to make deep inroads into the Australian way of life and it was said in 1832 that no gentleman there 'could expect to "dangle at a lady's apron strings" unless he could boast of his cricket prowess.'⁶ At the same time, 'meanings attached to games varied from place to place according to racial and political divisions and aspirations'.⁷ Sports historian, Jeff Hill, points to many cases where 'the initiative came from indigenous people themselves eager to modernise their own societies and seeing in British sports a mark of modernity and progress.'⁸ Rugby might not have succeeded in India – (the Calcutta Cup serves as an intriguing reminder of the game having been played in that part of the world) – but cricket was ever present. Recent research disputes the traditional view that 'for many

⁵ Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*, London, 2002, 3

⁶ J.Pollard, *The Formative Years of Australian Cricket, 1803-1843*, quoted in in *American Sociological Review*, February 2005, Volume 70

⁷ Holt, *Sport and the British*, 227

⁸ Jeff Hill, *The International Diffusion of Modern Sport*, De Montfort University 'Sports History and Culture' lecture notes, 2007

years the game excited no more than idle curiosity among the indigenous population'.⁹ Ramachandra Guha points out in *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*: 'It appears that in the beginning the British had no intention of teaching the natives to play cricket ... the Indian might roll the pitch or serve the whisky. He might even watch cricket and (at a price) retrieve the ball or throw it for the sahibs to bat back. He was not expected to play the game. But he would.'¹⁰

It is possible that cricket was introduced to southern Africa soon after the British first succeeded the Dutch at the Cape in 1795. Charles Anguish, an old Etonian, who arrived in May 1797, had played for Surrey in 1791 and Middlesex in 1794, but there is no record of his playing at the Cape. The Batavian Republic gained control in 1803 and it would seem that cricket did not gain a foothold at the Cape until after the British returned in 1806. Advertisements relating to the game appeared in the *Cape Town Gazette* in 1808 and 1810, with early fixtures involving military teams and sometimes local civilian combinations. In the first part of the nineteenth century, said historian, Basil A. le Cordeur, Britain 'increasingly felt the need to make over her new possession "in her own image", to adjust the alien laws, customs and institutions to the realities of British rule'. The aim was 'not merely a nationalistic urge' but to build an improved form of government. Although the British did not wish to alienate Dutch-speaking subjects who had first settled at the Cape in 1652, steps were taken to 'encourage or compel the use of the English language in most spheres of public life'. By the 1850s, many families from Dutch-speaking backgrounds in the Western Cape had become 'closely identified with British ways of life, culture and traditions'.¹¹ They produced some fine cricketers, especially when the game spread to farming communities in the outlying districts.

'Cricket,' said Jack Williams, 'was intertwined with the Empire'. He went on to describe the game as one that embodied the Victorian self-image of 'a race having a natural moral capacity that made it uniquely fitted for the exercise of imperial power'. To its credit and despite 'non-white' cricketers being rare, there was no colour bar in Victorian England 'equivalent to that of baseball in the United States'.¹² Yet in sport, argued Derek Birley, the Victorians were divided, 'making an enormous fuss' about the class distinctions between amateurs and professionals. 'The MCC,' he added, 'displayed a complacent superiority ...

⁹ R. Roberts and D. Rutnagur, 'India', in E. Swanton (ed.), *Barclays World of Cricket*, London, 1980, 79

¹⁰ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, 11

¹¹ Basil A. le Cordeur, 'The Occupation of the Cape, 1795-1854', in Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies (eds.), *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1986, 86-87

¹² Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race*, Oxford, 2001, 1, 17, 18

with the help of extra large doses of hypocrisy [which] had a lot to do with the Graces and W.G. in particular'.¹³ David Frith concluded that cricket 'could never bring about any real fusion of species' during the latter part of the nineteenth century. 'Class distinctions held firm,' he wrote, 'in cricket as in real life.'¹⁴

Settlers from England arrived in southern Africa with contrasting views as to how they wished to contribute to society. Some attempted to replicate known values in their new home towns. John Honey noted that 'all the leading boys' private schools – "Bishops", St Andrew's, St John's, Michaelhouse, Hilton – were founded in conscious imitation of the English model', adding, 'No less significant is the "colonisation" of government schools by men identified with public school ideals'¹⁵. Pupils were taught to respect the rules of the game and 'of playing life with a straight bat'¹⁶. Participation in the imperial games led to the establishment of clubs, some serving as retreats in maintaining morale for small, widespread white communities. The Western Province Cricket Club was formed in 1864 and modelled on England's Marylebone Cricket Club 'to whom cricketers from all over the world were expected to defer'.

There were also those emigrants who travelled far 'to escape the class structure of the old country'.¹⁷ They merged with colonial communities – sometimes in mixed cricket teams of black and white players – to play the games with no less enthusiasm in a beautiful climate. They might well have shared the opinions of the well-known journalist and South African cricketer, Charles Finlason. He wrote frequently of his dislike for the 'new chum'; the Englishman 'who looked down upon locals and persisted in 'making comparisons between the colony and home very much against the former'.¹⁸ Finlason challenged British notions of 'fair play' in an era, said Birley, when the representatives of the Mother Country thought 'it was an inversion of the natural order of things if they did not win' and that it was 'not entirely necessary always to behave well towards colonials'.¹⁹

Birley wrote of 'British settlers who here and there tried to teach [cricket] to the Boers, though not of course to the native population'.²⁰ He appeared to overlook the teachers and

¹³ Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, London, 1995, 107

¹⁴ David Frith, *The Golden Age of Cricket 1890-1914*, London, 1978, 12

¹⁵ J.R.DeS. Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, Grahamstown, 1972, 10

¹⁶ Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket*, Pietermaritzburg, 2004, 13

¹⁷ Holt, *Sport and the British*, 232

¹⁸ Jonty Winch, *England's Youngest Captain: The Life and Times of Monty Bowden and two South African Journalists*, Windsor, 2003, 98-106; *Daily Independent*, 1 May 1890

¹⁹ Derek Birley, *The Willow Wand: Some Cricket Myths Explored*, London, 2000, 89-90

²⁰ Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, 148

clergymen who took over from army officers in spreading the games cult to communities across a vast land. According to John Nauright, 'Modern sports became part of a culture and respectability among African elites ... [who] used sport to establish their *bona fides* and to set themselves apart from the masses'.²¹ The imperial games were taught in the mission schools in the Cape – 'by 1885 there were over 15 000 Africans being educated'²² – with Reverend Charles Taberer encouraging black pupils at his Keiskamma Hoek school to play alongside his sons, Henry (later a South African cricket captain and British Barbarian rugby player) and Sonny (who became a South African rugby international and Rhodesian cricketer). 'By enthusiastically playing the most gentlemanly and Victorian of games,' says André Odendaal of early black sportsmen, 'they intended to demonstrate their ability to adopt and assimilate European culture and behave like gentlemen – and by extension to show their fitness to be accepted as full citizens in Cape society.'²³

Politically, economically and socially, there was considerable change in southern Africa in the latter part of the century. The establishment of the diamond fields in the late 1860s strengthened the economy of the Cape Colony and responsible self-government was instituted in 1872. There was a locally-elected parliament with a non-racial system of voting. Its first prime-minister, John Molteno, was nevertheless powerless to prevent the British colonial secretary, Lord Carnarvon, from pursuing his stated aim to bring about a confederated southern Africa under the British flag. The initiative led by Sir Bartle Frere saw the region 'plunged into a series of bloody wars from which it took long to recover'.²⁴ The Transvaal Republic was annexed in 1877 – 'making every Dutchman in the Cape Colony, as well as in the Republics, a suspicious, distrustful man'²⁵ – whilst the Africans were defeated in Natal and the Eastern Cape. The visit to Cape Town in 1879 of the Boer leaders, Paul Kruger and General Piet Joubert, drew attention to their cause with the situation gaining momentum

²¹ S.W. Pope and John Nauright (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, Abingdon, 2012, 323

²² Pope and Nauright (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, 322

²³ André Odendaal, *South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, race and class in South Africa before Union in Africa Perspective*, Vol 1, Nos 7 and 8, 1989, 78; Odendaal *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of one of Cricket's Greatest Myths, South Africa, 1850-2003*, Cape Town, 2003, 35

²⁴ Jan H. Hofmeyr with F.W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, Cape Town, 1913, 145-46. According to J.H. Hofmeyr, a powerful leader of the Dutch-speaking people during the 1880s, 'if [Frere] had dared less he would have spared himself many a disappointment: The Zulu War would not have taken place, and he would have turned fewer Transvaal friends into enemies' (Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, 172)

²⁵ Phyllis Lewsen (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X. Merriman 1870-1890* (Cape Town, 1960), 67.

through the War of Independence that ‘sparked off the fire of ethnic nationalism among Cape Afrikaners’.²⁶ It seemed as if ‘the politically sluggish Western Cape had thus wakened from inertia to action’.²⁷

Molteno believed that any attempt to achieve confederation would have to come gradually from within and not be imposed from London. The moderate newly-formed Afrikaner Bond under J.H. (‘Onze Jan’) Hofmeyr expressed its desire to facilitate the creation of a unified white nation, an aim it shared with the arch-imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes. The period in which they operated followed the Witwatersrand gold rush that began in 1886, and was one of dramatic transformation as there was a great need to secure cheap black labour for the mines. ‘The mineral discoveries,’ said historian, Shula Marks, were ‘crucial in the shaping of modern South Africa and the peculiarities of its social order’.²⁸ The Rhodes-Afrikaner Bond coalition which gained control of the Cape government ‘found common cause on the need to exclude all Africans from political power’. In doing so, wrote Saul Dubow, they ‘sought to foreclose on the liberal promise that colour should not of itself constitute a bar to full membership of society’.²⁹

The changing nature of Cape politics occurred at a time when the sportsmen of southern Africa were in the process of forming administrative bodies and arranging international tours. The coalition’s move towards segregated sport naturally affected a tradition whereby black and white cricketers had been free to play with and against one another. The increasingly influential Afrikaner Bond endeavoured to weaken imperial interference at the Cape, a development that impacted on the Western Province Cricket Club’s desire to keep its ‘own little England intact’³⁰ and loosened its grip on the game. ‘Sport did not directly influence politics,’ wrote Jon Gemmell. ‘Cricket was at the whim of the dominant economic and political forces.’³¹ Nevertheless, a complex relationship developed between cricket and society, with the game playing a role in the dissemination of imperial ideas and providing a

²⁶ Mordechai Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump*, Abingdon, 1996, 37

²⁷ John Benyon, ‘The Cape Colony, 1854-1881’ in Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies (eds.), *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1986, 170.

²⁸ Shula Marks, ‘Class, Culture and Consciousness in South Africa, 1880-1899’ in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager, and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 102

²⁹ Saul Dubow, ‘South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship’ in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager, and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 32

³⁰ See James Morris, *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire*, London, 1968, 146

³¹ See Jon Gemmell, *The Politics of South African Cricket*, London, 2004, 21-33

window on the way those living in southern Africa coped with social, economic and political changes in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

An intriguing feature of society during this period is ‘the significance and fluidity of the main individuals involved’. There was an ‘extraordinary direct involvement in both cricket and politics by the same tiny group of imperialists, white colonists, Africans, coloureds and Indians who, in shaping the cricketing domain, also fashioned the political relations of the subcontinent’.³² In this critical formative period, William Milton was a powerful figure in Cape cricket. He headed the administration; captained the provincial and national sides, arranged the first tours to the country; oversaw the beginning of the first-class game in southern Africa; shouldered responsibility for the establishment of Newlands, and influenced the formation of national and provincial bodies. His growing reputation as an administrator brought him into contact with the Cape’s leading politicians, Rhodes and Hofmeyr. The unlikely alliance had a marked impact on the future of sport in southern Africa. Their influence meant that cricket would not only be ‘integrally linked to the spread of British colonisation and social Darwinism at the height of imperial expansion’³³ but would also fall under the spell of the Afrikaner Bond at a crucial stage of the game’s development in southern Africa.

Milton’s transition from cricket administrator to political leader is significant in the light of Williams’s argument that ‘the sportsmanship of cricket and the nature of cricket as a sport of the empire helped to persuade the white English that they could be trusted to exercise authority over other races in a reasonable and selfless manner’.³⁴ Interestingly, Gemmell comments that ‘the rules of cricket, although framed in a previous age, came to reflect a new society founded on the principle of law’. In support of this assessment, he quotes Dean Farrar as claiming: ‘no one can be a good cricketer ... who does not attend to the rules’.³⁵ Milton, who was deeply conscious of the ethics and values of cricket, was influenced by Farrar and Marlborough. Yet his sense of ‘fair play’ would to an extent be shaped by prevailing assumptions of the moral and physical superiority of the white English race; views reinforced through the argument that ‘social distances were considered an important and integral part of

³² Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009, vii and 5

³³ André Odendaal (foreword) in Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009, xv

³⁴ Williams, *Cricket and Race*, 16

³⁵ Gemmell, *The Politics of South African Cricket*, 37; Gary Whannel, *Blowing the Whistle: The Politics of Sport*, London, 1983, 81

maintaining order'.³⁶ Preoccupation with class which created the amateur-professional divide in England would appear in racial form at the Cape, with Milton taking the lead role in imposing segregated sport.

All the while that he was involved in rugby and cricket, Milton was establishing a career as a civil servant. He worked for thirty-seven years in his chosen pursuit, a period divided into two almost equal parts. The first half spent at the Cape saw Milton move rapidly through the ranks in an occupation that Lord Robert Blake thought would be considered by 'most of us dull'. The problem with civil servants, wrote Blake when examining Milton's period as Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, is that 'a convention of anonymity makes it difficult to discover exactly what they did and how they did it'. Blake questioned the role they played, noting that 'Dr Johnson wrote the *Lives of the Poets*, Lord Campbell the *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, Samuel Smiles the *Lives of the Engineers*, but no one has ever tried to write the "Lives of the Civil Servants".' He points to 'important functionaries, such as Sir Robert Menzies, Sir Warren Fisher [and] Lord Bridges', who, he says, 'have probably done more to shape events than almost any other category of person'

In recognising the powerful position which Milton held in the country now known as Zimbabwe, Blake observed the need to discover exactly what the Administrator did and how he did it.³⁷ My investigation into Milton's role, both in Rhodesia and in the evolution of southern African society, seeks to fill a major historiographical gap. No significant piece has been written on his work. A book on Milton's life is the glaring omission in the impressive range of publications produced for a Rhodesiana Reprint Library that comprises some 120 titles. References to Milton are generally of a fragmentary nature although useful information is gleaned from reading traditional histories and biographies. Robin Palmer, an academic predominantly in southern Africa, expressed concern that there is 'no single study of the important Milton administration'.³⁸ And of his period at the Cape, it was noted in Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.) *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (2009) that he 'loomed large over South African cricket', yet no chapter is devoted to him.³⁹

I have endeavoured to recapture systematically the key stages of Milton's life in order to account for the influence that he had on society in South Africa and then Rhodesia. The opening chapter details Milton's background, highlighted by the Trollope connection and

³⁶ Brian Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism and the Colonial Response to the British Empire' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (4), 662

³⁷ Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 147-48

³⁸ Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, California 1977, 74

³⁹ Murray and Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket*, 7

close ties with the church. The extensive research into the family's history by Victoria Glendinning (1992) and Pamela Neville-Sington (1997)⁴⁰ proved most helpful. Their work also went some way towards explaining why Lord Blake thought Milton had 'something of a middle-class chip on his shoulder'.⁴¹ That the Rev William Milton had a position in the church was in fact advantageous in that it enabled his son to attend Marlborough College and go on to fulfil his talents as a sportsman. Furthermore, as a former public schoolboy trained in the period virtues of the games-field, Milton could in 1877 be seen as a suitable candidate for an administrative role in serving the Empire. His progress is referred into in *The Marlburian* whilst I also gained illumination from A.G. Bradley, A.C. Champneys and J.W. Baines, *A History of Marlborough College during fifty years from its foundation to the present time* (1893) and Reginald Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., Etc., Sometime Dean of Canterbury* (1904).

Milton has been frequently noted as having persuaded the Cape to play rugby. An early task in my research was to ascertain the extent of his involvement. My findings led to an article, 'Unlocking the Cape Code: Establishing British Football in South Africa', which was published in *Sport in History* (Routledge, 2010). It prompted a welcome exchange of ideas with Professor Floris van der Merwe who had also entered the period in his research. My version forms the major part of the second chapter of Milton's story. I should mention that Ivor Difford's *The History of South African Rugby Football 1875-1932* (1933) has much interesting detail, but it is a series of newspaper articles over a period of nearly twenty years, as well as Frederick York St Leger's interest in the game as part of his campaign for 'Englishness', that bring the story together. The chapter introduces some of the leading administrators in Cape sport who, with Milton at the forefront, promoted imperial ideologies of the power of the British race, and of masculinity expressed through sporting prowess. These developments in the late nineteenth century are further examined in the course of chapters three to six but with an emphasis on cricket. The imperial games engendered a national spirit as efforts were made to unite the territories, but they also had a divisive influence in reinforcing rigidly distinct racial identities.

Milton's spent nineteen years at the Cape where he was able to mix politics and sport as part of a broader ideology, one which secured him a position of prominence in South Africa. I became increasingly aware that sports historians had failed to note that it was Milton's association with Rhodes and the Cape government which shaped the direction that South African sport would take. I first published details of this development in *Cricket in Southern*

⁴⁰ Pamela Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope: The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman*, London, 1997 and Victoria Glendinning, *Trollope*, London, 1992

⁴¹ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 116

Africa: two hundred years of achievements and records (1997) and expanded upon it in *England's Youngest Captain: the life and times of Monty Bowden and two South African journalists* (2003). I renewed my research on Milton in *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (2009) but have since questioned the unrestricted power he seemed to have in controlling the South African game. Who was backing him? Rhodes's interest in cricket seemed limited. In the last two years, I broadened my research to include the 1870s and 1880s. It enabled me to gain a better understanding of the manner in which cricket at the Cape evolved, most notably in the Afrikaner Bond's impact on the interaction of games with the region's political and social developments.

In embarking on this additional research I was most interested in Mordechai Tamarkin's (1996) *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump* and Vivian Bickford-Smith's *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice 1875-1902* (1995). Other publications that were particularly helpful included T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911* (1966); Jan H. Hofmeyr with F.W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)* (1913); Anthony Trollope, *South Africa (Volume I)* (2005) and Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994* (2011). In addition, there is a growing body of published work relating to the political, economic and social history of South African sport.

The second part of Milton's extended sojourn in southern Africa began in 1896 when he was called to Rhodesia to overhaul the civil service. His remarkable progress is outlined in chapters seven to ten. He arrived at a critical time in the country's history, a situation which I examined in the course of researching a paper that was presented to the annual Scolma Conference at the National Archives, Kew, London in 2011. Entitled 'Cricket and War in early Rhodesia, 1890-97', it was published in *African Research and Documentation – Journal of SCOLMA* (2011). For Milton, events moved rapidly in the four years after his arrival in Rhodesia, as the entire administrative establishment was unified in his hands. Historians have made general references to a northward expansion of the Cape but have not as yet questioned the methods by which Milton operated. His support for a games-inclined civil service makes for an interesting comparison with the Sudanese *corps d'élite* established by Lord Cromer. Milton's trusted sporting associates might have been employed to impose his – or Rhodes's – ideals on the colonial population, but he also believed in sport's potential value in shaping the hegemonic national identity that he desired and institutionalised through clubs which symbolised social and political domination.

The chapters covering Milton's administration in Rhodesia have taken advantage of the general histories as well as publications by historians of note. Robert Blake's *A History of Rhodesia* (1977) stands out amidst the early works of Lewis Gann, A.J. Hanna, Philip Mason,

Claire Palley, Terence Ranger, Ethel Tawse Jolie and H.C. Thomson, as well as more recent publications such as those by Arthur Keppel-Jones, Peter Baxter and Tony Tanser. I found myself consulting Charles van Onselen's *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia* (1976) and Robin Palmer's *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (1977) with great regularity. Further viewpoints were gleaned from African writers (such as Dickson Mungazi, James A. Chamunorwa, Mutambirwa and James Muzondidya), 'revisionist' writers (Carol Summers and Michael O. West); biographies/ autobiographies and creative texts which shaped people's views of life at various times. Publications related to Rhodes have been important (particularly Robert I. Rotberg's *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, 1988) as have works on an educational system which recalls the government seeking to secure the interests of colonists whilst attending to the moral duty of hastening the pace of African development. Here, I have used Norman Atkinson's *Teaching Rhodesians: A History of Educational Policy in Rhodesia* (1972), in addition to school and Books of Zimbabwe histories.

Insofar as Milton's involvement in sport was concerned, I was able to a limited extent to draw on my previous work, namely *Rhodesia Rugby: a history of the national side 1898-1979* (1979); *Cricket's Rich Heritage: a history of Rhodesian and Zimbabwean cricket 1890-1982* (1983) and *Zimbabwe Rugby Centenary 1895-1995* (1995). Prior to these publications, Jock Thompson wrote a general history of early Rhodesian sport up to 1935. The books contribute to an understanding of Rhodesian society but do not place the games clearly in political context, doing no more than indirectly reflecting hegemony, ethnocentricity and the influence of late Victorian moralistic ideology. I was therefore pleased to further my understanding of these issues in the course of an M.A. dissertation at De Montfort University's International Centre for Sports History and Culture (2007). I was fortunate to work under some of the foremost historians in the field, with my work leading to an award for the best article in *Sport and History* (Routledge) in 2008: "'There Were a Fine Manly Lot of Fellows": Cricket, Rugby and Rhodesian Society during William Milton's Administration, 1896-1914'.

Throughout my research, extensive use was made of newspapers from various parts of southern Africa and overseas. The British Newspaper Library at Colindale was able to provide virtually all the Rhodesian, South African and British newspapers required for the period studied. The National Libraries at Cape Town and Pretoria, and the Johannesburg Municipal Library (with its wonderful collection of cricket publications) were of great assistance. I made use of selected minutes from the South African Rugby Board files which are currently held at De Aar, and visited the William Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand in order to consult the minute books of the South African Cricket Association. The latter begin in 1898 but I also collected detailed newspaper reports of all South African Cricket Association meetings from the inaugural gathering in 1890 onwards. It is not

surprising that newspaper reporters were considered ideal secretaries for sporting committees, with writers such as Charles Finlason, Harry Cadwallader and E.J.L. Platnauer providing wonderful detail.

A principal mode of investigation was archival research, where I made use of deposits located at the National Archives, Zimbabwe, as well as some in South Africa and England. The staff members at the Harare-based Archives have in recent years laboured under difficult conditions and this has created problems. The descriptive catalogue of the Milton Papers in the Historical Manuscripts Collection states that there are 354 folios of personal correspondence (Archives reference MI 1/1/2), many of which are to his wife. Unfortunately, over 200 are missing. The donation included just one letter before 1896 – from 1884 – but this has been mislaid. Fortunately, some of the missing folios are described in the catalogue so researchers are at least able to obtain brief notes. The official archives of the Administrator's Office and the Native Department contain a huge amount of material. In this regard I was able to consult the *Guide to the Public Archives of Rhodesia 1890-1923* edited by TW Baxter (Salisbury, National Archives, 1969), a copy of which exists at the National Library in Cape Town. I also made use of IJ Johnstone's *Guide to Zimbabwe-related Documentation in Britain* (Harare, National Archives, 1985). I contacted Ian Johnstone and am most grateful for his expert advice and assistance.

Working on an earlier M-Net sponsored project on the 'Reconciliation of Sport in South Africa' had given me an idea of relevant material available in the Cape Archives and various libraries. More recently, the secretary of the Western Province Cricket Club kindly allowed me access to their minutes which date back to 1876. I was fortunate in that the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Province Cricket Association, André Odendaal, facilitated the opportunity to study Les Moults' scrapbooks at his Newlands office. Moults used the *Cape Argus* to build up an interesting record of Western Province cricket – by coincidence I also corresponded with his son-in-law, Phil Hartmann who is engaged in a history of the Cape Town Cricket Club. The current President of the Club, Terry Wallace, spoke to me about developments which have taken place at his club and the Western Province CC, both having left their respective bases at Newlands.

I looked forward to visiting the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford. The Archivist, Lucy McCann, kindly arranged for me to see the papers of Cecil John Rhodes which include a number of references to Milton. These can be located in the index guides to the Rhodes Papers, prepared in the early 1980s by June Williams. Unfortunately, there were no references to Milton's contact with Rhodes over the cricket problems of 1894. In my visits to Marlborough College, I was assisted by the Archivist, Dr Terry Rogers. The College records have been of great importance in establishing an understanding of Milton and his early enthusiasm for sport. I made contact

with local history and record centres and should note the help I received from Sarah Coltman at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies in Aylesbury, and Douglas Fergusson, Churchwarden at the St John the Baptist Church, Little Marlow. Guy Fletcher of Bedford School provided various cuttings and copies of documents related to the achievements of the Milton boys and their talented school-mate, Freddie Brooks. Jane Reid-Rowland forwarded further information from Harare on Brooks. The chairman of the Trollope Society, Michael G. Williamson, kindly let me have details of links between the Milton family and the famous Trollopes. A subscription to *Ancestry.com* has been beneficial in tracing further details whilst Paul Leppard, a genealogist with the Cannes Tourism Office provided information and photographs of the Miltons' graves. In addition, I spent a number of days at the Rugby Football Union Library at Twickenham, the MCC Library at Lord's and, at an earlier stage, the Cricket Library at The Oval. Visits are by appointment and whilst various museum staff allowed me to explore the records at Twickenham, I received assistance at Lord's over the years from Stephen Green, Adam Chadwick and Neil Robinson, and at the Oval from Jeff Hancock.

The British Library was able to supply books that proved difficult to obtain whilst the Oxfordshire libraries provided wonderful service throughout my period of research. I have over the years made use of the publications of the Association of Cricket Statisticians and have relied on *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game* as an essential source of material. With no previous surveys of Milton's career to draw upon, it has been a case of seizing every reference, however brief, in order to construct a biography.

I have gained much from working alongside a group of historians with a common interest in early South African cricket history. We meet regularly in London and I have enjoyed discussing aspects of the work with Richard Parry, Bernard Hall (grandson of A.B. Tancred) and Dale Slater. I am indebted to Robin Isherwood whose interest in South African cricket has led to his playing a key role in updating the country's cricket records and biographical details of the first-class players.

Finally and most importantly, I am most grateful to my Stellenbosch supervisors, Professors Albert Grundlingh and Bill Nasson, who have guided me through the various stages in preparing this manuscript and pointed me in the right direction with regard to reading material.

Chapter 1: William Henry Milton – his background and early life

William Henry Milton was the creation of an interesting and talented family. On his father's side, he inherited qualities that characterised a line of strong-willed, ambitious, even controversial men. His great-great-grandfather – John Milton (1689-1788) – grew up in Bristol, a prosperous port and thriving city that was second only to London in importance. A hard-working man who lived to be ninety-nine years old, John Milton operated under the disadvantage of being a tradesman in class-conscious Britain. To his credit, he 'considerably [assisted] the gentility of his family' by sending his son, William (1744-1825), to Winchester and then Oxford in preparation for the church.⁴² The young William became a fellow of New College in 1766 and obtained his Master of Arts four years later. In 1773 he was appointed Vicar of Heckfield, a rural parish in north-eastern Hampshire. It was a position he would hold for fifty-two years.

The Reverend Milton was 'a genial and eccentric man' who did not wish to be restricted by the mundane duties of a country parson. He placed a curate in his Heckfield parish and returned to Bristol where he had aspirations of making a fortune. He became involved in 'schemes and inventions'⁴³ with his wide interests leading to published pamphlets on 'redesigning the docks of Bristol'. Pamela Neville-Sington wrote in some detail of his ingenious plan which was to establish a floating harbour with the 'key element being the idea of a tidal bypass'. Unfortunately, and to his immense frustration, he received little more than 'grudging recognition'.⁴⁴ He returned to Heckfield after some twenty-five years but did not give up in his endeavours and, before long, 'his prototypes for traction engines and for carriages ... littered the vicarage lawn'.⁴⁵ Alarmed at the number of road accidents that happened in the course of a fortnight ... within twenty miles of [his] own house,' he produced a pamphlet on the 'dangers of travelling in stage-coaches'.⁴⁶ The main purpose of the publication was to draw attention to a coach he had designed. His invention reduced the chance of overturning through placing the luggage compartment below the axle in order to lower the centre of gravity. It made sense but did not attract the interest that he hoped would follow.

⁴² Pamela Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope: The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman*, London, 1997, 3

⁴³ Victoria Glendinning, *Trollope*, London, 1992, 8

⁴⁴ Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*, 10-12

⁴⁵ Glendinning, *Trollope*, 8

⁴⁶ Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*, 39

The Vicar of Heckfield went some way towards elevating his social position but, said Neville-Sington, ‘the stigma was ever-present’. When he married Mary Gresley, her family evidently thought it ‘a mésalliance for the lady’ as they ‘were directly descended from Sir Thomas Gresley (1552-1660) and could boast Norman ancestry’. The Milton children, Mary (1776-1870), Frances (1779-1863) and Henry (1784-1850), ‘were no doubt made to feel inferior in rank to those around them in Bristol and Hampshire’ but they were strong characters and were amused by the snobbery on their mother’s side of the family. Henry wrote to his sister, Frances – later the well-known Fanny Trollope – of the ‘illustrious Norman blood that flows in our veins’. It became a ‘family joke’ that would surface in Fanny’s writing⁴⁷, whilst she went a step further in pointing out that ‘the clergy of England, their matronly wives and highly-educated daughters, form a distinct caste [which] has a dignity and aristocracy of its own’.⁴⁸

Mary (Gresley) Milton died soon after the birth of her son, Henry, and the children were brought up by their father. Henry was about nineteen years old when he took his clerkship in the War Office and set up home in London at 27 Keppel Street, an unfashionable area ‘not much affected by the nobility’.⁴⁹ Henry, who was quickly joined by his two sisters, settled easily into the life of the city and was described by the author, Mary Russell Mitford, as ‘a lively, agreeable, enthusiastic person, who always carries things his own way’. She also rated him as ‘one of the best judges of art in England’⁵⁰ and, in the months following Waterloo, the publisher, Longman, requested that he travel to Paris where his ‘special errand was to see the works of art Napoleon had plundered for the Louvre and to write a description of them for the British public’. His indignation at what had happened at the Louvre was a feature of his book, *Letters on the Fine Arts, written from Paris in the year 1815*. He wrote that: ‘Hordes of thieves in the form of experts and connoisseurs accompanied their armies to take possession, either by dictation or naked force of all that seemed to them worth taking.’⁵¹

Henry Milton’s research which ‘ranged beyond paintings and sculpture to architecture and the theatre’ culminated in a publication that was later described as ‘the earliest of an impressive number of travel books to be written by members of his family’.⁵² He went on to publish two novels, *Rivalry* in 1840, and *Lady Cecilia Farrencourt* three years later. Yet, like

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 3

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 4-5

⁴⁹ Glendinning, *Trollope*, 4

⁵⁰ Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*, 26

⁵¹ Noah Charney, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: The True Story of the World’s Most Coveted Masterpieces*, New York, 2010, 96

⁵² R.H. Super, *The Chronicler of Barsetshire: A Life of Anthony Trollope*, Michigan, 1988, 2

his father, he would fall frustratingly short in his ambitions. As a writer, he could not match the ability of his sister, Fanny, and, says Neville-Sington, ‘must have cringed when he read one critic’s comment that ‘*Rivalry* was “of Mrs Trollope’s school”, though it lacked “the breadth and vigour” of her humour and caricature’.⁵³ It did not, however, prevent him from serving his sister as advisor and proof-reader.

Fanny married Thomas Anthony Trollope, a barrister, at her father’s church at Heckfield. They moved into 16 Keppel Street – two doors away from the house in which she had been courted – and, whilst the Miltons ‘did not belong to the same sphere of society as the Trollopes’⁵⁴, it was he who would struggle with financial misfortune. In an attempt to address the problems, Frances took the family to America and began writing. The move across the Atlantic was relatively unsuccessful but Frances became a prolific writer and, amidst family tragedies, produced travel works and social protest novels. Her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* was an attack on their hypocrisy: ‘with one hand hoisting the cap of liberty, and with the other flogging their slaves’. Other well-received works included *Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw*, the first anti-slavery novel and one said to have influenced Harriet Beech Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Her book, *The Vicar of Wrexhill*, tackled the subject of church corruption.⁵⁵

Fanny Trollope was compared to Jane Austen as they had much in common. ‘Although we cannot place them in the same room at the same time,’ wrote Neville-Sington, ‘Jane and Fanny would, nevertheless, have admired the same red coats of the local militia, visited the same milliners’ shops, worn the same fashions, subscribed to the same circulating libraries and danced in the same assembly rooms above Basingstoke’s town hall ...’ There was, however, ‘one important if subtle distinction’ between them:

Both women had an impeccable pedigree on their mothers’ side; but, whereas Jane’s paternal grandfather was a surgeon whose family belonged to the landed gentry, Fanny’s grandfather, John Milton, was in trade, variously described as a ‘distiller’ and ‘saddler’ in the city of Bristol.⁵⁶

The Trollopes had seven children of whom only three survived to be more than twenty-five. The eldest surviving son, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, wrote histories – notably the *Girlhood of Catherine de Medici* and the *History of Florence* – whilst the youngest, Anthony Trollope became particularly well-known. The Trollope Society refers to him as the ‘most widely-read, and the best loved, of all the great Victorian novelists’. It points out that ‘he wrote forty-seven novels – three times as many as Dickens – and many have long-preferred

⁵³ *New Monthly Magazine* (1840), 136-37, in Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*, 289

⁵⁴ Glendinning, *Trollope*, 7

⁵⁵ For details of her writing see: Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*

⁵⁶ Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope*, 3

Trollope for his subtle delineation of human character and middle-class mores'.⁵⁷ Trollope, it might be added, writes vividly of his early family life recalling that his father was 'scarcely a prosperous lawyer and the housekeeping was frugal [but] it would not have occurred to him to be without a servant dressed in Trollope livery'.⁵⁸

For many years, there was a reliance on Henry Milton whose home often provided shelter for the Trollope family. The understanding host had sons of his own – twins – who were born in 1820 and were for a while tutored by Henry Trollope.⁵⁹ Henry Milton instilled in his sons Victorian values of hard work, ambition and public service. One son, John, followed his father into the War Office in 1840 and enjoyed an even more distinguished career. He was disciplined and ambitious, proving to be a stickler for detail, a trait which upset Florence Nightingale who was on service in the Crimean War. She wrote that she would 'not submit to the impertinence of these War Office clerks, of which one John Milton is the chief'.⁶⁰ Her criticism did not affect his progress through the ranks: he became the Army's Accountant-General in 1871 and was subsequently knighted for his services.

Henry Milton's other son, William, earned a place at Oxford where he was awarded his M.A. in 1845 at the age of twenty-five. He had by then decided to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather and enter the church where he took up curate positions at Holbeck, Leeds, Halliwell, Bolton, Hemel Hempstead and Little Marlow. It was at Hemel Hempstead that he met and married Ehretia Sophia Smith – the sixth of nine children – in 1854. They would become parents ten months later – on 3 December 1854 – when William Henry Milton was born at Little Marlow. The parish records add that 'William Henry ... was baptised 10 January 1855 in the parish church of Hemel Hempstead, Herts, by me, William Milton, officiating minister'.⁶¹

Although the boy bore the same first name as his father, it is quite possible that William Henry was named after the two grandfathers. His mother came from a relatively wealthy background; her father, William Smith, was a banker and solicitor in Hemel Hempstead and her mother, Elizabeth Ehretia Grover, was from a particularly well-known family in the same area. Elizabeth's father, Harry Grover of Grover's Bank, was one of ten sons and had married Sibylla Ehret, one of ten daughters. They had fifteen children (seven sons and eight daughters), all of whom had large families. One daughter, Anne, married John Dickinson of

⁵⁷ Trollope Society website, <http://www.trollopesociety.org>, accessed 27 January, 2012

⁵⁸ Super, *The Chronicler of Barsetshire*, 3

⁵⁹ Information provided by Michael G. Williamson, chairman of the Trollope Society: according to Glendinning, *Trollope*, 47, 'Henry left Winchester at fifteen but as with Anthony, his school performances bore no relation to his accomplishments or capabilities'.

⁶⁰ Sue Goldie (ed.), *Florence Nightingale, Letters from the Crimea 1854-56* (New York, 1997)

⁶¹ Little Marlow parish records (ref PR 141), Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

John Dickinson and Company Limited, the nineteenth-century British paper manufacturers – Grover’s Bank supported the mechanised paper-making process that was invented by Dickinson. An interesting development was the move by a number of the family to Australia. The first to emigrate, William Alfred Grover – Elizabeth’s brother – chose Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) in 1832 and was followed by the younger, Eton-educated Ehret boys, Charles and Harry, who arrived at Melbourne in 1851, shortly before the Gold Rush.⁶²

After the Reverend William Milton married Ehretia Smith, they set up home at Lower Marlow but, six years later, he became Vicar of Speen (Newbury). The Reverend Milton was an outspoken member of his community and gained prominence through his writing. Eight of the Vicar’s books appear in the British Library. They were on church matters and not without controversy at a time when the Anglicans appeared to be losing their way. A review of his publication, *The Eucharistic Doctrine of Holy Scripture and the Primitive Liturgies: remarks on the Real Presence, Commemorative Sacrifice, Absolution, and Ritualism*, states: ‘The real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist is, in one sense, objected to and argued against by Mr Milton who, on this and other topics of his small book, shows himself earnest, acute and well informed.’ It adds, ‘We are profoundly sorry such subjects should need to be discussed within the Church of the nineteenth century.’⁶³

The Miltons enjoyed a life of comfort at Speen with the father the dominant figure in a middle-class environment that centred on the vicar and the vicarage. Young William experienced a sheltered upbringing – a spacious home with three servants – and thrived in the healthy countryside. There were five further children, all of them receiving traditional family names: Mary Anne Ehretia (born 1857), Francis Gresley (born 1858 but died the following year), John Archibald Raymond (born 1861), Frances Emily (born 1863) and Cecilia (born 1868). William would soon find himself parted from the family for a large part of each year as he attended boarding school. He was to benefit enormously from being sent to Marlborough College, which had been founded in 1843 to provide a ‘first-class education at low price for the sons of clergymen’. Of great significance to the tall, well-built youngster who displayed a natural and instinctive ability at athletics, was the fact that Marlborough was also ‘the first of the great schools to imbibe the traditions of the Rugby of Arnold’.⁶⁴

⁶² The Peerage – a genealogical survey: Person pages 46130 and 46131

⁶³ B. Harris Cowper (ed.), *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* (October 1867-January 1868) No III, London, 1868, 489

⁶⁴ A.G. Bradley, A.C. Champneys and J.W. Baines, *A History of Marlborough College during fifty years from its foundation to the present time*, London, 1893,

William Milton's school career coincided with a period during the second half of the nineteenth century when modern sport was allowed to flourish in Britain. The advent of increased leisure time enabled rapidly growing Victorian middle classes to follow sports that could be played in the restricted space of large industrial towns. They were encouraged by improved communications; changes in attitude towards exercise, and advances in the understanding of health-related matters. The rapid expansion of the public school movement and the increase in the number of pupils attending the schools resulted in unprecedented enthusiasm for sport across Britain.

The public school 'was a model for the city'.⁶⁵ School authorities gave sport due consideration by improving facilities; hiring professional coaches and employing teachers who were also sportsmen steeped in the traditions of fair play. Headmasters perceived the advantages that could accrue from channelling the athletic energies of a large number of boys into an environment where they disciplined one another. Games such as cricket and football became moral correctives as support grew for the Muscular Christianity being preached in public schools. It became apparent that organised sport could play a role in the training of English gentlemen through teaching the sons of the middle-class qualities such as sportsmanship, self-confidence, teamwork, leadership and loyalty. Regular matches served to reaffirm these values.

Rugby School is credited as a major influence on the general enthusiasm for athleticism at that time. Certainly the type of schooling that Arnold 'virtually saved from extinction' grew into a powerful system by the end of Victoria's reign. *Tom Brown's Schooldays* drew the public's attention to developments taking place through reference to a naïve, young boy leaving home in Berkshire to attend Rugby School where he is transformed into a robust, manly student. The much-revered headmaster is seen to encourage games in the story written by Thomas Hughes, but in reality the boys' world of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was very different to Arnold's 'high-minded idealism'.⁶⁶

It was members of staff at Rugby who were supportive of the athletic movement and when they moved to other schools they took Rugby's football with them. One of Arnold's close colleagues, George Cotton, formed his own strong views on the value of playing games. In 1852 he became Master of Marlborough College in the wake of a schoolboy rebellion and he strove to put his ideas into practice. He quickly identified a lack of recreational provision as being a major cause of the problems that existed amongst school pupils. His answer to the indiscipline was to 'infiltrate the system' through working closely with the boys in

⁶⁵ L. Allison, *The Politics of Sport*, Manchester, 1986, 9-10

⁶⁶ J.R. De S. Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, Grahamstown, 1972, 5

encouraging organised sport. It not only helped instil the self-control he wished to impose on his school community but developed closer relationships between masters and boys.⁶⁷

Cotton, who was the young master referred to in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, 'appointed to his staff four or five young Rugbeians who successfully reformed the games, particularly football, which they naturally promoted along Rugby lines'. They brought with them the 'traditions of the Rugby "Big Side"' and 'the whole system was changed; the Rugby shape of ball was introduced, Rugby goal-posts were erected, and the Rugby rules [without "hacking over"] practically adopted ... the art of "drop kicking" was taught, and ... the game grew fast in popularity'.⁶⁸ Other schools emulated Cotton's methods although it would be wrong to credit him or any other individual with generating the general enthusiasm for athleticism that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. The headmasters of Rugby and Marlborough were prominent in paving the way but the success achieved was 'the result of societal forces which were beyond the scope of any one man to create or control'.⁶⁹

William Milton entered Marlborough College in 1868. In his first four years, the Master of the College was George Bradley, a pupil of Arnold's at Rugby during 1837-40. Bradley was chosen by Cotton and continued his predecessor's good work in developing Marlborough's reputation for scholarship and games, in the course of which he fostered the appropriate development of ethical behaviour and the formation of sound social attitudes. When Lord Tennyson sent his son, Hallam, there in 1866, he was quoted as saying, 'I sent my son to Bradley rather than to Marlborough!'⁷⁰ The Bradley era also witnessed the first victory over Rugby School at Lord's and was progressive insofar as sport was concerned, much to the delight of Milton who became a passionate participant in cricket, rugby football, athletics and gymnastics.

The mania for games in the latter part of the nineteenth century coincided with the extension of British influence overseas. It was through the actions of the public schools that a unique educational ideal – character-training through team games – was disseminated to all parts of the British Empire. Amidst a number of important 'motives for promotion of Empire' such as 'trade, security, emigration and prestige', there was a firm belief in the value of sports such as cricket and rugby in the development of ethical behaviour and the formation of sound social attitudes. Within the schools, wrote Tony Mangan, headmasters played 'the

⁶⁷ Derek Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain*, Manchester, 1993, 256

⁶⁸ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 264-65

⁶⁹ J. Lucas, 'Victorian "Muscular Christianity": Prologue to Olympic Games Philosophy' in *Olympic Review* (1975)

⁷⁰ Hallam Tennyson (ed.), *Tennyson and His Friends*, London, 1911, 181

role of agents of hegemonic persuasion'⁷¹ in a system that believed 'there was a strong connection between the qualities developed by games-playing and those needed to create and govern and defend an empire'⁷².

In 1870, Milton moved across to the Modern School, which meant that he could take subjects such as modern languages, history and geography. As a consequence, he was not required to focus to the same extent as the Upper Sixth on classics, maths and religious education. It was not unusual for 'forward-looking parents to prefer their sons to take the broader course. In the case of Milton, his performance in the early years had been reasonably solid and it seems almost certain that his parents made the choice for him'.⁷³ They did so at a time when Bradley left Marlborough to become Master of University College Oxford and was succeeded by Frederic William 'Dean' Farrar who was appointed Master at the beginning of 1871.

The pupils were in awe of Farrar, a well-known figure who is best remembered for his school writing, notably *Eric, or Little by Little* (1858) which highlights the virtues of 'Muscular Christianity' and reflects the influence of Thomas Arnold. Yet Farrar's greatest impact on the sixth form at Marlborough was through his writing and lectures on academic subjects. He wrote the 'Origin of Language' in 1860 and, six years later, Charles Darwin successfully nominated him for the Fellowship of the Royal Society. Farrar's most controversial work was his 'Attitudes of Races', which was first read to ethnologists in 1866. In it, he classified race into three broad categories which Michael Biddiss summarised as 'first "the irreclaimably savage" who comprise, in the main, black stocks; then, "the semi-civilised" brown and yellow peoples whose limited capabilities are exemplified best in the "utilitarian mediocrity" of Chinamen; finally the Semitic and Aryan breeds who share between them the credit for all the great achievements of human civilisation'.⁷⁴

Mangan dismisses Farrar's views on race as representing 'crassly insensitive, ethnocentric nonsense'.⁷⁵ At the time, however, they were believed and would have been of interest to pupils at a school that contributed enthusiastically to the staffing of administrations in distant outposts of empire. Biddiss points out that Farrar's clerical status added 'particular poignancy' to his argument for he not only embraced 'an unashamedly polygenetic approach

⁷¹ J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, Harmondsworth, 1985, 22.

⁷² Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, Grahamstown, 1972, 7. J. Welldon, headmaster of Harrow, claimed that 'the pluck, the energy, the perseverance, the self-control, the discipline, the co-operation, the *esprit de corps*, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in peace or war' (Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 35-36).

⁷³ Discussion with Dr T Rogers, Marlborough College Archivist (February 2010)

⁷⁴ Michael D. Biddiss, *Images of Race*, Leicester, 1979, 141

⁷⁵ Mangan, *Games Ethic and Imperialism*, 113

but also suggests how the very inferiority of non-white races makes the application to them of Christian charity more rather than less necessary'. The latter point, concludes Biddiss, would have appealed 'readily to most members of the Ethnological Society' and no doubt had some influence on those he was teaching.⁷⁶ Farrar went so far as to use Marlborough boys in order to obtain data on anthropological measurement. In this regard he assisted a half-cousin of Darwin, namely Francis Galton, who had spent time travelling in Africa including two years in South West Africa (now Namibia). Galton would tell the *Times* in 1873 that Chinese should be encouraged to immigrate to Africa and displace 'inferior aboriginal blacks'. He wrote that 'average negroes possess too little intellect, self-reliance, and self-control to make it possible for them to sustain the burden of any respectable form of civilisation without a large measure of external guidance and support'.⁷⁷

Pupils of Marlborough listened with great interest to their headmaster. Cotton wrote of Farrar that he 'never knew anyone who had a greater power of stimulating intellectual exertion and literary taste'.⁷⁸ And, indeed, Mangan went so far as to say that headmasters would 'suffuse every pore of the school society with their version of reality' and would do so in a number of ways: 'through the pulpit sermon, the playing-field exhortation, the speech-day admonition, the informal "jaw", the classroom digression and the school magazine editorial'. Headmasters, continued Mangan, served 'the role of Gramsci's 'intellectuals', spreading and legitimatising dominant convictions, winning over youth and 'creating unity on the contested terrain of ideology'.

Much of Farrar's teaching time was spent with the older boys and he might well have observed Milton with particular interest. As the future Dean of Canterbury, he would have noted with some interest the writing of the Reverend Milton, whilst the name would have attracted his attention as he placed John Milton 'before all other poets' and 'before all other prose writers ... his character was steeped and saturated in Milton'.⁷⁹ Farrar was never 'what you may call a games lover, but he knew that he could get hold of fellows best by joining with them in their games ... He played football (rugby) like a madman, running amuck with his eyes shut, and got awfully mauled'.⁸⁰ He would almost certainly have noted the young Milton was a particularly able participant on the sports-field.

⁷⁶ Biddiss, *Images of Race*, 141-42

⁷⁷ *The Times*, 5 June 1873

⁷⁸ Reginald Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., Etc., Sometime Dean of Canterbury*, London, 1904, 59

⁷⁹ Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar*, 173

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 58, 63

Sport was an important part of the school-day as the *Marlburian* clearly illustrates. It was given generous coverage, sometimes forming the front-page story in a magazine that appeared two or three times each term. The annual cricket match against Rugby would always attract attention, particularly as the game was staged at Lord's. It made an impression on Milton who was sixteen years old when he first played on the famous ground in 1871. That was the season in which George Atkinson, the former Yorkshire round-arm bowler, was contracted to the College as the principal professional. He was 'an excellent preceptor, and his assiduous coaching produced a great improvement'.⁸¹ In the first year of Atkinson's engagement Marlborough 'put Rugby to the rout' for only the second time in its history. The excitement and optimism attached to the game 'attracted such a goodly number of old, in addition to present Marlburians ... altogether Lord's had a thick fringe of spectators.'⁸² Marlborough (103 and 157) achieved a 68-run win over Rugby (114 and 78) with Milton scoring 7 (off two balls that he faced) and 8 (run out).

There were more failures than successes for Milton who batted nine or ten in 1871. He was a better rugby player, possessing genuine pace and flair. He became an outstanding exponent of the drop-kick which, at the time, was 'one of the leading features of the game' and, it was argued, formed 'a prettier incident in the play than the latter-day system of passing'.⁸³ In a history of the first fifty years of the College, Milton was singled out as one of three 'safe-footed kickers [who] would sometimes with their sweeping drops keep the ball flying to and fro over the forwards for some five or six turns, till a short kick or a plucky charge brought it once more into general play.' His success in this aspect of the game could be attributed to 'puntabout' which for many years was:

... a recognised institution during the hour before dinner, and club balls were provided in considerable numbers for the purpose. The greater part of the school would take part in the exercise, even those who did not figure in the regular games, and the field was crowded with energetic kickers; some practising 'places', others joining in the general turmoil of 'dropping'.⁸⁴

No regular 'foreign' matches were played except against Old Fellows (the old Marlburians). Other schools in the vicinity did not play to the same laws and therefore fixtures between them were rare events. An inter-school match was arranged against Clifton College in 1864 but 'was attended with such unhappy consequences that the experiment was not again

⁸¹ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 249

⁸² *The Marlburian*, 6 September 1871

⁸³ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 291

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 267-68

repeated for many years'.⁸⁵ Rugby reputations were therefore built within the College's internal system, which included 'Big Side' games that were played over five days, unless one side sooner scored the necessary three goals. Highlights of the season usually included the Sixth versus School, Old House versus New House, North versus South, and the House matches which lasted three days and involved 'the whole house ... sometimes sixty strong. The housemaster, too, generally took part, and very often did good work'.⁸⁶

In October 1871, Milton was promoted to the First XX, making his debut against the Old Fellows. He also played in the first-ever fixture against Marlborough Nomads, already a leading club side. The *Marlburian* announced the season 'was well wound up with the glorious match with the Nomads, upon beating whom we may well congratulate ourselves after the success that club has had in its other matches'. The victory came through a solitary drop goal that 'astonished the Nomads'.⁸⁷ It was achieved when a scrum (or squash) formed some thirty yards from the Nomads' goal-line. The report recalled 'the ball came out apparently without any Nomad seeing it, and was picked up by Milton, who before any of the opposite side could touch him, dropped a long and very fine goal from up the hill, amid the well-deserved plaudits of the spectators'.⁸⁸

Milton was generally at his best at half-back during a period when the structure of rugby was very different to the modern game. The College played with fifteen forwards and five behind the scrum, with an additional back introduced when 'extra tackling power was deemed necessary ... there was, of course, absolutely nothing in the shape of passing'.⁸⁹ The half-back was required to clear quickly under pressure, a fine art that had been mastered by the England international, Harold Freeman, who often played against Marlborough for old boy combinations. Promising young College players such as Sydney Morse, Hugh Hamilton and Milton learnt much from Freeman. For Milton, it was a good first season for the First XX and comments forwarded to *Alcock's Football Annual* noted that he was 'a very good half back, making brilliant runs, and dropping splendidly with either foot.'

Milton's second year in first team sport was even more rewarding. He was fully involved in the administration of the games and served as hon. secretary for both cricket and rugby. A 'worker' rather than a 'leader', he was a reserved young man who was not made a prefect, nor did he captain the sporting teams. His strength was his all-round athleticism which showed up well on the annual 'sports day'. He won the College hammer throw, long jump, 100 and

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 275

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 271

⁸⁷ *The Marlburian*, 30 October 1872

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 13 December 1871

⁸⁹ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 268-69

300 yards hurdles and, after a bad start, managed to catch William Churchill on the tape to make a dead heat of the 100 yards in 11.0 seconds.⁹⁰ Fast, strong and a fine gymnast, it was not surprising that Milton discovered many of the skills involved in team games came naturally to him.

The 1872 cricket season was the most successful in the College's history. Milton arranged an impressive list of fixtures and was delighted on one occasion when HRH Prince Arthur and 'a party of illustrious ladies and gentlemen honoured the eleven with their presence'. The season was also rewarding in that he scored 55 against an MCC attack that included Frank Farrands, a fast round-arm professional who had played for Nottinghamshire and the Hon. John Ponsonby who delivered underarm and once claimed 5 for 37 when bowling in tandem with W.G. Grace. Milton then shone against the Rev SC Vowles's XI where he was run out 'from sheer want of breath for a hitting innings of 62 which contained an "eight", a "seven", a "six" and four "fours"'.⁹¹ There were no boundaries at that time and the players ran every run that was scored.

The Marlborough XI went on to 'vanquish both its school rivals, a feat never as yet accomplished in the same year, beating Rugby by ten wickets and Cheltenham by seven'.⁹² Milton kept wicket well against Cheltenham but his batting attracted criticism when he was 'caught at deep on' in Marlborough's second innings – 'blindly slogging into the hands of the man who had been put out for him'.⁹³ Indeed, the nature of his dismissal would be repeated on numerous occasions in the course of a career where an impetuous approach was driven by the challenge to clear fielders, especially those posted in the deep.

Milton was in excellent form at Lord's where 'with breasts beating high with expectation, a very fair sprinkling of old and present Marlburians and Masters appeared on the ground'. Milton 'ran up 33 in his usual quick and brilliant style in which a splendid drive into a far corner was most admired.' His innings came to an end, largely because of the unpredictable nature of the Lord's wicket which produced 'that most difficult of balls, a shooting half-volley'. Then, when Rugby batted, he kept wicket in style, claiming three stumpings and a catch in their first innings. Said the *Marlburian* admiringly, 'Milton too was twice hurt, but this seemed to have no effect on the excellence of his wicket-keeping.'⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Churchill was described as 'a noted athlete', representing Cambridge University in the quarter-mile in 1877 and 1878: see Philip Bailey, Philip Thorn, Peter Wynne-Thomas (eds.), *Who's Who of Cricketers*, Rushden, 1984, 203.

⁹¹ *The Marlburian*, 28 August 1872

⁹² Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 250

⁹³ *The Marlburian*, 25 June 1872

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 28 August 1872

At the end of a memorable season it was recorded: ‘WH Milton possesses tremendous hitting powers and a good defence; hits equally hard to all parts of the field. Has a wonderful power of punishing loose bowling. A splendid field anywhere and throws in beautifully; very quick at the wicket. Won the throwing the cricket ball with a magnificent throw of 111 yards and 2 feet.’⁹⁵ Another report said that he was ‘a beautifully free bat and a capital wicket-keeper’.⁹⁶

The rugby season was also a success with Milton persuading the Bursar to allow the First XX ‘three dinners during the Christmas half, thus enabling us to have one more foreign match than usual’.⁹⁷ The first of the games was against an Old Fellows combination that included Morse who had left the College at the end of the summer term. The schoolboys went up by a goal and, with Morse and Freeman mounting attacks, were ‘only saved by the brilliant play of Milton and Butterworth (who was brought in for the injured Hamilton)’. The fine victory ensured the success of the dinner which was ‘graced by the presence of the Master’ until ‘Auld Lang Syne’ wound up the day.⁹⁸

A new ‘foreign’ fixture was arranged against the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester – ‘very ancient opponents in the cricket field’.⁹⁹ The game was won by Milton ‘who after a short run, though half held by a half-back, dropped an excellent goal with his left foot’. The report also notes that Hamilton, an outstanding three-quarter back and team captain ‘played extremely well throughout’ and was ably supported by Milton who ‘offered him no inconsiderable aid’.¹⁰⁰ It was a partnership that would continue to flourish at Marlborough Nomads and, many years later, it was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the two players went on to make an everlasting impression on rugby through introducing ““passing” into Rugby Union rules’.¹⁰¹

The season concluded with the match against Marlborough Nomads. The club had won great honour earlier in the year when it supplied four players – Alfred Hamersley, Harold Freeman, Frederick Innes Currey and Fred Mills – to the first England team to win a rugby international. That victory was achieved by a goal against Scotland at Kensington Oval, London. In a grand season for them, the Nomads were keen to avenge their previous defeat at the hands of the College and, having scored a goal, held on doggedly to their narrow lead.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 30 October 1872

⁹⁶ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 258

⁹⁷ *The Marlburian*, 27 March 1872

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 13 November 1872

⁹⁹ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 276

¹⁰⁰ *The Marlburian*, 13 November 1872

¹⁰¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1930; see also H.T.E. Holt, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 9, Melbourne, 1983, 175-76

Their captain ‘remembering how dangerously fond Milton is of dropping goals was obliged to put a sixth man back towards the end of the game’.¹⁰²

The rugby season saw Milton at his best and it was reported in Alcock’s *Football Annual* that he was

... on his day a most brilliant and dashing half-back. Remarkably neat in getting away and always safe for a good drop. Is a fair collar and runs well. Is also a fair place-kick. Has been very successful in obtaining touch-downs and dropping goals throughout the season.¹⁰³

Milton finished his school career by being placed eleventh out of twenty-seven pupils in the Modern School. His achievement would not enable him to join the considerable number of Marlborough scholars who had made an impression at Oxford. On the score of entrance scholarships to universities, Marlborough stood in the front rank of public schools at that time. Older schools divided their pupils more or less evenly between the two universities, but Marlborough concentrated ‘almost her whole strength for some years on the older university’. This gave the College ‘a certain prominence at Oxford [and] in the middle of the sixties we find in an Oxford eleven with its twelfth-man no less than six Marlburians’.¹⁰⁴

Milton would work in London where his uncle, John Milton, was able to find him employment as a clerk, a career that was probably in accordance with the path his father had laid out for him. His mother set up home in London at 23 Norland Square and Milton was able to give attention to furthering his sport through Marlborough Nomads. He would go on to excel at rugby but it was cricket, the national game with its established traditions, that had the greatest influence on him.

¹⁰² *The Marlburian*, 16 December 1872

¹⁰³ Report in Charles Alcock’s *Football Annual* referred to in *The Marlburian*, March 1873

¹⁰⁴ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 170-71

Chapter 2: A Marlborough ‘Nomad’ persuades the Cape to play Rugby Football

Milton maintained close ties with Marlborough College in 1873, his first year out of school. A curious ruling enabled former pupils to qualify for the Sixth versus School match and Milton appeared on the last day of the ‘Big Game’. He duly inspired another School victory and showed that he was ‘as formidable a runner as ever’.¹⁰⁵ Later in the year, he again returned to the College, this time as a member of the Old Fellows, to demonstrate ‘tremendous pace’ in securing a touch down and to drop a goal ‘though half-collared at the time’.¹⁰⁶ He also played for the Nomads at Marlborough and was a dominant figure on the field, twice dashing through the schoolboy ranks ‘at a terrific pace’ to record touch downs. He added a neat drop goal ‘with his left foot’.¹⁰⁷

Little more than a year after leaving Marlborough College, the nineteen-year-old Milton was selected for England. There was just one international played in the course of the 1873-74 season – the fourth annual twenty-a-side encounter against Scotland. *Sporting Life* published an announcement in early January, 1874, of the intention to select an England team. It stated: ‘Gentlemen wishing to play are requested to send their names and club to Mr A. StG. Hamersley, 1 Warwick-Street, Pall Mall.’¹⁰⁸ In order to choose the side, four trial games were held on Wednesday afternoons, in addition to a North versus South match. Milton did not play in the first three of these trials which were held at Blackheath Club. Nor was he chosen for the North versus South fixture. A factor in his favour, however, was that he played for the same club as the England captain.

Milton was helped by a good performance when representing Marlborough Nomads in their drawn match against powerful Blackheath – a game described as ‘one of the best contested of the season’. He earned a place in the likely England team for the fourth and final trial which was played at Old Deer Park, Richmond, in the presence of a large assembly of several thousand spectators. Hamersley was determined to give his team a testing match and he fielded nineteen likely candidates against twenty-four opponents also keen to make their presence known. *Sporting Life* recalled: ‘In vain did Milton, Freeman and Congrave essay to pass the opposing forwards and their side was twice compelled to resort to defensive tactics and to touch down the ball behind their own lines.’¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *The Marlburian*, 19 February 1873

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 5 November 1873

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 10 December 1873

¹⁰⁸ *Sporting Life*, 3 January 1874

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 21 February 1874

It did not matter. Hamersley had decided on his England XX. He would lead the side from the back position with the old Marlborough College pair of Sydney Morse and Milton at half-back. A report noted that Hamilton was selected for England as well as Scotland but preferred to represent the latter in 'the greatest of all the multitude of matches played throughout the season'.¹¹⁰ It was staged at Kennington Oval on 23 February 1874, where tickets to the ground and the ladies' enclosure were a shilling. Those who wished to attend the after-match dinner for the two teams at St James Hall paid a guinea, a price that included wine.

The Scottish XX travelled southwards on the Saturday overnight train and arrived in London on the Sunday morning. They played in dark blue jerseys (with the thistle embroidered), red stockings and, like the English, white knickerbockers. The home side appeared in traditional white jerseys but with a large red rose on the left breast and dark-brown stockings.

When the game commenced at three o'clock 'a dull fog and Scotch mist hung over the scene, the latter increasing into a steady downpour for half an hour or so in the middle of the game'. The conditions made the ground 'terribly slippery and miry, the uniforms of the representative sides being scarcely distinguishable after a little time had elapsed. Some 4 000 spectators were present, among them far fewer ladies than usual, owing no doubt to the wretched weather'.¹¹¹

Scotland defended the gasworks end of the ground and dominated territorially for most of the early part of the match, keeping 'the ball in close proximity to the English goal'. It was noted that 'Hamilton and Kidstone were especially active for Scotland, as were also Freeman, Milton, Collins, Moore and Brooks for England during the first half of the play, and Milton, in particular, made a fine left-foot drop, which narrowly missed the Scottish goal'.¹¹²

English rugby historian, John Griffiths, says 'a feature of this match was the superb drop-kicking of the English backs' and might have added that it owed much to the hours of puntabout at Marlborough College. After changing ends, a good drop by Morse forced the Scots to touch down. Not long afterwards, Milton was again within an ace of scoring a goal, which forced Scotland to concentrate on bolstering their defence. Freeman eventually dropped a splendid goal to seal the match well into the second half. The Scots were

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 25 February 1874

¹¹¹ *The Times*, 24 February 1874

¹¹² *Sporting Life*, 25 February 1874; *The Times*, 24 February 1874

‘undoubtedly faster behind the bully but the Englishmen made up for their want of speed by their combined play’.¹¹³

England’s next international was not until 15 February 1875 and was their first against Ireland where, said *Sporting Life*, the game had ‘become exceedingly popular’.¹¹⁴ Milton was again selected but the team changed markedly from his previous match. Hamersley had emigrated and the Hon. H.A. Lawrence captained the side. Milton, who moved to the three-quarter position, was the only Marlborough Nomad to be chosen by a committee which announced the team a week before the match. The Irish were chosen from their northern and southern unions, and found themselves in a difficult position because ‘many of the players had never seen one another before. Two of those chosen to play did not even appear and backs were put to play in forward positions and vice-versa’.¹¹⁵

The Irish were nevertheless resplendent in their green and white striped jerseys and green velvet caps embroidered with shamrocks, alongside the English in usual dress with rose, velvet caps that were ornamented with silver lace. There was a crowd of 3 000 congregated around the ropes at Kennington Oval as the ‘occasional glimpse of sunshine appeared through the clouds’. Unfortunately, continuous rain during the previous weekend had ‘turned the pitch, which measured 130 yards by 75 into a quagmire’. It made for heavy going in a game the hosts dominated from the outset: ‘Some astute kicking by Stokes and Milton pushed England to the Irish goal-line’ where they were to spend a good part of the game. Territorial advantage and generally poor play by the Irish backs should have seen England win by a greater margin than a goal, a drop goal and try to nil.¹¹⁶

A points system had not as yet been introduced to a game that Milton would not play as often as he might have hoped over the next two seasons. Injuries saw him drift away from rugby and spend more time on the cricket field. He was soon a key member of the Marlborough Nomads cricket club that was formed in London. A reasonably strong side could be fielded but as few members of the committee lived in the city, practical problems developed. The club suffered further because it was ‘never popular with the School, a sure element of failure’ and was described as ‘dragging a precarious existence’.¹¹⁷

In 1877, his last season in England, Milton was in fine form for the Nomads, scoring 20-plus in seven of his nine innings. There were top scores of 88 against Esher and 80

¹¹³ John Griffiths, *The Book of English International Rugby 1871-1982*, London, 1982, 14; *Sporting Life*, 25 February 1874

¹¹⁴ *Sporting Life*, 17 February 1875

¹¹⁵ Griffiths, *English International Rugby*, 15

¹¹⁶ *Sporting Life*, 17 February 1875; Griffiths, *English International Rugby*, 15

¹¹⁷ Bradley, Champneys and Baines, *A History of Marlborough College*, 261

against Streatham. He was also bowling more often and one spell he would recall in later years was the occasion he and A.G. Steel shared all ten wickets in dismissing a strong Oatlands Park XI. Steel was a schoolboy at Marlborough College at the time, but was later described by *Wisden* as being an all-rounder with ‘good claims to be the best in England, always excepting W.G. Grace.’¹¹⁸

Apart from Milton’s concern that his cricket club was about to fold, he gained little satisfaction from an unexceptional post in the civil service. The War Office on the south side of Pall Mall was an unpleasant place to work and the ill-health of staff was so well-known that one newspaper commented that the ‘sickness and mortality attending it, should rank in point of danger at about the same level as an Ashantee campaign’.¹¹⁹ Milton was conscious of the fact that it was a good time for a career change. He feared being left behind: his brother, John, seven years his junior, had his sights set on a place at Oxford, whilst his old school-mate, Hugh Hamilton, was studying for a law degree and intended returning to Australia. His former rugby captain, Hamersley, a lawyer, had already joined the growing movement of young men destined to provide the skills deemed necessary to build an empire. At a crucial moment in his life, Milton was fortunate that a remarkable opportunity came his way. His father’s cousin and famous Victorian novelist, Anthony Trollope, was preparing to visit South Africa in order to write a book, and required some assistance in the course of his ambitious journey. The trip, according to Saul Dubow, was one which helped ‘initiate interest’ in a territory that had become ‘a neglected part of the imperial chain’.¹²⁰

Milton left for the Cape before the end of the 1877 cricket season, almost certainly with a view to starting a new life. There seemed to be much in his favour: he was a product of the public schools and it was ‘they who, if they did not make the empire, at least maintained and administered it through their members.’¹²¹ In addition a reputation as ‘a punishing bat’¹²² and the honour of being an English rugby international would serve as useful qualifications in a distant outpost of Empire. Moreover, admittance to the more influential Cape society would be made possible through Trollope who was regarded as a celebrity and attracted considerable press coverage. Sir Henry Barkly, the late Governor of the Cape Colony, was involved in planning the trip and provided ‘with great minuteness a sketch of [Trollope’s

¹¹⁸ *Wisden Cricketers’ Almanack*, London, 1915

¹¹⁹ *The Old War Office Building*, Ministry of Defence at <http://www.mod.uk>: accessed 21 November 2011

¹²⁰ Saul Dubow, ‘South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship’ in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 19

¹²¹ Mangan, *Games Ethic and Imperialism*, 21

¹²² *Cricket: A Weekly Record*, 12 May 1892

journey] as, in his opinion, it ought to be made'. Trollope was also able to acknowledge 'the great courtesy' he received from Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner for Southern Africa, and Sir Henry Bulwer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Natal.¹²³ Such links made a tour of the country a great deal more comfortable than it might have been, but it was Trollope's close association with the permanent Under-Colonial Secretary, Captain Charles Mills, that would pave the way for Milton to obtain a position in the Cape civil service.

Trollope 'endorsed the idea of white supremacy while cautioning that "that ascendancy should not be too complete".' In a land where race relations were a major issue, Trollope was of the opinion 'that the white man has to be master and the black man servant'. Milton would become an advocate of Trollope's assessment that the coloured man should be made to work because 'the more successful we are in bringing him into his harness, the better for himself, and the colony at large'. Trollope argued that 'a wretched hut and a great many hymns' did not bring the black man 'any nearer to civilisation'. And, as for the future, he was not prepared to say that 'a Kafir may make as good a prime minister as Lord Beaconsfield ... It will be sufficient for us if we can make up our minds that at least for the next hundred years we shall not choose to be ruled by him'.¹²⁴

Trollope's book went 'through four editions in its first year of publication and it soon became a standard work of reference for editorialists, parliamentarians and polemicists'. His views were almost immediately taken up by Bartle Frere who spoke of 'legislative and other means' to ensure Africans were 'subdued and converted to habits of useful labour and civilisation and thereby made into the subject races of an imperial mistress ...' Citizenship, wrote Saul Dubow, 'was not a right: it would have to be earned by individuals who could show that they were conforming to the norms and precepts of the Victorian moral economy.'¹²⁵

The full extent to which Milton assisted Trollope is unknown. He did have a lengthy break prior to his settling into an office job in April 1878, but devoted much time to local sports clubs and becoming involved in the games. He might not have been surprised to learn that the football played at the Cape differed to the codes existing in Britain. Every form of football had a tenuous foothold at that time and Jeff Hill points out that 'all sports, having travelled across national boundaries, take on local inflexions and acquire new characteristics'¹²⁶. Notable examples, such as American football and Australian Rules support the argument that locally influenced sports had strong appeal. Allen Guttman wrote

¹²³ Anthony Trollope, *South Africa (Volume I)* reprint, Stroud, 2005, 12

¹²⁴ Trollope, *South Africa*, 13, 45

¹²⁵ Dubow, 'South Africa and South Africans', 20, 25

¹²⁶ Hill, *The International Diffusion* study notes

that ‘ludic diffusion is quite obviously a complex social process’ and ‘the British game of rugby, itself the product of centuries of evolution, underwent so many changes once it arrived in the United States that the final product seems to represent American rather than British cultures’.¹²⁷ In the case of Australian Rules, it is thought that Thomas Wills who had captained Rugby School at cricket and rugby, made a point of incorporating aspects of the Aboriginal game of marngrook.¹²⁸

Changes to the way football was played were also inevitable at a time when the different codes in Britain were still struggling to reach a consensus. Although the Football Association was formed in 1863 it was not – says Tony Mason – until ‘April 1877 [that] one set of laws was finally achieved’.¹²⁹ In fact, the new body struggled to make an impact and ‘was not a very powerful organisation in the 1860s and 1870s. The young men who had set it up were not sure what they wanted or what the eventual outcome would be’.¹³⁰ That ‘F.A. rules still allowed handling the ball’, wrote Tony Collins, demonstrated ‘not only the fluid state of the various rules of football at this time but also how little difference the F.A.’s formation made to the game’.¹³¹

Rugby had comparatively fewer difficulties in creating a coherent structure in Britain and, by the time its ruling body was formed in 1871, it was the dominant football code. In standardising its rules, the Rugby Football Union removed some of the more violent aspects of the Rugby School game, notably ‘hacking’. Milton grew up with these developments and was therefore suitably qualified to develop the game amongst colonialists. It was not, however, a straight-forward task and to fully appreciate Milton’s contribution to the establishment of a winter code at the Cape, it is necessary to sketch the progress made prior to his arrival.

‘Athleticism,’ wrote John Honey, ‘took root most naturally in South Africa because its apostles found that, compared to England, here was a country where the games-playing ideals of Tom Brown’s successors could be striven for in a decent climatic setting.’¹³² The *Cape Argus* reported on a match played between Officers and the Civil Service at Green Point on

¹²⁷ A. Guttman, ‘The Diffusion of Sports and the Problem of Cultural Imperialism’ in Eric Dunning, Joseph Maguire and Robert Pearton (eds.), *The Sports Process*, Illinois, 1993, 128

¹²⁸ A. Mallett, *The Black Lords of Summer: The Story of the 1868 Aboriginal Tour of England and Beyond*, St Lucia, 2002, 14

¹²⁹ Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, Brighton, 1981, 15

¹³⁰ Christiane Eisenberg, Pierre Lanfanchi, Tony Mason and Alfred Wahl (eds.), *100 Years of Football: The FIFA Centennial Book*, London, 2004, 18

¹³¹ Tony Collins, *A Social History of English Rugby Union*, Abingdon, 2009, 15

¹³² Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, 15

23 August 1862. It announced ‘... this is the first time within our recollection that so large a party of gentlemen have made a public appearance at Cape Town in this manly English school-game’. The wording suggests that it was not the first time football had been played: the Diocesan College had started their own game the previous year and the military had almost certainly kicked a ball in the area at some stage.

Links with the ‘Mother Country’ feature prominently in the *Cape Argus* account of the match at Green Point. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, and the Colonial Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Jenner, were in attendance, whilst it is recalled the game involved ‘Eton, Rugby, Winchester, Marlborough and other schools’.¹³³ Radley might be added to the list: John X. Merriman – a member of the Civil Service team and future prime minister of the Cape – had ‘played an early version of football’ at the Oxfordshire school.¹³⁴ The products of such public schools would have brought with them different interpretations of football, thereby adding to the problems incurred in staging such a match.

Those participating in the keenly-contested but goalless draw might have drawn inspiration from the football chapter in *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, which first appeared in 1857. The *Cape Argus* report appeared to echo the writing of Thomas Hughes in recalling ‘over and over again did the combatants roll in their brave charges; over and over again did the unerring drop kick of the goalkeepers save the game as those terrible rushing outsiders swept past ... We have never seen so thoroughly plucky a game ...’¹³⁵ In the return match, the reporter actually hoped to see a ‘display of strength and science worthy of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*’. The game was played on a Friday, umpired by the Colonial Secretary and ‘watched by a large party of ladies and gentlemen in carriages and on horseback’. They appreciated a change whereby the goals were ‘placed 100 yards asunder, instead of the 150, as in the former contest’. The report recalled the Officers winning by two goals and then embarking on a ‘third struggle [which] ended at sunset uncompleted ...’¹³⁶

The player described as ‘the very best man’ in the second match was Adrian van der Byl. He had initially attended Marlborough College under George Cotton, before transferring to Merchiston Castle where he captained his new school against Royal High in the first-ever inter-school rugby match in 1858. The boys who played in that game did not ‘fully

¹³³ Paul Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa: A History 1861-1988*, Cape Town, 1989, 17-18; *Cape Argus*, 25 August, 1862

¹³⁴ Phyllis Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman*, New Haven, 1982, 11

¹³⁵ Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, 17-18; *Cape Argus*, 25 August, 1862

¹³⁶ *Cape Argus*, 8 September 1862

understand all [rugby's] rather complex rules'¹³⁷ but van der Byl would have remembered it as a period when, 'a scrum was a scrum indeed – fifteen pushing against fifteen in a tight maul, which was often immovable for several minutes. The steam rose from the pack like smoke from a charcoal-burner's pile!'¹³⁸

In Cape Town, the success of the first football at Green Point encouraged further encounters with one report marvelling at the playing of games on various days during the week and 'at any time of the year'. It claimed 'such ostentatious pursuit of leisure during "working hours" was a mark of social standing, a token of the newly desirable masculinity'.¹³⁹ It was a time when rules were settled shortly before kick-off and depended to a great extent on the backgrounds of men who comprised teams such as Town and Country, Officers and Civilians, the Civil Service and All-comers, and the Diocesan College and 11th Regiment. Some 'ambiguity' was inevitable, and Peter Alegi went so far as to state that 'the earliest forms of the game in South Africa resembled both the chaotic, rowdy football of nineteenth-century English public schools and universities and the pre-industrial "folk" game of artisans, apprentices, and rural workers'.¹⁴⁰

At the Diocesan College, a new game developed when the headmaster, Canon George Ogilvie, introduced a mixture of Winchester and Bradfield rules in 1861. Ogilvie had been a pupil at Winchester (where the field was narrow and dribbling was encouraged) but on his appointment as second master at the newly founded Bradfield in the early 1850s, he began the process of establishing a form of football that the Cape boys would call 'Gog's game or Gogball' – names that relate to 'the only really legible letters of the headmaster's signature'.¹⁴¹ Ogilvie has been compared to George Cotton, the famous Master of Marlborough, in the way he brought order to the troubled Diocesan College where pupils 'had the run of a wild estate and were themselves wild' but would be taught to work with young masters in organised games.

'At no time were there written rules for Gog's game,' said Paul Dobson, 'but as the inventor was also a player that problem was probably overcome, probably amicably, as the good Canon believed in sportsmanship'.¹⁴² The loose arrangement that existed at the College posed few problems for the boys but it could not continue indefinitely at senior level. As a

¹³⁷ 'Rugby Notes' in Merchiston Castle School Register 1833-1903

¹³⁸ Huw Richards, *A Game for Hooligans: The History of Rugby Union*, Edinburgh, 2007, p. 32

¹³⁹ Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, Cape Town, 1998, 197

¹⁴⁰ Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa*, Scottsville, 2004, 16

¹⁴¹ Paul Dobson, *Bishops Rugby: A History*, Cape Town, 1990, 12, 19

¹⁴² Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, 19

consequence, a crucial development occurred in 1873 when John James Graham advocated the need to establish a uniform code of laws for playing football in Cape Town and its suburbs. Graham, a respected twenty-six-year-old who had been appointed as Assistant Registrar in the Supreme Court of the Colony¹⁴³, chaired a committee that was made up of delegates from the Civilians (William Harwell), Civil Service (Clark Thwaites/ John Graham), the Diocesan College (William Hopley) and the South African College (Johan Gie). Graham had been educated at St Andrew's in Grahamstown – the town named after his grandfather – and might have been exposed to various codes of football, but at least one committee member, nineteen-year-old Hopley – later a judge and father of an English rugby international – would have known only of Ogilvie's creation.

The game decided upon and referred to simply as 'foot-ball' was based on no more than the fifteen rules that were published in the *Standard and Mail*. It borrowed from existing codes but reflected local influence and preference.¹⁴⁴ The development resembled an earlier situation in Australia where ten, not dissimilar rules had been instituted by the Melbourne Football Club in 1859. The founders of football in Melbourne, says Collins, 'saw themselves as being no less British than those living in Britain. They were merely engaging in the same discussions about how football should be played that were taking place among British footballers at the same time.'¹⁴⁵

At the Cape the new rules were implemented immediately, and subsequently used by clubs when they were first established in 1875. Institutionalising the game ensured greater control in a programme that involved matches being played virtually every Saturday during the winter months. The first inter-club season featured teams from the two Colleges (which offered university courses and therefore attracted older students), Hamilton's, Green Point, Gardens and the Country Club (later Western Province Club), as well as the traditional Civil Service versus All-comers and Town versus Country. Late in the season, a new side from

¹⁴³ Graham was from a distinguished background: a descendant of the old Scottish kings, he became the 15th Graham of Fintry on his father's death. And on his grandmother's side, he was a descendant of Jacob Klute, the first permanent settler at the Cape who, it is said, landed in 1652 with Jan van Riebeeck (Mike Oettle, *Colonel John Graham of Fintry*, <http://uk.geocities.wapenspreuk/GrahamE.html> - accessed 23 April, 2009)

¹⁴⁴ Much that existed in Gog's game was considered and utilised in establishing the rules, although Winchester's narrow pitch was not in evidence as dimensions of up to 200 yards by 100 yards were allowed. Goals were won when the ball was kicked 'between the goal posts at any height'; the ball could be handled in certain circumstances such as after a fair catch, whilst dribbling, marks, free kicks, tackling, and scrimmages or 'hots' played their part. Hacking and tripping were not allowed (*Standard and Mail*, 7 June, 1873)

¹⁴⁵ Collins, *Social History of English Rugby*, 16

Stellenbosch was praised by the *Daily News and General Advertiser* for ‘their pluck, by challenging, in their infancy, a club of so long standing as the Civil Service Club’.¹⁴⁶

With added entertainment often provided by the band of the 24th Regiment, the football field was a place to be on Saturday afternoons. The first two seasons of the newly instituted game were problem-free but when Graham left for Grahamstown in 1876, the Cape rules were challenged by members of the Western Province Club. They declared an interest in playing Rugby’s rules, thereby forcing a split within the club. A group led by Howard Jones remained loyal to Graham’s game and a meeting was called to form the breakaway Villager Football Club.

Rugby had a strong following in Britain and interest at the Cape was not unexpected. ‘The adherents of Rugby rules,’ wrote Collins, ‘had both the certainty of Arnoldian self-belief and the public profile generated by the success of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* ... The class identification of Rugby School football and Muscular Christianity also gave the code a resonance beyond the British Isles’.¹⁴⁷ Western Province Club players such as Louis Péringuey (an entomologist who became director of the South African Museum), William Finlay (an astronomer at the Royal Observatory who discovered Comet Finlay in the solar system) and Eustace Pillans (a horticulturalist and author who discovered *euphorbia eustacei*) enjoyed their rugby, but underestimated opposition to changing football codes at the Cape.

On 15 July 1876, the Western Province Club hosted Villager’s at Rondebosch. The *Cape Times* described the match as ‘not by any means a successful performance. Rugby Union rules were adopted for the afternoon (and we hope for the last time)’. The newspaper emphasised the unhappy circumstances of a clash in which ‘even those who professed to propound the rules seemed to possess very hazy notions indeed of their first principles’. It added, somewhat disconcertingly for the future of rugby: ‘It is not at all surprising under the circumstances that many of the players at the conclusion of the game should have openly declared their intention never to use this code again.’

The *Cape Times*, which had been started by Frederick York St Leger in 1875, clearly empathised with localised football and its contribution towards fostering feelings of community identity. It stated that the Cape had developed its own ‘well-known game which has grown up in the Colony, has its own peculiarities, and has been called foot-ball; its principles are generally understood by young South Africa’. The report concluded: ‘It

¹⁴⁶ *Daily News and General Advertiser*, 21 August 1875 as used in Floris van der Merwe’s ‘The First Football in the Cape and the Emergence of the Stellenbosch Rugby Football Club’

¹⁴⁷ Collins, *Social History of English Rugby*, 16

certainly seems to be a mistake to introduce a new game in place of the old one, unless some particular advantage can be shown in the proposed code.¹⁴⁸

A lively debate ensued with letters reflecting views on issues such as rules, preference for the one code over the other and the dangers of playing Rugby's rules. One writer pointed out that the simple structuring of Cape rules made more sense than the fifty-nine compiled in order to play rugby. Another conceded, 'The Union rules are a degree less harassing than those used at Rugby School,' but then claimed, 'they labour under the great objection that the ball is more often carried than kicked.' Kicking – particularly the drop-goal – was considered a more attractive feature of the game. Concern was expressed that the Western Province Club had allowed hacking and 'a few gentlemen suffered from "shinners"'. Perhaps it was a desire to prove a point against opponents who had defected from the club less than two weeks earlier, or the chance to demonstrate a sense of masculinity that other codes lacked. There was certainly truth in the assessment that the rules of rugby as applied in the match at Rondebosch were 'a little too severe for those who have neither seen nor played them before'.

'Old Rugbeian' referred to Charles Alcock's *Football Annual* in arguing that that his game should prevail at the Cape because in Britain more clubs 'use the [Rugby] Union rules than all the others put together'. 'Floreat Rugby Union' forwarded lists of clubs, universities and schools that played rugby and, when 'JB' challenged the veracity of his claims, a threat was issued that the matter would be taken to the query column of *Bell's Life*. The ever-present 'Home' factor could not be discounted in a society where 'deference in all cultural matters, including sport, went to Britain and British institutions and authorities'.¹⁴⁹ And, amidst the raging debate, 'Old Rugbeian' identified the crucial weakness in the Cape's version of football when he stated it was 'difficult to say under what rules the game was played' – they did not comply with any known English brand.¹⁵⁰

Rugby at the Cape needed a champion and he duly appeared in the latter part of 1877. Milton arrived in Cape Town at the height of the boom which occurred during 1875-1882. The discovery of diamonds had quickened the growth of the Cape's economy and also encouraged people to move to the city from the agricultural hinterland. Cape Town's municipal population rose from 33 000 to 40 000 between 1875 and 1880, making it the largest city in

¹⁴⁸ *Cape Times*, 18 July 1876

¹⁴⁹ David R. Black and John Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation: Sport, cultures, politics and power in the old and new South Africa*, Manchester, 1998, 25

¹⁵⁰ *Cape Times*, 20 July – 4 August 1876

southern Africa.¹⁵¹ For a young white man such as Milton the accepted meeting place in an alien land was the sports club which served to integrate new arrivals into Cape Town society. It was sport and club committees that helped him build a social network that he would use to advantage in achieving his goals. He first obtained employment in the Cape of Good Hope civil service as a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Office on 4 April 1878, an appointment that was confirmed as permanent on 1 January of the following year.

Milton arrived during a period when British migrants had relatively few difficulties in adapting to the new locations. 'By then,' said Stephen Constantine, 'the hard work of pioneers in creating social as well as economic and political infrastructures modelled on Britain had been done.' Although 'dispersed into and assimilated by this Greater Britain', it was nevertheless deemed necessary to work towards establishing a distinctive 'Englishness' when confronted by Afrikaner (and African society)¹⁵². The editor of the *Cape Times* saw the value of the imperial games in reinforcing the 'Englishness' that his newspaper advanced. According to Vivian Bickford-Smith, the 'new English-language journals of the 1870s were, unlike the [*Cape*] *Argus*, unashamedly jingoistic'. St Leger and the editors of the *Lantern* became the prime mobilisers of a 'more assertive Englishness in the Colony', a development attributable to 'imperial intervention in southern Africa and opposition to that intervention'.¹⁵³

No one would make a greater impression on the Cape sporting scene than Milton, who was from the outset a key figure in the diffusion of rugby and cricket – games that would play a significant role in the evolution of southern African society. Within months of his arrival, he had a foothold in the administration of cricket, having been elected secretary/treasurer of Cape Town's premier Western Province Cricket Club. Then, in the ensuing winter, he joined the Villager Football Club.

That Milton was keen to emulate what was happening at 'Home' appealed to St Leger who, in seeking to impose English values and hegemony at the Cape, recognised the advantages attached to using the England rugby international in promoting the imperial games. The *Cape Times* expressed hope that southern Africa would take its place in the cultural exchange that was developing within the empire. Forging similar highly visible links with the Mother Country and playing on the imperial sporting stage would become a priority.

¹⁵¹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice 1875-1902*, Cambridge, 1995, 44

¹⁵² Stephen Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire – Commonwealth since 1880: From Overseas Settlement to Diaspora?' in Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London, 2003, 21-24

¹⁵³ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 40, 50

The Australian cricketers were setting the pace through playing against English teams at home and abroad during 1877/78, whilst generous coverage also appeared of the boat race, intervarsities and rugby's internationals at a time when St Leger gained a reputation as 'the mouthpiece for imperialism'.¹⁵⁴

Milton was a voice of authority and liked to have his way but persuading the Cape to play rugby was no easy task. It was well-known that the Western Province Club had failed in its attempt to introduce the game, culminating in its football section folding in early 1877. Not surprisingly, the Villager's committee did not wish to instigate trouble and was reluctant to consider the matter. Ironically, it was at the rival club, Hamilton's, where Milton discovered some interest in rugby. Clubs were administered by young men and twenty-three-year-old Milton was able to enlist the support of twenty-one-year-old Londoner, Billy Simkins, who was the key figure at Hamilton's. They worked together in the civil service and shared a passion for sport, fitting the mould of youthful officialdom that was commonplace in British rugby. Huw Richards wrote of two consequences: 'long careers' and 'to give substance to rhetoric about the game being run for players. In time, this became tired and irksome – not least to the alleged beneficiaries – but in the early days it was based in reality'.¹⁵⁵

Towards the end of July 1878, Milton and Simkins were instrumental in organising a match under Rugby's rules. Hamilton's hosted Villager's at Green Point in a game in which opponents of the code such as Howard Jones and his brother, Walter, were absentees. It was a one-off arrangement as Villager's played Cape rules in their remaining fixtures. A point was nevertheless made and Milton sought to reaffirm his intentions by opting not to play the local version of football. In August he received strong backing for his stand when the *Cape Times* announced: 'At a meeting recently held in connection with the Hamilton Football Club to decide whether the old rules as heretofore played, or the Rugby Union should be the standing rules of the club, we were glad to find that the new rules were unanimously adopted.'¹⁵⁶

Momentum had thus switched dramatically in favour of rugby. In late September, the *Cape Times* noted that 'the last match of the season' would see Milton's United Services play Hamilton's at rugby.¹⁵⁷ A public relations exercise, it gave rugby the last word prior to the long South African summer, but it also projected the impression that the football scene was far from settled.

¹⁵⁴ Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 218

¹⁵⁵ Richards, *A Game for Hooligans*, 42

¹⁵⁶ *Cape Times*, 21 August 1878

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 21 September 1878

During 1878, John Graham returned from his stint in the Eastern Cape to become Chief Clerk to the Attorney-General in the capital and Clerk of the Peace for the City. He was also called upon to help determine the direction that football would follow in the Western Province. Graham and Milton met on a number of occasions before the new rugby season began. They played cricket together during the summer, notably for the Civil Service against All-Comers at Wynberg on Boxing Day. Also in attendance was Advocate Shepstone Giddy, a pro-rugby member of Villager's who had learnt the game at Christ's College, Finchley, and was keen to promote its cause in South Africa. The three men reached an agreement, formulated a plan of action and made use of Villager's annual general meeting as an appropriate forum to announce their intentions. Howard Jones agreed to hold the meeting at his home in Stanmore and St Leger provided a front-page advertisement in the *Cape Times*.¹⁵⁸

Symbolically, the meeting in May 1879 marked the end of Cape rules. Milton wrote: 'John Graham moved and I seconded a resolution that the Villager's should play under Rugby Union rules. That was unanimously agreed to: and was the real beginning of the Rugby Union game in the Cape.'¹⁵⁹

Graham was sufficiently influential to carry the players with him. He led the way, demonstrating a commitment to rugby through his involvement in the game even after his appointment as Secretary of Law in 1882. He did not retire from playing rugby until he broke his collar-bone during a match. Thereafter, he held administrative positions, became absorbed in his work, received the CMG in 1899 and was knighted six years later.¹⁶⁰

The transition to rugby was assisted by unprecedented coverage in the *Cape Times* during the course of the 1879 season. The report of the opening fixtures began: 'If anyone had entertained any doubt whether the good old English game of football had taken root on African soil, a visit to the Camp ground at Rondebosch last Saturday would speedily have dispelled it. No less than ten fifteens of various ages and sizes had come out in jerseys and flannels ready and equipped to wipe out old scores or win fresh laurels ...' The newspaper did not mention that the junior teams were not as yet playing to Rugby Union's rules.¹⁶¹

The Diocesan College opposed the switch to rugby in 1879 but, when they struggled to find opponents, they changed their standpoint. Dobson wrote that headmaster Ogilvie 'first refused and then gave grudging permission for his school to play rugby, stating, "Well, if you

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 10 May, 1879

¹⁵⁹ Ivor D. Difford, *The History of South African Rugby Football 1875-1932*, Wynberg, 1933, 457

¹⁶⁰ *South African Law Journal* described him as 'almost an "institution"' in 4 January 1906, 361-64

¹⁶¹ *Cape Times*, 18 June 1879

boys want to kill yourselves, do so!”¹⁶² The irony is not lost in the fact that ‘Steele and two others [at Bishops] had legs broken in 1879’ whilst engaged in a ‘non-rugby’ code.¹⁶³ Almost inevitably, the College’s decision to play rugby proved popular, with the transition enabling the game to prosper in the 1880s.

The game’s advance also owed much to the pivotal role played by the *Cape Times* in popularising the sport through keeping townspeople aware of details concerning fixtures, venues, team selection, hours of play and transport available. Messages such as the typical ‘be at the ground at 3.30 sharp – town players requested to leave by 3-5 train’ contributed to Cape Town building a reputation for its sport.

Rugby consolidated its position in 1883 when Hamilton’s called a meeting to establish the first provincial union. Milton did not make an appearance but was elected vice-president. Giddy became president and Simkins, the Hamilton’s representative on the committee. The secretary was twenty-one-year-old Carlo Douglas-de Fenzi, a product of Bedford Modern who had joined the Cape’s civil service. The ‘Englishness’ of the committee was significant in ensuring Western Province accepted the authority of the Rugby Football Union and adhered closely to its directives. St Leger played his part by publishing details of meetings of the Rugby Football Union.

The new committee immediately set about organising a Grand Challenge Cup competition, an idea used successfully overseas when the Yorkshire Challenge Cup brought with it an influx of new players, new spectators and new playing methods.¹⁶⁴ Success at the Cape owed much to an active committee that attended regular meetings in Giddy’s chambers. Teams were soon neatly attired in their club colours ‘which enabled spectators and players to distinguish clearly between sides’, a situation that had been found ‘wanting in previous seasons’. Good crowds attended matches even to the extent that they sometimes hampered play by ‘getting inside the flags and closing round when there [happened] to be a scrimmage on the goal-line’. Improvements in the playing conditions were still necessary and when one of the Versfeld brothers broke a leg it was noted that it had been ‘caused solely by the faulty nature of the ground ... the Green Point Common abounds with mole-holes’.¹⁶⁵

The Challenge Cup – proudly displayed in a shop window on Adderley Street – changed the complexion of Western Province rugby. A number of new clubs were established and there was a greater intensity in the play. Hamilton’s were the inaugural champions in 1883 but Villager’s raised their game to secure the cup the following year. Milton was sufficiently

¹⁶² Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, 20

¹⁶³ Dobson, *Bishops*, 25

¹⁶⁴ Collins, *Social History of English Rugby*, 25

¹⁶⁵ *Cape Times*, 9 July 1883

enthused by his club's success to accept the position of captain in 1885. He had rarely played in the preceding years, achieving little since a match against Hamilton's in 1880 when his towering drop-goal from the half-way line was 'received with great enthusiasm on both sides'.¹⁶⁶ His fitness had declined and in February 1885 there was drama when he 'overstrained himself with palpitation of the heart being induced' during a 'Mother Country' versus 'Colonial-born' cricket match.¹⁶⁷ He did not recapture former glory in his final rugby season and, after serving the game as 'umpire' and Western Province vice-president for a few years, he withdrew from active participation after 1887. Pressure of work and a commitment to cricket were cited as reasons for his withdrawal.

The rugby community was also changing with Colonial-born players dominating the composition of teams in the 1880s. The game was popular in the schools which ensured a steady supply of talent and, in no time, an expanding programme featured at least a dozen clubs, some fielding second and third fifteens. Colonial-born teams would defeat 'Mother Country' with customary ease and it became increasingly difficult to find players to represent the latter. After a year or two of Milton cajoling his civil service colleagues into making up the required numbers, the fixture was dropped. Its demise was significant because the Colonial-born versus Mother Country match continued to be the highlight of the cricket season. In this regard, rugby would have a unifying effect on the white community, more so than cricket which tended to define and divide communities in the region. It was a situation with which Milton struggled to come to terms but is explained to an extent by John Honey's observation:

In England rugby was socially divisive; it is the game identified with the middle and upper classes and apart from a few special cases, the social pretensions of schools are classifiable by whether they play rugger or soccer. In South Africa, on the other hand, this kind of classification has never caught on ... The function of rugby football in South Africa has been, rather, to unite the white nation, to bridge the differences between Afrikaner and Englishman in a common religion, with common rituals and a common language; with a high priesthood and a company of saints (and even martyrs) who belong to all.¹⁶⁸

Early football teams at the Cape had invariably featured Dutch names – some from 'anglicised' families – but in the 1880s, says Ivor Difford, 'the young Boers took to the game like ducks to water, which was not surprising, in view of their magnificent physique and virility'. Stellenbosch came to the fore 'with the result that enthusiasm for the Rugby game

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 26 June 1880

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 23 February 1885

¹⁶⁸ Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, 15

spread like wildfire into all the farming districts of the country'.¹⁶⁹ The Western Province Rugby Football Union actively encouraged the participation of the Afrikaans-dominated country districts and in a short time won considerable support for their game. Douglas-de Fenzi introduced the successful Country Challenge Cup and areas such as Paarl, where players had previously been 'forbidden to participate because the game was considered too rough', provided powerful teams.¹⁷⁰ Within a few years, Stellenbosch – a cricket centre of some note – became the first of the country teams to enter Cape Town's premier rugby competition.

The surge in enthusiasm that Afrikaner communities developed for rugby came at a time when they were endeavouring to become politically assertive. The situation gained momentum in 1880-81 with the defeat of the British by republican commandos at the Battle of Majuba. In the course of the 1880s, wrote Shula Marks, 'the Afrikaner mobilisation in defence of their "oppressed brothers" proved remarkably ephemeral'. Wealthy farmers who dominated the Afrikaner Bond under J.H. Hofmeyr, 'were not hostile to the imperial connection' although they would 'regret its parochialism' when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886.¹⁷¹

The timing of Milton's arrival and his subsequent determination to establish rugby in Cape Town cannot be underestimated. The handling game had, conceded Gibson and Pickford, 'obtained a start on Association in the most fertile soil for football'¹⁷² and soccer's adherents were slow to react. Attempts were made to form two association clubs – Wanderers and Thistles – in 1883 but they did not survive long. Rugby claimed the attention of young men at the Cape and, before long, was spreading across the colony. Kimberley's rugby team visited the Cape in 1884 and St Leger, delighted by the enterprise displayed, ensured the matches were generously advertised and therefore well attended. 'They were the first rugby adventurers', wrote Dobson, 'the first tourists, the first, really, to play inter-provincial rugby in South Africa'. Three thousand people watched them play Villager's and there was 'a sea of faces on every side of the enclosure' when they played a Combined Town side at Rondebosch.¹⁷³ The excitement led to calls for a South African Challenge Cup with one

¹⁶⁹ Difford, *History of South African Rugby*, 15

¹⁷⁰ *Cape Times*, 10 April, 1885; Difford, *History of South African Rugby*, 514

¹⁷¹ Shula Marks, 'Class, Culture and Consciousness in South Africa, 1880-1899' in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 111

¹⁷² Alfred Gibson and William Pickford, *Football and the Men Who Made it*, London, 1906, 220

¹⁷³ Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, 26

writer predicting ‘inter-provincial matches may at no distant date come to be regarded almost as an institution’.¹⁷⁴

The formation of the Griqualand West Rugby Union in 1886 was seen as pointing to the ‘rapid development of the game in the country with another link to the chain of communication [binding] the disconnected branches of our athletic system’.¹⁷⁵ The Eastern Province Rugby Union formed in 1888 rendered the chain complete insofar as the Cape Colony was concerned. The next stage was a national union – albeit one restricted to white players – with the Transvaal joining the southern provinces in forming the South African Rugby Football Board in 1889. Natal was the only part of southern Africa where soccer gained the ascendancy in the late nineteenth century. J.J. Sewell, who had been an outstanding sportsman at Marlborough College, was instrumental in organising the first rugby game at Pietermaritzburg in June, 1887, but it would take until 1915 before the game ‘effectively displaced soccer as the major winter ball sport among the settlers’.¹⁷⁶

The drive towards establishing rugby as the major winter code was not confined to whites – or white males. This was apparent during the Kimberley visit where ‘men of every shade and colour and position could be seen. The Malay and the Negro were there, as well as the elite of Cape Town society; and the varied and bright costumes of the ladies, set off as they were by the large white canvas enclosure and marquee, made quite a pretty sight.’¹⁷⁷ Two years later, in 1886, the Western Province Coloured Rugby Union was formed in Cape Town.

A rugby match was played by the Pioneer Column *en route* to Mashonaland in 1890 and, in no time, the game was well established north of the Limpopo. The advance of rugby was indeed remarkable in the years that followed the historic meeting at Stanmore in 1878. But Milton, having carved a niche in the game’s history, chose to seek opportunities in other fields. Hard work enabled him to make impressive progress within the civil service: he qualified as a second-class clerk in 1880 and became Secretary to the Tender Board in August 1881. Two years later he was a first-class clerk. Then in 1885, he became the officiating clerk to the executive council.¹⁷⁸ Cricket was also occupying much of his time and his involvement in Cape rugby was restricted to rare appearances such as his membership of the

¹⁷⁴ *Cape Times*, 13 August 1884

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 14 April 1886

¹⁷⁶ Robert Morrell, ‘Forging a ruling race; rugby and white masculinity in colonial Natal, c1870-1910’ in John Nauright and T.J.L. Chandler, (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, London, 1996, 92

¹⁷⁷ Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa*, 27

¹⁷⁸ Ernest F. Kilpin (ed.), *Civil Service List 1885*, National Library of South Africa, Cape Town

Western Province Rugby Football Union reception committee for the 1891 British touring team.

Milton's important contribution to rugby would not, in fact, be fully realised until many years later when South Africa was a force at international level. Those who had been part of the early rugby years such as C.F.S. Nicholson, C.G. van Renen and Clarkson Tredgold would recall Milton's role in establishing the game. Difford's history was unable to refer to the details outlined in this chapter but does pay tribute to Milton in glowing terms such as: 'What the late Sir William Milton did for rugby in the Western Province can never be appreciated sufficiently' and 'he, perhaps more than any other man, caused the adoption of Rugby Union rules'.¹⁷⁹

Milton's influence in sport continued to be considerable, an important feature being the partnership that had been formed initially to promote rugby's cause. The early success achieved by Milton and Simkins proved a rewarding and reassuring experience for two young men. Heartened by his subsequent accession of status, Simkins became an ambitious sports administrator, not only serving as president of the South African Rugby Football Board for twenty-three years, but heading Western Province's rugby and cricket for varying periods. He was in regular contact with Milton – an alliance that would have a massive impact on South African sport.¹⁸⁰

In time, Milton drew satisfaction from the remarkable progress of the Springbok rugby team. In 1930, he commented that 'the result has been even more magnificent than any of us could have anticipated'.¹⁸¹ South Africa's defeat in a Test series in 1896 would not be repeated until 1956.

¹⁷⁹ Difford, *History of South African Rugby*, 457

¹⁸⁰ See Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed, (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009

¹⁸¹ Difford, *History of South African Rugby*, 457

Chapter 3:

Milton, the Western Province Cricket Club and the administration of the summer game during 1877-88

When Milton arrived in Cape Town in 1877, his famous relative, Anthony Trollope, was in the process of writing about the town and its suburbs. Trollope saw Cape Town as Milton might have done: ‘not in itself a prepossessing town ... not specially dirty, – but somewhat ragged’.¹⁸² Trollope was more impressed by ‘the Elysian scenery of Wynberg’. He liked ‘the district at the back of the Table Mountain where are Mowbray, Rondebosch, Wynberg and Constantia’ and thought it ‘would be hard to beat in form or colour, so grand are the outlines of the mountain, and so rich and beautiful the verdure of the shrubs and timbers’.¹⁸³ Another description of the area recalled that ‘many of the principal inhabitants have built elegant mansions to which they return after the business of each day to escape the heat, dust and smells of the town’.¹⁸⁴

Milton would live in Wynberg, ultimately in a mansion, and play cricket. He joined the Western Province CC which had been formed in 1864, a significant year in cricket history. It was when the M.C.C. ‘virtually died and was reborn’, a reference to its brushing off attempts to replace it with a ‘Cricket Parliament’ concept that was proposed in the columns of the *Sporting Life*.¹⁸⁵ It was also the year when *Wisden* was founded; over-arm bowling was legalised; W.G. Grace played at Lord’s for the first time; Surrey was listed as the first county champions ... and a club was formed at Stellenbosch.

The Western Province CC soon became the headquarters and centre of cricket in Cape Town. By 1871 it had ninety-three members, not quite the social scramble being experienced by the M.C.C. but an intriguing window nevertheless on the cultural life of the Cape. An editorial in the *Cape Argus* went as far as to suggest that the club ‘should be called the “Institution”’.¹⁸⁶ Stewart West, described the Western Province CC as the South African counterpart of the famous Hambledon Club to which ‘many of the best cricketers belonged

¹⁸² Anthony Trollope, *South Africa (Volume I)* (London 1987), 68

¹⁸³ Trollope, *South Africa*, 78

¹⁸⁴ R.M. Ballantyne, *Six Months at the Cape or Letters to Periwinkle from South Africa*, London 1878 – Gutenberg Ebook – 6 June 2007

¹⁸⁵ Tony Lewis, *Double Century: The Story of MCC and Cricket* (London, 1987), 6; Simon Rea, *W.G. Grace*, London, 1998, 44

¹⁸⁶ *Cape Argus*, 6 April 1872

[and] in its heyday took on All England'.¹⁸⁷ Milton was delighted to discover that the Western Province CC operated in a fashion after the M.C.C. and he sought to establish his reputation there.

The game was not as popular as it had been a few years before. 'Cricket everywhere!' wrote one new arrival at the Cape in the early 1870s. On sailing into the bay, he had been delighted to see 'our beloved game going on half way up "the Devil's Peak"' and then 'behind Zonnebloem, on a ledge scooped as it were from the mountain's side, we have beheld stalwart young Kafirs bowling and hitting with freedom and skill'. His pleasure did not end there because 'Fort Knokke must have been named prophetically ... for there elevens, military and civilian, receive and distribute thumps to one another's shins' and, not far away, there are 'the cricketing glories of the Parade'. He also mentioned that 'as naturally as within the precincts of York or Canterbury, cricket grows beneath the shadow of St George's Cathedral' whilst 'breezy Green Point Common, one of the finest natural grounds on earth, at times swarms with cricketers'.

Yet, despite the enthusiasm for the game at the various venues, Cape Town did not have 'a decent wicket whereon to bat'. When a match was arranged, the cricketers had to travel to Wynberg – 'the Cape Lord's' – an enchanting venue but some nine miles away. 'It keeps cricket alive,' the visitor continued, 'but it also chokes it: for as long as there is 2s. 3d. between the Cape lad and his practice, cricket is in a state of semi-strangulation'.¹⁸⁸ To underline Cape Town's plight was the fact that country villages such as Stellenbosch and Robertson had their grounds.

The Western Province CC was at an advantage in being able to play its matches on the Wynberg Ground – also known as Southey's Field¹⁸⁹ – at a time when sheep kept the grass low and creases were marked by a knife. The field was regarded as 'one of the most popular resorts in the neighbourhood of Cape Town'. A leader article in the *Cape Times* recalled the enjoyment in being there 'when the sun was warm and the wind soft and low, and in the carriages, on horseback, or on foot the feminine grace and the masculine strength of the suburbs thronged that pleasant ground, listening to the strains of the band (refreshed by tickey beer) and witnessing the manly contest at the wicket between naval and military heroes or the more notable civilian clubs.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ S.E.L. West and W.J. Luker (eds.), *Century at Newlands, 1864-1964: A History of the Western Province Cricket Club*, Newlands, 1965, 12

¹⁸⁸ 'An Old Peripatetic' in *Cape Monthly*, Vol. VI, 1873, 161-66

¹⁸⁹ In earlier years it was known as (Mrs) Higgs's Field

¹⁹⁰ *Cape Times*, 14 August 1878

The Wynberg Ground became a meeting place for those who counted in Cape society. The sports club, as elsewhere in the Empire, was ‘an enclave of power and privilege’¹⁹¹ – a retreat where the English could escape an alien culture and celebrate an imperial lifestyle with fellow expatriates. The Western Province CC fell into this category, envied because it was the favoured club but questioned because of its exclusivity. As the game grew at the Cape, the club became increasingly inclined to attend to its own interests and to care little for the vast majority of clubs and players within its imagined jurisdiction. Particular emphasis was placed on showpiece fixtures between Mother Country and Colonial-born which were restricted to members of the club.

Many on the Western Province CC membership list – which included Cecil John Rhodes – were non-playing. They were nevertheless influential in determining the direction that the club pursued. It was also considered important to have a prominent dignitary as the patron – usually the governor – rather in the fashion of the M.C.C. whose committee once chose Prince Albert because ‘his connection placed the club in an exalted position ... the national and manly game of cricket cannot but still rise more in public estimation under such distinguished patronage’.¹⁹²

Like the M.C.C., the Western Province CC fielded just one side. Even so, they were always scouting for players and Milton was drafted into the side on his arrival. He recollected ‘when only two days in the colony, being called up to the office of the chairman’ and being asked to play. In those years, said Milton, ‘cricketing was not in the best form’ and he recalled times when they would be ‘trying at the George Hotel and the Masonic to make up a team’. The cricket administrator’s problems were compounded by poor facilities with the Wynberg wicket notoriously difficult for batsmen. The ball ‘instead of bounding to an angle fairly to be calculated by the striker, as on the close-knitted English turf, takes a dive into loose sand or earth, and emerges in uneasy and irregular gyrations’. Milton, however, discovered his style of play was suited to the venue: ‘... what with the long grass, molehills and undulations of varying degree, the best way to score was to lift the ball. In those days sixes were allowed if the ball cleared the row of trees which served as changing rooms, grandstand and score-box’.¹⁹³

Milton’s early performances made an immediate impression. He was chosen for the prestigious representative matches during the 1877/78 season, taking eight wickets for the

¹⁹¹ J. Morris, *The Spectacle of Empire: Style, Effect and the Pax Britannica*, London, 1982, 168

¹⁹² Lewis, *Double Century*, 100

¹⁹³ West, *Century at Newlands*, 5-6

Mother Country in the annual fixture against Colonial-born¹⁹⁴ and making top score (54) in helping Country (123) defeat Town (63 and 30) by an innings. His name featured regularly in press reports and even when he had a relatively quiet game for All-Comers against the Diocesan College it was noted, 'Mr W.H. Milton ... added to his reputation as a player by a magnificent hit to square-leg for six'.¹⁹⁵

Ivor Difford, who played with and against Milton at that time, described him as 'a big, athletic and powerful man' who was 'essentially an attacking batsman':

From the moment he took guard he seemed imbued with a desire to knock the cover off the ball. He raised his bat on high and lashed out in all directions. The very mention of pad play to him would have caused an explosion. There was no pushing or patting or 'persuading away' the ball for him. He cut it with flashing bat or cracked it to leg or drove it powerfully and usually loftily to, or more often over, the boundary; and he knocked off their length very quickly all but the most imperturbable of bowlers.¹⁹⁶

Milton was awarded a cricket bat for the Western Province CC's 'best average' in each of his first two seasons, 1877/78 and 1878/79. Success on the field of play was complemented by his involvement in the general administration of the club. There was no professional assistance and he gained attention through his efforts towards improving the playing conditions. In July 1878, he was elected as secretary and treasurer well in advance of the new season, and responded by instituting the 'first increase of subscriptions from one to two guineas'.¹⁹⁷ Sixty pounds was overdue on ground rental, a situation that Milton was quick to confront and make public knowledge. In a leader article, the *Cape Times* described Milton as 'the willing horse' in developing the game at Wynberg and urged financial support 'for the improvement and enclosure of the fields'.¹⁹⁸

In promoting the club, Milton was initially guided by his club chairman, James Sivewright who was a few years older and already well-known in Cape society. Sivewright was a highly intelligent man who had obtained a Master of Arts degree at the University of Aberdeen; won first place in Great Britain's telegraphy examination and co-authored the definitive textbook on the subject. In early 1877, he arrived at the Cape to develop telegraphic systems throughout southern Africa. His exceptional ability was recognised and he mingled with those in high places, becoming close friends with J.H. Hofmeyr and Cecil

¹⁹⁴ *Cape Times*, 9 November 1877; Milton claimed eight wickets in the match but disappointed with the bat, scoring 0 and 9.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 4 April 1878

¹⁹⁶ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

¹⁹⁷ West, *Century at Newlands*, 11

¹⁹⁸ *Cape Times*, 14 August 1878

John Rhodes, men who would dominate Cape politics. Sivewright was an important connection for Milton as he brought him into contact with Rhodes. It is also quite possible that Sivewright knew Anthony Trollope because the latter worked for the post office and is credited with introducing the pillar box to Britain and negotiating postal treaties across the world.

It was on the motion of Milton that Sivewright was voted to the chair of the Western Province CC in August 1878. And at the end of Milton's first year in office as secretary/treasurer of the club, it was Sivewright who proposed the thanks of the meeting be accorded to Milton 'for his efficient and energetic conduct of affairs during the past season'.¹⁹⁹ Club members were delighted with the progress made. They wanted to be the best and paid little heed to a *Cape Argus* warning: 'By all means let the Western Province CC be the leader, but let it have grouped around it clubs whose elevens could compete with it and with one another, not in the desultory fashion now in vogue but with some enthusiasm, some display of science'.

Milton established an early working relationship with the *Cape Times*, thereby giving impetus to the growth of the game at the Cape. The newspaper, with a circulation of 25 000 to 30 000 copies a week, published details of fixtures, teams and meetings, whilst also affording considerable space to match reports, comments, scorecards and letters from the public. The *Cape Argus* continued to provide some coverage of sport but Alfred Geary at *The Lantern* was reluctant to co-operate with Milton. He wrote: 'We never were very much in love with cricket, even in our green and salad days, and we do not entertain any present intention of taking to it at this period of our career'. But, mindful of the need to promote 'Englishness', Geary conceded 'we like to see the rising generation in a Colony taking to [cricket] kindly as a Home institution'.²⁰⁰

In the style of the MCC, the Western Province CC could choose its opposition through an arrangement whereby clubs forwarded requests for matches. They could also commandeer the finest players available, choosing from members of the civil service, the military and sportsmen from 'Home'. The articles of association for the club allowed for this as they catered for 'a class of members, not to exceed ten' who could be 'admitted by the committee

¹⁹⁹ Western Province CC minutes, August 1878 and 20 October 1879. Sivewright spent much of 1879 constructing communications during the Anglo-Zulu War – becoming the only non-combatant to win the South African Medal with three clasps – but returned as chairman of the Western Province Cricket Club the following year. He was a good batsman, often making scores of substance, and was good enough to command a regular place in the Mother Country team that played the annual fixture against Colonial-born. Work kept him away from the game for long periods and although he played as often as he could in the early 1880s, he was forced to relinquish the post of club chairman.

²⁰⁰ *The Lantern*, 26 October 1878

without entrance fee [and] be entitled to practise on the ground and play in matches during the season'. A player who had experience of the English first-class game was certain to be given honorary membership and a place in the side. Lieutenant William Davidson (M.C.C. and Northants), Lieutenant Lyndhurst Winslow (Sussex) and Major Frank Crawford (Kent and M.C.C.) were first-class cricketers who made occasional appearances, whilst EW (later Sir Edward) Wallington, an Oxford Blue, was given a game when his ship docked at Cape Town *en route* to Australia. Major Robert Gardner Warton, Captain Edward Pocock (who had played rugby for Scotland), Captain Robert Spurway (who later represented Somerset), Surgeon Young and Major Dugdale were regular players for both club and army teams. Milton's school associates – Major William Churchill from the well-known Marlborough family, and Fred Mills, an English rugby international – were also drafted into the side during their brief sojourns in the country.

Milton – “Joey” as his intimates know him’ – was a popular member of the club and in the early years topped the votes for members elected to the committee. He was also given every opportunity to shine, frequently opening the batting and proving a ‘useful slow to medium right-arm bowler’.²⁰¹ By his third season at the Cape, he was choosing the matches he wished to play, largely because his work commitments were such that he could not always be available. Glossy annual fixtures such as Mother Country versus Colonial-born and Civil Service versus All-Comers were a priority. He was also pleased to play in a match that celebrated the opening of the Beaufort West Railway: the governor, Sir Bartle Frere was there to see him score 50 in leading Cape Town to a seven-wicket victory over the local side.²⁰²

A new experience for Milton was that of participating with and against players of Dutch descent. They had been part of the cricket scene for many years – the *Cape Times* recalled the prominent figures of the early 1850s as being the ‘Van Renens, Cloetes, Hornes, De Smidts ...’²⁰³ Cricket unified and divided people: ‘There were Afrikaners,’ wrote Mordechai Tamarkin, ‘... who played cricket, dressed in white, and those who preferred to mount a horse and hunt with veldschoene on their feet’.²⁰⁴ D.P. Faure, a club player at the time and later editor of *Het Volksblad*, wrote: Cricket was the outdoor game in my boyhood. The star of football had then not yet risen. Our field was the Green Point Common, then a grass field

²⁰¹ *Cape Times*, 4 January 1909

²⁰² *Ibid*, 4 February 1880

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 25 May, 1894

²⁰⁴ Mordechai Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump*, Abingdon, 1996, 46

extending from the lower end of Bree Street to Three Anchor Bay, on which only two buildings were to be seen, a powder magazine and the race stand'.²⁰⁵

The game spread. The influence of the English settlers 'fanning out from the coastal towns,' wrote TRH Davenport, 'could be seen through newspapers which described a world where debating societies and horse-racing and cricket matches between "Home-born and Colonial-born" or shooting matches referred to as Wimbletons were among the leading recreational pastimes'. By the 1870s, isolated conditions no longer protected the platteland Boer from the influences of anglicisation as increased commercial activity in the interior saw the English and other immigrant settlers gain control of the towns.²⁰⁶

At Stellenbosch, cricket had from the earliest years been 'the most popular sport in the town ... there were no special fields or facilities and any open area would be used for matches'.²⁰⁷ In 1871, the Stellenbosch and District team entertained the Western Province CC when it made its first venture into the country districts. Stellenbosch became the focal point of a flourishing cricket environment that penetrated deep into the countryside to villages such as Ceres, Worcester, Paarl, Riverdale, Somerset West, Swellendam, Robertson and Wellington. Blessed with space, good weather and a healthy, outdoor life, athletic young farmers developed an instinctive fondness for the English game. A report of a match played on Easter Monday, 1876, stated: 'This noble game is becoming exceedingly popular in the Worcester district ... The village-green swarmed with spectators of every sex, age and colour assembled to witness the much talked of cricket match between a Worcester XI and employees on the extension line'.²⁰⁸

Milton soon discovered in his first season at the Cape that the most feared team was the Stellenbosch Cricket Club. Comprised almost entirely of players from the Dutch-speaking sector of the white population, the team at that stage included A Albertyn, N Hofmeyr, J van Heerden, EL Schröder, R Howe, J Wege, J Wium, L Neethling, A Neethling, A Faure, P van Coller and J Neethling.²⁰⁹ Their impressive deeds occurred at a time when S.J. du Toit was promoting the idea of 'Afrikaners' being whites of Dutch, French or German origin who had

²⁰⁵ D.P. Faure, *My Life and Times*, Cape Town, 1907, 144: He joined Gardens Club which played its matches on Breda's Field but practised at Green Point along with J.W. Sauer and E.J. (later Sir John) Buchanan.

²⁰⁶ T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911*, Cape Town, 1966, 5, 24

²⁰⁷ Niel Hendriksz, *The History of the Van der Stel Club*, <http://www.vanderstel.co.za>: accessed 27 January, 2010

²⁰⁸ *Cape Times*, 21 April 1876

²⁰⁹ Twenty-year-old Rudolph Robert Bird Howe, who was born in Colchester in the Cape Province and later represented Kimberley, was the only player on the team list who suggested English ancestry.

since the seventeenth century been bound together by common experience and the Afrikaans language.²¹⁰ J.H. Hofmeyr, the editor of the *Zuid Afrikaan*, provided a broader definition of the Afrikaner as ‘anyone who, having settled in this country, wishes to remain here to help to promote our common interests and to live with the inhabitants as members of one family’. In time, the term would refer to Afrikaans-speakers as distinct from English and other nationalities.²¹¹

Mowbray and Rondebosch sent a combined team to Stellenbosch in 1877 and were dismissed for 10 and 22 – L.Neethling and E.L. Schröder sharing the twenty wickets. When Sea Point visited Stellenbosch two weeks later, they bolstered their side with several star players from outside clubs. Their action prompted the *Cape Times* to comment: ‘In fact we have not seen such a strong eleven for some time and it was thought that the men from the Cape would gain an easy victory.’ It was not to be as Schröder and Neethling made short work of the visiting batting line-up.

The bowling of Neethling in particular caught the eye – ‘first-class,’ said one report, he is considered by good judges to be one of the best bowlers in the colony’. It then added ‘with the bat he can do nothing’.²¹² That effectively summed up Stellenbosch’s cricket. No side could match their attack but their batting proved brittle, and against the South African College, they went down in a low-scoring game by 14 runs.

Later in the year Stellenbosch demolished the Diocesan College, a team that had comfortably defeated the South African College in the previous week. Against Stellenbosch, the students from ‘Bishops’ were bowled out for 22 in their first innings with Neethling returning the remarkable figures of six wickets for no runs in seven overs. He and Schröder then proceeded to complete the humiliation by dismissing their opponents for 20 runs in the second innings.

Not long afterwards, the match of the season occurred when the Western Province CC travelled to Stellenbosch to play the local team in early December 1877. Milton was on his travels with Trollope and did not appear on the day but the *Cape Times* reported ‘considerable interest was taken in the match, and numbers of people were on the ground to see the cracks of Western Province play’.²¹³ They were left in no doubt as to the strength of a Stellenbosch side that won by nine wickets thanks largely to devastating bowling by the formidable

²¹⁰ J.H Hofmeyr with F. W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)* (Cape Town, 1913), 195

²¹¹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice 1875-1902*, Cambridge, 1995, 48-49

²¹² *Cape Times*, 23 February 1877

²¹³ *Ibid*, 19 December 1877

Neethling (6/13 and 5/6) and Schröder (4/31 and 4/17). The Stellenbosch pair bowled unchanged and Western Province's second innings of 27 was over in fifty minutes – a matter of nineteen four-ball overs.

Neethling left Stellenbosch at the end of the year, having taken 66 wickets for 117 runs (average 1.77) against the area's top sides. He appeared to drift away from the game before resurfacing some years later at Worcester where he clean bowled six batsmen in the course of helping dismiss Wellington for 9.²¹⁴

Milton would play against Stellenbosch in 1878. The fixture was eagerly anticipated as Schröder in particular had helped maintain the country club's good form. In matches against Mowbray and the two Colleges, he had captured 31 wickets for 100 runs, but he was unable to inspire a victory over the Western Province CC at Wynberg. Milton held his side's innings together, scoring 34 out of 67 in a hard-fought game. Stellenbosch had struggled to 51 in their first innings, but were 114 for 8 when it became necessary to catch the 4.10 train. Of particular significance in this match was that Milton came up against J.H. Hofmeyr, already a powerful figure at the Cape. Apart from his newspaper interests, Hofmeyr had formed the Dutch-speaking farmers' protection association, the *Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*. He also maintained a strong interest in cricket since learning to play the game at the South African College and, like Milton, believed strongly in the benefits of manly exercise. The two men would meet regularly over the years on cricket fields, in boardroom meetings and later, in the political sphere. Yet, despite their shared interest in cricket and rugby, there was uneasiness in Milton's communication with the Afrikaner people. Like other English-speaking South Africans in the late 1870s and early 1880s, he was probably suspicious of Hofmeyr and might well have shared in the belief that the leader of the Afrikaner Bond was 'one of the hottest agitators, anti-English to the backbone'.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 6 March 1888; Neethling became captain of the Worcester CC (*Cape Times*, 24 September 1891). He is also noted as having taken 9/31 and 3/22 against Paarl in January 1891 when his team went down by five wickets (*Cape Times*, 27 January 1891). Charles Finlason wrote (*South African Review*, 13 October 1893) that when Stray Cats played at Worcester: 'I met old Neethling, once the demon bowler ... He took a little run and sent in without any effort, a very fast ball. Kept a lovely length he did ... I remember as Woodthorpe came out clean bowled for 18, I passed him on my way to fill the vacant place. His fingers were covered with blood and he said with indignation: "This is not cricket, it's blasted cruelty". After that warning, I looked after Neethling's bailers, and let the shooters look after themselves. Of course the fifth ball was a shooter – a straight one – and I went back for a duck's egg. But I stopped two bailers, had a rouser in the ribs, and dodged another which would have brained me if I hadn't been quick.'

²¹⁵ Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 87

Milton met Hofmeyr again when another hard-fought match – ‘a very pleasant game’ – was played out in 1879.²¹⁶ That was the year Hofmeyr won a seat in parliament from Stellenbosch. It was also a time when St Leger adopted a cautious standpoint with regard to the Afrikaner and ‘for all his English jingoism, argued in [a *Cape Times*] editorial that whites should take pride in their common heritage’.²¹⁷ St Leger’s attitude would change dramatically, however, and during 1881 his newspaper attacked Afrikaner republicanism and accused J.H. Hofmeyr of stirring up sympathy for the Transvaal in the Cape²¹⁸. *The Lantern* went further and called for the Hofmeyrs – the ‘reigning family of Cape Town’ – to be ‘toppled from their throne’.²¹⁹

Despite the strength of Stellenbosch cricket, the Western Province CC did not see the country team as a priority when arranging matches and seasons went by without the sides meeting. Milton wrote of the ‘native talent of South Africa ... which lacks nothing but opportunity for development’ but did not appear to have the time or inclination to attend to the needs of those clubs and players outside the suburbs.²²⁰ He designed the fixture list to suit the Cape elite. The Western Province CC programme for 1880/81 included Batchelors versus Benedicts; Civil Service versus All-Comers; Mother Country versus Colonial-born; Veterans versus Juveniles, as well as club games against the Diocesan College, South African College, Mowbray, Claremont and the South African College Past and Present. Effectively, it was a relatively short season – 13 November-24 March – which involved matches within the suburbs, minimal travelling and the attraction of the 91st Regiment Band at all fixtures. The Western Province CC thus distanced itself from the town and country districts.

In that particular season, a late change did occur when the club suddenly arranged a fixture at Worcester. It might have been aimed at placating grievances within the country districts but if there was a good intention, it was quickly destroyed. The Western Province CC displayed crass insensitivity by collecting Schröder *en route* to Worcester and thereafter using him to full advantage in destroying the host team. The action was not dissimilar to ‘gentlemen’ calling upon professionals to bowl out the opposition in English cricket. The visitors made 197 and then dismissed the home side for 17 and 14, with Schröder returning a match analysis of 10 for 10.

It was not the only invitation that Schröder received. Earlier in the season, Milton had enlisted his support to ensure the Civil Service defeated All-Comers. Schröder claimed

²¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 24 March 1879

²¹⁷ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 63

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 61

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 50

²²⁰ *Cape Argus*, 18 October 1879

thirteen wickets in sharp contrast to Milton who managed just one, alongside a ‘duck’. It would have bruised the captain’s ego but there were further indignities to follow. The fiasco at Worcester paved the way for Schröder, as a Western Province CC player, to represent Colonial-born against Mother Country. The development contributed substantially to Milton’s side suffering three successive defeats. Schröder influenced two of the games through five-wicket hauls and in the third teamed up with G Melck and H.L. Scholtz to enable Colonial-born to win by an innings. The potential of the Afrikaner as a bowler was underlined.

Milton’s refusal to cater satisfactorily for the country districts effectively meant a refusal to support the Afrikaner in his efforts to play the game. The problem was only partially offset through ‘New Year’ tours made by the Cape Town Wanderers. Captain Robert Gardner Warton, a member of the army’s permanent staff and a Western Province CC player, organised three trips. The first in early 1884 encompassed Paarl, Ceres, Worcester, Wellington, Malmesbury and Claremont. Hopes of an unbeaten record were dented in convincing style at Worcester where a bowler by the name of Johan du Plessis inflicted damage on the experienced Cape Town team.

Milton did not take part in the tours and spent time away from the game during 1883/84. He was to enjoy an eventful period in the course of which he married twenty-five-year-old Eveline, daughter of Mary Ann and the late Allan Borchers – a well-known Cape family. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverend T.W. Swift M.A. (Oxon) and took place at the St John’s Church, Wynberg, on Tuesday, 6 February 1883. Of particular interest was that the bachelors’ party – a dinner in Milton’s honour – was given ample space in the *Wynberg Times*. It was a formal occasion, chaired by C. Neumann Thomas, and at which guests celebrated their ‘Englishness’. There were toasts to ‘the Queen’ and ‘the Army, Navy and Reserve Forces’, as well as a ‘Royal Bumper’ and with ‘an efficient string band’ playing the national anthem. Speakers praised Milton’s contribution to the Western Province Cricket Club but Neumann Thomas, ‘with a tally of eleven [children]’ was able to tell him that in marriage ‘he had many difficulties yet to contend with’.²²¹

The Miltons’ first son, Cecil, followed on 7 January 1884 and the proud parents travelled overseas later in the year for the wedding of Milton’s brother, John. On their return, two further sons followed – John (named after Milton’s brother) arrived on 1 May 1885 and Noel Willoughby on 31 December 1886. The name ‘Willoughby’ was chosen in honour of the brother of Milton’s mother who was drowned in the Gulf of Mexico whilst serving with the Royal Navy’s *HMS Cumberland*.

²²¹ *Wynberg Times*, 3 and 10 February 1883

Milton's absence affected the Western Province CC and a member complained that 'cricket has got to a very low ebb in our club [which] is supposed to be the leading club in the Western Province'. It noted 'the cricket on the Wynberg ground was anything but good ... the pitch was so bad that for a player who plays the forward game and whose whole face and body is open to the attack of the ball, it is really dangerous.'²²²

There were other serious problems affecting the Cape's cricket and the Western Province CC was regularly criticised. The stoical Charles Neumann Thomas, who had played in the historic first match involving the club in 1864 and was chairman in 1877 and 1881-82, admitted that 'the opinion is often expressed and more than one communication has found a piece in [the press] that the Western Province CC is not a representative one, and that it does little or nothing for the promotion of good cricket'. He did not attempt to dispute the allegation, dwelling instead on the view that it was the club's desire to provide the required leadership and 'prove itself worthy of the name which was given it many years ago when it was the only cricket club in the neighbourhood of Cape Town'.²²³

Letters flowed in the press. One to the *Cape Times* called for a 'Cricket Association' and 'complained that cricket is simply ruled by about four members who live in Wynberg'.²²⁴ The *Cape Argus* published a letter that stated, 'No club should call itself the "Western Province" unless it represents every club in the province.'²²⁵ Further correspondence from 'X' expressed annoyance that 'leading clubs like the Western Province and others come on to the field, match after match, without even attempting to secure a qualified and independent umpire'. The writer believed it led to the 'growing habit that has sprung up of openly criticising, and in some cases actually challenging the decisions of the umpire', a situation which he thought exposed 'that so-called "manly independence" as much affected by a section of our colonial youth, which chafes at anything in the shape of constituted authority'. The concluding line that 'it would not be tolerated on any ground at Home',²²⁶ displayed blissful ignorance of the fact that Yorkshire's Ted Peate had deliberately thrown a ball whilst bowling in the previous English season and then proclaimed: 'There, that shows what you umpires are all worth'.²²⁷

Concessions made by the Western Province CC did little to improve the situation. It was agreed in 1882/83, for example, that 'teams for the Mother Country versus Colonial-born

²²² *Cape Times*, 22 August 1884

²²³ *Ibid*, 27 September 1884

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 22 August 1884

²²⁵ *Cape Argus*, 4 September 1884

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 10 March 1885

²²⁷ Rea, *W.G. Grace*, 286

game will be chosen from all clubs and not be confined to members of this club as hitherto'. In reality, the Western Province CC still selected the teams and there was no inclination to release the reins of power, a situation not unlike that prevailing at the M.C.C. of which it was once written that 'to legislate for the vast cricket-playing community was ... too great a task for a single club'.²²⁸ The organisation under Milton resembled the M.C.C. of the mid-nineteenth century: '... the run-down gentlemen's club straining to put its own house in order ... new carpets and curtains and better facilities for the surge of new members which would bring in welcome new subscription money'.²²⁹ In both cases, the primary concern was for the club; the M.C.C. relied on 'the glitter of the great social fixtures between the schools and universities'²³⁰, whilst the Western Province CC also focused on its annual representative matches.

Despite the flawed administration, cricket continued to gain in popularity throughout the Cape Town region with numerous teams being fielded. Frustration was expressed that it was difficult for town clubs to break into the elite group that resided in the suburbs. The better cricketers cherished the hope of being able to play and beat the Western Province CC. In September 1886, 'Longstop' wrote that 'no one doubts Western Province CC is the leading club of the province but this does not entitle them to ignore applications for fixtures from the secretaries of local clubs. I myself know of three clubs who have been thus treated'. The writer added, 'It should be borne in mind that the Western Province CC fixture is the most important of the season – secretaries of other clubs allow fixtures to stand over until dates are settled with the Western Province CC.'²³¹

Milton attempted to solve the problems through assuming greater control over the direction that the Western Province CC pursued. By 1886, he was captain – a position that entitled him to chair all meetings. He was also treasurer and, said Ivor Difford, 'emphatically the dominating personality both on the field of play and in the council chamber'.²³² Milton's desire to accumulate power was a trait that would be repeated in the course of his life. He did not like to delegate responsibility and showed little interest in projects where he could not be in charge. He opposed suggestions that cricket's administration be shared with other clubs, believing strongly that it was the Western Province CC's duty to set an example that other clubs should follow. He strove to build a bigger and better centre of cricket that would also

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 44-45

²²⁹ Lewis, *Double Century*, 133

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 111

²³¹ *Cape Times*, 6 September 1886

²³² *Ibid*, 8 March 1930

serve as his 'corner of a foreign field' with its appropriate social conformity and racial exclusivity.

Milton also showed a lack of interest in the cricket played in other centres of the colony, an attitude shared by the elite of the somewhat aloof 'Mother City'. The Western Province CC was not keen to assemble teams to take part in the Champion Bat tournaments during the 1880s. Part of the problem stemmed from Cape Town's failure to win the first inter-town competition at Port Elizabeth in 1876. It was a blow to the prestige of the 'metropolis' and induced a lack of confidence to compete, a state of mind that was not shared by the other centres. As soon as the frontier wars ended in the late 1870s, the Eastern Cape decided to renew cricket links with the other towns by staging a second Champion Bat tournament. Milton was not interested and in January 1880, the Mayor of King William's Town sent a telegram to his counterpart in Cape Town: 'Rumour current here that there is some difficulty in Cape Town in arranging for cricket team to come to tournament ... Please use your influence to remove any obstacles to team starting, otherwise the whole tournament may be a failure'.

The Cape's attitude was reflected by J.C. Hofmeyr's response at a subsequent council meeting: 'If necessary the receipt of the telegram can be acknowledged with the best compliments of the season. The fact is, now the war is over, they do not know what to do with themselves up there'.²³³

Cape Town did not attend the 1880 tournament and there was renewed pressure for them to take part at Grahamstown in 1884. Milton and Sivewright were quick to declare that they were unavailable. The *Cape Times* subsequently wrote that Milton's decision was 'regretted – for as a wicket-keeper his equal is not to be found in Cape Town, he is effective as a bowler, and is moreover a steady bat'.²³⁴ On the rare occasion when he kept wicket, he was able to execute 'stumpings' – an unusual dismissal in South Africa at that time because wicket-keepers were invariably 'back-stops'.

Despite the absence of several key players, Cape Town played in the tournament. They introduced a great talent in a one-eyed teenager, Charlie Vintcent, who inspired one-sided victories over Kimberley and holders, King William's Town. But, once again, the Capetonians stumbled in the deciding match, this time against Port Elizabeth. The defeat was a blow but not dwelt upon in the way that Kimberley used their dismal performance to inspire improvement. Charles Finlason, 'the life and soul of Diamond Fields cricket'²³⁵, became the motivating force on and off the field as Kimberley immediately strove to become a leading

²³³ *Ibid*, 8 January 1880

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 1 December 1884

²³⁵ Luckin, *The History of South African Cricket*, 45

cricket centre. In contrast, Milton appeared satisfied with the state of the game at the Cape. The previous season had seen the Western Province CC win thirteen and lose just one of their fourteen fixtures, with Milton receiving the bat for the 'best average' – an all-round award based on his batting average of 20.4 from twenty innings and his 51 wickets at 9.82. The Western Province CC saw no reason to react to Finlason's subsequent comments in the *Daily Independent*:

One is constantly hearing of the progress of Cape Town cricketers, but from a long and careful perusal of the scores which appear from time to time in the journals of the metropolis, we fail to see anything extraordinary in the cricket displayed. We have taken 80 innings and find that the average total per innings is something under 60 ... on their own ground Kimberley in our opinion would hold their own against any Cape Town team that could be sent here.²³⁶

Finlason made cricket a major talking point in Kimberley through his forthright and colourful writings on the game. When Milton ignored an invitation to send a team to a tournament at the Diamond Fields in Easter 1886, Finlason explained: 'It was partly from want of chips [but also] because several of [Cape Town's] best men have an idea that on matting in a different light, with grey or brown ground, they would fail to "come off"'.²³⁷ The dapper newspaper man loved a challenge and tremendous excitement was generated when he arranged a two-week tour of the Cape by Kimberley's Stray Klips in January 1887. The players were largely from Eclectics, the club that Finlason had founded in Kimberley, with fixtures arranged through Milton. The focal point was the game against the Western Province CC at Southey's Field, where 'the carriage enclosure was full and the fair sex turned up in great force, many of them wearing the Eclectic colours'.²³⁸ Kimberley's irrepressible cricketers had not only captured the hearts of the Cape Town ladies but when the battle unfolded, they were well prepared for the defining moment of the game. Finlason records Kimberley had scored 110 and the hosts were four down with forty runs on the board when:

... The great Milton filled the vacancy. Milton has the reputation of being a tremendously hard hitter, and the field just went to the ropes. Owing to the continued failure of the Western Province batsmen the excitement had been growing until people could hardly contain themselves. Grimmer advanced and dropped one of his curlers. Milton stepped forward and the people held their breath. The hit did not come off quite as the batsman intended, and instead of landing the ball to long-off he put it hard back into Grimmer's hands, who stuck to

²³⁶ *Daily Independent*, 28 December 1885

²³⁷ *Cape Times*, 25 October 1886

²³⁸ Luckin, *The History of South African Cricket*, 46

it. Such a howl that arose then I have not heard for many a day. No one could sit down or listen; everybody had to cheer and then talk ...²³⁹

Kimberley's Irvine Grimmer, an off-spinner who was prepared to flight the ball, was hit for 45 runs in the home side's first innings of 59, but wickets tumbled – he took eight – and then another nine in the second innings to give him the extraordinary match analysis of 17 for 83. The Western Province CC was beaten by 105 runs in a low-scoring match.

'Centurion' writing in the *Cape Times* said: 'I watched with considerable interest the match on Saturday between the Kimberley men and the Western Province CC and I was very much struck (as an old cricketer) with the utter absence of anything like science, exhibited by the Western Province CC captain in particular and the team generally'.²⁴⁰ It was harsh but quite possibly fair criticism of Milton who would be in charge of virtually every representative team in which he played during 1885-96. He tended to lead by force rather than flair: 'As a captain,' wrote Difford, 'he was alive to every move on the board, if anything something of a martinet, and a very terror to slack fielders, especially among the younger players'.²⁴¹

The Stray Klips tour reinforced Finlason's oft-stated view that cricket was making greater progress in Kimberley than it was at the Cape.²⁴² Kimberley went on to win the 'Extraneous' Tournament that they hosted in April 1887 and then the fourth 'Champion Bat Tournament' at Grahamstown in December of the same year. They dominated the latter in devastating fashion, beating both Grahamstown and King William's Town by an innings before accounting for Port Elizabeth by 187 runs. Charlie Vintcent, who had established a business in Kimberley, and Grimmer captured 55 wickets between them in three matches. Kimberley had every right to claim that they were the best team in the Colony.

The absence of 'a metropolitan team at Grahamstown was the theme of much regret, expression given to it both individually and also in the speeches made'.²⁴³ Clearly the Western Province CC's indifference to playing at an inter-town level was stifling progress in

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 47

²⁴⁰ *Cape Times Weekly*, 12 January 1887

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 4 January 1909

²⁴² After the tour, Finlason paid tribute to his people: 'No town in the Colony supports sport in the liberal way that Kimberley does. At Cape Town they have wretched grounds and not a single pavilion ... Kimberley has two magnificent grounds and it will soon have three. The three pavilions which have been subscribed for by the public are monuments of Kimberley's generosity (*Cape Town Weekly*, 30 March 1887).

²⁴³ *Cape Times Weekly*, 4 April 1887

Cape Town. Playing the same club opponents on a regular basis served little purpose and 'Centurion' wrote in the *Cape Times* in December 1887:

I have been very much exorcised in my mind lately concerning the cricket at present played in this part of the Colony, and although the fixtures announced in your issue on Saturday point to the fact that the 'game' has lost none of its popularity, yet it appears to me that the quantity has not improved the quality. I allude more particularly to what may be termed the fixture of the day viz 'Mother Country' versus 'Colonial-born'. The batting with one or two exceptions was of a flukey 'win-the-match-in-one-hit' style; a brilliant hit succeeded by the fall of a wicket from the first straight ball ... so few long individual scores are made.²⁴⁴

There were of course cricketers at the Cape who wanted to demonstrate their ability to play at a higher level and eventually it was decided that the Cape Town Wanderers should accept an invitation to visit the Diamond Fields in early 1888. A strong team was assembled although Milton was again unavailable, a disappointing decision in that he had enjoyed a fine season in 1887/88 during which he scored 588 runs (average 42.00) and accounted for 57 wickets (average 9.44). He might well have known that the Cape had little hope of success, despite optimism in the press. 'The Owl', writing in the *Wynberg Times*, commented: 'I do hope our representative cricketers will be able to visit Kimberley at Easter and take down some of the conceit of the boys there'.²⁴⁵

Cape Town Wanderers were humbled in losing two of their three matches by an innings. Kimberley's batsmen were in imperious form; the runs flowed and there were large scores, whilst 'Gobo' Ashley and Theunissen were bowled into the ground in the course of capturing thirty-seven of the forty wickets taken on the tour. The tourists' batting was disappointing except for an unbeaten 123 from Captain Robert Spurway which helped set up a victory over Eclectic CC. Spurway and Private Beech had a fine eighth-wicket stand in that innings, a partnership that did not transfer to the social side of the tour. Class distinction which prevailed in the English game was also very much apparent at the Cape. It was reported that Private Beech was forced to travel separately from the team – third-class – and, 'once there, studiously and contemptuously ignored by those who had sought his aid to wrest the honours of the willow from Kimberley'.²⁴⁶ The Pirates Cricket Club endeavoured to make Beech's stay as pleasant as possible but, said 'Old De Beer's' in *The Lantern*: 'Because that good cricketer happens to be a mere private his co-workers have considered it infra-dig and

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 2 December 1887

²⁴⁵ Reproduced in the *Daily Independent*, 25 January 1888

²⁴⁶ Letter from 'Old Cricketer', *Daily Independent*, 25 April 1888

derogatory to the sublime positions they claim on the social pedestal to have any intercourse with him away from the cricket field'.²⁴⁷ An 'Old Cricketer' added:

Poor Private Beech has not even the consolation of knowing that his services as a cricketer can guard him against the daily affront and humiliation of social avoidance as if he were a machine, instead of a sentient being, with feelings and faculties quite as refined as those of any other wanderer from the classic and perennially fragrant metropolis.²⁴⁸

The Cape Town players were humiliated on and off the field, a situation summed up by a letter published in the *Daily Independent* under the *nom de plume*, 'A Disgusted Cape Town Man'. The writer stated: 'It does not seem to have struck anyone, how singular it is that Kimberley cricketers should have success in beating Cape Town. That Kimberley with its three clubs should be able to pick an eleven strong enough to beat Cape Town with its twenty-odd clubs and the military thrown in'.²⁴⁹

The comment in the *Daily Independent*, coupled with the treatment of Private Beech, served as a stinging indictment of the way the game was being administered in the Western Cape. Yet there remained an apparent imperviousness to criticism on the part of Milton and his committee. Every year they took pride in publishing the Western Province CC's successful playing record, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the opposition they played against was not improving. From the mid-eighties, they became increasingly preoccupied with a matter they considered to be a priority, that of establishing a new and better ground. As early as 1881, Milton had informed the *Cape Argus* of an intended move to 'a piece of ground close to the Wynberg Station – a sum of 'three or four hundred pounds was required to clear it, turf it and put it in proper trim'. He did not then receive sufficient support for the project but under his leadership it became well-known that the Western Province CC did not intend staying at their Wynberg ground. In November 1885 a sub-committee was set up to address the situation. Milton, Thomas and Warton inspected properties available and liked Mariendahl farm which 'encompassed large tracts of land adjacent to Newlands Station on both sides of the railway'. The section they preferred was Lot 27: 'though partly vlei and heavily wooded, it was the best site for the cricket ground'. Milton arranged terms with the owner, the Vicomtesse de Montment and work began in 1887.²⁵⁰

Warton, who was then secretary of the club, had reservations about the scheme. In a detailed letter, he said that he was against the move because of the expense; the size of the ground – 'little accommodation for carriages', and its inability to cater for other sports such as

²⁴⁷ *The Lantern*, 23 April 1888

²⁴⁸ *Daily Independent*, 25 April 1888

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 19 April 1888

²⁵⁰ West, *Century at Newlands*, 13-14

football, tennis and athletics.²⁵¹ He was conscious of placing great financial responsibility on club members at a time when medical advice indicated that he did not have long to live. The *Wynberg Times* reported he was leaving for England ‘in search of health and that little hope is entertained that the quest will be successful’.²⁵²

Milton was not to be dissuaded by Warton’s comments on the Newlands project and Difford would state years later:

How many I wonder are aware of the fact that that beautiful ground might never have become the home of cricket in the Western Province but for the enthusiasm and determination of Milton. It was due largely to him that the decision of the Western Province CC committee was arrived at to acquire a lease of the ground in 1886 ... and, in the face of a certain amount of determined opposition, he carried it through.²⁵³

A later report recalled ‘a troublesome time for the committee and the members for there was a shortage of money, continuous anxiety about the new ground, about the pitch, and about the facilities for members, players and spectators’.²⁵⁴ The club intended building a pavilion and adopted a similar but more modest fund-raising exercise to that adopted by the M.C.C. during 1888. The latter offered one hundred life memberships of the club for £100 apiece to pay for a new pavilion (‘it was stipulated that these new members be at least seventy-seven years old’). The Western Province CC created twelve Life Members at a subscription of £25 each and then relied on donations amounting to £350.²⁵⁵

On 2 January 1888, a Mother Country versus Colonial-born match was staged to open Newlands. The best part of 1 000 people attended the match with the ground’s near proximity to Cape Town and easy accessibility by rail being eminent factors in its popularity. Milton received the first ball and made top score of 24 in Mother Country’s first innings. He then claimed 5/37 in 27 overs when Colonial-born batted – but his side lost. There was nevertheless pride in establishing Newlands, an achievement that would in time be lauded. More the pity that his team should maintain their dismissive attitude towards other sides – in a subsequent match against Gardens, only five players from the Western Province CC bothered to arrive at Newlands for a 12.30 scheduled starting time. Milton had his way in batting first, thereby allowing the offending players time to get to the ground. He was ‘in great form and scored with much rapidity’ to make 127. In the years before declarations were permitted, his side reached 343 and he did not disguise the fact that his ‘retirement was intentional on his

²⁵¹ Western Province CC minutes: letter dated 23 November 1885

²⁵² *Wynberg Times*, 2 August 1887; *Cape Times Weekly*, 3 August 1887

²⁵³ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

²⁵⁴ West, *Century at Newlands*, 14

²⁵⁵ Lewis, *Double Century*, 152

own part, as he neglected to strike at the ball which levelled his wicket'.²⁵⁶ Gardens reached 87 for 6 by the close of play to gain a draw in a match that further dented the reputation of the Milton administration.

Pilloried as being autocratic and self-interested during the 1880s, the Western Province CC had to bear much of the responsibility for a troubled period in Cape Town cricket. It had 'established itself as the premier club and bid fair to become the M.C.C. of South Africa', but said Difford, it would be 'a promise unfulfilled owing to the transfer ... of the cricket strength and prestige of the sub-continent to Kimberley and later to Johannesburg'.²⁵⁷ The apparent indifference displayed by cricket's governing body towards teams in the town and country districts contrasted with the attitude of the progressive and democratic Western Province Rugby Football Union.

Developments in the two games did not go unnoticed by J.H. Hofmeyr, the Stellenbosch member of the House of Assembly: his interest in cricket was well-known but 'football he admired no less'. He recognised the power of sport in not only 'building up the youth of the nation' but in 'unifying the two [white] peoples'.²⁵⁸ Described as having 'too nervous a temperament ever to have excelled at any branch of sport', Hofmeyr became a respected cricket administrator.²⁵⁹ As president of the town-based Leeuwenhof CC from 1883, he was well acquainted with the strong bias in favour of the elite clubs that resided in the suburbs. His close ties with Stellenbosch also meant that he was suitably informed as to cricket developments in the country districts. He was therefore determined to end the imbalances which existed by establishing a strong 'town' club.

In the mid-1880s, Hofmeyr was the 'the most powerful of all the Cape politicians ... an ideological leader, with long-term aims which he cautiously yet tenaciously pursued'.²⁶⁰ He had been credited with being able to counter the militant, anti-English rhetoric of the more extreme elements evident in Afrikaner mobilisation during the 1870s and early 1880s.²⁶¹ In the same year as he took control of the Leeuwenhof CC, he merged his *Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* with Du Toit's Afrikaner Bond to create a vibrant organisation that grew rapidly. Hofmeyr was then able to outmanoeuvre Du Toit and unite the majority of the Afrikaner members of the House of Assembly. Two years later, the reformed organisation

²⁵⁶ *Cape Times*, 29 February, 1888

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 4 January 1909

²⁵⁸ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, 31

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 31

²⁶⁰ Phyllis Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman* (New Haven, 1982), 99

²⁶¹ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 42

established a 'guidance of Providence clause that excluded Cape Coloureds and Africans from its membership'.²⁶²

Hofmeyr successfully combined work as a parliamentarian and community leader with duties attached to overseeing a cricket club. Strong ties were fostered between the Leeuwenhof and Stellenbosch CCs and when the latter's players moved to the city, they joined Hofmeyr's fledgling club. He had his brother-in-law, fellow Bondsman and Member of the Legislative Assembly, D.C. de Waal, as vice-president for several years, whilst gathering together an active support group. The committee comprised former Stellenbosch stalwarts in Paul van Coller, W. Tindall and Marthinus Neethling, and included a diligent secretary in James Barry Munnik, who was son of the godfather to James Barry Munnik Hertzog, a Boer general during the second Anglo-Boer War and future prime minister of South Africa.²⁶³

The key appointment to the committee was James Sivewright, the 'Afrikaner from Aberdeen',²⁶⁴ who left the Western Province CC to work under Hofmeyr, a man he deeply admired. Sivewright became the club's vice-president; joined the Afrikaner Bond and was elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly. He introduced himself to the constituents of East Griqualand West as an 'independent', but said one report, 'Hofmeyr carries the measure of the independence in his pocket book'.²⁶⁵ Sivewright nevertheless emerged as a major player in South African politics, not only serving as a link between Rhodes and Hofmeyr but between the Cape and the Transvaal. His biographer, Kenneth E Wilburn, said that Sivewright was able to use 'the Bond as a vehicle to gain access to Boer leaders' whilst Merriman's ire towards him increased when Sivewright 'added business dealings with Barnato to his membership in the Afrikaner Bond'.²⁶⁶ According to historian, Phyllis Lewsen, Sivewright became 'prominent in the Bond's extreme illiberal faction and was very rich and influential, with an ugly reputation as a company promoter and financial manipulator Rhodes used him for his secret financial and political transactions but like Hofmeyr was aware of the mischief-making potential of this clever unscrupulous politician'.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Kenneth E. Wilburn, *The Life of Statesman and Industrialist Sir James Sivewright of South Africa, 1848-1916*, Queenstown, 2010, 132

²⁶³ James Barry Munnik was named after a British surgeon who had delivered him by caesarean section, the first case in South Africa in which both the mother and child had survived the operation. The surgeon, James Barry, was believed to be Margaret Ann Bulkley but chose to live as a man so that 'he' might be able to pursue a career as a surgeon.

²⁶⁴ Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 179

²⁶⁵ *Cape Times Weekly*, 5 October 1887

²⁶⁶ Wilburn, *Sir James Sivewright of South Africa*, 134, 147

²⁶⁷ Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, 135

Interestingly, and unlike Hofmeyr, the wealthy Sivewright was not prepared to assist cricket financially – he would in time, find a fellow Scot to take on that role.

‘As a Dutchman,’ wrote Dale Slater, ‘Hofmeyr’s espousal of the English game has wide and deep political resonances, foreshadowing his accommodation with Rhodes, but also pointing towards its limits in that he uses his political skills and influence not only to prevent the game becoming solely a vehicle for Englishness, but also to forge a place within the game for the Afrikaner.’²⁶⁸ With the advent of organised Afrikaner politics from the late 1870s, they ‘were well poised to take advantage of their numerical superiority and to make their mark on the colonial state’.²⁶⁹ Hofmeyr sought Afrikaans solidarity but at the same time created a party with moderate views that became the ‘most powerful single force in parliament’.²⁷⁰ Rhodes acknowledged the English to be ‘hopelessly divided’ in the Cape Assembly and sought to gain the support of the Bond; not a straight-forward task for ‘the most aggressive British imperialist of the day’.²⁷¹

Tamarkin writes that between the parliamentary sessions of 1885 and 1886 Rhodes ‘more or less, completed his strategic volte-face, becoming converted more clearly to Cape sub-imperialism’. It was a ‘conscious, concerted effort to win over Hofmeyr’, a move that would ‘bewilder and frustrate his friends from the opposition ... who could not figure out where exactly he stood politically’. In time, Milton would work closely with Rhodes and understand the arrangement with the Bond but in the eighties it is likely that he would have been as puzzled as politicians on all sides. He observed from close quarters the irony of Rhodes trying to appease the Bond. The mining magnate was, after all, ‘among the founders of the jingoistic Imperial League which agitated for imperial intervention and provoked rage and resentment among Cape Afrikaners’.²⁷²

Hofmeyr’s position was no less complex, one in which he sought to secure equality between the white races but turned down a Colonial Office offer of a knighthood – ‘nothing would persuade him to take it’.²⁷³ He was prepared to remain a British subject ‘in the sense of subjection to law and authority and attachment to the cause of order’ but with it all he was ‘not prepared to become an Englishman’.²⁷⁴ He was attracted to cricket because he appreciated the virtues of the game and wanted his people to play it. And, in order for this to

²⁶⁸ Correspondence with Dale Slater, 11 April, 2010.

²⁶⁹ Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 63

²⁷⁰ Frank Walsh, *A History of South Africa*, London, 2000, 288; T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, Bergvele, 1989, 103-04

²⁷¹ Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners* 314

²⁷² *Ibid*, 95-96

²⁷³ *Cape Times Weekly*, 4 May 1887

²⁷⁴ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, 84

become possible, he strove to provide the game with an administration that served as a chamber of fair debate. Politically, Hofmeyr 'wanted at all costs to eliminate the Imperial factor in South Africa, that is the power of the British government to interfere in South African affairs to the embarrassment of a self-governing colony'²⁷⁵; and on the cricket front he wished to curtail efforts to establish a governing body in the style of the M.C.C. A complacent Milton did not appear to realise until very late that Hofmeyr's involvement in the game would result in his club's cricket hegemony being challenged.

Hofmeyr's opening move towards ending the Western Province CC's monopoly of the game was to establish a strong town club through the amalgamation of Gardens and Leeuwenhof. At meetings to discuss the issues involved in the new arrangement, Gardens expressed the need to 'have a name which would stamp it as a representative club of Cape Town'²⁷⁶ and Thomas Lawton emphasised the Leeuwenhof view that the new club should be 'on par with the Western Province CC and give them a voice in South African cricket'.²⁷⁷ In September 1888, fifty-three members of the two clubs met under the chairmanship of Sivewright and agreed to form the Cape Town Cricket Club.²⁷⁸ The clubs shared key posts in the new committee with Leeuwenhof providing Hofmeyr as president, Sivewright vice-president and Munnik treasurer. The Gardens' representation included John J. Graham (vice-president), Louis Smuts (secretary), W.V. 'Billy' Simkins (captain) and Carlo Douglas-de Fenzi (committee), all well-known personalities in Cape sport. As if to signal its intentions, the new club proceeded to outdo the Western Province CC in the quality of its patronage by featuring Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, as patron and the Mayor and Bishop of Cape Town as vice-patrons.

The Cape Town CC was the product of meticulous planning. The meetings ensured smooth execution, and their ultimate success could be measured by the fact that of the combined eighty-five members only five declined 'to join the new club through dissatisfaction with the amalgamation'.²⁷⁹ There was a genuine desire on the part of club leaders to improve cricket's administration in the area. Hofmeyr's commitment to the Cape Town CC could never be questioned. He would serve as its president for twenty-one years with his biographer recalling 'how by means of his assistance the club managed to pull through many a financial difficulty, and how eventually at his own desire he was carried to

²⁷⁵ C.F.J. Muller (ed), *Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa*, Pretoria, 1981, 190

²⁷⁶ *Cape Argus*, 11 September 1888; the combined clubs would eventually decide on the 'Cape Town Cricket Club' by 37 votes to 14.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 18 September 1888

²⁷⁸ The first Cape Town CC was formed as a consequence of the inaugural meeting on 28 December 1857

²⁷⁹ *Cape Times*, 18 September 1888

his grave by members of the club. As he once expressed it, he would rather enter the bankruptcy court than allow the club to go under'.²⁸⁰

By the end of 1888, the Cape Town CC had decided to occupy a ground next-door to the Western Province CC. Several members of the Cape Town CC who were active within the Western Province Rugby Football Union were able to facilitate an arrangement whereby the cricketers would sub-rent the proposed new rugby facility at Newlands during the summer.²⁸¹ It meant that the Cape Town CC had effectively reached a stage whereby it offered members a similar environment to that of the Western Province CC. The progress had been rapid and demonstrated organised, sometimes aggressive management that would challenge the dominant role of the region's senior club. For Hofmeyr, it was also a matter of bringing the white races together through creating cricket opportunities for those outside the orbit of the Western Province CC, most notably the Afrikaner cricketer. His methods in administering cricket were consistent with his political stance where he regarded the recruitment of Englishmen as testament to the Bond's success. Addressing the May, 1888 Bond Conference, he referred to the progress in securing equality between Dutch and English: 'If we shall follow this path we shall become one volk'.

It was at this crucial stage in the Cape's cricket history that attention was diverted by the arrival of the first English team. Milton was in charge of an enterprise that was made possible by Major Warton, the man who had returned home 'so thoroughly prostrated' with his heart condition that it 'preclud[ed] the possibility of ultimate recovery'.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, 84

²⁸¹ The new ground was opened with a match against Woodstock – 'the pitch, field and general arrangements left nothing to be desired'. Cape Town CC (93) defeated their opponents (83) by 12 runs (*Cape Argus*, 3 November 1890)

²⁸² *Wynberg Times*, 2 August 1887; *Cape Times Weekly*, 3 August 1887

Chapter 4: A ‘turning point’ in South African cricket history: the planning, significance and impact of the 1888/89 tour

In the late 1870s and early 1880s the Cape Town newspapers carried reports on the success that Australia had achieved in cricket and questioned why the Cape could not attain similar status. The *Cape Times* expressed its frustration when it said, ‘Merchants in Australia think nothing of giving £10 or £20 each to send home a good eleven, and have their appointments still open for them when they come back. Cape Town could not send a team to Port Elizabeth.’²⁸³ In 1881, the *Cape Argus* wrote pessimistically that ‘it will be a long time before [cricket in] South Africa will attain to the pitch of perfection already reached by some of the sister colonies in the Australian group’. A few months later, the same newspaper pointed to the financial success experienced by Australian touring teams and stressed ‘it is time the Colony did something to show that it is not dead to sports and manly pastimes’.²⁸⁴

Milton responded by stating: ‘The idea of sending a team to England capable of holding its own with a first-class English eleven is, as you remark, a seeming impossibility, and a great impossibility it is, I fear, likely to remain, until a greater interest is taken in the development of cricket in South Africa by those who possess the power of giving some practical proofs of that interest.’ He argued that cricket had potential at the Cape but the lack of opportunity was causing the game to languish in comparison with progress in other colonies. He put the problem down to inadequate facilities, claiming the ground at Wynberg was ‘little better than the hard road and not quite so good as a Namaqualand saltpan’.²⁸⁵

Milton did not share the prevailing eagerness for international competition. His desire to improve playing conditions was a sound argument and culminated in the construction of Newlands, a grand venue for international tours. There was nevertheless interest being shown in competing against teams from England and Australia, a development seized upon by Charles Alcock in *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*. He reported enthusiastically and misleadingly: ‘It may not be long after all before Kaffreland is able to send us as fine a specimen of native cricket as that excellent all-round player, the Australian Aboriginal, Mullagh, who made such a capital show here in 1868.’²⁸⁶ Enthusiasm was also fuelled by sportswriters in South Africa, most notably Harry Cadwallader – formerly a reporter for the

²⁸³ *Cape Times*, 13 September 1880

²⁸⁴ *Cape Argus*, 26 May 1881 and 4 July 1881

²⁸⁵ A letter dated 4 July 1881, published in the *Cape Argus* the following day

²⁸⁶ Jonty Winch, *England’s Youngest Captain: The life and times of Monty Bowden and two South African journalists*, Windsor, 2003, 53

Sussex Daily News – and Charles Finlason, an erudite commentator on the game and the *Daily Independent's* ‘Gossip’.

Cadwallader, who arrived at the Cape in 1885, was soon a controversial and active critic of Milton’s cricket administration. His first piece to create widespread interest concerned the arrival of the Australian cricket team at Table Bay in October 1886. The visitors had communicated with the Cape Court of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London in the hope of extending their stay at the Cape in order to play cricket. The communication was ignored and the Australians left the boat briefly before moving on to New Zealand for two weeks. Cadwallader was incensed by a missed opportunity and in an article for the *Whitehall Review*, he lamented the inability of Cape cricketers to ‘organise something’, noting ‘the leading club of the Colony, the Western Province Cricket Club, should have taken some measure to accord a hearty welcome to a team of cricketers whose play is universally noted; it was certainly their place to move in the matter’.

Cadwallader went on to praise the Cape Press Cricketers Club – for which he was the opening batsman – for ‘coming forward at the eleventh hour and presenting the Australian team with a framed testimonial of the esteem in which the visiting cricketers were held in the Cape Colony’.²⁸⁷ His actions served as an early indication that he was an ambitious, even fanatical supporter of the game, one who would enliven the local cricket scene. Unfortunately for him, his report was misleading: the Australian cricketers were in fact met by Milton and members of the Western Province CC soon after nine o’clock on the day after their arrival. They were escorted around the Houses of Parliament, Library and Museum before returning to the vessel at noon. It emerged that Milton was not to blame for the breakdown in communication; the message had simply not been passed on by the London officials who had also told the Australians that ‘they would find no cricket worth paying attention to at the Cape’.²⁸⁸

Meeting the Australian touring side stimulated interest but did not short-cut the process towards establishing international links. Poor communications, financial implications, relative strengths of teams involved, time away from work and fears over professionalism were some of the issues faced in planning early cricket and rugby tours. Milton was still a committee member of the Western Province Rugby Football Union when it went some way towards setting up an overseas tour in 1886. Their efforts were eventually blocked by Rowland Hill, the Rugby Football Union secretary and a staunch advocate of amateurism. He wrote, ‘We do not think it wise to encourage this undertaking’ and pointed to the question of expenses, the weather and the ability of the touring team ‘to make good matches with our

²⁸⁷ Report in *Whitehall Review* published in *Cape Times*, 25 December 1886

²⁸⁸ *Cape Argus*, 1 November 1886; *Cape Town Weekly*, 23 February 1887

best clubs'.²⁸⁹ Hill, however, misrepresented the situation and the Rugby Football Union admitted soon afterwards that its 'misapprehension of the Cape 1886 proposals' had been its fear of 'professionalism'.²⁹⁰

The apparent change in stance on the part of the English gave the Cape's rugby authorities good reason to believe that they would be the first to organise an international tour. In early 1888 a visit by an English rugby team was scheduled under the auspices of sporting entrepreneurs, Alfred Shaw and Arthur Shrewsbury. Cape players were involved in early-season training in preparation for the touring team who would stop over *en route* to Australasia and – thanks to Milton – play a match at Newlands. It therefore came as a shock when the Western Province Rugby Football Union suddenly abandoned the idea to stage the game. The *Daily Independent* was scathing about Cape Town's 'scurvy conduct' towards the English players but would later concede 'the English sporting 'papers conclusively prove that the English football team which touched at Cape Town is not an amateur team. The action taken by the Western Province Rugby Football Union therefore will be approved by all the football unions in the Colony.'²⁹¹

Disappointment over the aborted rugby visit was soon offset by a more aggressive demand for a cricket tour in either direction. It was supported by the press with the *Empire* stating 'it is time for South Africa to send Home something besides gold, diamonds and millionaires'.²⁹² In his desire to make the English public aware of developments at the Cape, Cadwallader began inserting details of local cricket matches in overseas journals such as *Sporting Life* and *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*. His efforts prompted the New Brighton Cricket Club to contact the Cape Premier, Sir Gordon Sprigg, in early 1888 in the hope that their team would be welcome at the Cape. Sprigg's involvement in the matter gave it some prominence but Cadwallader was more interested in attracting the Australians who were visiting England again. He pointed out that two of their players, '[Jack] Blackham and [Sammy] Jones, 'were both here *en route* home in October 1886 and expressed much regret at their not being able to meet our representatives'.²⁹³

Cadwallader was provocative in suggesting: 'If our Kimberley friends could only be induced to stir in the matter the thing would go through undoubtedly and colonial cricket would be more benefited by such a visit than the sanguine imagine.'²⁹⁴ It was not as if the

²⁸⁹ A letter dated 7 March 1887, published in the *Cape Times*, 27 August 1888

²⁹⁰ *Cape Times*, 27 August 1888

²⁹¹ *Daily Independent*, 12 April 1888

²⁹² Report in *Empire* published in *Daily Independent*, 30 March 1888

²⁹³ Report in *Lantern* published in *Daily Independent*, 14 June 1888

²⁹⁴ *The Lantern*, 12 June 1888

Diamond Fields had been inactive: a local businessman was said to have offered to underwrite the expenses of a team and that Henri Bettelheim, a cricket professional, had left for England armed with a guarantee of £2 000 to entice the Australians to play in Kimberley. There were also plans for a Cape Colony team to visit England in 1889. In continuing to play one side off against the other, Cadwallader mischievously informed the *Lantern's* readers that Cape Town was doing nothing to promote a tour. The *Daily Independent* reacted by urging Milton to become involved, only to discover that he had despatched letters to Melbourne and London.²⁹⁵ On enquiring what Milton planned to do next, Finlason was informed by the sporting notist of the *Cape Argus* that 'it may ease "Gossip's" mind to hear that the matter is being attended to by the Western Province CC through the medium of that urbane and model secretary, C.W. Alcock of the Surrey CC'.²⁹⁶

In England, the Australian manager, Charles Beal, was more concerned with the form of his inexperienced team because they were without the unavailable Giffen, Spofforth, Bruce, Moses and Trumble. The task was exacerbated by Jones developing smallpox during the eighth match and 'his life was in danger for some time'.²⁹⁷ When Beal eventually turned his attention to South Africa he forwarded a terse reply in mid-August: 'Thousand: you pay expenses, travelling and hotels'. Milton met with his Western Province Cricket Club committee before advising Kimberley that the project 'will come to about £1 500 for at least six matches. We consider it expensive. Please let us know your views and what you would guarantee. Port Elizabeth guarantees nothing beyond gate-money'.²⁹⁸

Kimberley cricket authorities were not prepared to contribute more than one-third, a decision that would have some bearing on a meeting that J.H. Hofmeyr chaired in late August. Milton delivered the opening address, spelling out developments that had taken place in 1886 and then outlining what had transpired in recent weeks. He reminded the gathering that 'considerable regret was expressed' that no offer was made to induce the Australians to stay for a cricket tour in 1886. Accordingly, he had negotiated a month's tour and, when the Australians had forwarded their terms – which were duly communicated to Kimberley and Port Elizabeth – it was calculated that 'Cape Town would be called up to guarantee two-thirds' of the estimated cost of £1500.

Having gone some way towards discouraging his audience from inviting the Australians, Milton then stated that Major Warton offered an alternative arrangement. The popular army

²⁹⁵ *Daily Independent*, 14 June 1888 and 25 June 1888

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 25 June 1888

²⁹⁷ Peter Wynne-Thomas, *The Complete History of Cricket Tours at Home and Abroad*, London, 1989, 219

²⁹⁸ *Cape Times*, 23 August 1888

officer had on his return to England discovered that he was not about to die and immediately celebrated the news by declaring himself available to assemble an English team of amateurs and professionals to tour the Cape Colony. Milton said that he had written to Warton, stating that 'Kimberley and Cape Town had each offered 75% of the gate money while Port Elizabeth offered the whole amount taken there'. Cementing ties with the Mother Country was evidently the preferred option for Milton and the Western Province CC.

Advocate Shepstone Giddy was not convinced by Milton's argument and moved that the proposals of Warton's team 'be not entertained but that a further effort be made to arrange more advantageous terms with the Australians'. He received little support as most people favoured Warton's team and it was agreed that 'the committee of the Western Province CC be empowered in their discretion either finally to accept or reject the proposals of Major Warton's team'. At the conclusion of the meeting £100 was guaranteed, with the Western Province Rugby Football Union and Hofmeyr making notable contributions.²⁹⁹ The meeting had moved in the direction that Milton hoped it would take, but the next few months would prove difficult. The financial implications were not as straight-forward as he had outlined.

The English tour proved expensive and complicated. Warton, for example, drew up contracts to pay his professionals £100 plus expenses, only to discover the leading amateurs, Monty Bowden and Aubrey Smith, required similar packages in addition to their superior accommodation and travelling arrangements. Bickering on both sides over finance placed the tour in jeopardy, a situation compounded by Warton suddenly announcing that he had decided to adhere to his original demand for 'three-quarters of the gate money, over and above the guarantee of £1 800 minimum already made'. It was not until early November 1888 when additional matches were confirmed that the guarantee was declared sufficient without taking a percentage of the gate money. Milton promptly contacted the various centres, stating:

This we take to mean that [Warton] withdraws his request for three-fourths of the gate. This is the result, I think, of a letter I wrote to him on the 17th October. I had previously pointed out that, with Johannesburg and Graaff-Reinet, the guarantee list amounted to £2250, and if Natal came in £400 or £500 more might be expected. I am glad he has withdrawn his demand, as it was creating a bad impression in some quarters.³⁰⁰

The organisation of the tour was scrutinised by cricket writers over a period of several months. The manner in which Milton undertook the task of co-ordinating the venture gave other provinces and clubs the impression that they were being left out of the decision-making. Finlason was outspoken without antagonising Milton. He was aware that criticism in the

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 28 August 1888

³⁰⁰ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 4 October 1888

latter's direction had already been delivered by the *Cape Times*, which strongly protested 'against the Western Province CC taking all arrangements absolutely into their own hands without reference to the cricketers belonging to any other club...'³⁰¹ Finlason preferred to press for an early psychological advantage over the tourists and directed his attack at Warton. He was scathing about the English manager who had claimed somewhat arrogantly in a published interview that the touring side wanted to play against odds because the professionals 'did not anticipate hard work on the tour ... as had been the case in Australia'.³⁰² The *Daily Independent* scribe informed Warton that the Diamond Fields were the stronghold of South African cricket and deplored the latter's 'impertinence in calmly arranging a series of fixtures without consulting [Kimberley]'. He warned the Major not 'to assume the office of dictator' and that if Kimberley, the champion side of the Colony, should choose to withdraw – and he unilaterally threatened to do just that – the entire exercise would become a farce.³⁰³

Much of Finlason's writing was based on sound reasoning. He did not view matches played against Warton's team as being simply a learning experience for South African cricketers. He was of the opinion that it was vital to gain as many victories as possible against the tourists in order to prove that the game in South Africa had reached a standard at least comparable with that in Australia. The success of Australian cricket had helped forge a national identity in that country that was envied by other colonies suffering from an inferiority complex. The aim of the Australian cricketer 'is achievement,' wrote Jim Kilburn, 'the Grade pennant, the State trophy, the Ashes'.³⁰⁴ Richard Holt added, 'Affection for the "Old Country" was tinged with a sharply democratic "Jack's as good as his master" attitude'.³⁰⁵ Finlason adopted a similar stance with a view to put heart into those colonial players who 'deemed it presumptuous to hope to make five runs or to take a single wicket'.

After months of intense debate there was praise for the itinerary that Milton had devised. The suggestion of matches in Johannesburg attracted interested comment. 'Quite a new departure for the Boers' observed *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game* in light of the fact that the Boer Republics had turned down British overtures to federate with her colonies. The fixtures would have gained the approval of Cape leaders as sport was acknowledged as being important in the promotion of a federated South Africa. Only the 'Model Republic' – the

³⁰¹ Reported in the *Daily Independent*, 23 November 1888

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 29 October 1888

³⁰³ *Daily Independent*, 17 November 1888

³⁰⁴ J. M. Kilburn, 'Australia', in E.W. Swanton's *Barclays World of Cricket*, London, 1980,

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³⁰⁵ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford, 1992, 229

Orange Free State – did not host a fixture; the wealthy Sam Barratt, who had built a cricket oval on his farm, led opposition against a match because it would be ‘crippling the resources and there was no enclosed ground’³⁰⁶ His negative stance was criticised by the *Friend* and attention was drawn to an article in the *Cape Town Weekly* that commended the itinerary for:

... bringing men into friendly relations with each other ... Whether the Imperial Federationist is quite capable of producing a federal programme or not, we all know what he means, and that what he means is right. We cannot but think that such periodical interchange of hospitality, in the course of the best of all field games would have a more unifying effect than any number of formal conferences, or than any amount of platform gush ... Cricket may yet prove a grand political healer.³⁰⁷

The tour was a massive undertaking, not least because there were no South African provincial or national cricket administrations in place. It was Milton who liaised with the centres involved; structured the itinerary; headed selection committees; controlled the financial arrangements and arranged for the Cape government to give the touring team the run of the railways at an almost nominal rate. It was a remarkable venture in which the visitors travelled 2218 miles by train and 754 miles by coach during a 105-day period that comprised four days at practice, 14 Sundays, 25 travelling by coach, cart or rail, 57 playing matches and a mere five ‘off-days’.³⁰⁸ ‘The visit,’ wrote Difford, ‘was very largely due to Milton’s energy and enthusiasm. Practically unaided he made all the arrangements in connection with the tour. But for him that first visit might very well have been deferred for several years with the inevitable consequence that the development of South African cricket would have been correspondingly delayed.’³⁰⁹

As the tour unfolded, the cricket would have different meanings for those involved – or were marginalised by it – depending on their social positions. Writers such as Finlason, Cadwallader and John Tengo Jabavu, for example, used the games to express and promote contrasting ideologies. They appeared to wield a free hand although Milton’s influence as the tour organiser was never in doubt. He was not always in agreement with Warton and allowed pressure to be exerted on the English manager, not only with regard to unrealistic financial demands but in the need to recruit a strong touring side. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser* stated, ‘It is imperative that if we are to have an eleven to visit South Africa at all, to take

³⁰⁶ The *Friend* said of Barratt: ‘He elicits a smile from those who know the financial condition of the club. The requisite amount of money (say £300) could be raised in town with comparatively little difficulty.’

³⁰⁷ *Cape Times Weekly*, 2 January 1889

³⁰⁸ Charles W. Alcock (ed.), *Lillywhite’s Cricketers Annual*, London, 1889

³⁰⁹ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

such a proportion of gate money away, it must be a really first-class team well capable of showing what really good cricket is.³¹⁰ This view was echoed by the *Cape Argus*: ‘Oh, if we are to be demoralised at all, let us be bowled out by a really first-rater.’³¹¹ They were rewarded by the selection of a side that fielded five players – Bobby Abel, Maurice Read, Johnny Briggs, Harry Wood and George Ulyett – who had been selected for England in various Tests against Australia during 1888.³¹² George Lohmann was a late withdrawal but there were two other leading cricketers in Aubrey Smith and Monty Bowden, who had represented Gentlemen against the Players and Australians during the recently completed English season.

The English press was confident in their team’s superiority and patronising in claiming their players would be teaching locals, stimulating interest and creating material benefits for a territory with no governing cricket body. The view was taken up by Cadwallader who believed ‘Colonial cricketers have learnt all they can hope to learn from each other ... [Major Warton’s team] will give the final finish to the course of instruction which was begun by his brother officers when the colony was in its infancy’.³¹³ An intriguing situation arose whereby Cadwallader joined the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* and challenged Finlason’s rival *Daily Independent* on cricket matters. The former’s pride in the English game shone through in his writing. So keen was he to be first to meet the touring cricketers that he hired a boat at two o’clock in the morning to take him out to the mail steamer when it entered Table Bay. He then clambered aboard ‘to welcome Major Warton and his team on behalf of the Kimberley cricketers’; a ‘scoop’ he duly telegraphed to his delighted editor.³¹⁴ Yet behind such boyish enthusiasm was a fearless operator, a man of perseverance, unselfishness and stoicism – cardinal virtues one might expect of an imperialist. Once the tour was underway, Cadwallader worked closely with their management, an arrangement which suggested divided loyalties and, in time, was viewed with suspicion.

Soon after settling into their hotel, the English management entered into a meeting with Milton and his lieutenant, Lynedoch Graham, to discuss the team’s itinerary. Final arrangements were amicably agreed to, most notably the confirmation of matches to be played in Johannesburg. In an atmosphere of great enthusiasm the tourists were caught a little off-guard when it came to the composition of local sides. They were to have originally played against the eighteen of Western Province and the eleven of the Cape Colony but, ‘on

³¹⁰ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 4 October 1888

³¹¹ *Cape Argus*, 15 November, 1888

³¹² Ulyett did not arrive until early February 1889

³¹³ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 29 October, 1888

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 15 December, 1888

the humble representation of the Cape Town secretary,' the numbers were altered to twenty-two and fifteen respectively. It was described as 'an act of foolish generosity on the part of Englishmen' but Milton, as always, was well prepared and gained his way through coercing the smooth-talking Lynedoch Graham, into implementing the change.

The considerable publicity that cricket was generating soon attracted the attention of the colonial ruling elite. Political and social significance was attached to the tour as most English-speaking South Africans regarded involvement in the cricket as an emulation of what was happening at 'home'. After-match speeches were published in full detail and the English captain, Aubrey Smith, was allocated much space in his efforts to promote imperial solidarity. At Cape Town, he told a large gathering that the tour did more than 'further the feeling of sport which every British man had within himself' and that 'when they come to a colony, Englishmen find brothers and cousins extending to them the right hand of welcome and they feel then that in reality they are Englishmen one and all'.³¹⁵ The imperial identity was reinforced at Port Elizabeth where 'flags hung in profusion from the galleries with the Union Jack conspicuous because it was supported by two cricket bats ... on the stage there was a large and excellent photograph of W.G. Grace set amongst ferns and other green plants'.³¹⁶

The welcome given to Warton's team was of a magnitude not previously experienced in South Africa. It brought both cricket itself and the key personalities, whether players, administrators or journalists, into the public eye. A highlight of the first week's arrangements in Cape Town was a public dinner for 120 people at which His Excellency the Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Hercules Robinson was present. The chair was occupied by Sir Thomas Upington, a former Prime Minister of the Cape who was said to be a peerless parliamentarian whom few dared to challenge. Other guests included Sir J. H. de Villiers (the Chief Justice), Sir David Tennant (Speaker of the House of Assembly), Sir Thomas Scanlen (Prime Minister 1881-84) and the J.H. Hofmeyr. Speakers focused on cricket being used to instil the values of British elite culture through northern expansion into the African hinterland. Upington and Warton were prominent in exchanging wildly-applauded comment. 'Some years ago,' Upington told guests, 'when I first elected political life in this country, if anyone spoke of the British flag being hoisted at the Zambesi, he was looked upon as a lunatic. However, things have changed lately and I sincerely hope before Sir Hercules Robinson's period of office in this Colony has terminated, that what is at the present moment known as "the sphere of influence" will be known as the British Protectorate up to the Zambezi. And I shall be inclined to go further ... I see no

³¹⁵ *Daily Independent*, 20 December 1888

³¹⁶ *Port Elizabeth Telegraph*, 3 January 1889

reason why we should not cross the Zambezi... (Hear, hear, loud and prolonged cheers – loud applause).’

The tourists were not ignorant of the interest being shown in the north as there had been considerable press coverage on the subject in England. Frederick Courteney Selous’ *A Hunter’s Wanderings in Africa* (1886) was a best-seller, and was followed not long afterwards by Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*, a novel that created excitement over Mashonaland and the legend of Ophir.

Warton informed dinner guests that when he began organising the cricket tour, he thought it would be a difficult exercise, but he had little idea that Upington was ‘opening up trips of much greater difficulty’ in the future – taking teams towards the Zambezi (laughter).³¹⁷ They were prophetic words and might have been recalled some years later by personalities who attended the gathering, notably Milton, who was captain of the Western Province XXII in the opening match, and two visiting cricketers, Monty Bowden and the Hon. Charles Coventry. The three men would pursue contrasting paths of opportunity and success in the northward expansion of the empire. Particularly extraordinary was that Warton should become one of the first Englishmen to cross the Zambezi in the course of leading three expeditions into a vast land that would be brought under the sphere of British influence.

Lessons learnt over the next few months convinced Milton of the power of sport to express and enhance the solidarity of colonial society. Cricket could assist in not only forging a South African identity in a land that was otherwise sharply divided, but also promote a cultural link between ‘home’ in Britain and settlers overseas. ‘The first touring cricketers from England were ‘ambassadors’ said David Frith, ‘showing the flag in the colonies, providing a fond link for the settlers from the old country and a sight of some curiosity for the native-born’.³¹⁸

South African towns competed with one another in hosting Warton’s tourists; Kimberley, for example, was satisfied that ‘arrangements may be easily better than they were at Newlands’. Cricket scribes writing under pseudonyms – such as ‘Excalibur’, ‘Vigilance’, the ‘Archer’, ‘Galopin’ and ‘Gossip’ – produced detailed reports and revelled in lively discussion, not least when promoting their candidates for ‘South African XIs’ Only the Graaff-Reinet newspaper, the *Advertiser*, failed to provide the standard record that was required of matches played against the touring side. The editor explained ‘time is not at our call and service; besides, we suppose, there is nothing original or wonderful in leg before wicket, a catch or a successful bowl ... some of the players would, we are sure, rather not see them in print’.

³¹⁷ *Daily Independent*, 20 December 1888

³¹⁸ David Frith, *The Golden Age of Cricket 1890-1914*, London, 1983, 16

Finlason described the Graaff-Reinet editor as ‘naïve’ and lashed out that it was ‘no wonder that the English team beat the twenty-two by an innings’. The editor, who ‘for time past waged a bitter war against the Afrikaner Bond’, might at least have been credited with recognising the importance of the tour as a means for people of the republics and colonies to air their views to a wider audience than previously possible. When the cricket was played in Graaff-Reinet he focused interest on the after-match speech by a local businessman, Henry Maasdorp. ‘As a Dutchman,’ said Maasdorp, ‘I feel proud of the honour that has been conferred upon me this evening ... When I look upon the friendly gathering of people tonight I am able to look into the future and to picture to myself a united South Africa ... a nation grown to national manhood under the tuition of England, forming a link, a proud link in the colossal confederated empire of Great Britain.’³¹⁹

The cricket euphoria that swept the country tended to be restricted to the white English-speaking communities as a result of the programme designed by Milton. Key Afrikaners involved in the tour – Jack van Renen, Pieter de Villiers and Nicol Theunissen – were past and present members of the Western Province CC. Other names such as Van der Spuy, Schuurman, Van Niekerk, Morkel, Swart, Lodewyks and Steinhobel featured in sides that opposed the English team but were a very small percentage of the Afrikaans-speaking population that played the game. Milton had overlooked the relatively large Afrikaner community that made up teams in the districts surrounding Cape Town. Whilst matches played were related to guarantees provided, the districts were essentially within the domain of the Western Province CC. Milton was expected to address the issue when he arranged the next tour to South Africa.

The English side expected to play black cricketers at some stage during the tour. Prior to departure from the East India dock basin, they were told by Spencer Todd (Assistant Agent General of the Castle Company) that ‘No sport has taken such deep root among the black people of South Africa as cricket’.³²⁰ Sir Donald Currie delivered a speech in which he dwelt upon the mystique of the African continent and warned the cricketers of ‘the great running powers of the Kafir tribes’. And when the Garth Castle entered the Cape Town docks, Warton recalled: ‘We found a large crowd awaiting us, a large percentage being Kaffirs and Malays’. Newspapers frequently referred to black interest in the game and recognised their desire to take up British games as part of a process of cultural transformation. Smith noticed ‘while driving through the suburbs of Cape Town that every spare patch of ground was used by blacks to pitch wickets – or paraffin cans in some cases – in order to play cricket’³²¹.

³¹⁹ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 7 March 1889; *Daily Independent*, 9 March 1889

³²⁰ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 29 October 1888; *Cricket*, 27 December 1888, 473

³²¹ *Ibid*, 3 January 1889

Warton recalled seeing ‘as quaint a sight as ever cricketers saw at Mowbray. Two or three cricket matches were being played by Malays and Kafirs, and hundreds of Malay women in the many coloured costumes were there to do honour to their friends’.³²² At the same time, inter-racial activity was not encouraged; a *Potchefstroom Budget* reporter was shocked to see two English cricketers sitting with black companions ‘in sight of some thousands of spectators’ at Newlands. He proffered the view that ‘the professionals in question were quite unconscious of any impropriety’.³²³

There is no evidence of Milton and Warton discussing the racial composition of local teams. The former was not interested in upsetting the *status quo* whilst the latter was more concerned that traditional divisions were maintained within the English team. Soon after their arrival, Warton was careful to ensure the amateurs were booked into the International and the professionals into the less salubrious quarters at the George. He requested the separation be maintained in accordance with the prevailing practice, one which Keith Sandiford would later recognise as leading to a concept whereby ‘Anglo-Saxons were ordained to have dominion over non-white peoples’.³²⁴ South African colonists did not appear at all obsessive about the divide, but were not as outspoken on the subject as the Australians. There were few comments during the tour but Finlason wrote afterwards: ‘In South Africa the people are very much republicans and nobody much respects anybody. It is the generally accepted belief that everybody is as good as his neighbour in theory, and a good deal better in practice; and the aristocrat or the famous Englishman who comes into the country finds himself treated on terms of equality by every Tom, Dick and Harry he meets, in a way that benumbs him.’³²⁵

To his credit, Cadwallader also went some way towards denouncing the tourists’ strict adherence to class distinction between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’. He was horrified to discover that at a dinner at the Kimberley Club ‘the really capable portion of the [English] team, the professionals, were not present nor we believe, even invited’. He did, however, fall short of implying that the tourists were entirely to blame by suggesting that local organisers were at fault for not issuing invitations to the professionals: ‘Strange that at Kimberley, of all places, such a correction should be needed’.³²⁶

Cadwallader was further unsettled by Finlason being proved correct in his estimation that South African sides could win matches against the English. At Cape Town, the tourists went

³²² *Cricket*, 24 January, 1889, 4

³²³ *Potchefstroom Budget*, 25 January 1889

³²⁴ K. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians*, Aldershot, 1994, 153

³²⁵ C.E. Finlason, *A Nobody in Mashonaland*, Bulawayo, 1970, 72

³²⁶ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 15 January 1889

down by 17 runs to Milton's Western Province XXII. It was a dramatic victory as the home team score subsided to a dismal 36 for 7 before Milton strode purposefully to the wicket. He was unaffected by the occasion and started to hit out powerfully, taking three boundaries off Briggs and two off Smith. A huge six, which landed in the pavilion enclosure, caused quite a flutter among the tea-sipping ladies. The scoreboard improved to 72 for 7 at lunch but Milton departed shortly after the interval, well caught by Bowden off Arnold Fothergill's bowling for 36. The Western Province XXII were all out for 137 but struck back well through Nicol Theunissen. He claimed 5 for 46 as Warton's team fell two runs behind, bowled out for 135.

In their second innings, the home players were again reliant on Milton who hammered 40 in no time before being caught and bowled by Briggs off a skier. The score was 74 for 8 when he departed for a well-played 40 – Western Province going on to record 138. Difford later recalled 'The finest innings [Milton] ever played or rather pair of innings was without doubt the 36 and 40 he scored for the Western Province XXII against Warton's team ... two splendidly vigorous innings which to a certain extent restored confidence among his colleagues ... [he] evinced a particular partiality for Briggs's tempting slows and cracked them to the ropes with clean and beautifully-timed strokes which left the fielders standing, while the crowd roared their applause'.³²⁷

Charles Finlason recalled wandering across the ground ...

... and hearing the name of Milton in everybody's mouth. One old chap came striding up to me in a very bellicose way. He thought I had written in the papers to say that Joey oughtn't to be in the team. I never did but he thought so, and he gave me a dreadful doing down. He couldn't find words to express his contempt for my opinion. And to do him justice he tried hard too. He flew away when he had finished, leaving me standing, greatly regretting that I had not been able to explain that I was Joey's most staunch admirer.³²⁸

The English were set 141 to win. Maurice Read held their innings together until he was out at 97 for 6, succumbing to the intense heat rather than the bowling. The last part of the match was very exciting with Milton earning the respect of friend and foe alike as he kept a tight control of proceedings. There was an indeterminate period in which no wicket fell and no run was scored. At one stage, Hearne played out six successive maidens as he doggedly held up one end to score a painstaking 6 not out. The tension that brooded over the ground tightened when Smith served up a few lusty blows but the colonials, despite a jittery presence in the field, dismissed their opponents for 123 to win by seventeen runs. Theunissen was again prominent, capturing 6 for 55 to return a match analysis of 11 for 101.

³²⁷ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

³²⁸ *South African Review*, 11 August 1893

The home team's victory was seen to have an important psychological effect. If the English had won, they could quite conceivably have gone on to win all their matches. The tourists had their excuses: Warton referred to the '... unceasing hospitality of the residents who will not realise we are here on cricket intent. Club vies with club in hospitality, acquaintance with acquaintance'. Smith wrote more diplomatically in the *Sportsman*: 'Our defeat was due in some measure to these casualties [he listed the injuries] seconded by a continued series of banquets, etc. but most of all to unexpected prowess in bowling on the part of the colonials'. Not satisfied with the concession made, Finlason amused readers by asking the question, 'What does "etc" stand for?'³²⁹

Milton's inspirational batting was seen as an important factor if local teams were to succeed but he was unable to play in the next two matches: 'Mr Milton, after hoping against hope, found the effects of his recent sunstroke still so bad upon him as to incapacitate him from participation in the game'. Surprisingly, a second loss – by 55 runs – was suffered by the tourists at the hands of a Port Elizabeth XXII. It prompted the *Empire* to be blunt in its condemnation: 'Never in the history of cricket touring has an English team made so miserable a start.' It described the situation as 'an almost national misfortune, despite all philanderings on the social aspect of the expedition. When we send men out to play cricket we want them to win, for if they cannot win our name goes down'.³³⁰

Finlason added with undisguised glee: 'So far, there can be no doubt that the Englishmen as teachers of cricket have not been a success.'³³¹ He thrived on the controversy that his unashamedly partisan comments provoked. He believed that Kimberley was far superior to any other centre in the Colony and could be compared favourably with the strength of most English counties. The two matches at Kimberley were inevitably bitter contests in the course of which the tourists were outplayed. A Kimberly XVIII and then a Cape Colony XV achieved ten-wicket victories to present a crisis situation for the tourists.³³² Milton returned to captain the Cape Colony XV in the second encounter. He had an impressive attack at his disposal and they quickly exploited a lively wicket at the Pirates' Ground, Kimberley. Theunissen was at full pace, bouncing and bruising batsmen. He caused injuries to both

³²⁹ *Daily Independent*, 30 January, 1889

³³⁰ *Ibid*, 13 February 1889

³³¹ *Ibid*, 5 January 1889

³³² In the opening match, Finlason had the fine figures of six for 25 in the English second innings with Cadwallader admitting his press rival bowled 'exceedingly well [and] sent down all kinds of balls, now a fast one and then a tempting round-arm lob with a good break on it. The English bats were anything but easy against it'; skipper Aubrey Smith was bowled first ball by Finlason in their dismal 81 (*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 14 January 1889).

Harry Wood and Frank Hearne with deliveries that reared nastily; the latter spending the lunch interval at the doctor's surgery before returning to the wicket. It was to no avail in another poor performance. Theunissen recorded figures of 5 for 37 and Charlie Vintcent 4 for 52 as the tourists crumbled to 91 all out.

The English innings lasted little more than two hours. It left their opponents with a good part of the afternoon to bat and by the close they had reached 91 for six wickets. Milton was not out on 15 overnight but fell immediately the following morning, bowled by Smith. A fine partnership followed between Bobby Klinck, who scored a sound 81, and Finlason, who displayed an obstinate defence interspersed with some robust strokes in his 46. Their stand of 109 took the Cape Colony to 267. The commanding lead of 176 proved to be too much for the English. Milton removed Bowden, who top-scored with 50 in the touring side's 212, leaving the Cape Colony XV a mere 37 to record a comfortable victory.

Not unexpectedly, the English received another pasting in their press. Four defeats in six matches was a calamitous record. The *Sunday Times* grumbled, 'The English cricketers at the Cape are not doing much to "astonish the natives" ... W.G. Grace says it is the heat of the sun and the accidents that are accountable for the poor displays ... The sun must have been very hot ...'³³³

Beating the Mother Country, 'was a rite of passage for settler communities, an indicator perhaps of eventual fitness for dominion status'. Smith projected the required stiff upper lip in proclaiming, 'We are able to accept defeat because we are Englishmen and every Englishman knows how to accept defeat.'³³⁴ Finlason did not believe him and played on the premise that contrary to their self-image, the English did not like losing. He became impatient with their excuses and turned on them: 'Hospitality too profuse, travelling too hard, light too puzzling, odds so great ... the latest excuse has been made by Mr Bowden in the *Potchefstroom Budget* where he attributes the defeats of his team partly "to the inferior grounds". What will they come up with next?'³³⁵

Never one to side-step the unpalatable aspects of an issue, Finlason went on to strike at the very heart of the public school ideal by accusing Smith and his English team of infringing the spirit of 'fair play' through controversial on-field antics 'that no colonial man would care to try'. Their behaviour included an appeal that was 'made with an almost irresistible air of confidence, and the trick of throwing up the ball as if there could be no manner of doubt ... an umpire indeed has to have a firm will, great presence of mind and fine judgement when he

³³³ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 21 January 1889

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 21 January 1889

³³⁵ *Daily Independent*, 30 January 1889

is umpiring with the Englishmen in the field'.³³⁶ Other writers generally balked at the idea of questioning the English tactics although comment was made on Briggs's habit of running alongside a ball in the hope of inducing a run or pretending he had missed the ball. 'Antics, of course,' reported the *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*, 'that would not be tolerated in a cricketer of mediocre ability.'³³⁷

'Whatever the merit of these accusations,' wrote Richard Parry, 'they stemmed in part from the break down of class in the colonial context, following the Australian model.' In Kimberley, however, there were those who still expected proper colonial reverence and thought claims of unfair play to be in poor taste. Milton was an interested observer at the Pirates Hall banquet where matters came to a head when Darny Haarhoff, publicly criticised Finlason. The Afrikaans-speaking lawyer told the assembled gathering that 'the finger of scorn has been placed at Kimberley men because of remarks which appeared in the *Daily Independent*'.³³⁸

The incident, which was loudly applauded by a section of the crowd that included the English cricketers, evoked swift and heated reactions over the next few days; the *Cape Argus* commenting, "'Gossip" has, at length, got what he richly deserves'.³³⁹

Most newspapers, however, spoke out strongly in favour of Finlason, condemning the tactics used against him as being wholly unethical. It was recognised that Finlason had been largely misunderstood, that the English had only themselves to blame for their poor performances and that the administration of cricket in Kimberley had been soured. The *Times of Natal* condemned 'a party of English gentlemen and cricketers' that should 'cheer and applaud their own men on to the assault, and then drown the defence of the man attacked'.³⁴⁰ The *Port Elizabeth Advertiser* reminded readers that when Finlason 'attempted to point out that the cricketers in Major Warton's team were but men, he was pooh-poohed and contemptuously held up to ridicule. Yet he, and those who sided with him, were proved to be correct ... in the writer's humble estimation, he has done more to infuse courage into colonial cricketers than all the writers in the colony put together'.³⁴¹

³³⁶ See Winch, *England's Youngest Captain*, 98-106.

³³⁷ Reproduced in *Cricket*, 21 February 1889

³³⁸ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 21 January 1889

³³⁹ *Cape Argus*, 25 January 1889

³⁴⁰ *Times of Natal*, 15 February 1889

³⁴¹ *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*, 8 February 1889. George Allsop later commented: 'Finlason did not exactly please the Englishmen by his criticism of their play ... His slighting references to them, however, bucked Kimberley up tremendously which was of course his object': M.W. Luckin (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket: Including the Full Scores of All Important Matches since 1876* (Johannesburg, 1915), 126.

Finlason claimed the incident had arisen because of the ‘deplored home-born and colonial-born feeling’. He explained:

Nothing that the colony has can equal anything that the old country has; nothing that a colonial-born man can do can equal what a home-born man can do. Such are the unfortunate opinions which are held by many men who owe every farthing they have in the world to the colony they milk systematically in and out of season. The feeling has been intensified by men who have for the moment rendered bitter and unreasonable their oft publicly repeated prognostications as to the mincemeat the formidable English cricketers would make of the colonial cricketers and been proved woefully wrong by them.³⁴²

It was suspected that the touring team in collusion with Cadwallader had put pressure on local administrators to silence Finlason. ‘It is a fact,’ said the editor of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, ‘that such was the discontent felt among the members of the English team, from the gentlemanly captain downwards, at the ungracious dissertations which found place in a Kimberley newspaper that they were seriously considering the advisability of returning to Kimberley if such a line of writing were persisted in or unless some amends were made for the same?’³⁴³ The comments were ill-advised. Major Warton was in no position to duck out of a fixture and forego the financial benefits.

The tour brought to light many of the problems that had simmered below the surface for a number of years. It was not only a case of conflicting ideologies between white groups over whether or not they should be supporting the colony against the country some still regarded as ‘Home’. There was also ‘a great rivalry between centres stemming to a large extent from ‘the impact of mineral discoveries, the boom-and-bust cycles of speculation and depression and notably the switch in focus from diamonds to gold’.³⁴⁴ The English captain claimed that wherever his side went, they were urged ‘to thrash Kimberley’. In turn, Finlason described Johannesburg as ‘an abode of fleas, flies and favours’ and poured scorn on their efforts to raise a cricket side. And nobody much liked the ‘Metropolis’ for the air of superiority it had always projected on matters related to cricket.³⁴⁵

The form of the English side improved markedly after leaving Kimberley, albeit against weaker teams. Huge English victories in the Eastern Cape prompted the question of why talented black cricketers had not been included in the local teams. It upset a black newspaper

³⁴² *Daily Independent*, 28 January 1889

³⁴³ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 13 February 1889

³⁴⁴ Bernard Hall, Richard Parry and Jonty Winch, ‘More than a Game’ in Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914* (Pretoria, 2009), 6

³⁴⁵ *Daily Independent*, 2 February 1889; *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 21 January 1889

proprietor, John Tengo Jabavu, who was most interested when the tourists visited King William's Town, an area where cricket played an important role within urban black popular culture. Jabavu argued that cricket matches were calculated to make the two races 'have more mutual trust and confidence than all the coercive and repressive legislation in the world'.³⁴⁶ When matches were staged against the white Cape Mounted Rifles, their commanding officer, Colonel Zachary Bayly, was conscious that everyone should see the cricket and arranged for the ground to be 'fenced but not screened'. As a consequence, *Imvo Zabantsundu* could state that there were people 'of all classes' supporting the game with a number of black spectators amongst the crowd of 2 000. The newspaper recorded 'the sympathies of the native spectators were with the English', thereby heralding the beginning of a long tradition of black support for visiting sides.³⁴⁷

The events that unfolded in the course of the tour proved an eye-opener for Milton as he had previously shown little enthusiasm for cricket outside the Western Province CC. Insight was gained into the way the game was played in various outposts – 'articulate, settled, westernised black families had emerged ... Africans established cricket clubs'³⁴⁸ – but the opportunity to fully unify cricket had been overlooked in favour of government policy which discouraged mixed sport. The subject was discussed at the time and the English captain, Aubrey Smith, spoke of the need to encourage all races to play cricket in South Africa. 'Our visit, which, from all that I can see,' he told a gathering in Port Elizabeth, 'is calculated to have so great an effect on the cricket of the Cape, not only amongst the white population, but even amongst the black [people] ... wherever you go in the colonies you will find that it is cricket which binds men together in the cause of sport and I hope it will always be so'.³⁴⁹

The South African team selected for the first 'Test' at Port Elizabeth represented the various parts of the fragmented southern African political map. The first 'national' team – albeit English-speaking and white – came before there was a nation, a significant but perhaps understated development at the time in that the majority of the cricket-playing population expected unification in due course under the British flag. There were other factors being considered such as writers promoting the argument that if South Africa won the match or made even a fair show, it would rank them with Australia. The representative matches were not designated as official 'Tests' until a later date, although leading cricket historian, F.S.

³⁴⁶ André Odendaal, *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of One of Cricket's Greatest Myths*, South Africa, 1850-2003, Cape Town, 2003, 46

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1889

³⁴⁸ Shula Marks, 'Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa 1880-1899' in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 141

³⁴⁹ *Port Elizabeth Telegraph*, 3 January 1889

Ashley-Cooper, wrote in *The Cricketer Annual* of 1930-31 that ‘the term “Tests” was, at the time, applied to them’. Certainly, the South Africans approached the matches with the same national fervour and pride that they entered subsequent internationals. The players were smartly turned out in ‘greenish-bronze’ caps that had been specially purchased for the occasion, whilst the wife of the South African captain, Owen Dunell, had embroidered the letters ‘SA’ in yellow on the front of each cap.³⁵⁰

It was not altogether surprising that in the First Test at Port Elizabeth, Aubrey Smith of Charterhouse and Cambridge should be opposed by a South African captain who was a product of Eton and Oxford. Owen Dunell, a Port Elizabeth-born businessman, led an interesting local team that included six other colonial-born players (A.B. Tancred, Charlie Vintcent, Okey Ochse, Fred Smith, Bert Rose-Innes and Gustav Kempis) and four brought up in the ‘Mother Country’ (Lieutenant Robert Stewart, Charles Finlason, Philip Hutchinson and Milton). The original selection had comprised players from the two republics as well as the different colonies but the Transvaal representative, William Newby, dropped out at a late stage. The choice of Arthur Edward ‘Okey’ Ochse was notable, not only because he represented the Orange Free State, but because he was originally – and incorrectly – recognised as the first Afrikaner to play Test cricket. His father, Andrew Ochse, born at Graaff-Reinet and the son of a government surveyor, was English-speaking and a close acquaintance of Rhodes, Rudd, Beit and Wernher, whilst his mother, Mary Ann Robinson, was the daughter of a Brighton vicar.

Milton and fellow tour organisers were found wanting when it came to the key selection of Nicol Theunissen. He would have been chosen had he been available because in the three matches that he played against the tourists, he claimed 34 wickets for 314 runs (average 9.23) and recorded five wickets in an innings five times out of a possible six. Finlason believed that the absence of Theunissen’s ‘considerable pace, and great knee-shaking, rib-roasting, finger-mangling bump’ made the English favourites for the Test.³⁵¹ That he did not play could be attributed to a by-passed community’s lack of interest in the match at Port Elizabeth. The fast bowler was refused time off from lectures because his professor thought ‘sulke speelitjies (sic)’ (such little games) were a waste of time.³⁵²

South Africa began the First Test poorly. Although the wicket held no terrors for the batsmen, the English bowlers quickly gained the ascendancy. The first nine overs were

³⁵⁰ At the end of the First Test, Finlason called for ‘a small gold medal with an appropriate inscription engraved on it’ to commemorate the players’ participation in the match (*Daily Independent*, 23 March 1889). At least one medal is known to exist today.

³⁵¹ *Daily Independent*, 1 March 1889

³⁵² Correspondence with Robin Isherwood, 26 October, 2008

maidens, five by Briggs and four by Fothergill, during which time Rose-Innes and Hutchinson were dismissed. The first scoring shot was an on-drive for two by Tancred who was the only batsman to look reasonably secure. Bobby Abel took catches at slip to dismiss Vincent (3), Ochse (4) and Milton (1) as South Africa slumped to 17 for 5. Skipper Dunell and Tancred then set about repairing the damage. They took the score to 58 before Tancred was bowled for a well played 29. Thereafter wickets fell at regular intervals as the South Africans laboured painfully to 84 all out.

The English edged past this score and were 87 for 8 and 103 for 9 before last man, Fothergill, arrived at the wicket with one intention – to hit out at everything. He and his partner, Basil Grieve, enjoyed the luck that fortune sometimes confers on a last-wicket stand, particularly as Rose-Innes beat both batsmen frequently. It was Milton who eventually had Fothergill caught at cover by Tancred, but only after he had smashed a priceless 32. The last-wicket stand of 45 gave England the advantage as South Africa scrambled to 129 in their second innings; Tancred top-scored again with 29 while Milton contributed a quick-fire 19 before being taken at the wicket by Bowden off Briggs. Bowden deputised for Harry Wood as England's 'keeper and the South Africans decided to do likewise with Milton taking over from Fred Smith as the English cantered home by eight wickets. It was a comfortable victory although the South Africans rued their bad luck – Finlason put his right-hand thumb out of joint early on – and, with good reason, argued that Theunissen could have made a difference.

As the match ended sooner than anticipated, it was decided to play an exhibition game on the Friday to entertain the many visitors to Port Elizabeth. Briggs, Abel, Ulyett and Hearne represented the married men and Read took the field for the bachelors. A large crowd applauded rapturously as Milton plundered the bowling to score 62 with local hero, Dunell, providing an unbeaten 59.³⁵³

Milton had earlier requested that 'the towns where the matches are played should choose the [South African] teams, as I believe is the case with representative matches in England.' As anticipated, the Western Province CC selected Milton as captain for the 'Second Test' and brought in local stars, Theunissen, 'Gobo' Ashley and Dick Richards. Monty Bowden – England's youngest-ever-captain at 23 years 144 days – won the toss and batted. Milton rang the bowling changes but it had little effect as the tourists amassed 292. He then marched out to applause when South Africa batted and pulled Fothergill to the square-leg boundary for 4. Not long afterwards he lost his wicket – for a second-highest score of 7 – when trying to cut a ball from Briggs that was too close to his body. The whole South African innings of 47 lasted a mere hour and a quarter – Tancred batting throughout to score an unbeaten 26.

³⁵³ Married Men scored 225 (Milton 62, Dunell 59 not out, Briggs 36; Rose-Innes 6 for 60) and Single-men 113 for 5 (Dick Richards 33 not out).

Following-on, the second innings was equally disastrous. The South Africans were both bemused and demoralised – Briggs flattening Milton’s off-stump with a fast, straight ball. In a devastating morning’s cricket, a stunned crowd saw sixteen South African wickets fall for 81 runs. They were all out for a second time soon after lunch for 43. In the course of the home side’s capitulation, Briggs teased and tormented the mesmerised South Africans to claim fifteen wickets for 28 runs – the most wickets by one bowler in a day (not even two sessions!) of Test cricket. Major Warton thought it bewildering that men who had scored half-centuries against the tourists in earlier matches should suddenly find Biggs impossible to encounter.³⁵⁴

As the fortunes of the English team changed in the latter part of the tour, Jabavu seized his opportunity to write critically of South Africa’s cricket structure. He scorned the white press for their belief that the supposedly ‘representative’ team which played the English ‘would do wonders’. He described the one-sided Cape Town ‘Test’ – lost by an innings and 202 runs – as ‘the uplifting of the curtain over the ridiculous mouse, the South African team’.³⁵⁵ There were many who pointed out that the disparity between the two sides placed huge doubts on South Africa’s ability to stand alongside England and Australia as a cricket-playing nation. The *Cape Times* portrayed a more optimistic viewpoint:

It is indeed a remarkable thing that in this country, so different in climate and with so much difference of race, the thoroughly English games of cricket and football should have become so universally popular. Few of the members can strictly claim to be South African in cricket education, or even in birth but the most destructive bowler and the bowler who has been deemed worthy of a special prize are South African in both respects; so is one of the highest-scoring batsmen. In order to produce such men cricket must have become a favoured institution in a country; and here both cricket and its winter substitute are practised with a zeal hardly surpassed in any part of England itself.³⁵⁶

The Second Test humiliation was a blow for South Africa’s white cricketers but the tour was regarded as a success. Charles Alcock commented in *Lillywhite’s Cricketers Annual 1889*, that clubs ‘derived material benefit from the increment to their funds by the large attendances, and improvements have been thus effected on the grounds, which will be of permanent use’. Sir Thomas Fuller, a parliamentarian and former editor of the *Cape Argus*, told a gathering after the Second Test that ‘the English team has taught many lessons and the names of many

³⁵⁴ Winch, *England’s Youngest Captain*, 155-58

³⁵⁵ *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 30 March 1889

³⁵⁶ *Cape Times Weekly*, 2 January 1889

of its members are now known in every household'.³⁵⁷ In a farewell dinner for the touring side, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon Frederick Schermbrucker spoke of the importance of the tour in uniting the South African states.³⁵⁸ Later, in examining South African cricket from 1860 to 1915, W.H. Mars concluded that 'the turning point in its history' was Warton's tour.³⁵⁹ It marked the beginning of first-class cricket in the country with the presentation of the Sir Donald Currie Challenge Cup being a notable development. In addition, the game's entrepreneurs were immediately encouraged to explore further opportunities to arrange matches at an international level, whilst local enthusiasts were galvanised into establishing cricket administrations.

The tour saw Milton further enhance his reputation. His grand achievement in organising matches across the vast southern African landscape was perhaps tinged with irony as he had, in preceding years, demonstrated a reluctance to build relationships with other centres. But, in making up for lost time, he showed an ability to succeed where others had failed in previous attempts to stage a tour. Ever the opportunist, Milton was not slow to publicise his involvement in sport. At Kimberley he informed his audience that he had taken interest in cricket in the colony from the first day he landed. He recalled there had been just 'one club in the suburbs, but now in Cape Town, cricket was played everywhere, with proper materials, or with paraffin tins and a fir cone (laughter)' – and one Saturday he counted 'the names of 420 players announced in the 'papers to play cricket that day. That showed the advance of cricket.'³⁶⁰ His statement might be challenged in that other teams did appear in the period leading up to 1877, but he was correct in referring to an impressive growth in the game.

Milton conceded the tour was not a financial success but pointed out that it had given 'great impetus to cricket'³⁶¹ and fostered widespread awareness of the game. The images that were collectively projected in the course of the tour were those of a society clamouring to be associated with a game that featured prominently in imperial culture. Cadwallader recalled seeing 'a number of the fair sex indulging in practice with the willow on the Pirates' Ground', adding, 'Who knows but we may have a match – 500 ladies of Kimberley against Major Warton's team.'³⁶² Finlason commented on 'a new, less discerning audience to that which [the English] were accustomed'³⁶³, and the 'fair amount of betting [which] has been and is

³⁵⁷ Charles Cox, *The Cricket Record of Major Warton's Tour 1888-89*, Port Elizabeth, 1889, 203.

³⁵⁸ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 30 March 1889

³⁵⁹ Luckin, *History of South African Cricket*, 152

³⁶⁰ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 21 January 1889

³⁶¹ *Cape Argus*, 3 September 1890

³⁶² *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 4 October 1888

³⁶³ *Daily Independent*, 27 December 1888

being indulged in' giving rise to the suggestion that players 'cared more for what they had on the result than for the cricket itself'³⁶⁴. Tour reports did not skirt the divisions: Finlason, for instance, was sensitive to assumptions of superiority on the part of the touring side whilst Jabavu drew attention to the racial exclusivity which marred the matches. It bode well that respected journalists were able to express strong views through the context of the game and without being prejudiced by social and political diplomacy. It was also commendable that an attempt to restrain Finlason should be cast aside, thus strengthening the position of sport to question the *status quo*.

A week or two before the tour concluded, it was thought that Warton was going to be out of pocket. Finlason called for assistance but Milton was not overly concerned. The success of the exercise from a unifying perspective had delighted the Cape's leaders and they duly rewarded the adventurous Warton with a role that he coveted. He was appointed by Rhodes to act as the British South Africa Company's Commissioner and travel beyond the Zambezi to set up telegraph stations that would eventually link that territory to the Cape.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 12 November 1888

Chapter 5:

Powerful opponents disrupt Milton's hopes of an 'MCC of South Africa'

No sooner had the 1888/89 tour ended than Milton turned to the domestic scene. The Western Province CC was under pressure and preparing to deal with a serious challenge posed by the Cape Town CC. The tour had demonstrated the extent to which the game had grown and there were calls for cricket associations to cater not only for the Western Cape, but the wider population of southern Africa, an area encompassing the British colonies, Boer republics and high commission territories. Changes were necessary, with Milton seen as the Cape's stumbling block. He was the Western Province CC's leading player and committee member whose personality held sway on almost every issue. He had ignored criticism in the past, seemingly content to antagonise his opponents by building a more elaborate club where members could bask in their Englishness. He had been secure in the knowledge that there would always be a steady supply of players. The Western Province CC had traditionally been first call for new arrivals in the Cape's colonial society, whilst it also had the pick of local talent.

The new challenge – a club led by J.H. Hofmeyr and James Sivewright – presented a far different proposition to ongoing criticism in the form of letters to the press. There were serious political undertones in Cape Town CC's attempt to end any thought of cricket being ruled by the 'M.C.C. of South Africa'. Milton and his committee were forced to react to the threat and showed a willingness to bring about radical change in order to improve the image of the Western Province CC and ensure it maintained its position of authority. There were efforts to embrace Afrikaans-speaking cricketers. The fixture against Stellenbosch in 1889 was referred to in the press as 'this annual match in which considerable interest is taken', whilst the regular appearance of the Afrikaans-speaking Nicol Theunissen and Pieter de Villiers suggested a change of heart in the club's selection policy – quite apart from an immeasurable strengthening of the bowling attack. Developments demonstrated the growing influence of Hofmeyr's campaign. The Western Province CC's dramatic about-turn was seen as being 'Rhodes-inspired – his alliance with the Bond was just around the corner.'³⁶⁵

Another radical change in policy was the adoption of a very different fixture list. There was a concerted move by the Western Province CC to play teams that they would not previously have considered worthy of a game. Battling, impecunious clubs such as Leytons, Darling, Wasps and St Mary's were granted matches as Milton's committee agreed to play two or three times every week. The policy was not unlike that of the M.C.C. which had

³⁶⁵ Correspondence with Dale Slater, 11 April, 2010. Rhodes's membership card is amongst the Western Province CC's historic possessions.

recognised the need to spread interest in the English game by playing as far afield as possible. Milton did not participate in mid-week matches which the Western Province CC referred to as ‘minor’ fixtures and for which separate averages were published.³⁶⁶

Throughout the period under review, the club gave Milton their backing, with Neumann Thomas moving a vote of thanks in 1889 ‘for the way in which the club affairs had been conducted’.³⁶⁷ Milton’s profile had been enhanced by the 1888/89 English tour. There was also admiration for his whole-hearted approach in ensuring the Natalians enjoyed their tour to the Cape during January 1890. He showed up well with the bat against the latter, scoring 29 out of 85 in Western Province’s first innings in a match where Nicol Theunissen (11/108) so nearly brought about a dramatic victory. Milton then top-scored with 47 when Theunissen and ‘Gobo’ Ashley inspired a three-wicket win for United Cape Town over the tourists. Aside from the actual cricket, the warm hospitality with which Milton accommodated the visitors received favourable comment. Natal’s J.T. Henderson wrote later:

We had a good time in Cape Town, and Newlands is a lovely ground. It is a pleasure to me to bear testimony in particular to the kindness, shown in many thoughtful ways that we experienced from that sterling cricketer [William] Milton. Two years afterwards the Old Marlburian was good enough to edit for one year the *SA Cricketers Annual* which I had been obliged to relinquish.³⁶⁸

It was a situation that Hofmeyr would have taken into account when ‘unifying’ cricket. Under Milton, the Western Province CC might not have been popular or successful as a governing body, but it remained integral to the city’s cricket. The advent of the Cape Town CC clearly brought the best out of the Milton-led committee and heralded the onset of an important rivalry on the cricket field. Hofmeyr realised that his team would have to prove itself in the most demanding of clashes and he offered to treat the players to a dinner when they were successful against the Western Province CC. The first three encounters were lost although the *Cape Times* admitted ‘the losses did not represent the true strength of this rising club’.³⁶⁹ The Western Province CC relied heavily on the bowling prowess of its two Afrikaners. A five-run victory in the second match was attributed to Theunissen’s impressive 7 for 45 in 24.2 overs, whilst de Villiers set up the third success with a match analysis of 10 for 25. The tide eventually turned in January 1890 when Cape Town declared at 147 for 8

³⁶⁶ The ‘minor’ matches were first referred to in the 1892/93 season when separate statistical records were provide

³⁶⁷ Western Province CC minutes, 5 August 1889

³⁶⁸ M W. Luckin, *The History of South African Cricket: Including the Full Scores of All Matches since 1876*, Johannesburg, 1915), 107

³⁶⁹ *Cape Times Weekly*, 14 February 1889

and then bowled out a full-strength Western Province CC for 68. Milton hit the first ball he faced out of the ground for 6 but was well beaten soon afterwards by a ‘beautiful breaking ball’ from Ashley.³⁷⁰

The victory was significant from a cricket point of view but Hofmeyr knew the groundwork was not complete. His club wanted a say in the administration of the game and their opportunity would occur in response to events that were taking place. Cadwallader, who had succeeded Finlason at the *Daily Independent*, was pushing for a national body to capitalise on the interest engendered by the Warton tour. He had made it known that he was ‘not unacquainted with the workings of institutions of the kind in England and other of the colonies.’³⁷¹ It was not as easy to arrange a meeting in southern Africa with its vast distances and primitive communications but Cadwallader was keen for action. He said there were ‘English and Australian teams willing if not anxious to call at the Cape ... If nothing is done, there is a real danger of a fiasco developing similar to that which took place in 1887/88 when two English touring sides toured Australia.’³⁷²

Warton’s tour inspired a number of entrepreneurs who were keen to organise visits that would be commercial ventures rather than attempts to improve South African cricket. The names of Shrewsbury and Lohmann were mentioned but it was not only English cricketers who aroused interest. The *Cape Times Weekly* announced in February 1890 that ‘the visit of the Australian team in September next may be said to be practically settled, the Wanderers Club of Johannesburg having guaranteed a sum of £2500 for the tour of ten to eleven matches over a period of seven weeks’.³⁷³ Later the same month, the Western Province CC held a meeting over the proposed visit. Milton stated that he had received communication from Johannesburg but that any decision as to whether the club should support the venture would depend on the relative risks that members were prepared to take over the financial position at that stage. He reminded his audience that he had hopes of further ground improvements and concluded, amidst laughter, that there was ‘a nice little clause in the articles of association by which every member was made liable for the whole sum of any deficiency’.

Advocate, Lynedoch Graham, then took over proceedings. He was in favour of ‘the adoption of a bold course, and stated that they should guarantee the whole sum themselves’. He failed to see what ‘good could be done by the calling of a general meeting of cricketers’ as the Western Province CC would simply be asked to make all the arrangements. Displaying surprising naivety towards the state of affairs in club cricket, Graham said that he felt

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 15 January 1890

³⁷¹ *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 23 November 1888.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 9 February 1890.

³⁷³ *Cape Times Weekly*, 19 February 1890

convinced that the majority of cricketers ‘trusted the Western Province CC and were glad to leave their interests in the hands of the club’. He therefore proposed a guarantee of £500 for six days of cricket against the Australians.

Ned Steytler, who was also a member of the Claremont CC, thought Graham’s interpretation was provocative. He pointed out that ‘the Western Province CC was usurping its authority to a certain extent in taking this thing entirely in its own hands’. He argued that there had been ‘numbers of letters’ and articles in the papers on the subject of the Western Province CC’s tendency to make decisions without consulting the other clubs. He received support from James Collier who stated ‘there was a great feeling in the outside clubs that they did not get fair treatment ... It is an indefinite feeling which has existed for ten years’.³⁷⁴

At a special meeting of the Cape Town CC on 12 March 1890, there were complaints that the Western Province CC was making no effort to consult with Cape Town clubs in preparing for a proposed tour by an Australian team. Simkins called for a meeting of clubs to protest against the Western Province CC’s actions but Hofmeyr prevented confrontation at that stage by declaring there was insufficient time for such an arrangement. Instead, a resolution was drawn up which read:

During the past season the necessity has been frequently urged on members of your committee by members of the club and of other clubs to take some steps to wrest from the Western Province Cricket Club the apparent monopoly which they hold in regard to the administration of cricketing matters in the Western Province, and obtain equal representation for all first-class local clubs on some duly constituted board in whose hands the sole management of such matters should rest.³⁷⁵

It was a strongly-worded statement of intent but Sivewright tactfully stated that the Cape Town CC committee did not agree with many of the critical remarks that were being made about the Western Province CC at that time. The *Cape Argus* rightly argued that the ‘undignified squabbles only go to emphasise the long felt want of a cricket association’³⁷⁶, but success depended on Sivewright gaining the co-operation of Milton and his committee in pursuing change. There was no clear indication as to how much discussion was taking place behind the scenes but Hofmeyr with ‘a natural gift for lobbying and for grass-roots organisation’³⁷⁷ was able to make use of his vice-presidents, Sivewright (who knew Milton

³⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 26 February, 1890

³⁷⁵ The resolution was published by the *Cape Argus* after it was presented to the annual general meeting of the Cape Town CC on 18 August 1890.

³⁷⁶ *Cape Argus*, 1 August 1890

³⁷⁷ Phyllis Lewsen, *John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman*, Yale, 1982, 83

well) and John J. Graham (older brother of Lynedoch) in ensuring the Western Province CC fell into line.

In the mean time, Cadwallader injected a sense of urgency with regard to the implementation of a national organisation when he wrote that Port Elizabeth had ‘formed a committee of captains of clubs in the matter and would suggest you at the Cape might follow a similar course’.³⁷⁸ He proposed holding a congress of delegates at Kimberley during the first Currie Cup Challenge match between Kimberley and the Transvaal in early April 1890. Although Milton was keen to maintain the Western Province CC’s position of significance, the attraction of sport as a vehicle for nation-building was being spelt out to him by Sivewright who was acting ‘as the major facilitator between Rhodes and Hofmeyr’.³⁷⁹ Milton’s narrow cricket world stood for little when he realised that Hofmeyr and Rhodes shared the vision of unifying southern Africa into a single political and economic system. It determined much of their political strategy, with cricket perhaps unwittingly giving impetus to their plans through the earlier England tour and the selection of a South African XI.

On a Monday afternoon in late March, the Western Province CC convened a meeting of ‘delegates from the Cape Town, Claremont, Sea Point, Woodstock, Garrison, South African College and Diocesan cricket clubs’. The gathering met in the pavilion at Newlands where the host club was forced to admit that ‘everything had moved too quickly to invite country clubs’. It was quite possibly a deliberate oversight as Milton sought to minimise opposition. The fact that he did not attend the meeting might also have been prearranged as Milton was never comfortable dealing with the gripes of those outside his circle of cricket associates. He asked Lynedoch Graham ‘to express his regret at being unable to be present, owing to illness in his family, which was not, however, serious’. Milton’s loyal supporter, John Reid, was elected chairman and he explained that ‘the meeting had been called to consider the proposal emanating from Kimberley for the formation of a South African Cricket Association’. It was quickly resolved that William Hopley – the crown prosecutor at Kimberley and a close friend of Cecil John Rhodes – be requested to represent the centre at the proposed meeting and to request certain minor amendments to the rules. Harry Hands then moved, seconded by Frank Robb, ‘that in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a local cricket union be formed, and that Mr [Thomas] Lawton [a member of the Cape Town CC] be requested to communicate with the secretaries of all clubs ...’³⁸⁰ This motion, after some discussion, was

³⁷⁸ *Cape Times Weekly*, 5 March 1890

³⁷⁹ Kenneth E. Wilburn, *The Life of Statesman and Industrialist Sir James Sivewright of South Africa, 1848-1916*, Queenstown, 2010, 150

³⁸⁰ *Cape Times Weekly*, 29 March 1890

put to the meeting and carried. Not only was it an important step forward, but it was a decision initiated and followed up by delegates from clubs outside the Western Province CC.

A South African Cricket Association was duly formed at a meeting held at Glover's Athletic Bar in Kimberley on 9 April 1890, two days after the Kimberley versus Transvaal match had been completed. Cadwallader produced his 'rough draft' of the rules and objectives which were, with minor amendments, accepted unanimously. It was the second 'national' body to be formed following rugby's unification in the previous year. It aimed 'to foster and develop cricket throughout South Africa', yet any assertion of 'national' unity ignored the fact that those who attended the meeting were restricted to white clubs and that the majority were resident in Kimberley.³⁸¹ Milton's choice – Hopley – was elected the first president of the South African Cricket Association and, as anticipated, Cadwallader became hon. secretary.

The formation of the new governing body was a breakthrough and given wide publicity at a time when major political developments were taking place. Its powers were nevertheless limited and there were no details, for example, of the proposed Australian tour as the Wanderers' representative, Monty Bowden, was in the process of celebrating his remarkable role in the first Currie Cup Challenge. He had scored 63 (out of 117) and an unbeaten 126 (out of 224 for 4); given a lively display behind the stumps, and then captured key wickets as a bowler to inspire an historic victory for the Transvaal. *The Star* described him at the time as 'far and away the best bat in South Africa' but he was also viewed as an attractive publicity proposition for the expedition that Rhodes was organising to occupy territory north of the Limpopo.³⁸² Within weeks Bowden was ensnared by Rhodes's Chartered Company, seen by some as a callous business enterprise known for its 'carelessness of the welfare of the individual'.³⁸³

The story of Bowden reflected developments taking place across the country. The boom on the Rand during the previous two years had been killed by dishonest methods, rumours that gold was giving out, and the panic-selling of shares. The rising unemployment and general collapse in morale finally ended plans to invite the Australian cricketers. Bowden and other provincial players departed with the Pioneer Column which would open the route to

³⁸¹ The nine delegates were William Hopley (Western Province CC), Bertie Rose-Innes, (Port Elizabeth), Irvine Grimmer, Arthur Seccull and Alby Bennitte (Kimberley), FT Clarkson (Natal), John Piton (Pretoria), Finlason (Klerksdorp) and Cadwallader. They elected Hopley as chairman and Cadwallader as hon. secretary and treasurer. See Jonty Winch, *Cricket in Southern Africa: Two Hundred Years of Achievements and Records*, Rosettenville, 1997, 25.

³⁸² *The Star*, 9 April 1890. Bowden was in a vulnerable position because he was 'dead broke' after his stock-broking venture on the Rand had collapsed (*Daily Independent*, 28 October 1890).

³⁸³ Adrian Darter, *Pioneers of Mashonaland*, London, 1914, 148.

Mashonaland. The dramatic venture was made possible through the grant of a Royal Charter; the setting up of the British South Africa Company and the financial strength of De Beers.³⁸⁴ Together, they gave Rhodes immense powers in forging ahead with his northern objectives although he admitted that he could only have done it through the Cape Colony and the support of the Afrikaner Bond.³⁸⁵ Sivewright was not only involved in the consummation of the relationship between Rhodes and the Bond but would help negotiate the construction of the railway through Bechuanaland, an important factor in securing the Charter.

The new political alliance was able to secure the premiership for Rhodes after the fall of the Sprigg cabinet in mid-July 1890. Rhodes appeared to be fully converted to the Bond's point of view 'on vital issues affecting it, like agricultural protection and "native policy"'.³⁸⁶ Hofmeyr was content to turn down the opportunity to form a government, stating he was not prepared to head 'an irresponsible majority'. He preferred to back 'men with good sound Afrikaner views' who were able to make judgements themselves.³⁸⁷ The Afrikaner Bond did not have an absolute majority – in 1890 it could call on thirty-seven out of seventy-six members in the House of Assembly – but an alliance with Rhodes was to their 'mutual advantage' as he was largely dependent on Hofmeyr. Once in power, Rhodes put together a broad coalition that included liberals and members of the Afrikaner Bond but it rarely happened that 'a proposal was submitted to the House without having been placed before the Afrikaner leader'.³⁸⁸

Less than two months after Rhodes became prime minister, Hofmeyr turned to the next stage in the reconstruction of the Cape's cricket administration. His aim was to establish a cricket association that would represent the clubs. Hofmeyr worked closely with Sivewright – one of the two Bondsmen in Rhodes's cabinet – who was familiar with the methods of the Western Province CC. Milton in turn made use of the negotiating skills of Lynedoch Graham in reaching an agreement whereby the Western Province CC was allowed a full role in proceedings and therefore seen as a key participant in orchestrating a new cricket structure at the Cape. Hofmeyr did not wish to lose Milton who was not only the best-known personality

³⁸⁴ The Charter empowered the BSAC to, *inter alia*, make treaties, promulgate laws, preserve the peace, maintain a police force, acquire new concessions and generally provide, at the Company's expense, the infrastructure of a new Colony was to obtain a charter that granted the British South Africa Company the right to operate in all Southern Africa.

³⁸⁵ Mordechai Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners: The Imperial Colossus and the Colonial Parish Pump*, Abingdon, 1996, 86

³⁸⁶ Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 127

³⁸⁷ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, Oxford, 1988, 341

³⁸⁸ T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, Bergville, 1989, 105; Lewsen, John X. Merriman, 139

in the Cape's cricket, but had recently been appointed acting secretary in the Prime Minister's Department. The 'worldly Afrikaner leader' as Phyllis Lewsen described Hofmeyr 'took men as he found them and readily exploited their weaknesses'.³⁸⁹ The presidency of the proposed new provincial union was thus offered to Milton, an ambitious and capable administrator but one who was handily-placed to be kept in check by Rhodes and Hofmeyr.

Progress was rapid. At the Western Province CC's annual general meeting on 4 August 1890, Lynedoch Graham asked members to approve 'the formation of a local cricket union and that the committee be authorised to consult with the representatives of other clubs with regard thereto and elect representatives'.³⁹⁰ Graham, who was appointed as the club's first vice-captain and was in the process of winning fame as a criminal lawyer, was then nominated to represent Milton at a meeting to consider the establishment of a provincial body. They were positive steps forward and when the Cape Town CC met again on the 18 August 1890, Sivewright was able to report to the gathering that the Western Province CC 'readily fell in with the idea' of unification. The Cape Town CC was by this stage driving the changes that were taking place, which prompted Louis Smuts to state that 'the club has won for itself a position in the Western Province which has exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine members'.³⁹¹

The formation of the Western Province Cricket Union became a reality at a meeting of delegates from leading clubs at the Thatched Tavern on 5 September 1890. Graham chaired a straight-forward meeting as delegates from the clubs had already met to frame rules for the governing body so that the new constitution could be 'regarded as an accomplished feat'. It had been agreed that the Western Province CC should have four delegates to the Union, the Cape Town CC two, Claremont two and Sea Point one. A quorum would consist of representatives from at least three different clubs. It was further unanimously agreed that Milton be elected president of the Union with Pieter de Villiers – 'mentioned as a good man' – the secretary and treasurer.³⁹² The appointment of the latter, who was also a paid assistant secretary of the Western Province CC, meant Milton and Lynedoch Graham had engineered an effective six votes against the five of the other delegates.

The composition of the committee might have been contentious but the general mood in cricket was one of optimism. Hofmeyr could be credited for masterminding the unification of Western Province cricket and, to an extent, reining in Milton – some might have said giving him a second chance. It reinforced John X. Merriman's description of Hofmeyr as 'the Mole

³⁸⁹ Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, 98

³⁹⁰ *Cape Argus*, 5 August 1890

³⁹¹ *Ibid*, 19 August 1890

³⁹² *Cape Times*, 6 September 1890

– an industrious little animal ... You never see him at work, but every now and then a little mound of earth, thrown up here and there, will testify to his activities'.³⁹³ The remark offended Hofmeyr but the methods he used to 'unite' cricket had ensured a smooth transition. Clubs would at last have their say in the administration of cricket in the region, whilst Hofmeyr was in a position to oversee Milton's leadership.

Soon after the formation of the South African Cricket Association, Cadwallader was transferred to Cape Town and Finlason resurfaced at the *Daily Independent*. The various administrative adjustments in cricket were bound to affect a meeting that Milton chaired in early September 1890. Cape Town cricketers attended and were asked to consider whether they might guarantee anything towards the stipulated £3 000 expenses of a Kimberley-hosted English team later in the year. Milton told the gathering, which included Cadwallader, that their decision was of some importance because 'cricketers generally were waiting upon the action of Cape Town in the matter'. It was argued by Advocate Graham that such a venture was inadvisable in a period of 'severe depression owing to the Union Bank smash', but Simkins opposed that view, stating that 'sport would not be affected by the failure of half a dozen banks'.

Milton appeared sympathetic with Simkins' viewpoint. He read out an impressive list of men from whom Lillywhite's team would be chosen and pointed out that Warton had been paid more than £3000 besides travelling expenses. He went on to state that he favoured a tour insofar 'as people here require constant spurring on, a second visit would do good'. At the same time, he could not say that the new season was a favourable time to embark on such an arrangement, and admitted that 'there would be great difficulty in getting individual guarantees'. The Cape Town cricketers went along with Milton and voted against raising a guarantee. Instead, it 'was resolved to hold a tournament at Newlands to which all centres are invited'.³⁹⁴

Cadwallader subsequently cancelled the proposed Lillywhite tour, stating that he did so because Cape Town was not prepared to pay its portion of the guarantee. The situation became very embarrassing for him: Finlason wrote that Johannesburg, Kimberley, Pretoria and Natal had provided guarantees and that Port Elizabeth preferred a South African tournament but would go with the majority. Other Kimberley newspapers accused Cape Town of vetoing Lillywhite's proposed tour without first consulting the centres. It resulted in Lynedoch Graham writing to the *Cape Times*:

We have nothing at all to do with the actions of the hon secretary of the South African Cricket Association, Cape Town's cricketers not having yet formally joined this body. This gentleman

³⁹³ Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, 98

³⁹⁴ *Cape Argus*, 3 September 1890

(whom, it is only fair to say, has done a deal for cricket in South Africa) was appointed hon. secretary at a meeting held at Kimberley, consequently he is a representative of Kimberley, rather than of Cape Town, and as such they are bound by his actions. Truly, this appears to me to be a striking instance of chickens coming home to roost.³⁹⁵

Graham's explanation was accepted by the various centres and they agreed to support Cape Town's proposal to host the Fifth Champion Bat Tournament at the end of the year. The event was a great success and 'the Western Province cricketers treated the visiting teams (especially Kimberley) with the greatest possible kindness and hospitality. They did everything they could to make the stay of their guests pleasant'. The *Cape Times* in particular gave the tournament generous coverage, bringing out a special edition which provided full reports, details, scores and analyses of the players' performances. The Western Province players led by Milton were convincing winners and it was noted tongue-in-cheek that 'the only unmannerly and discourteous thing they were guilty of towards their guests was "walloping" them all round'. The report added the tournament 'was remarkable in many things and amongst others in the way town prejudices and mutual dislikes amongst the players were eradicated'. The financial results were eminently gratifying and Milton and his committee made the popular decision to 'give up the major share of the gate money to the visiting cricketers who therefore received enough to pay all their expenses ... including a grant of £9 or £10 to each visiting player'.³⁹⁶ The matter of an English tour was also put right when Milton chaired a meeting of the South African Cricket Association on 30 December 1890: 'a resolution favouring the visit was agreed upon, details of negotiations being left to the secretary'.³⁹⁷

Cadwallader entered the assignment with his usual enthusiasm and when the South African Cricket Association met again in April 1891 he spoke of Lord Sheffield bringing out a team that would include W.G. Grace. He described the arrangement as 'a chance probably only to be got once in a lifetime; every nerve should be strained to secure such a visit'.³⁹⁸ Unfortunately, his plans ran into opposition because the British rugby team was visiting during the winter months of 1891. It was argued that the relatively small white population could not cope with the costs and organisation involved in staging two major tours in the same year. The set-back increased Cadwallader's resolve to make an impression and he

³⁹⁵ *Daily Independent*, 5 September 1890.

³⁹⁶ Luckin, *History of South African Cricket*, 185-88; *Cape Times*, 15 January 1891

³⁹⁷ *Cape Argus*, 31 December, 1890

³⁹⁸ *Cape Times*, 9 April 1891; The *Cape Argus* ('Home' edition) added 'Lord Sheffield is very busy just now getting together a cricket team [for] a tour in which he intends to visit India, Australia and the Cape' (Reported in *Cape Times*, 17 April 1891)

switched his focus to an overseas tour. He identified Bowden as the important drawcard needed to attract the necessary financial backing and fixtures for the proposed tour. The latter's role as a pioneer opening a new territory of the empire had added lustre to his fame as a cricketer. Cadwallader was also aware of the fearful weather that had struck Mashonaland in early 1891 and believed he could persuade the cricketer to return to South Africa. A trip to the north was not out of the question as the newly-acquired territory was of major interest and it suited the *Cape Times* to have a man on the spot. It was agreed that Cadwallader should update views on gold prospects; the growing impatience with the Chartered Company; the findings of an investigation by the controversial Randolph Churchill; the aftermath of the British-Portuguese conflict ... and lure Bowden back to South Africa. The South African Cricket Association was advised of the development and Milton agreed to take over the secretarial duties.

While Cadwallader spent nearly two months in a tent erected haphazardly on the bank of a muddy stream in Mozambique,³⁹⁹ Milton's heavy workload was increased to include the position of acting private secretary to Rhodes and a role on the reception committee for the 1891 rugby tour alongside Hofmeyr, Sivewright and other notables.⁴⁰⁰ Hofmeyr was a strong influence as he was also a devoted follower of the winter game and 'there was rarely an important match at Newlands, of which he was not a spectator'. He wished to build on increasing Afrikaner enthusiasm for the game, as he was heartened by the success of Stellenbosch in particular and the crowds of 2000-plus that were in attendance when they played leading Cape Town teams. At the inaugural inter-provincial tournament at Kimberley in 1889, he presented a cup to an outstanding Western Province player (Charlie van der Byl) whilst 'taking occasion in an eloquent and lengthy speech to combat the fear of those who held football to be a dangerous game and drew a happy augury of future success from the advance made'.⁴⁰¹ His involvement made it a relatively straight-forward task to convince Rhodes to underwrite the tour. This was a major step forward: Rowland Hill had tested everyone's patience but, said Billy Simkins, 'when they cabled home "Rhodes, Premier, guarantees expenses" the team came out'.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Winch, *England's Youngest Captain*, 238-40

⁴⁰⁰ One of the touring players, Paul R. Clauss, later mentioned Milton as one of the men who made the tour 'the happy one it was' (Ivor D. Difford, *The History of South African Rugby Football 1875-1932*, Wynberg, 1933, 258).

⁴⁰¹ *Cape Times Weekly*, 9 October 1891

⁴⁰² *Cape Times*, 10 September 1891. Even then, Hill proved awkward when it came to including Transvaal in the itinerary, claiming, 'Many varsity men in the England team find it impossible to extend their absence owing to previous engagements at Home'. A different attitude was expressed by the players on arrival as they 'unanimously expressed the desire that the tour might be so arranged to

Milton organised a Western Province cricket team to play against the visitors on a green matting wicket at Matjesfontein, where J.D. Logan – an ‘intimate’ friend of Sivewright⁴⁰³ – owned a hotel resort. The British centre, Edward Bromet, clean bowled three batsmen who captained South Africa at some stage – Milton (2), Castens (47) and Richards (10) – in taking 7 for 41 but the local side managed to inflict on the tourists their only tour defeat. All nineteen rugby matches were won with just one point – a try in the first match – being conceded. A challenge from Stellenbosch in an unofficial fixture very nearly produced a defeat as M. Daneel crossed the tourists’ line but was tackled as he headed inwards to the goal-posts. The chance to score was lost, leaving the British with a win by two points to nil.⁴⁰⁴

As the rugby season drew to a close, Milton faced fresh demands for an English cricket tour during the summer. He began the October 1891 meeting of the Western Province Cricket Union by stating that Lohmann had offered to bring out a team for about £3 500 and 80% of gate money. The proposal was greeted with laughter.⁴⁰⁵ Milton then explained that Edwin Ash, the rugby manager, had expressed an interest in returning with a cricket team. It was generally thought that the idea of the English visiting South Africa in 1891-92 ‘would not be judicious, at least from the financial aspect’, as a team of rugby footballers had been touring the country during the summer.⁴⁰⁶ There again, Ash had made a good impression and the cricketers sympathised with his efforts. He was grudgingly given the green light to organise a cricket venture on the condition that he should raise a first-class combination. He was able to fulfil this requirement by assembling a powerful side that was led by the England batsman, Walter Read, and included the Australians, Billy Murdoch and J.J. Ferris.

Sir Henry Loch welcomed the tourists and expressed his intention ‘to bring about an encounter here between Lord Sheffield’s team (now touring Australia) and Mr Read’s team on the return of Lord Sheffield’s team *en route* to England’.⁴⁰⁷ He was unable to deliver on his promise but his involvement created interest. Milton again sought the support of the politicians with Sir Thomas Upington presiding at a banquet in honour of the tourists at the Royal Hotel. The former prime minister was flanked by the respective captains and described by Hofmeyr as ‘a lover of sport, though a better politician’. Milton, who led the Western

admit of a visit to the Transvaal being undertaken. Most of the men are not at all anxious for an early return to the Mother Country’.

⁴⁰³ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 372

⁴⁰⁴ Difford, *The History of South African Rugby Football*, 477

⁴⁰⁵ *Cape Times*, 22 October 1891

⁴⁰⁶ Peter Wynne-Thomas, *The Complete History of Cricket Tours at Home and Abroad*, London, 1989, 37

⁴⁰⁷ *Cape Times*, 11 December 1891

Province XVIII in the opening match of the tour, had himself become a celebrity in Cape circles. After Read 'proposed the "Western Province Cricket Union", coupled with the name of "Mr Milton"', the latter responded with the statesmanlike comment that he believed 'what the Western Province said today, South Africa said tomorrow' (hear, hear).⁴⁰⁸

Milton did have awkward moments in the course of the tour. A couple of days after the banquet, he upset church leaders who were opposed to his arranging a Sunday picnic for the English team in Hout Bay. W. Barnett Clark (Dean of Cape Town) and fifteen others (Afrikaans and English) wrote a letter of protest to Milton in his capacity as Western Province CC captain. They complained that the occasion was an 'affront to the Christian community ... this day is recognised as a day of worship by the church throughout the world, we unitedly protest against a selection which manifests such a disregard for the convenience, the sentiments and the convictions of so large a proportion of the community'.⁴⁰⁹ It was delivered to Milton at his office and, after he promised due consideration, the picnic was abandoned. The beleaguered cricket leader might well have mulled over an earlier press announcement that 'Sunday cricket is very popular in Johannesburg'.⁴¹⁰

Milton worked with Frank Hearne in planning an extensive tour programme but there was some criticism of the way it panned out. Milton, for example, had hoped to satisfy the interest of the country districts by arranging for their best twenty-two to take on Read's team. A side was selected that included players from Stellenbosch, Worcester, Swellendam, Paarl, Robertson, Ceres, Durban, Caledon and Malmesbury, but then Milton deemed it necessary to ask Captain Townley Wright, the archetypal Englishman and secretary of the Western Province CC, to lead the largely Afrikaans-speaking team. Wright offered little as a player and local supporters, who had seen their rugby men give the British tourists a fright, were most disappointed by the performance of the cricketers. There was sympathy for the team in that they were not at full strength and were put in on a 'treacherous, drying wicket' but, said the *Midland News and Karoo Farmer*:

Some scathing criticisms have been penned on the match between the English team and the XXII of Country Clubs. The latter, in their two innings, only totalled 134, while four of the English team (two not out) made 201. The gate money on the last day amounted to thirty shillings – a striking proof of public disgust.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 18 December 1891

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 11 December 1891

⁴¹⁰ *Cape Argus*, 2 September 1890

⁴¹¹ *Midland News and Karoo Farmer*, 22 March 1892

Criticism appeared in the *Cape Times* that ‘town teams (such as the United Services, Woodstock, Sea Point, Mowbray and the Colleges) are superior to nearly all if not all the country clubs and should be given a chance.’ It was suggested ‘twenty-two of such clubs be given a day’s cricket under Mr Milton’s captaincy and I am sure you will see a good game and draw a large attendance’. There was further objection to the inclusion in various fixtures of ‘members of Her Majesty’s land forces, who have plenty of opportunities at Home of seeing and playing in good matches’.⁴¹² Another writer complained that games involving odds had become unpopular as ‘most lovers of cricket are hastily tired of [such] matches’; a view that prompted the editor to note ‘a very large number of the public and cricketers are at one with the correspondent’.⁴¹³ The problem was not easily overcome as Peter Wynne-Thomas explained: ‘The tourists were equipped with bowlers who were much too good for the home batsmen ... this fact further reduced public enthusiasm for the visit’.⁴¹⁴

Milton did not fare well in the four matches he played against Read’s team and *The Star* in particular opposed his selection for the Test at Newlands.⁴¹⁵ He had registered scores of 0, 17, 0, 2, 17, 18 and 5 but it was no surprise that he should be chosen to lead the South African team. The match was not only hosted by the Western Province Cricket Union, but Milton was tour organiser, convener of the selection committee and incumbent leader. He had also experienced a good season at club level – scoring 437 runs (average 51.5) and capturing 31 wickets (average 10.1) – with the highlight being his 154 for Western Province CC in about ninety minutes against the Garrison.⁴¹⁶ There was a strong challenge for places in the South African XI and, in selecting six from Western Province, it was also regretted that such sterling local players as Herbert H. Castens and Alf Richards were overlooked. There were no representatives from Kimberley: Grimmer, who had produced a fine spell of 6 for 58 against the tourists, and A.B. Tancred, the country’s leading batsman, were unavailable.

Nicol Theunissen was no longer playing cricket regularly. He had joined many Afrikaners in turning to rugby and captained Stellenbosch to victory over the Villager Club at the opening of the Newlands rugby ground on 31 May 1890. Most memorably on that occasion, he had ‘with no team-mate to pass to, and with a man hanging on to him’, dropped the winning goal from ‘fully 40 yards out’.⁴¹⁷ Then, a few weeks before the cricket ‘Test’, he agreed to play for a Stellenbosch XI against a team of Hofmeyrs in a fixture that would

⁴¹² *Cape Times*, 8 March 1892

⁴¹³ *Cape Times*, 5 March 1892

⁴¹⁴ Wynne-Thomas, *History of Cricket Tours*, 37

⁴¹⁵ *The Star*, 16 March 1892

⁴¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 15 February 1892: his innings included seven 6s and twenty 4s.

⁴¹⁷ A.C. Parker, *W.P. Rugby: Centenary 1883-1983*, Cape Town, 1983, 17.

become an annual affair. The leader of the Afrikaner Bond watched the inaugural game ‘attentively from the commencement till the close’ and, having seen his ‘family’ side build a large first-innings lead, looked on in horror as Theunissen entered the fray in the second innings to take eight wickets (all clean bowled) at the cost of 7 runs.⁴¹⁸

The representative fixture was played against Read’s team on 19, 21, 22 March, 1892. ‘This match is now regarded as a “Test”,’ wrote Peter Wynne-Thomas, ‘but at the time *Wisden* thought so little of it that no details at all were given of the two South African innings.’⁴¹⁹ The English, as was often the case, failed to appreciate the interest that existed in the game in southern Africa. The *Cape Times* reported:

Long before noon, Newlands ground became a scene of life and activity, and bunting gaily streamed above the recently-erected stands and marquees which looked very picturesque amongst the trees. Popular prices ruled the day (a wise arrangement of the manager) and from eleven o’clock special trains brought crowds of visitors. His Excellency Sir Henry Loch and party, who were present from the start, watched the progress of the game from the members’ stand. Fully 3000 persons must have passed the gates including every phase of Cape society, every class and colour.⁴²⁰

As in so many other games on the tour, Ferris proved too good for the South African batsmen. A left-arm swing bowler, he was a fine player and in July 1888, he and Charlie Turner had bowled out England for 53 and 62 to set up a victory for the Australians inside two days. This time the South Africans suffered at the hands of his bowling and were dismissed for 97 and 83. Ferris produced a match analysis of 13 for 91 and lifted his wicket total for all matches to 234. South Africa went down by an innings and 189 runs but it might be added that Lord Sheffield’s English team began a ‘Test’ against the Australians less than forty-eight hours later and won by an even greater margin – an innings and 230 runs. Johnny Briggs, who had humiliated South Africa at Newlands in 1888/89, once again created havoc, claiming 14/136 but, remarkably, the Australians with Turner conspicuous won the series 2-1.

As the ‘Test’ at Newlands ended early, a match was arranged against the Malay XVIII to raise funds for the eleven professionals in the tour party. They all played – there is no evidence to support Rowland Bowen’s claim that the amateurs were unwilling to turn out against black players.⁴²¹ The game was organised by Frank Hearne who was a great favourite

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid*, 9 February 1892: the Hofmeyr team was made up of SA, AM, P, SV, C, AW, TJ, JH, AJL, JOS and W. Stellenbosch (46 and 106) beat the Hofmeyrs (101 and 20) by 31 runs.

⁴¹⁹ Wynne-Thomas, *History of Cricket Tours*, 37

⁴²⁰ *Cape Times*, 21 March 1892

⁴²¹ R. Bowen, *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development throughout the World*, London, 1970, 134

amongst the Malay people, having spent much time assisting them through coaching players and umpiring matches. ‘Naturally the crack professional bowlers were not put on first,’ said the *Cape Times* of the Malay innings. Chatterton and Barton opened, thereby allowing Samsodien to make some progress towards establishing the top score to have been made against the tourists. The Hearne brothers were eventually brought into the attack and Samsodien was induced into spooning a catch to Edwin Leaney off Alec Hearne’s bowling. He had contributed an invaluable 55 in a total of 113.⁴²²

Milton had scheduled a meeting of the South African Cricket Association on the second day of the match and missed some of the most dramatic cricket seen on the tour. The large Malay audience delighted in seeing the English struggle to cope with the pace of ‘Krom’ Hendricks. The loose-limbed fast bowler was described as ‘a regular “demon” with his very swift deliveries’. The dismissal of Jack Hearne caused the crowd to gasp in astonishment. Cadwallader recalled, ‘JT Hearne, who had been very venturesome, had his off-stump shot some yards out of the ground in trying to drive a fast ball from Hendricks.’ One of the English players, George Hearne, described Hendricks as being ‘the fastest bowler in South Africa ... I was in a long time with Jack Hearne but it wasn’t pleasant. The balls flew over our heads in all directions...’⁴²³

Nearly twenty years later, the touring team’s opening batsman, William Chatterton, said that he had ‘played at home against Richardson, Lockwood and Mold, and against the greatest of Australian genius, Spofforth and Turner’. Yet the ‘very ablest bowler he had ever met he believed to be, not Spofforth, but a South African black, Hendricks’. He added: ‘The memory of this man’s pace from the pitch, his quick swing away, alternating with a fine break, stirred a cold and critical nature to enthusiasm’.⁴²⁴

Hendricks’ bowling was a thought-provoking conclusion to the English side’s tour. The ‘Mohammedan community’ expressed their appreciation in the *Cape Times* and hoped ‘local cricket teams will, in future, show us a similar kindness’. They were proud of their ‘players for the fair stand they made against the professionals’ on a day that Milton’s mind focused on the optimistic tone that had characterised the meeting of the South African Cricket Association. He was pleased to announce that it was the first time representatives from the two sister states, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, had attended. Gustav Fichardt, who stressed the Orange Free State’s desire to form a union on the basis of other district unions, was a prominent businessman and fine cricketer who had been praised by Read’s

⁴²² *Cape Times*, 24 March 1892

⁴²³ Report in *Cricket Field* reproduced in *Cape Times*, 2 February 1894

⁴²⁴ A.E. Knight, ‘The Complete Cricketer’ (1906) in John Bright-Holmes, *The Joy of Cricket*, London, 1984, 241

team after compiling an unbeaten 54 against the tourists at the Ramblers Club, Bloemfontein.⁴²⁵

The next day, fortunes changed dramatically for Milton. When he, Cadwallader and others accompanied the English team on the tug to the steamer, they discovered the captain and manager, Read and Ash would be arriving late on a rowing boat. Unfortunately, as many feared, the tour had turned out to be a financial failure. It culminated in Writs of Arrest being issued against the two Englishmen for the recovery of £1 000 that had been advanced by J.D. Logan to assist the team in completing their matches. Logan, who had entertained Ash during the rugby tour in 1891, would win his case.

Financial problems surrounding the tour contributed to an unpleasant period for Milton. At a meeting of the Western Province Cricket Union, clubs complained that they were not given a voice with regard to the costs involved in hosting Read's team. They declined any responsibility for expenses incurred, notably 'a large amount for rent of the ground charged by the Western Province CC'. The grievances expressed had repercussions for Milton as the *Cape Times* vented its wrath on being unable to gain entry to the meeting. The newspaper chose to investigate the way cricket was being administered. It referred to 'some little friction in the Western Province Cricket Union arising again out of some disagreement with the Western Province CC who possess a distinct preponderance of voting power on the Union which is therefore a union in name only'. There were further complaints that all Union meetings were held in camera and there needed to be a fairer distribution of club representation. The report stated that there was no need for the Western Province CC to be greedy over voting power and that it was encouraging to know the Cape Town CC would be seeking a more equal distribution of representation. It concluded: 'The Province club will take a step forward if it works in the same direction instead of attempting to wreck what may be made a very useful organisation'.⁴²⁶

The following day, 'Long Stop' submitted a damning indictment of Western Province CC strategy:

Everything considered there can be no question that the Union is, as a union, a complete fiasco. It is really the old thing over again for the Western Province CC cannot be outvoted. Worked on equitable representation from all clubs wishing to join as at Kimberley and elsewhere – the Union – which it would be then – must succeed; but at present it appears to be the strengthening power of our strongest club. That club has never shown a desire to be the nursing club it should, and in the Cape under notice we have it further exemplified that it has no intention of becoming so.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ *Cape Times*, 24 March 1892

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, 13 October 1892

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, 14 October 1892

Four days later, on 18 October 1892, it was announced that Milton had resigned his position as president. There was sympathy for him in that he and Hearne – both Western Province CC – had taken on the task of organising the tour and the club had gone to some expense in ensuring the best possible setting for the matches against Read’s team. Committee colleagues therefore rallied around Milton, encouraging him to agree to continue. The episode slipped by without further fuss as attention was focused on fielding a Western Province team to play in the Currie Cup tournament at Kimberley in November. The usual financial concerns disappeared when J.D. Logan sent a telegram to say any deficiency on expenses for the Currie Cup tournament would be met. A great deal more could be read into this display of generosity in that Sivewright had recently granted Logan a contract to supply refreshments on the entire Cape railway network for eighteen years, without inviting tenders and for a ridiculously low payment. Sivewright, who had only just been knighted as a consequence of taking the railway line into the Transvaal,⁴²⁸ was overseas. So was Rhodes, forcing liberal cabinet ministers, John X. Merriman, Jacobus W. Sauer and James Rose Innes, to wait patiently for ‘the inevitable row’.⁴²⁹

In the mean time, Milton declared himself unavailable for the cricket tournament and awaited news from Rhodes. Sivewright’s dealings would be exposed when ‘he came under definite suspicion in late 1892’. Robert I. Rotberg described Sivewright as ‘a crook’ who had seriously abused earlier public works positions: ‘As head of the Johannesburg Water Company he had, for a handsome profit, sold its water rights which he had earlier acquired for himself [and] as manager of the Johannesburg Gas Company in 1890, he had signed a contract in exchange for a healthy bribe’.⁴³⁰ The ‘Logan Affair’ was serious enough to lead to the break-up of the government, but Rhodes was able to successfully manipulate the indecisiveness of his opponents and resume power with a reconstructed cabinet. In the build-up to this happening, Rhodes reaffirmed and reinforced his relationship with the Bond by consulting with Hofmeyr and, at one stage, deciding to ask J.H. de Villiers, the Chief Justice, to head the new government. Then, crucially and ‘apparently accidentally’, Rhodes met Sprigg on the steps of parliament and formed ‘a deal which superseded that which was developing with de Villiers’.⁴³¹ Ties were broken with the liberal element of the former ministry, leaving Merriman to lament the ‘Rhodes-Hofmeyr way of doing business – the

⁴²⁸ The *Cape Times*, 9 December 1891, described it as the ‘finest bit of diplomatic work in South Africa in recent years’

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, 373

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*, 372

⁴³¹ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 374

lobbying, the intrigue and utterly cynical disregard of anything approaching moral principle in the conduct of public affairs'.⁴³²

On the cricket field at Kimberley, the two professionals, Frank Hearne and Charles Mills, were able to keep a depleted Western Province on track in their Currie Cup campaign. They defeated the Transvaal by 91 runs in their opening encounter which earned them the right to challenge the holders, Kimberley. This match was duly won by 109 runs with the two professionals, Frank Hearne (5 for 47) and Charles Mills (4 for 37), bowling the hosts out for 130 in their second innings. Hearne (who struck 102 against Transvaal and 96 against Kimberley) and Charles Mills (who claimed 17 wickets for 220 runs in the two matches) were undoubtedly the key to their team's success in winning the tournament.

Between matches, Cadwallader arranged a meeting of the South African Cricket Association at the Central Hotel, Kimberley, and placed an overseas tour on the agenda. It was an issue that had been spoken about for some years, with the argument being put forward that if the Parsees could visit England (in 1886 and 1888) then there appeared to be no reason why South Africa could not do the same. Cadwallader had met Bowden in Mozambique – where the erstwhile cricketer swept dramatically into a village at the head of a convoy of seventy naked carriers – but the overriding plan broke down with the cricketer's death following a match at Umtali in Manicaland. It did not affect Cadwallader's determination to go ahead with a tour, even though the 'idea was received with the usual ridicule' at the Kimberley meeting. The secretary was not perturbed as he had prepared meticulously and, with the support of the South African wicket-keeper/batsman, Ernest 'Barberton' Halliwell, he presented a strong argument for the venture. Griqualand West's representative, Irvine Grimmer, who chaired the meeting, expressed his interest and it was agreed that Cadwallader should be empowered to liaise officially with authorities in England in order to arrange a tour in 1894.⁴³³ This would prove fairly straight-forward for the latter who had already communicated with Charles Alcock.

A more difficult task for him was to tackle opposition to the tour on the part of the Western Province Cricket Union. Milton influenced the Cape's objection to the venture with an argument that 'it was premature and that South African cricket was not strong enough at present to cope with the best English players on their grounds'. He distrusted Cadwallader and was almost certainly of the opinion that if work commitments precluded his involvement in organising the visit, then he did not want his Union to be part of it. The Western Province Cricket Union backed Milton at a meeting in October 1893, despite Alcock's promise that 'any South African team would receive a warm welcome from English cricketers and that

⁴³² Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners*, 183

⁴³³ *Cape Times*, 20 November 1892

everything reasonable would be done to promote the success of a tour'.⁴³⁴ Milton, under pressure at work and about to resign as president, relied on Lynedoch Graham to argue his case and push through a resolution that the Union 'will not have anything to do with the tour'.

Herbert Castens showed some anxiety as to the strong line being taken and moved an amendment that 'if other unions should choose to go "Home", the Western Province Cricket Union would not in any way raise any obstacle to such an undertaking'.⁴³⁵ Graham accepted the amendment as a rider to his resolution. Cadwallader was not at this stage bothered by the attitude of the Cape Town elite. He knew there was interest in the town and brushed off the Western Province Cricket Union's action as 'generally expected'. He thought Graham's arguments 'had little bearing upon the matter under discussion', adding 'most if not all the other centres have expressed themselves favourable to the project, and in Johannesburg cricketers are red-hot on the subject'. Cadwallader cursed 'the inaction of the South African Cricket Association' – he thought it 'may just as well be ditched'⁴³⁶ – but working in his favour was the fact that he was a journalist with a leading newspaper. He was able to facilitate administrative arrangements and counter criticism of the way the game was run.

Cadwallader did not indicate that he was giving thought to nominating a black player for the overseas trip. An ambiguous promise had been made to Charles Alcock that he would collect 'a side which will be very nearly, if not quite representative of South African cricket'.⁴³⁷ He also wrote enthusiastically about the ability of Malay cricketers and was very much taken by the pace bowling of 'Krom' Hendricks against W.W. Read's English team in early 1892. Cadwallader was particularly encouraged by a comment made by Read: 'If you send a team, send Hendricks; he will be a drawcard and is to my mind the Spofforth of South Africa'.⁴³⁸ The South African Cricket Association meeting in November had been too early to raise such a sensitive issue, although it cannot be discounted that Milton's early reservations about the tour were linked to fears that Hendricks was a fine player, good enough to be selected. The possibility of political interference affected both sides: 'It was,' wrote Parry, 'over the role of Malay and Coloured cricketers in the broader social context that a key battle in the ongoing war over South African identity was specifically fought.'⁴³⁹

If Cadwallader required further evidence of Hendricks's ability, this was provided in matches played towards the end of 1892. In late December, Hendricks was invited by the

⁴³⁴ Cape Argus, 3 October 1893

⁴³⁵ Cape Times, 17 October 1893

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 18 October 1893

⁴³⁷ Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game, March 1893

⁴³⁸ Cape Times, 11 January 1894.

⁴³⁹ Richard Parry, 'Black Cricketers, White Politicians and the Origins of Segregation at the Cape to 1894' in *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009, 22

Malays to play against a European XI in preparation for an inter-town tournament. The Malay XI scored 114 (Ariefdien 34), a score that a team selected largely from the Cape Town CC, would have expected to overtake. It was not to be: Hendricks (5 for 47) and Ariefdien (4 for 42) bowled unchanged in a fiery display that presented problems for the likes of Louis Smuts, Arthur Seccull, JB Munnik and John Heynemann. It was left to the professional, Charles Mills (61), to fight a lone battle in helping his side reach 101.

Two days later, Cadwallader joined the largest attendance that had been seen at a cricket match in the Western Province that season. It was the beginning of the Malay tournament at the Cape Town CC ground and the home team's fast bowling duo was devastating as they scythed through the Kimberley batting line-up. The talented Robert Grendon (0 and 6) made no impression as Kimberley (33 and 81) went down by eight wickets to the Capetonians (59 and 59-2). Only Arrien Hendricks 10* and 22 was able to withstand the onslaught of Hendricks (5 for 9 and 6 for 36) and Ariefdien (5 for 18 and 4 for 42). A day or two later, Cadwallader marvelled at Hendricks's speed and stamina as the paceman accounted for Johannesburg with a match analysis of 12 for 88. A cricketer who would impress English audiences had been discovered but Cadwallader's initial enthusiasm was tempered by concern as to how best to convey his plan to the cricket authorities.

Few whites would have thought along similar lines to Cadwallader. There was a general belief that the Malay community had some way to go before they could be considered to be on an equal footing with white cricket. There was no suggestion that any player of colour was in line for representative selection. Names such as Grendon, Ariefdien and Hendricks were well-known but they were prevented from playing against the premier clubs or in showpiece representative matches such as Mother Country versus Colonial-born. Hendricks had applied to become a member of the Cape Town CC but had been turned down. The leading white clubs used the game to divide society.

When Rhodes and Hofmeyr came out in support of segregation in the 1890s cricket was soon linked with official racist ideologies and policies. Hofmeyr had for some time during 1892 and 1893 been preoccupied with the Franchise Bill that initially 'aimed at a direct restriction of the non-tribal African vote' but he would go on to question 'whether coloureds were to be embraced as part of the "South African" dominant grouping or would join Africans in the political cold'.⁴⁴⁰ The debate was 'long and strenuous' but thanks to co-operation between Rhodes and Hofmeyr, the Bill received the support of the Cape parliament and, significantly, the press in England who saw it as 'a matter of policy' rather than a race question. Hofmeyr's remarks on the debate summarised the direction he intended taking:

⁴⁴⁰ Parry, 'Black Cricketers, White Politicians and the Origins of Segregation', 40-41

... the Bill would be the precursor of a better understanding between the two great European races, and that then they could talk of a United South Africa in its best sense. The English colonist and the Dutch colonist ... were equally faithful in their allegiance to the Crown ... There was only one other matter, which created a little suspicion in the minds of the Dutch Afrianders. They feared that some Englishmen in the Colony were not clear upon the line of demarcation between barbarism and civilisation, as existed in India, in Natal, and other countries where the line of demarcation was drawn between the coloured barbarian and the civilised European.⁴⁴¹

Any attempt by Cadwallader to include a player of colour in a 'national' cricket side to tour overseas would obviously fly in the face of political developments taking place. The issue would not escape the attention of the politicians who were involved in the game, many elected to official club positions. Hofmeyr led the Cape Town CC with Sivewright his active deputy. James Rose Innes and JW Sauer were the respective presidents of Mowbray and Wynberg Rovers, with the latter club also boasting Sir Henry de Villiers as its patron and Milton as a vice-president. J.C. Molteno had an obvious interest in the Molteno CC of which his son, JT, was president. Even a small club such as Caxton CC managed to attract three parliamentarians as vice-presidents (T.E. Fuller, A. Ohlsson and T.J. O'Reilly), a role in which Rhodes would later serve the Western Province CC. The High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, was also involved, having accepted the position of president of the South African Cricket Association'.

Hofmeyr was arguably the power behind the Cape government and Western Province cricket. He had been instrumental in setting up Rhodes and Milton in their respective positions of power and, no doubt, found it convenient that they should 'share' the same office. Hofmeyr communicated regularly with Rhodes: they were 'early risers, and it was the usual thing for the two men, often joined by Mr Sivewright, to take a ride on horseback together before the town was astir'. At a time when the composition of the team for the overseas cricket tour was receiving prominent press coverage, it was decided that Milton should return to the fray and thereafter play a lead role in structuring the direction that the country's sport would take.

Hofmeyr might have been in the background but there is little doubt that he wielded great power in the fateful decisions that were made in the 1890s.

⁴⁴¹ J.H Hofmeyr with F. W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, Cape Town, 1913, 436-37

Chapter 6:

No 'boomerangs during the luncheon interval': Milton, Hendricks and the colour question

Ramachandra Guha's opening chapter in *A Corner of a Foreign Field* refers to the 'Parade' – or 'Maidan' as locals termed it – as 'an expanse of green ground at the southern end of the island of Bombay'. From the early 1830s, Parsi boys would watch and imitate the cricket played by European soldiers. Unfortunately, mishaps occurred and 'a flying ball once struck the wife of a European constable out on her evening walk. The incident caused the Parsi cricketers to be temporarily banned from the Maidan.' It was a harsh punishment in that the narrow sliver of land 'was the only place to which they could go' for exercise and recreation.⁴⁴²

In Cape Town, youngsters also required space to play their cricket and it was there in 1873 that reference was made to the 'cricketing glories of the Parade'. Her Majesty's servants would fire 'blank cartridge in the mornings at the Masonic Hotel, and round shot at one another in the shape of cricket balls in the evenings'. And, said the writer, 'skirmishing round their serried ranks on every patch of green [were] crowds of small boys of all colours playing cricket.'⁴⁴³ The Parade provided much enjoyment but the authorities were conscious of mounting opposition to the games being played. Complaints were voiced such as that of 'Vally' who wrote to the *Cape Times* in 1884:

I have no wish to interfere with certain 'darkeys' who play what they call 'cricket' on the Parade every afternoon; but I would be glad if some arrangement could be made whereby passers-by – and especially ladies – would be protected. No matter how many or who passes, they stop for no-one ...⁴⁴⁴

In no time restrictions were placed as to where games could be played. By 1890 the 'cricketing glories of the Parade' were over because ball-playing was prohibited altogether. An article in the *Cape Argus* commented:

The stern Town Council has decreed that little boys shan't play cricket or football on the Parade any longer. The old gentleman with the crutches and the 'bell topper' may now hobble across without fear of his 'bell topper' coming to grief, but possibly some of the youthful spirits of Cape Town, who have hitherto found cricket and football on the Parade an outlet for

⁴⁴² Ramachandra Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of British Sport*, London, 2002, 12-14

⁴⁴³ 'An Old Peripatetic', 'Cape Town and Cricket' in *Cape Monthly*, Vol. VI, 1873, 162-63

⁴⁴⁴ *Cape Times*, 29 January 1884

their exuberance, may now seek other means for letting off steam even more objectionable to the City Fathers. It is an unwise thing to place too heavy restrictions on youthful sports.⁴⁴⁵

The situation was a little more complicated than simply preventing children from having fun. The Star of South Africa and other clubs made use of the space for practices and were targeted by Councillor Woodhead who referred to them as ‘great hulking fellows who ought to be at work’. Attitudes were hardening as cricket became part of the discriminatory tendency of Empire. The Council led the way with pressure being placed on the clubs to demonstrate where they stood with regard to the colour question. It was well-known that the Western Province and Cape Town cricket clubs allowed Malay cricketers to play on their respective grounds at Newlands. It brought in much-needed revenue as the matches attracted large crowds. An article on the January 1890 tournament, for example, referred to ‘the whole Malay population [having] deserted Cape Town for the sylvan pasture’ and that ‘from an early hour the road was alive with a string of vehicles heavily freighted with Malays [as] every conveyance was pressed into the service’. Military bands attended the matches and a further attraction was lent by ‘the arrival of many of the elite of the white population, who merged themselves upon the pavilion stand, the quiet refined costumes of the ladies throwing into greater relief the wealth of colour in the other portions of the ground’.⁴⁴⁶

Sport in the old Cape liberal context ‘helped define communities, facilitated their interaction and promoted a common set of values’.⁴⁴⁷ There was white support for ‘Malay’ cricket, especially amongst new arrivals as black sportsmen were the subject of intense curiosity in a country such as Britain. Of particular interest in 1888/89, for example, was the New Zealand ‘Native’ rugby team that toured Britain ‘under the scrutiny of an imperial elite’.⁴⁴⁸ That the Rugby Football Union should entertain a largely Maori side prompted the Western Province Rugby Football Union to pursue the possibility of communicating with the New Zealanders prior to their departure from Britain. It was determined upon the motion of George Richards: ‘That a challenge should be sent on board the steamer for the Maori team to play a match or matches in Cape Town, the necessary arrangements to be left to the

⁴⁴⁵ *Cape Argus*, 1 November 1890

⁴⁴⁶ *Cape Times Weekly*, 5 January 1890

⁴⁴⁷ Richard Parry, ‘Origins of Segregation at the Cape’ in *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience, 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009), 37

⁴⁴⁸ Greg Ryan, *Forerunners of the All Blacks: The 1888-89 New Zealand Native Football Team in Britain, Australia and New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1993, 10

committee'.⁴⁴⁹ Unfortunately, there was no further progress in the matter, one suspects because Shepstone Giddy stood down as president and was replaced by Billy Simkins.

The Malay and Coloured people had for a long time been part of the local cricket scene and early newspapers refer to their involvement in cricket every week throughout the summers. The *Norsemen* passengers were well beaten when they stopped over in 1871 to play a Coloured XI at Southey's Field. In 1876 it was reported that 'our Malay population has its knights of the willow also and some are very dexterous ... we should be glad to hear of a match being arranged between Christian and Malay'.⁴⁵⁰ Eight years later – in 1884 – it was observed that 'a large crowd of coloured persons' congregated on the Green Point Common on Sundays 'where they indulge from sunrise to sunset in the game of cricket'.⁴⁵¹ And, when Malay cricketers were allowed the use of Newlands in 1890, it was noted that the 'the followers of the Prophet entered into the game with much zest'.⁴⁵²

Cape 'liberalism' was 'always a minority creed', says Shula Marks, 'and a rather frail one at that'. It was increasingly challenged, largely because of white alarm at the influx of 'migrant workers into the colony's towns' and the influences of 'Social Darwinism' and 'the strains of rapid social transformation'. By this time 'many of the westernised and assimilated Africans and coloureds' were beginning 'to find the foundations of their world shaken, their dreams of incorporation into a common colonial society betrayed'.⁴⁵³

Cricket was inevitably affected. An important issue arose when the Malays asked their white counterparts to assist them in preparing for an inter-town tournament in mid-February 1891. They asked Cape Town CC for a match. Contact was made with John Heyneman who, in turn, told a club meeting that he thought 'it would be only sportsmanlike to accept their wishes and arrange a game'.⁴⁵⁴ The committee, chaired by Joe Lodge, acceded to the request, only for the hierarchy – Hofmeyr and Sievwright – to veto the arrangement.

Four days after the meeting was held, the *Cape Times* announced:

... we are authorised to state that the club have declined to play their team against the Malays
.... To us there appears no reason whatever why the well-behaved cricketers of the Malay community should not be occasionally met by European exponents of the British national game, which our coloured neighbours show such a commendable desire to emulate. The

⁴⁴⁹ *Cape Times*, 10 April 1889

⁴⁵⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 20 January 1876

⁴⁵¹ *Cape Argus*, 7 March 1884

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, 14 November 1890

⁴⁵³ Shula Marks, 'Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa 1880-1899' in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 144

⁴⁵⁴ *Cape Times*, 12 February 1891

English amateurs heartily welcome the Parsees; the Eclectic Club, Kimberley, have played a couple of fixtures with the Malays of the Diamond-fields and in Natal the natives play European colonists.⁴⁵⁵

The Cape Town CC provided the first indication of an ‘official’ line being taken on mixed cricket. White players reacted by assembling a strong ‘European XI’ to play against the Malay team on the arranged date. They were not disappointed as the first of a series of matches between the two teams began sensationally when the Malay opening bowler, E. Ariefden who delivered ‘a very fast ball with an apparently natural break from the off’, claimed ‘the hat or for him the fez trick against three formidable batsmen’. The match report recorded ‘Ariefden yorked [Alf] Richards with the first ball of his third over. He then got a fast ball to break in a surprising manner on to [Ned] Steytler’s bails and third ball clean bowled Captain Townley Wright.’⁴⁵⁶ It required the skill and experience of Frank Hearne to guide the Europeans to victory.

The inter-racial fixtures were popular and the Malay community attended in considerable numbers. Milton did not take part although a number of notable white players were prepared to play including a strong nucleus from the Cape Town CC. Press reports were detailed and commented on the way the Malay cricketers conducted themselves. In patronising fashion, they praised Malays for being ‘extremely orderly’ and noted that Hearne ‘has been giving our Musulman neighbours a few hints on the game of cricket, from which it is clear they have profited to judge by the knowledge and exemplary behaviour they showed’. It was also observed that the Malay cricketers were displaying ‘many points which even members of the small European clubs would do well to study’.⁴⁵⁷

One of the players who participated in the matches, Edward ‘Ned’ Steytler, succeeded Milton as president of the Western Province Cricket Union in October 1893. He inherited the tour issue which had reached an unsatisfactory stage. His committee adopted the view that the overseas side could not be truly representative if they ‘had nothing to do with it’⁴⁵⁸ but they did not foresee the excitement that the tour aroused throughout the southern African region. Cadwallader furnished a flow of positive articles through his columns that claimed ‘almost every leading cricketer in the country outside the Western Province has indicated his readiness to join the team’.⁴⁵⁹ Steytler and his committee were not bothered until news was

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 15 February 1891

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 25 February 1891

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 23 March 1891

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 17 October 1893

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 11 November 1893.

received that a leading Western Province ‘sportsman’ – later identified as J.D. Logan – had agreed to a £500 guarantee; that Abe Bailey was aiming at raising £1 000, and that Natal, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley had promised contributions. The required amount of £3 000 did not appear too distant.

Cadwallader sensed the momentum was with him. He was also aware that Milton was committed to maintaining the Prime Minister’s office as Rhodes had adjourned the Cape’s Legislative Assembly and travelled north. A war was looming in Matabeleland and Rhodes made himself deliberately ‘inaccessible’ to the British until the conflict began. On 1 November – three days before Bulawayo fell to Jameson’s troops – Cadwallader initiated controversy with guns blazing by nominating the sixteen players he thought should tour England. He chose Hendricks as one of a quartet to spearhead the bowling and then followed up his shadow selection by suggesting ‘the inclusion of a Malay may cause rabid colonists to change colour’.

A few days later, Cadwallader published a letter that called on players to avail themselves for the tour.⁴⁶⁰ The Western Province Cricket Union was in an invidious position, more so in early 1894 when Cadwallader asked the major centres to consider likely candidates and submit nominations from their respective areas to the national selection committee. They were also asked to choose the side that they believed would be best equipped to represent South Africa on an overseas tour. In the weeks that followed there was much discussion as to the composition of the team while Cadwallader maintained ‘constant communication’ with Alcock and ‘hoped that any player selected to represent South Africa will not be prevented from any cause from playing’.⁴⁶¹

Steytler realised that he ought to be more assertive and when pressed at a meeting of the Western Province Cricket Union, he indicated that his committee did not object to Cape Town’s players declaring their availability for selection. If anything, it came as a relief for the Union to become part of the project, although they did enter on the proviso that their involvement was dependent on the guarantees being secured. To maximise the publicity surrounding their entrance, Rhodes was drawn into chairing the first public meeting at the Commercial Exchange in early February 1894. The prime minister had recently returned to a ‘hero’s welcome’,⁴⁶² having added the Ndebele stronghold to the Empire, and was probably not fully acquainted with tour developments. He thought the overseas trip was ‘a plucky thing to undertake’ but warned organisers against favouritism and to ‘take the best team

⁴⁶⁰ *Cape Times*, 1 and 11 November 1893.

⁴⁶¹ *The Press*, 9 January 1894. Alcock, the secretary of the Surrey County Cricket Club, arranged the tour fixtures in England.

⁴⁶² Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, New York, 1988, 445

whoever they were and wherever they might reside'.⁴⁶³ The statement might easily have been misinterpreted but Rhodes of course was hoping the selectors would cast their net as far afield as the land that would become officially known as Rhodesia.

For several weeks speculation centred on whether Hendricks should be chosen. Cadwallader, who had a dual responsibility as a cricket writer and secretary of the South African Cricket Association, boldly promoted the player's inclusion. Those in favour of selecting Hendricks were also able to point out that he was easily the fastest bowler in South Africa. The only player who rivalled him in terms of pace was Natal's Peter Madden who had been labelled a 'chucker' and was not considered for the tour. E.J.L. Platnauer, the sports editor of the *Standard and Diggers News*, was persuaded that Hendricks was essential to the team's success. Interest in the fast bowler grew quickly and in January 1894, Reuters carried a message which was published in newspapers throughout South Africa: 'With regard to the proposed cricketing team for England, the [Transvaal] papers strongly advocate the inclusion of Hendricks, the Malay fast bowler, in the team.'⁴⁶⁴

It was the late intrusion of the Western Province Cricket Union that placed a different complexion on the tour. They were the provincial body that would be called upon to nominate Hendricks, a step that they were unlikely to take. There were references to the fact that players might object to travelling with 'a coloured man on equal social terms' and that 'men declared they would rather stay than go with him'.⁴⁶⁵ Cadwallader reacted dramatically to growing concern by suggesting through the *Cape Times* that Hendricks could be taken as 'baggage-man'. In that role, Cadwallader argued, 'there could be absolutely no objection to Hendricks on account of his being a Malay'. What might be interpreted as an unfortunate suggestion seemed to be a calculated attempt to bring the issue into the open. Cadwallader wanted Hendricks to be given a public hearing, an assertion that is supported by a prompt – and possibly pre-arranged – response in the next edition of the daily newspaper. Hendricks was insistent on disclaiming connections with the Malay community, pointing out, 'My father was born of Dutch parents in Cape Town and my mother hails from St Helena'. He also objected to the fact that no one had ascertained his views on the subject of a cricket tour and he stated unequivocally that he would not think of going in the capacity of baggage-man.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ *The Press*, 12 February 1894; *Cape Times*, 9 February 1894; *Cape Argus*, 10 February 1894

⁴⁶⁴ *Cape Times*, 11 January 1894

⁴⁶⁵ *The Press*, 29 January 1894. In the *Standard and Diggers News*, 8 November 1897, Maynard Nash referred to objections to the inclusion of a 'prominent coloured player' [presumably Hendricks] but none of the players ultimately chosen were quoted as voicing a complaint prior to selection. See also Bernard Hall, 'A.B. Tancred and his Brothers' in *Empire and Cricket*.

⁴⁶⁶ *Cape Times*, 11 and 12 January 1894

The following day, a letter from a 'Coloured Cricketer' served to explain the 'difference between a Malay and a coloured man ... not one coloured man out of six would allow another to call him a Malay to his face'. Important points were being conveyed to everyone involved in the cricket tour. Cricket historian, Richard Parry, noted Hendricks's 'desire to distance himself from the descendants of Muslim slaves who had arrived in the Batavian era in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and identify himself with the "Christian" white ruling class'. These were concepts of civilisation that offered opportunities for social improvement which appealed to Hendricks, despite concerns that 'the Cape's social and political landscape under the Rhodes government was undergoing a period of rapid and fundamental social and cultural as well as economic change'.⁴⁶⁷ It would be Milton's task to ensure the imposition of the segregationist policy was not obstructed by the individual advancement of a coloured cricketer.

Milton was in the process of setting up the Prime Minister's Department of which he would be appointed permanent head from April 1894. He was also immersed in work that Rhodes assigned him with regard to settling prickly issues in 'native affairs'.⁴⁶⁸ It was 'impossible for him to go to England', although Finlason pointed out somewhat tongue-in-cheek: 'He's as fit as a fiddle now, and oils his bat every morning though there are months of dreary football yet, before the delightful wickets are stuck up at Newlands.'⁴⁶⁹

It was the Hendricks question that saw him return to the fore as chairman of the Western Province Cricket Union selection committee. He was thus responsible for a final decision on the nomination of the cricketer; a matter he discussed with Rhodes who later claimed, 'They wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England ... but I would not have it. They would have expected him to throw boomerangs during the luncheon interval'.⁴⁷⁰ It came as a subtle reference to the 1868 tour by Aborigine players. Referred to as 'darkies' and viewed as 'curiosities', the Aborigine cricketers were required to provide boomerang and spear-throwing demonstrations in addition to playing cricket.⁴⁷¹ Rhodes thus shifted the blame for the non-selection of Hendricks from South Africa to Britain.

⁴⁶⁷ Richard Parry, 'The Real Mr Hendricks' in *Cricket Lore*, 2, 4, 16

⁴⁶⁸ The additional responsibility did bring its rewards and his salary of £37 10/- per annum as a secretary in 1885 had increased to £350 (plus an allowance of £37) as a first-class clerk and secretary of the tender board in 1890, before reaching £600 (plus £100 allowance) in 1894 when he became Chief Clerk and Chief Accountant in the Colonial Secretary's Office. The Civil Service List recorded that the additional salary as private secretary to Rhodes was 'not noted'

⁴⁶⁹ *South African Review*, 11 August 1893

⁴⁷⁰ Pelham Warner, *Lord's 1787-1945*, London, 1951, 60

⁴⁷¹ Ashley Mallett, *The Black Lords of Summer: The Story of the 1868 Aboriginal Tour of England and Beyond*, St Lucia, 2002, 89-101

Rhodes's decision to reject Hendricks was discreetly communicated to the Western Province Cricket Union in order to prevent the prime minister from being implicated in any further discussions on the subject.⁴⁷² Milton, of course, knew that the rejection of Hendricks was a great deal more complex. The Cape was shifting its colonial policy from a strategy of amalgamation to one of segregation. The movement culminated in the 'momentous and complicated' Glen Grey Act of 1894 which regulated the lives of black dwellers in the Eastern Cape. Rotberg said it had been 'conceived by Rhodes ... drafted by Milton', and that when it was forced through the House of Assembly, there were just minor alterations with Rhodes 'largely keeping his (or Milton's) phrases intact'. At the same time, Rotberg notes there had been 'extensive consultations' with Hofmeyr, an assertion supported by the latter's biographer who goes so far as to state 'the ideals embodied are those of Hofmeyr rather than those of Rhodes'. The Glen Grey Act therefore appears to have evolved as a collective effort, one that promised 'to extend the Cape's net of ever-tightening segregation'.⁴⁷³ It reduced the size of properties owned by blacks and provided a means through which they would work for whites, thereby fostering an increased labour force for the mines. In addition, the existing African smallholders were unable to further develop their relatively successful operations and be able to compete with white producers. According to Saul Dubow, the Act was 'freighted with political symbolism ... a decisive native policy that was broadly attractive to whites would facilitate the creation of a united white nation capable of expanding ...'.⁴⁷⁴ Rhodes presented it as 'a Native Bill for Africa' and, despite efforts from J.W. Sauer, John X. Merriman and James Rose Innes amongst others to attack 'both the principle and the details of the bill', the prime minister carried the day'.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² His involvement in the affair was not made public knowledge until Pelham Warner, a former England cricket captain, wrote about it some fifty years later in his book, *Lord's 1787-1945*.

⁴⁷³ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 476-77; J.H Hofmeyr with F. W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, Cape Town, 1913, 469; Richard Parry, 'In a Sense Citizens, But not altogether Citizens ...: Rhodes, Race and the Ideology of Segregation at the Cape in the late nineteenth century' in *CAAS Newsletter*, University of Saskatchewan, 1983, 384; Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Randlords* (New York, 1986), 148

⁴⁷⁴ Saul Dubow, 'South Africa and South Africans: Nationality, Belonging, Citizenship' in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*, Cambridge, 2011, 32

⁴⁷⁵ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 467-77. Rotberg noted: 'It had to be crafted with unusual care if it were to satisfy the full range of [Rhodes's] supporters, especially the Bond, serve his own interests as a political and industrial leader, exemplify his philosophical approach to matters African, and prove roughly congruent with what he was doing and expected to do beyond the Limpopo.'

‘Segregation’ – a word seemingly ‘only coming into use in the first years of the twentieth century’ – was designed to include the ‘coloured’ communities of the Cape.⁴⁷⁶ Of particular relevance to the debate taking place on Hendricks was the concern on another front that a Muslim teacher, Ahmed Effendi, would benefit from a constitutional peculiarity and be elected a member of the House of Assembly. Rhodes led a move to amend the system whereby Malays in Cape Town could vote cumulatively. The system, known as ‘plumping’ gave coloured people four votes, which could be used for any four candidates, or, could be used to support one candidate. It presented an untenable situation to those in power and James Molteno reminded the House of Assembly, ‘The Malays and people of that class were ... invading the town, and occupying the streets not occupied by them in times gone by ...’⁴⁷⁷

Rhodes was successful in his bid to facilitate an amendment although it was unlikely that it would have made a difference as Effendi was well beaten in the election.⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, a point had been made and Rhodes was not prepared to weaken his stance over Hendricks. ‘In this climate,’ wrote Parry, ‘the idea of a black player representing South Africa was politically dangerous and, for a large proportion of the white population, emotionally intolerable.’⁴⁷⁹ A letter to *The Star* stated that ‘any attempt to include a coloured player will be resented by the vast majority of South Africans ... I look forward to a friendly tussle between the English and South African cousins and, if we cannot do better, we can at least take a licking like white men’.⁴⁸⁰

Despite the efforts of Milton and the Western Province Cricket Union, interest in Hendricks would not go away. Disparaging comments were made by A.B. Tancred in the *Standard and Diggers News* to the effect that it would be ‘impolitic, not to say intolerable’ to take Hendricks as an equal.⁴⁸¹ The remarks upset the cricketer who sought help from Cadwallader in his capacity as hon. secretary of the South African Cricket Association. In what was becoming a most sensitive issue, Cadwallader advised Hendricks to back down for the sake of gaining acceptance. It was a questionable approach but Cadwallader appeared to be concerned with the bigger picture and the importance of taking Hendricks. A letter referring to the cricketer’s change of mind was forwarded to the *Standard and Diggers News*.

⁴⁷⁶ Shula Marks notes in ‘Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa’, 144, that ‘segregationist ideology’ was ‘relatively undeveloped as a systematic political doctrine before 1914’, with the word (‘segregation’) ‘deriving from the American South’.

⁴⁷⁷ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 458-59

⁴⁷⁸ He lost the vote by 2356 to 699

⁴⁷⁹ Parry, ‘The Real Mr Hendricks’, 18

⁴⁸⁰ *The Star*, 16 January 1894

⁴⁸¹ *Standard and Diggers News*, 14 February 1894

Parry points to the capitulation over the ‘baggage-man and servant’ issue as having a deeper significance than simply securing a place in a cricket side. Hendricks was making ‘an attempt to come to grips with the changing realities of the situation’. The unfolding tragedy for the cricketer ‘was a microcosm of the tragedy of thousands of black South Africans at the time. They believed the ideology; that their behaviour and attainments would allow them to pass across class lines. Cricket and Christianity were the passports to a better life on the other side of the divide’.⁴⁸²

Shortly before the selection committee met, Cadwallader sent out a carefully-considered but now desperate letter through the *Cape Times*:

I learn from Hendricks who seems to be an unassuming man, and bears an excellent character for a number of years from his employers, that he would be pleased to go to England if required, on certain low terms for services rendered, and would not for a moment expect to be “classed” with the rest of the team. Hearne and Mills speak of Hendricks as quite the best fast bowler in the country and Mr George Lohmann (he is an amateur with us here) says (this has reached England first from Lohmann himself): “By all means take him Home” (for various reasons). Strong advices have come from other parts of the country in favour of this man’s inclusion, but that question is, of course, a South African one for the consideration of the Final Selection Committee, and approval of guarantors ...⁴⁸³

By drawing on the respected opinions of the two English professionals in Cape Town, Frank Hearne and Charles Mills, as well as the support of the great English bowler, George Lohmann, Cadwallader was able to present a strong case in favour of Hendricks. It placed the Western Province Cricket Union in an embarrassing situation and almost certainly impacted negatively on Cadwallader’s chance to manage the touring side, a position he dearly coveted and seemed certain to fill.

Milton took it upon himself to contact the other cricket bodies in preparation for the final selection meeting. The one centre that he was wary about was the Transvaal. They were a strong, although not necessarily united committee, comprising Abe Bailey (chairman), Alfred Soames, Fred Smith, George Allsop, A.B. Tancred and Halliwell. They were restricted to nominating players from their own area but included Hendricks in their ‘fifteen’. Platnauer announced in the *Standard and Diggers News* that the selection of Hendricks was unanimous: ‘The prejudice against him disappearing on the understanding that he is willing to go as baggage-man and servant. Without a doubt the Western Province must also name him ... Hendricks is acknowledged to be a red-hot trundler, and Halliwell who will have to “stand

⁴⁸² Parry, ‘The Real Mr Hendricks’, 17

⁴⁸³ *Cape Times*, 21 February 1894. The major guarantors at that stage comprised Rhodes and Logan (each £500) as well as varying contributions from the territories with interests in the tour.

up” to him, is the gentleman who particularly insists on the inclusion of this dusky unit’.⁴⁸⁴ The *South African Review* thought it was an unusual situation in that the ‘liberal’ Cape’s ‘discriminatory attitude towards Hendricks was opposed by the Transvaal where, curiously enough the greatest antipathy to mixing with the coloured race in social life prevails’.⁴⁸⁵

The last few days before the selection meeting were hectic. Charles Finlason, who had become editor of *The Press*, entered the fray and warned that the tour was ‘not only of sporting importance but of political importance as well’. He was concerned that the Hendricks issue had obscured the fact that players of ‘Dutch descent’ were not being considered. In calling for a representative team, he optimistically noted that ‘several players who were likely to be selected were of Dutch descent’.⁴⁸⁶ He did not name anyone but might have taken into account Charles Fichardt (Orange Free State) who had ‘batted well against the formidable array of bowlers’ that the English possessed on their 1891/92 tour⁴⁸⁷; Pieter de Villiers, a highly-respected bowler,⁴⁸⁸ and Frederick Kuys, a promising young player who represented Stellenbosch before joining the ranks of the Cape Town CC.

In stressing that the tour should ‘assume its true importance as a national affair’, Finlason made a point of calling upon President Kruger to contribute towards the tour funds. He believed a donation from the leader of the Transvaal Republic would ‘show the *uitlanders* that he sympathises with their old national game ... a game which will do more to merge Boer and *uitlander* into good Transvalers than any elaborate political measure that can be devised by the *Volksraad*. Boers and *uitlanders* must not only work together, but play together ...’⁴⁸⁹ It is not known whether Kruger responded to the editorial but General Joubert was reported to have headed the list of Transvaal subscribers.⁴⁹⁰

Hopes that were held for Hendricks and for ‘Dutch’ representation were quickly dashed. The alienation of groups other than English-speaking whites was a feature of the final selection committee meeting that Milton chaired and dominated at De Aar on 25 February 1894. The men who met at the small railway siding – chosen because of its central location – included Messrs Grimmer (Griqualand West), Dunell (Eastern Province), Halliwell (Transvaal), Yule (Orange Free State) and Cadwallader (hon. secretary representing Natal).

⁴⁸⁴ *Standard and Diggers News*, 17 February 1894.

⁴⁸⁵ *South African Review*, 2 March 1894.

⁴⁸⁶ *The Press*, 5 February 1894.

⁴⁸⁷ *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*, 19 May 1892, 136.

⁴⁸⁸ Charles Finlason wrote of de Villiers (*South African Review*, 13 October 1893): ‘He has got very fat, poor boy, now, and grunts when he goes down to a ball. But he is still a fine bowler, and if he liked to practise up would be a nailing bat.’

⁴⁸⁹ *The Press*, 5 February 1894.

⁴⁹⁰ *Cape Times*, 16 February, 1894; *The Press*, 17 February 1894.

In a meeting lasting more than five hours, Milton had his way on virtually every issue, most notably in the rejection of Hendricks. In the light of the number of players who were unavailable for the tour, it was reprehensible that no place could be found for the fast bowler.

There was criticism, for example, of George Glover, who was said to throw the ball, and a sense of bitterness that Hendricks, 'pure South African as he is', being overlooked as the selectors went 'to the other extreme' and accepted Clement 'Boy' Johnson, who had only just arrived on the Rand.⁴⁹¹ One sarcastic report asked why Lohmann had not been considered because he 'has been out here longer than Johnson, and it is a sort of open secret that South Africa will be his future home'.⁴⁹²

So suspicious were people of the manner in which the whole process had been conducted that Milton was forced to release a copy of the minutes. They were sketchy and, if anything, prolonged the dispute. With regard to Hendricks, they simply read, 'Halliwell proposed Hendricks be added to list – not seconded'.⁴⁹³ According to Finlason, Hendricks 'was proposed strongly' whilst Platnauer stated that Halliwell's support for Hendricks was received 'with cold indifference that showed an appalling want of regard for the analytical components of the team'. He claimed that the Australians had failed in England during the previous year because of the absence of a fast bowler and that it would be 'absolutely criminal to send our team away without a fast bowler when we have Hendricks, standing 6 feet 2 inches high, who takes three or four strides to the wicket and sends down lightning deliveries all day without tiring'. Platnauer, like Bailey and his committee, was desperately keen for South Africa to do well. 'The coloured race,' he tried to explain, 'should be kept in their proper sphere in this country, but in this particular instance it would be a very great mistake to allow any such abstract consideration to stand in the way of success'.⁴⁹⁴

A Reuter's telegram was sent from Kimberley, stating, 'It is the almost general opinion here that the Western Province Cricket Union has, by its high-handed action regarding various matters in connection with the team for England, muddled the whole concern'.⁴⁹⁵ Further criticism came from a frustrated 'Rough Colt' in the *South African Review* who exclaimed: 'there will be some surprise at their colour, coming from South Africa, and there will be a guffaw from one end of the country to the other that they left their only coloured player behind because he was coloured!' In England, *The Cricket Field* predicted, 'It is not

⁴⁹¹ *South African Review*, 2 March 1894.

⁴⁹² *Cape Times*, 27 February 1894.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, 5 March 1894.

⁴⁹⁴ *The Press*, 27 February 1894; *Standard and Diggers News*, 27 February 1894; Parry, 'The Real Mr Hendricks', 17

⁴⁹⁵ *Cape Times*, 12 March 1894.

unlikely that our visitors will regret before the end of the season that they were so particular as to the colour of their men.’ *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game* added that Hendricks’s omission was ‘from a cricketing point of view hardly wise policy’.⁴⁹⁶

It was a demanding period for Milton. Not even the tightest of cricket contests could have prepared him for the dramatic off-the-field tension he was facing and, characteristically, he said little as he contemplated his next move. Milton liked to weigh up his options carefully and played for time over the question of tour manager. His claim that guarantors had to be consulted did not create suspicion as Cadwallader was the only candidate and it seemed a formality that he would be chosen. The other unions were not initially aware that Milton opposed the appointment and that he needed time to choose and then promote another candidate. The *Cape Argus* was the first to express its surprise that ‘Western Province’ should treat Cadwallader so shabbily as he had done more than anyone to put South African cricket on its feet. ‘It is whispered,’ said the report, ‘that the Western Province Cricket Union committee after having opposed the scheme at the outset, having got a majority of selections in the team, a Western Province man as skipper [Herbert H. Castens], and the Western Province CC colours adopted for the tour, want also to dictate about the managership and are nominating a “special” of their own fancy.’⁴⁹⁷

Cadwallader responded by publishing an open letter in which he appealed to the guarantors of the English tour not ‘to throw him overboard, after working so hard in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion’. He said that he was being overlooked in favour of Simkins ‘in consequence of the machinations of a clique about whose actions I could “a tale unfold”’. Cadwallader might well have known the full story of Rhodes’s involvement in the drama. He was probably afraid to mention the Prime Minister but spoke out bravely against Milton who, he said, had ‘privately exerted influence to induce other unions for that gentleman [Simkins] against myself’.⁴⁹⁸

The *South African Review*, a weekly publication for whom Cadwallader had begun to write, gave him their full support to the extent that it had to publicly deny he had written some of the articles. The newspaper claimed Milton and his fellow cricket authorities had insisted on the choice of manager being ‘a man of some social standing, address and be able to make a respectable after-dinner speech’. It was therefore a case of demanding that ‘Mr Social Standing Simkins be manager in place of Mr Hard-working Cadwallader because [the latter]

⁴⁹⁶ *South African Review*, 16 March 1894; *The Cricket Field*, 31 March 1894; Parry, ‘The Real Mr Hendricks’, 15

⁴⁹⁷ *Cape Argus*, 27 February 1894; it was later reported that the tour colours were green and gold.

⁴⁹⁸ *Cape Times*, 5 March 1894.

takes his cricket without champagne; and Simkins as every Anglo-Indian knows is the very name for that intoxicant itself.⁴⁹⁹

Simkins was officially nominated by the Western Province Cricket Union to stand against Cadwallader. The national votes for the two candidates were divided equally but Cadwallader withdrew, stressing that he did not care to identify himself with the candidature for the management unless he received unanimous, or almost unanimous, support. He was later paid £50 and reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses to conclude another unfortunate episode. An editorial in the *Cape Times* referred to the tour's 'regrettable controversies' [which] ought not to have happened of course, but we are passing through an era of squalls in which influenza and Laboucheres and explosive bombs must play their part to remind the world that the reign of peace is not yet. But we could have wished the movement had been spared the slur of murky surroundings at a time when it needed all favouring auspices.⁵⁰⁰

Politician and cricket benefactor, J.D. Logan who had enjoyed a 'magnificent majority at the poll due to the coloured vote' was 'strongly in favour of the best team that South Africa can send of whatever class or colour, as most likely to ensure a successful tour'. He believed that Hendricks should have been selected and then announced that he was withdrawing his guarantee on account of Cadwallader being discarded.⁵⁰¹

It was hoped that the influential Bailey would speak out on the question of sending Hendricks but he reserved a final decision on the matter until he had met with Milton at the Currie Cup tournament towards the end of March. Bailey admitted thereafter that he had 'yielded somewhat to the very good argument that, after all, our men were going to England to learn rather than with the hope of achieving any great glory. Under these circumstances, it was argued, it was not absolutely necessary to lift a coloured man up on account of the moral effect it might have on the whole coloured population ...'⁵⁰²

Milton did not attend the meeting of the South African Cricket Association which was held during the Currie Cup tournament in March. Rhodes had orchestrated the annexation of Pondoland and wished to put his 'stamp on the endeavour' that had taken place. Milton accompanied him on what Merriman was to call Rhodes's 'scamper through the Transkei'. It was 'a triumphant journey that echoed the processions of Roman Caesars' and they travelled 'in great state in a fancy coach drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, and accompanied by

⁴⁹⁹ *South African Review*, 16 March 1894.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 16 March 1894.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid*, 6 March 1894. Logan arranged for a South African team to tour England in 1901. An outspoken critic on the omission of Hendricks from the team that toured in 1894, Logan was given the opportunity to make amends but failed to include a Coloured players in his side.

⁵⁰² *Standard and Diggers News*, 29 March 1894

100 men of the Cape Mounted Rifles ...’ Parts of the journey were considered ‘rash and dangerous’ but Rhodes was firm and dominant, maintaining his belief that it would only be a question of time before the Transkei was self-supporting.

Castens represented Milton at the cricket gathering and was well briefed on the innumerable problems that had arisen in the aftermath of the De Aar meeting. An important development to occur was the ruling that in the future the South African Cricket Association ‘should be managed by a committee of three members of the union holding the Currie Cup’.⁵⁰³ As Western Province had emerged triumphant in the tournament, they formed a new committee that comprised Milton, Smuts and Steytler. It was clear that Castens had pushed all the right buttons and most notably secured the removal of Cadwallader as secretary of the South African Cricket Association. The game was effectively in the hands of Milton and the Cape government, although it was reliant on the Western Province side winning the Currie Cup.

In early April, a match was arranged for the South African touring team against an All-Comers XI at Newlands. It sought to provide practice prior to the side’s departure and to raise funds for the professionals. The *Cape Times* announced on the 30 March that the All-Comers XI would include Hendricks and Lohmann. The *Cape Argus* thought the selection contradicted the view that no man of colour should be selected for a representative team but recognised the benefits in the official side having a ‘warm time of it’ against Hendricks and Lohmann operating in tandem. Then, on the 31 March, Vollie van der Bijl withdrew from the touring squad and with great insensitivity was immediately ‘given a place in the All-Comers team in place of Hendricks’. Two days later, Lohmann wrote a letter to the *Cape Times* to announce his withdrawal and a special committee (Alf Richards, Castens and Steytler) was deemed necessary ‘to fill up vacancies for the All-Comers team’. Despite this precaution, Van der Bijl ‘for some reason or other failed to put in an appearance’ on the day of the match.⁵⁰⁴

The *South African Review* had its say, commenting that the ‘circumstances’ of Lohmann’s withdrawal related to resentment of ‘much that takes place in the Western Province under the guise of sport which is devoid of every sportsman-like feature’. It added a week later, ‘For reasons which can be understood, Mr G. Lohmann declined to play, and for other reasons which cannot be so easily understood, Hendricks was shunted’.⁵⁰⁵

To Milton’s immense chagrin, the *South African Review* teamed up with other newspapers to send Cadwallader overseas as their press representative. In response to this

⁵⁰³ *Cape Times*, 16 March 1894

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 30 March – 3 April, 1894; Parry, ‘The Real Mr Hendricks’, 17-18.

⁵⁰⁵ *South African Review*, 13 April 1894.

development, the South African captain was misguidedly instructed to ignore the press. An interview with 'Barberton' Halliwell revealed that 'a great blunder of tactics was made. Instead of taking the press into their confidence, the authorities chose to adopt a spirit of haughty exclusiveness that is galling under any circumstances but particularly when assumed by swaggers'. The powerful London press was said to have been alienated through 'the fatuous behaviour of an individual swollen with an exaggerated and erroneous notion of his own importance'. Castens was attacked unmercifully by Cadwallader:

All attempts to draw the chief of the team into a statement as to their programme were met by a chilling snub. Practice was conducted with as much mystery as if some vital secret had to be guarded until the opening day ... there may have been good reason for this policy ... the Press failed either to recognise or sympathise with it. Spiteful paragraphs got into circulation ridiculing the team ... instead of starting with a boom, the team went to the wickets in their first match without exciting the slightest interest or curiosity. It was a fatal blunder.⁵⁰⁶

Very little went right thereafter and the tour proved a financial failure. Its collapse was only avoided through assistance received from steamship companies and South African businessmen in England. The team record was encouraging in that they produced twelve victories, lost five and drew seven matches. They overcame the gamesmanship of W.G. Grace and 'won a splendid victory over a fair M.C.C. eleven' at Lord's but, it was said, lacked players who could draw the crowds.⁵⁰⁷ The fact was quickly seized upon by Cadwallader. 'Certainly everywhere we went,' he observed, 'we were asked why we didn't bring Hendricks with us. It was surprising how the general public had got to know about his reputation.'⁵⁰⁸

Castens, a Rugby School and Oxford product, knew the country well. He realised the mistake that had been made but when he chose to speak to the press he did not endear himself to the English public or the Cape government. He was irritated by the public interest in Hendricks and commented ruefully that English crowds 'have been disappointed with us because we are none of us black'. He was then perfectly frank in explaining the non-selection of Hendricks. 'In England,' he said 'the colour question never crops up – with us it is always doing so. I don't defend it, merely say what is a fact ... when it was proposed to bring him

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 31 August 1894 and 16 November 1894.

⁵⁰⁷ Peter Wynne-Thomas, *The Complete History of Cricket Tours at Home and Abroad*, London, 1989, 226. The M.C.C. lost eight wickets for 9 runs to enable the South Africans to triumph in dramatic fashion by 11 runs.

⁵⁰⁸ *Standard and Diggers News*, 2 October 1894. One of the South African players, A.W. Seccull, wrote that Hendricks's 'non-appearance ... caused some disappointment among a certain section of the cricketing public': M.W. Luckin, (ed.), *The History of South African Cricket*, Johannesburg, 1915, 639.

[Hendricks] the greatest pressure was put upon us by those in high authority in the Cape Colony to leave him out because it was feared that trouble might ensue'.⁵⁰⁹

Simkins, as might have been expected, put across the view that Hendricks had been omitted for cricketing reasons. He told *St Paul's Magazine* in an interview that was reprinted in an edition of *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*: 'I think he has been over-rated here.'⁵¹⁰ A different view was taken by the former Australian captain, Billy Murdoch, who had toured South Africa with Read's team. He was very disappointed with the South African performance. 'As to Hendricks,' he said, 'I think myself he would have been of immense value to you, and in any case would have been a very great draw. I feel sure he would have knocked some of us and our pegs about on hard wickets.'⁵¹¹

Pre-tour indignation over the idea of Hendricks accompanying the side did not stop the South Africans from playing against black cricketers overseas. They met the legendary K.S. Ranjitsinhji and rated him the finest batsman that they came across; he scored 53 and 146 not out for C.W. Wright's XI against the South Africans at Portsmouth. George Glover, George Kempis and Dante Parkin commented admiringly on his play in a post-tour interview: 'A prettier bat all round the wickets it would be impossible to imagine.'⁵¹²

A little more than two months after the tour concluded, Western Province Cricket Union committee members were called upon to make another ruling with regard to Hendricks. He had played in the 'white' Cape Town First Cup competition during October 1894 and bowled so well that permission was sought to include him in a Colonial-born team to play the annual match against the 'Home-born'. The fixture, which demonstrated imperial sporting links, was also an important social occasion. 'For some years,' wrote Christopher Merrett, 'the Home-Born versus Colonial contest was the season's most significant match but it had a more far-reaching significance – it introduced to the game the crucial question of who was a South African, an issue that was to haunt all representative sport until the 1990s.'⁵¹³

Castens had told *The Cricket Field* in the course of the 1894 tour that 'a reason – the most important of all – for leaving [Hendricks] out of our team, is that he never plays in any local European teams, and hardly ever against them'.⁵¹⁴ To an extent, the problem was rectified by Hendricks's participation in a predominantly white league, but at the key stage which followed, the authorities wavered.

⁵⁰⁹ *The Cricket Field*, 4 August 1894, 348

⁵¹⁰ *Cricket: A Weekly Record of the Game*, 13 September 1894; *The Cricketer*, July 1994, 15

⁵¹¹ *Standard and Diggers News*, 2 October 1894

⁵¹² *Cape Times*, 17 September 1894

⁵¹³ Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett, *Caught Behind: Race and Politics in Springbok Cricket*, Pietermaritzburg, 2004, 12

⁵¹⁴ *The Cricket Field*, 4 August 1894, 348

The Western Province Cricket Union was divided over the possible inclusion of Hendricks in the 'Colonial-born' side against the 'Mother Country'. They were prepared to revise the constitution to allow the 'Colonial-born' XI to include players born in 'the British colonies or in India', but the case for Hendricks was not settled.⁵¹⁵ Steytler told members that because Hendricks had played for the United Services Club in a competition recognised by the Union, he could not see how he could be excluded from the representative match. Thomas Lawton was also in favour of including Hendricks, stating, 'It had always been the boast of cricket that the peer and the ploughman could meet together in the same field.' He conceded, however, that the committee 'could not be blind to the fact that there was strong opposition to Hendricks in certain quarters'.

Maynard Nash – the secretary and very much a Milton disciple – reminded the committee that it was 'a wider issue than the mere admittance of Hendricks'.⁵¹⁶ It was therefore agreed that the problem should be deferred until a further meeting four days later. A decision could not be made without consulting Milton.

The delay increased interest in the controversy. Cadwallader stressed that the matter should be debated carefully because Hendricks was, in the opinion of leading cricketers, 'one of the finest extra-fast bowlers in the world.' He continued: 'It seems to us that there are two "gates" for "coloureds" to the cricket field – the first being exceptionally good cricket, and the next exceptionally good and appropriate behaviour, and the main question is – does Hendricks fulfil these qualifications?'⁵¹⁷

The selectors did not wait for the second meeting before naming the Colonial-born team. They did not include Hendricks. This annoyed Advocate Shepstone Giddy, who was representing the United Services Club, and he informed delegates when they reassembled that the question of whether Hendricks was eligible for selection should be settled 'once and for all'. Milton's opinion was keenly anticipated but he was not interested in discussing the matter and moved that the meeting pass on to the next business. He pointed out that he 'had been in the Western Province for seventeen years and many good players had been available under the same conditions as Hendricks and the question had never been brought up'.⁵¹⁸ Louis Smuts immediately seconded him and the motion was carried. *The Cricket Field* stated euphemistically that Milton had 'disposed of the difficulty for the present'.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁵ The Australians selected were C.D'O. Mainon ('an Australian of repute' – *Cricket*, 15 March 1913), A. Goldman, T. Tunnclyffe and C. Drake.

⁵¹⁶ *Cape Times*, 30 October, 1894

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*, 2 November 1894

⁵¹⁸ References to the meetings appear in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*, 21-28 October, 1894

⁵¹⁹ *Cricket Field*, December 1894

Platnauer was particularly scathing: ‘The Western Province would indeed be stultifying themselves, after their strenuous and successful objection to Hendricks’ inclusion in the South African team to England, where race distinctions are unknown, should they include the coloured bowler in representative cricket at the Cape, where snobocracy reigns.’⁵²⁰

There was widespread and genuine sympathy for Hendricks as he had been part of the Cape Town cricket scene since playing his first recorded match for the Star of South Africa in January, 1883. Through his fine bowling deeds, his name appeared regularly in match reports. He had even played for a junior Colonial-born team, dismissing four top-order batsmen for 5 runs in as many overs and sending a junior Mother Country tumbling to 13 all out. Hendricks had every right to play for the senior Colonial-born team but no member of the Western Province Cricket Union committee was prepared to stand up to Milton.

Hendricks was not chosen for the 1895 Currie Cup tournament at Durban but was fast becoming a household name. The situation arose whereby Natal fielded the ‘coloured’ all-rounder, ‘Buck’ Llewellyn, whilst the Cape Town bowler stayed at home and played as a ‘celebrity’ in a match organised by white ladies before a sizeable crowd of white holiday-makers. The men fielded and batted left-handed and could only walk after the ball, but it did not prevent the eager Hendricks from making an impression. He accomplished the hat-trick and captured five wickets for eight runs as Mrs Potter’s team of thirteen ladies crumbled to 37 all out.⁵²¹

At Durban, Transvaal won the Currie Cup, defeating a Western Province side that included three professionals. It meant the administration of the South African Cricket Association would transfer to the Transvaal. Milton was determined to hold on to the reins as long as possible and worked on the assumption that a transfer of power could only take place at the next meeting of the South African Cricket Association. He managed to delay the transition until the last possible opportunity and in the mean time organised the itinerary and handled contentious issues for the next cricket tour to South Africa.⁵²²

When Lord Hawke arranged for his side to visit South Africa during 1895/96, the question of colour was again a prominent issue. The *Cape Times* noted that ‘the Indian prince with the impossible name [Ranjitsinhji]’ was being considered for the team.⁵²³ Milton reacted quickly, with his efforts receiving sympathy from the cricket establishment in England. Lord Harris, who had taken over as President of the MCC and was destined to become chairman of Consolidated Goldfields, previously led an administration in India that supported ‘blatant

⁵²⁰ *Standard and Diggers News*, 2 November 1894.

⁵²¹ *Cape Times*, 19 April 1895

⁵²² There had been no meeting of the South African Cricket Association since March 1894

⁵²³ *Cape Times*, 18 September 1895.

segregation'.⁵²⁴ Brian Dobbs writes of the English overlooking Ranjitsinhji a few months later because of 'the virulence of colour prejudice at Lord's'. Sir Home Gordon, quoted by *Wisden* as being a friend of Ranjitsinhji and Lord Hawke, explained '... there was so much prejudice against "a nigger showing us how to play cricket"'.⁵²⁵

Milton secured C.B. Fry as a replacement with details surrounding the selection not coming to light until some years later. 'Ranji would have been unwelcome in South Africa,' wrote Iain Wilton and therefore 'he took the opportunity to urge Lord Hawke to select his friend and Sussex team-mate instead.' Fry wrote of his selection in a 'particularly vivid and succinct description': 'There was the temporarily dispossessed Heir Apparent of an Indian State who had become a fantastic success as a batsman, and who with Rajput love of honour and glory desired to see Sussex champion county. There was a recent addition to the Sussex county eleven in whom the Rajput Heir Apparent saw possibilities. That is how I came to be in South Africa in the year of the Jameson Raid'.⁵²⁶

It was 'another imperial duty' wrote Derek Birley in a reference to Lord Hawke's team that included ten amateur gentlemen out of fourteen players and, 'with just one exception, the "gentlemen" were all Oxford or Cambridge Blues'.⁵²⁷ Fry, George Lohmann, Tom Hayward, Timothy O'Brien and Sammy Woods were in a team renowned for its colourful splash of blazers, belts and hat ribbons, but not particularly popular 'owing to their unsportsmanlike behaviour, lack of concern for locals, their complaints about pitches, unpleasant sledging and the occasional clamouring for money'.⁵²⁸ After going down by 74 runs to Milton's Western Province XV in their first match in late December 1895, they requested a match on even terms. A one-day, one innings encounter was therefore played with Milton's team once again successful, this time by one wicket. It was a grand start for the captain in an otherwise problem-ridden season.

The day after the match – 29 December – the Hon. Charles Coventry, second-in-command of the Bechuanaland Border Police, addressed another gathering of men on 'imperial duty'. Coventry, who had played for England in their overwhelming victory over Milton's South Africans at Newlands in 1888-89, told his men, 'We are going straight to

⁵²⁴ Guha, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*, 56-77

⁵²⁵ Brian Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play*, London: Pelham, 1973, 140; Benny Green (ed.), *The Wisden Book of Cricketers' Lives: Obituaries from Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*, London: Queen Anne Press, 1988, 316. Lord Harris, President of the MCC and, six years previously, Governor of Bombay, stated that he was not in favour of playing 'birds of passage' (Alan Ross, *Ranji: Prince of Cricketers*, London: Collins, 1983, 62 and 207).

⁵²⁶ Iain Wilton, *C.B. Fry: King of Sport*, London, Metro, 2002, 78.

⁵²⁷ Derek Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket*, London, 1999, 165

⁵²⁸ Wilton, *C.B. Fry*, 84-85

Johannesburg. We want you all to come. It will be a short trip, everything has been arranged.’⁵²⁹ The expedition which became known as the Jameson Raid was a disaster from the outset. The wrong telegraph wires were cut by supposedly drunk men assigned the task and, as a result, the Boers were able to monitor their movements. On Sunday evening, 30 December 1895, Rhodes learnt that Dr Leander Starr Jameson had taken ‘the bit between his teeth’. At 11am the next morning he met with men well aware of the conspiracy. He was, wrote Rotberg, “‘ill and haggard” (Had he slept?)’. At noon, he socialised with Lord Hawke’s visiting English cricket team that had been invited to lunch at his house.⁵³⁰ He might then have broached the subject of the Raid for the first time with Milton who, it seems, was not involved in any way. Philip Jourdan, the chief secretary in the Prime Minister’s Department, wrote:

Although I was so intimately associated with [Rhodes] I never had the slightest suspicion of what was going on at the time and I do not think anybody in the office, not even William Milton, had any knowledge of the impending invasion. I suppose it was because he thought that as we were government officials it would not have been right to implicate us in such a matter.⁵³¹

Jameson, Coventry and his force were arrested at Doornkop, some twenty miles from Johannesburg, on 2 January 1896. The fact that Rhodes resigned did not initially affect Milton, who continued as permanent secretary in the Prime Minister’s Department under Rhodes’s successor, Sir Gordon Sprigg. The Raid ‘destroyed long-standing friendships and aroused intense pro-Kruger and anti-British sentiments among the populace’,⁵³² but for Milton, much of the period was spent dealing with problems concerning the composition of local sides to play Lord Hawke’s tourists.

In November 1895, the *Cape Times* included Hendricks in their choice of a South African team to meet the tourists. Cadwallader, who was about to depart for the Transvaal, probably had some say in a not unreasonable selection. Hendricks was left out of the ‘Colonial-born’ versus ‘Mother Country’ fixture but created interest on the same day by taking 6 for 31 for United Services against Bishops at the College ground. All his victims were clean bowled. He followed this performance by returning figures of 8 for 31 against Woodstock; 7 for 6 against the Castle, and 5 for 13 against Olympics.⁵³³

⁵²⁹ E. Longford, *Jameson’s Raid*, London, 1982, 61.

⁵³⁰ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 543-44

⁵³¹ Philip Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes – his private life by his Private Secretary*, London, 1910, 27

⁵³² Marks, ‘Class, Culture, and Consciousness in South Africa’, 149

⁵³³ Matches reported in *Cape Times*, 30 November – 20 December 1895.

Milton, Smuts and Steytler were the selectors for all provincial and Test matches to be played against Lord Hawke's team at Newlands. They were not prepared to consider Hendricks for representative selection but Halliwell, the South African captain and chairman of the Transvaal selection committee, was keen to provide the fast bowler with the opportunity that he deserved. Halliwell had chaired the recent meeting of the South African Cricket Association and was determined that his administration would be no pushover. A world-class wicket-keeper who had in 1894 won admiration for hammering 110 against Gloucestershire in the wake of a verbal exchange with W.G. Grace, appeared to relish the opportunity to challenge Milton.⁵³⁴

The Transvalers resolved to invite Hendricks to the Rand for two weeks to enable the selectors 'to form an opinion as to his form' in view of his playing for South Africa in the Second Test against Lord Hawke's side in 1895/96. Platnauer, a member of the committee, claimed the action of the Transvaal Cricket Union was one 'few will find fault with' but the Cape viewed the situation in a very different light.⁵³⁵

Hendricks cabled his interest to Halliwell but it was to no avail. The Western Province Cricket Union refused to support the selection and Hendricks was prevented from travelling to Johannesburg. Cadwallader's replacement at the *Cape Times* demonstrated vigorous support for his Union by describing the selection of Hendricks as 'a most uncalled-for insult' to Western Province cricket. The newspaper added, 'Such slights are not calculated to foster that spirit of friendliness which should exist between the two chief centres of sport in South Africa'. The writer was correct in his estimation that the relationship between the two unions had broken down. Western Province cricket officials were determined not to lend support to Halliwell 'who apparently thinks that every cricketer and every cricketing centre is under his regal way'.⁵³⁶ The Cape Town CC refused James Middleton leave to play in the Test, even though the provincial body had earlier expressed support for the inclusion of professionals in the South African team.⁵³⁷ It resulted in the Transvaal selectors frantically searching for players to represent South Africa as late as the morning of the match. It provoked a sense of perverse satisfaction at the *Cape Times* where it was reported that 'after a lot of trouble G.H. Shepstone and Fred Smith were obtained – these are by no means the best available men in

⁵³⁴ Luckin, *History of South African Cricket*, 645; Jonty Winch, *Cricket in Southern Africa: Two Hundred Years of Achievements and Records*, Rosettenville, 1997, 33

⁵³⁵ *Standard and Diggers News*, 25 January 1896.

⁵³⁶ *Cape Times*, 20 February 1896

⁵³⁷ *Cricket*, 9 April 1896, 54, reported: 'Middleton was ordered to Cape Town to take part in a club match and his recall by the executive of this club gave rise to a great deal of unpleasantness'

the Transvaal, but they were the only players who could be got at the last moment. Thus the representative nature of the team is entirely destroyed'.⁵³⁸

Milton had ensured government policy prevailed but it had come at a terrible price. In a show of solidarity, the press and clubs at the Cape had backed their Union to the hilt but to the detriment of South African cricket. The *Standard and Diggers News* expressed deep disappointment in South Africa's defeat by an innings and 197 runs: 'Had Middleton and Hendricks been playing in this match, the phenomenal score [482] made by Lord Hawke's team would not have been made.'⁵³⁹ The racist selection policy of the Cape's cricket administrators had divided the country and weakened the national side.

An interesting selection in the South African team for the Second Test at Johannesburg was that of 'Buck' Llewellyn. Years later it would be confirmed that he was the first South African player of colour, a fact that might well have been known at the time. After playing at the Wanderers, Llewellyn was dropped for the next Test at Newlands. A promising all-rounder, Llewellyn had made the second-highest score in South Africa's first innings at Johannesburg but had little luck with his bowling, returning figures of 0 for 71 in fourteen overs. The selection decision could have been simply parochialism as the Cape selectors went for their men – naming Alf Richards as captain in his only Test – but there might also have been an ulterior motive: 'A rumour that Llewellyn was not entirely white could have been enough for Milton to simply block his selection, a decision he could partly, if not convincingly, justify to some extent on cricketing grounds'.⁵⁴⁰

Milton described the visit of the English team as 'a great success as far as cricket went' in that the Western Province CC was able to hand over £1000 as their share of the ground and he 'did not think anybody could do better than that.' He did concede that there were 'certain circumstances which had militated against its general success in other parts of the country'. The year of drama for Milton was far from over because no sooner had the tour ended than a rebellion broke out north of the Zambezi. The Matabele were an unhappy people under Jameson's administration and saw an opportunity to strike when the Raid failed and a good number of Rhodesia's white policemen were held by the Boers. A rebellion followed that continued into August when the Matabele retreated into the Matopos, an area of granite kopjes south of Bulawayo. Jan Grootboom, a coloured scout from the Cape, ventured into the

⁵³⁸ *Cape Times*, 27 February 1896

⁵³⁹ *Standard and Diggers News*, 7 March 1896.

⁵⁴⁰ Jonty Winch and Richard Parry, 'Two Cricketers and a Writer: The Strange Case of "Buck" Llewellyn, Jimmy Sinclair and Major Bowen' in *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009, 204

Matopos several times to make communication,⁵⁴¹ and eventually cleared the way for Rhodes to meet the Matabele and work towards extracting a promise of peace⁵⁴².

Milton was called upon to reorganise the civil service in Rhodesia and bade a hurried farewell to Cape Town during August 1896. There was time to deliver his last annual statement to the Western Province CC in the course of which he remarked that the club had had an uphill fight for many years but ‘now, however, had a ground which was worth a great deal more than they gave for it and there was every chance of their getting on well’. He told members that the game had occupied the greater part of his time and that ‘next to his home and his work, cricket was the only thing for which he cared.’⁵⁴³ Lynedoch Graham replied by stating that all regretted the captain was relinquishing his official connection with the club: ‘In every little dorp in South Africa where the national was played the name of W.H. Milton had become familiar and it was impossible to overrate the influence he had upon the affairs of the Western Province CC and the welfare of cricket generally throughout South Africa’. He was elected a life member of the club and joined Rhodes, Lt General Goodenough and Rear Admiral Rawson as a vice-president.

Praise would follow from various Cape Town cricket personalities. Frank Reid wrote of him as the figure ‘that looms largest of all in the history of the Western Province Cricket Club ... [he] was a great cricketer, a great captain and a great man.’⁵⁴⁴ John Reid claimed – with some exaggeration, it seems – that ‘when Milton first came here the game of cricket was in a state of collapse, as a matter of fact almost defunct.’⁵⁴⁵ Years later, Difford recalled that ‘in those days, Milton held a very similar position to that of W.G. Grace in English cricket in his prime ... in figure and appearance too, he was not unlike the greatest of all cricketers, except for the fact that he did not grow a beard’.⁵⁴⁶ The mere mention of Grace suggests a dominant but flawed personality, and Difford admitted he looked back on Milton with ‘mixed feelings’ as he was a ““hostile” leader’ with the ‘virtues and faults of his essentially virile personality’. Milton ‘hated to see the Province team beaten’ and Difford recalled a game at Newlands when Claremont required ‘half a dozen runs’ with fifteen minutes remaining. Milton suddenly ‘shouted out from the field for the bell to be rung’ to signal the end of play and

⁵⁴¹ A. Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, Kingston, 1983, 467. He wrote of Grootboom: ‘He was not only an incredibly brave, but a highly-skilled scout, worthy to associate with the great white scout whom he admired and called “Colonel Baking Powder”.’

⁵⁴² Rotberg, *The Founder*, 567-69. Vere Stent, a journalist ‘with known pro-African sympathies’ was able to record the meeting and send word to the world.

⁵⁴³ G.H. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, 1890-1965*, Salisbury, 1965, 178.

⁵⁴⁴ Luckin, *History of South African Cricket*, 365

⁵⁴⁵ *Cape Argus*, 3 August 1896

⁵⁴⁶ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

‘proceeded to lead his team from the field’. The Claremont captain, Ned Steytler hurried out ‘and there was a somewhat heated altercation mid-way between wicket and pavilion’. But Milton triumphed and the Province men followed him into the pavilion’. By the time Milton ‘was convinced of his error, the light had gone and the stumps were not pitched again’.

Milton could be forgiven for his behaviour on the cricket field but not off it. In his treatment of Hendricks and Cadwallader, he escaped recrimination because events were air-brushed out of South Africa’s cricket history.⁵⁴⁷ There were of course other prominent figures involved in the systematic exclusion of Hendricks from representative cricket. This came about largely after Milton’s departure for Rhodesia, a development that encouraged a few cricket administrators to seek opportunities for coloured cricketers. Prior to the new season – 1896/97 – Frank Robb arranged for Woodstock to employ Hendricks as their professional with the intention of using his services in the newly-formed ‘championship’. The Western Province Cricket Union responded quickly and ruthlessly by instituting a racially discriminatory resolution which stated: ‘That this union will not object to any club employing a coloured professional in matches other than championship fixtures, and no coloured professional or member shall be allowed to compete in championship matches.’⁵⁴⁸ It was only partly successfully and to prevent Hendricks from playing in any matches involving ‘white’ cricketers, the term ‘championship’ came to be used more loosely than the resolution had originally implied.

On the few occasions that he was given a chance to play, Hendricks demonstrated his great ability. When Woodstock met the Cape Town CC in November 1896, he captured 8 for 32. ‘It was a remarkable performance,’ said the *Cape Times*, ‘considering the class of batsmen’. His victims included five players who represented South Africa at various times, with Hendricks hitting the stumps on seven occasions.⁵⁴⁹ Cape Town’s cricket followers wanted to see more of him and an opportunity arose when a new full-time secretary was appointed at the Western Province CC. Harry Hands made the brave decision to select Hendricks for an All-Comers XI to play against the Western Province CC at Newlands. An

⁵⁴⁷ There is no reference to Cadwallader – who founded the South African Cricket Association – in Luckin’s *History of South African Cricket*. It was an unfortunate omission by the editor, who was then secretary of the South African Cricket Association and claimed to have ‘collected very extensive records of South African cricket’.⁵⁴⁷ Finlason, had remarked earlier, “‘Old Caddy’ deserves all the kudos that may be given him and it is no exaggeration to say that for the next fifty years and more the cricketers of this country will have cause to feel grateful to the first secretary of the South African Cricket Association.’ (*Daily Independent*, 16 May, 1890)

⁵⁴⁸ The wording of the resolution is outlined in the *Cape Times*, 6 November 1897.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 23 November, 1896. The five South African players were Charles Prince, Howard Francis, Stanley Horwood, Frank Hearne and Joseph Willoughby

unusually large crowd of 1 600 surrounded the field at Milton's former club and Hendricks did not let them down. In 21.3 overs of sustained pace he captured 6 for 20.⁵⁵⁰

Simkins complained that 'someone was guilty of a grave error in having selected Hendricks for the All-Comers'. He told committee members of the Western Province Cricket Union that they should use all means at their disposal to ensure the two classes 'be kept distinctly separate'. It was a powerful indication of the direction in which cricket at the Cape was moving. The language of official racist ideologies was ominously present in the statements of committee members. Smuts pointed out that 'It was all good and well in some countries to talk of cricket as a levelling institution but here circumstances were so very different'. Vollie van der Bijl said the selector of the composite side would, if given his way, have chosen three players of colour, but claimed if three were chosen 'probably the other eight would not have played'. Maynard Nash, who had succeeded Cadwallader as the secretary of the South African Cricket Association, praised the discriminatory resolution, stating, 'We must look to the future as well as the present'.⁵⁵¹

A *Cape Times* leader said that it was not prepared to say the Union was wrong 'to exclude colour from Union cricket matches'. It did, however, criticise the cricket authorities for allowing multi-racial matches in the first place: 'A general free mixture of white and coloured youth in games nobody here is prepared to advocate' and it should not be followed by 'the admission to white cricket of the few coloured players good enough to be played in Union matches'. The selection of Hendricks had set a dangerous precedent at a time when interest in the game prevailed amongst black communities and when many were gravitating to towns. 'Where are you to draw the line?' asked the newspaper in asserting that if the issue of multi-racial cricket could be restricted to Hendricks, there was no problem. The concern existed in whites being overwhelmed by 'our coloured friends of all shades and of various classes in life [who] have taken to the white man's athletics with great vigour'.⁵⁵²

The votes that went against Hendricks over the years demonstrated that the majority of cricket administrators within the Western Province Cricket Union opposed coloured participation in 'white' competitions. Yet, there were those who stood by Hendricks – men such as Shepstone Giddy (who became Solicitor General) and Harry Hands (later Mayor of Cape Town and knighted for his services). The *Cape Times* leader believed white South Africans of the time 'were not blind to the wrong that was committed'. The writer – probably Edmund Garrett who had taken over as editor from St Leger – advocated 'an equal policy of mutual exclusion' but was able to see that it reinforced a deeply flawed course of action.

⁵⁵⁰ *Cape Times*, 1 November 1897

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*, 6 November 1897

⁵⁵² *Ibid*, 13 November 1897

After referring to youngsters ‘ranging from the lighter of brown looks to the darkest of black ones, going forth to various open spaces [to play sport]’, he asked: ‘Can the English who carry their cricket and football to the uttermost parts of the earth look with disfavour on such a phenomenon?’

The argument asked questions of Milton, a forceful figure in the movement which disseminated public-school athleticism throughout the empire. As the games spread, so different population groups at the Cape, as elsewhere, had displayed interest in playing and interacting with the broader colonial community. In the words of J.A. Mangan, there was ‘relevance to both dominance and deference’, the inculcation of which served to provide ‘a useful instrument of colonial purpose’ that helped ‘create the confidence to lead and the compulsion to follow’.⁵⁵³ Yet, Milton and the Western Province CC failed to promote such qualities through the medium of cricket. There was in fact a notable decline in the interest shown by Afrikaans-speaking people, whilst coloured groups were actively discouraged from partaking in a game that became a symbol of exclusivity and discrimination.

The *Cape Times* editor might have hoped his views would reach Milton in faraway Rhodesia as he turned to the good service the Cape-boys did in quelling the recent Matabeleland Rebellion. ‘Coloured readers,’ said the article, ‘will debate whether he and his, though good enough to fight side by side with white men, are good enough to play side by side with them. And the answer – NO!’

In conclusion, the newspaper accepted that it ‘might be wrong to put forward these considerations, unless we are prepared to advocate the opposite answer. But we think it is just as well to show that we whites are not – many of us are not – blind to such considerations, even if we cannot in some particular matter carry them into action’.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ J.A. Mangan, *The Game Ethic and Imperialism*, Harmondsworth, 1985, 18

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 13 November 1897

Chapter 7:

‘A god-forsaken place to spend one’s life in’: Milton arrives in Rhodesia

The new colony established by the British South Africa Company and known as Rhodesia represented further expansion of the English-speaking world. Robert Blake described the 1890 pioneers as ‘the heirs to a tradition of European adventure’ that began in the fifteenth century. If these men had been ‘endowed with the gift of prevision’, he said, ‘they would have seen themselves as the last European colony of settlement ever to be established – unless one counts Israel, as some people might’.⁵⁵⁵ The pioneers aimed to take advantage of the fabled riches of ancient Ophir in the course of a venture that Cecil John Rhodes hoped would redress the balance of power in the sub-continent by tilting it in favour of the Cape and against the Transvaal.

Opening the hoped-for ‘second Rand’ in the northern hinterland encompassed a series of manoeuvres in which Rhodes overcame considerable opposition. The Rudd Concession gave him and his partners ‘complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in [Lobengula’s] kingdoms, principalities and dominions’ and full power to ‘do all things they may deem necessary to win and procure the same’.⁵⁵⁶ Queen Victoria granted a Royal Charter to govern, legislate and administer the territory, thus enabling the British South Africa Company to assume formidable powers over a large and vaguely defined area. De Beers Consolidated Mines backed the project with the resources for empire-building⁵⁵⁷ although the task of occupying the territory was a daunting challenge.⁵⁵⁸ Expedition contractor, Frank Johnson, had ideas of a sudden assault⁵⁵⁹ but the well-known hunter, Frederick Courtney Selous was able to suggest a route that skirted the southernmost region of the Matabele kingdom. Selous, the guide to the expeditionary force, argued that ‘a large sector of Mashonaland was not within Lobengula’s gift... [the Matabele] are no more aborigines of the country they now occupy than the Romans were aborigines of Britain’.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁵ R. Blake, *The Pioneer Column – Its Origins and Implications* (Fourth Dugmore Memorial Lecture, Rhodes University), Grahamstown, 1970

⁵⁵⁶ R. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, Oxford, 1988, 262

⁵⁵⁷ Its Trust Deed gave Rhodes and his colleagues further powers ‘... to annex and govern territories, raise armies and fight wars’

⁵⁵⁸ A. Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, Kingston, 1983, 74

⁵⁵⁹ The Rev James Hepburn supposedly overheard talk of Johnson’s scheme and reported the matter to the Administrator of Bechuanaland, Sir Sidney Shippard

⁵⁶⁰ S. Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod: A Life of Frederick Courteney Selous, African Hunter and Adventurer 1851-1917*, London, 1989, 56. Selous was of the opinion that the Matabele ‘were invaders and have almost utterly exterminated the original population ...’

Rhodes opposed the view because the Moffat Treaty ‘made it a matter of record that Lobengula’s domain consisted not of Matabeleland but also of Mashonaland’. If the Mashona were ‘independent of Lobengula, then it made matters a great deal easier for the Portuguese to move in’.⁵⁶¹ The only alternative to British rule was annexation by another power.

There were two thousand applicants for the Column’s two hundred places. Early advertisements called for men ‘who could ride and shoot’ but Rhodes wanted the right balance of people, a community prepared to settle and build up the country. Men were carefully chosen from diverse occupations and social origins that would include ‘farmers, artisans, miners, doctors, lawyers, engineers, builders, bakers, soldiers, sailors, cadets of good family and no special occupation, cricketers, three parsons and a Jesuit’⁵⁶². Sporting prowess was seen to express the masculinity and solidarity of men who were ‘on the eve of a great undertaking, and at the mercy of Lobengula’⁵⁶³. Their departure was marked by a famous rugby game staged on the dry river bed of the Shashi, where leading Transvaal and Western Province players – Louis Vintcent, Adrian Darter and Charlie van der Byl – were amongst those who struggled after the ball in the ankle-deep sand.⁵⁶⁴ A few weeks later, a cricket match was played on the open grasslands of the highveld, a mile from Providential Pass. ‘Skipper’ Hoste wrote, ‘I forget who won. It was probably ‘A’ Troop as they had several outstanding cricketers, notably Monty Bowden.’⁵⁶⁵

Milton had more than a passing interest in the developments taking place. Many of the pioneers were well-known to him, the departure of some eroding the ranks of the Western Province Cricket Club. Milton was also acting secretary to the Prime Minister and shared in the tensions which accompanied the expedition. He recalled being ‘at the end of the wire, standing alongside Mr Rhodes when the prime minister read the telegram which [reported the Column’s safe arrival at Fort Salisbury]’. Rhodes had then handed the telegram to Milton ‘with the characteristic remark, “My young men have got the country”’.⁵⁶⁶

Those men who ‘challenged fear, and the unknown and opened a new chapter in history’⁵⁶⁷ were soon disillusioned. Suspicion of Company propaganda became an enduring

⁵⁶¹ R. Cary, *Charter Royal*, London, 1970, 49

⁵⁶² J. Lockhart and C. Woodhouse, *Cecil Rhodes: The Colossus of Southern Africa*, New York, 1963, 180

⁵⁶³ Adrian Darter, *Pioneers of Mashonaland*, Bulawayo, 1977, 65

⁵⁶⁴ References are made to the game in H. Hoste (ed. N. Jones), *Gold Fever*, Salisbury, 1977 (Hoste came to the conclusion that ‘...the result was a draw, slightly in favour of ‘B’ Troop.’) and Jonty Winch, *Rhodesia Rugby: A History of the National Side 1898-1979*, Salisbury, 1979

⁵⁶⁵ Hoste, *Gold Fever*, 31

⁵⁶⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, 18 September 1914

⁵⁶⁷ Peter McLaughlin in W. Ellerton Fry, *Occupation of Mashonaland*, Bulawayo, 1982, xvi

feature with some newspapers critical of the selfish manner in which the Pioneer hierarchy staked mining claims and monopolised equipment. Men became disillusioned and some saw no option to selling their farm and claim rights to the likes of Johnson and fellow expedition leader, the Hon. John Willoughby.⁵⁶⁸ Rhodes's concept of community broke down as pioneers were unable to safeguard their own interests. Prospecting ventures failed and, for several months, the men struggled in horrendous weather conditions with indifferent food and the ever-present fever. The rivers flooded and by Christmas 1890, the fledgling capital, Fort Salisbury, was cut off from the outside world.⁵⁶⁹

During this period of privation, the white pioneers obtained food from the African population. Selous secured treaties with the ruling chiefs but social amalgamation was not contemplated. A sharp contrast in cultures emerged as settlers attempted to replicate known values in a new environment. The Company painted a rosy picture of the new territory via sports reports which appeared in South African and overseas newspapers. Cricket – ‘the umbilical cord of Empire linking the mother country with her children’⁵⁷⁰ – emphasised the division between the people and there was no plan to imbue the indigenous inhabitants with a love of games. The weekend matches served as a retreat for the white community, separating them from the Mashona, who were the ‘most degraded-looking people imaginable’ and lived high up on almost inaccessible granite kopjes in dread of random Matabele raids.⁵⁷¹ A ground was granted by the Company on Cecil Square where the pioneers had raised the British flag to signal their occupation of the territory. The decision to play cricket there was of symbolic significance and reflected the game's status within the white community. Rugby attracted interest soon afterwards and helped promote imperial ideologies of the power of the British race and of its social and political domination. Bonds became stronger when women were permitted to join their menfolk during 1892, although sport remained the preserve of a homophobic, white masculinity.

Inter-tribal strife did not stop after the arrival of the pioneers. This was clearly apparent during the early months of 1893 when the situation was monitored in the press under the heading, ‘Matabele Menace’. Whites objected to the persistence of Lobengula's raiding parties in Mashonaland but the Matabele were adamant that they did not wish their exploitation of the Mashona to be undermined. There were incidents and Jameson concluded

⁵⁶⁸ Darter, *Pioneers of Mashonaland*, 109

⁵⁶⁹ *The Star*, 12 May, 1891 reported that Louis Vincent, captain of Villager's shortly after Milton, had written home, ‘I miss my football fearfully ... We could, I think raise a team second to none in the colony, but of course at present everybody thinks of nothing else but prospecting’. Less than three weeks later, he was struck by fever and died.

⁵⁷⁰ J. Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*, London, 1992, 6

⁵⁷¹ Darter, *Pioneers of Mashonaland*, 99-100

that defeat of the Matabele would eliminate the general threat to security; open up new lands in which to pursue the elusive gold reefs, and facilitate control over the labour supply. Regiments were drawn from Salisbury and Fort Victoria whilst Rhodes hurried to join the action. The High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch provided aggression, warning Lobengula that if he did not withdraw his impi 'they would be scattered like chaff is blown before the wind'. He hoped to 'exploit the invasions himself, in order to cut Rhodes down to size' and it became a race to Bulawayo between rival armies: 'the High Commissioner's (or Grandmama's) representing London and imperial control, and Jameson's representing the buccaneering spirit of Rhodes, the Charter and colonial nationalism'.⁵⁷² The latter's victory over Lobengula's army was decisive – the Matabele were given 'a dose of their own medicine' wrote Keppel-Jones.⁵⁷³ The contingent that marched back to Salisbury was 'received in the manner of bigger cities with a triumphal arch, bunting-lined "streets" and cheering crowds – but it was noted that of those who had marched out a few months before, only a quarter had returned ... the majority had transferred their interests to Bulawayo. Salisbury was eclipsed.'⁵⁷⁴

In 1895, Rhodes stepped up his pursuit of a political federation and sought an opportunity to intervene in the Transvaal. The men who had come to dig for gold – the 'Uitlanders'⁵⁷⁵ – expressed grievances and Rhodes worked on a scheme whereby a rebellion would lead to the British annexing the Transvaal. The Administrator, Dr Jameson, was asked to raise a volunteer force in Bulawayo and be on the alert to support the rising. In late December, the impatient Jameson set out at an inopportune time on his infamous Raid – 'You may say what you like but [Robert] Clive would have done it,' he declared.⁵⁷⁶ The repercussions for all concerned were immense, especially because the defeat of the raiders led to members of the Rhodesian police force being trapped in the Transvaal. The Matabele were not slow to take advantage. They were an unhappy people because calamities such as drought, swarms of locusts and an epidemic of the dreaded rinder-pest occurred at a time when they were 'chafing under the man-made exactions' of the English-speaking intruders from the south. They struck suddenly and dramatically in late March 1896. Within a week 'at least 140 men, women and children, more than ten per cent of the white population of Matabeleland and well over half

⁵⁷² Rotberg, *The Founder*, 435

⁵⁷³ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 249. He added, 'How had they acquired the lands (and to a large extent the cattle) of which they were now to be robbed? By robbing their predecessors with even more violence and less restraint'.

⁵⁷⁴ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 358

⁵⁷⁵ Outlanders or foreigners

⁵⁷⁶ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 539

those living outside Bulawayo, were dead'.⁵⁷⁷ It was a terrifying time, not only for the white people but also for the blacks who were loyal to them. They were forced into laager for two months whilst more than 5000 Matabele warriors infiltrated the neighbourhood. The besieged held their breath as rumours circulated of a mass attack. But not all black communities supported the rebellion and this contributed to the road south being kept open with Selous and others establishing forts to maintain communication.

Late in May, Rhodes's reinforcements linked up with a column sent out from Bulawayo. The Matabele went on the defence and began hiding in the Matopos hills where they could slip from one rocky fastness to another. They continued their resistance well into August. Even before the rebellion had been quelled, Rhodes was making moves to restructure the administration. In early July, he forwarded a telegram to Milton:

I want to know whether you would favour offer of position here as head of native affairs and civil administration with a seat on the Council ... please understand this offer is from Lord Grey on my recommendation.⁵⁷⁸

Milton immediately expressed his desire to assist. A delighted Rhodes responded by stating, 'I am very pleased with your answer which I have given to Lord Grey.' He added, 'I still think you should reserve to yourself the right of retirement after three months trial should you wish to return to Cape Town.' Rhodes then contacted Sir Gordon Sprigg to let him know:

We are anxious to conform our administration to the Cape system in every detail and as you know this depends upon the individual. The only man I can think of in the Colony to do this is Milton. Could you give him leave for three months to come up here to help us? We also want him for the settlement of the native question as we are anxious to supply the Cape laws. It might be that he would like his work so much that he would remain but in that case I am sure you would consent to such a sacrifice for the sake of my object which is the assimilation of our laws and administration to that of the Colony ends.⁵⁷⁹

It was generally accepted that Rhodes had 'found just the right man'⁵⁸⁰ and, in early August, the *Cape Argus* announced that Milton had 'been charged with the duty of reorganising the civil service of Rhodesia at a salary of £2000 a year'.⁵⁸¹ As he was on £600 plus extras at the Cape, the new salary was seen as a substantial increase. The move was nevertheless a

⁵⁷⁷ Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod*, 236

⁵⁷⁸ Rhodes to Milton, 13 July 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁵⁷⁹ Rhodes to Milton telegram 16 July 1896 which provided the text of Rhodes's telegram to Spriggs (MI 1/1/1 NAZ)

⁵⁸⁰ L. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934*, London, 1965, 145

⁵⁸¹ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1896

tremendous upheaval for him. His wife and sons moved to England and he set off, accompanied by Jourdan, on a journey that involved a rail trip as far as Mafeking and then ‘ten days’ and ten nights’ travelling by coach to cover the 500 miles to Bulawayo. The road was ‘strewn with carcasses’ as a result of the rinderpest and the odour which ‘emanated from them was most unwholesome not to say unpleasant to travellers’. The country ‘was parched for want of rain ... and so dusty that at times one could hardly distinguish one’s fellow travellers in the coach’. Jourdan was full of praise for the way Milton ‘made the best of the adverse conditions ... and managed to extract fun from life even then. He was always cheerful and helped to keep up the spirits of the other passengers. He was the guardian angel of us all, as during the last five days every one of his five fellow-passengers had to depend upon him for provisions, which he willingly dispersed with a generous hand’. Milton’s wife had provided him with a hamper and the travellers ‘were inspired with feelings of the highest admiration for her devotion to her husband ... It was too truly wonderful to see all the useful things that came out of that small basket’.⁵⁸²

On arrival, it did not take long for Milton to realise that the territory was in a parlous state. He thought it would ‘take ten years to make the country fit to live in’⁵⁸³ and formed an immediate dislike for the unpleasant ‘army of occupation’ atmosphere. Despite the casualties suffered, European self-confidence remained unbroken although there was criticism of the events and particularly Company rule. Olive Schreiner turned on Rhodes ‘with a woman’s vindictiveness the rage of one who had admired him deeply’.⁵⁸⁴ She published *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* which ‘made much of alleged white atrocities [but] was not based on any first-hand knowledge of the events which she purported to describe’.⁵⁸⁵ Milton, though himself realising weaknesses in the quality of early Company administration, dismissed Schreiner’s work as ‘the most awful rubbish and quite libellous’.⁵⁸⁶

In Bulawayo it was arranged that Milton would work with the Administrator, Earl Grey, during the week but join Rhodes in the Matopos over weekends. ‘I am helping Grey in all ways I can,’ said Milton to his wife, ‘but he is quite unable to give proper attention to

⁵⁸² Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes*, 31-33

⁵⁸³ Milton to his wife, 2 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁸⁴ G. Wheatcroft, *The Randlords*, New York, 1986, 208

⁵⁸⁵ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 140

⁵⁸⁶ Milton to his wife, 5 April 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ). Herbert Castens sent a critique by ‘Toga’ of Schreiner’s *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* and a narrative of the death of Mrs Langford during the Matabele Rebellion to the *Cape Times*. The editor, Edmund Garrett, returned the material, stating his reasons for not printing the bitter attack on Olive Schreiner (MSS Afr.s 228 C 28 25-30: blue, 81-90, 4 June 1897, Rhodes House).

anything but war matters.⁵⁸⁷ Milton recalled Bulawayo being ‘a curious town in those days ... I had quarters in a little place next to the club, where the ants stole my food and the natives stole my whisky’.⁵⁸⁸ A clear picture emerged through his letters as to his impression of the situation in Matabeleland. He described Bulawayo as an ‘abominable place and I do not think anything would induce me to live here, certainly not as a grass widower’.⁵⁸⁹ At one stage, he complained of ‘trying to write amidst a hubbub which nearly drives me wild. Rhodes, Grey, Carrington and a few titled understrappers are all talking at once in the next room and a typewriter or two going here. Oh it is charming to work here!’⁵⁹⁰ He concluded, ‘I am going to strike at the end of the week, and tell Grey plainly that I cannot do any decent work under such circumstances and that I must have a proper place and staff’⁵⁹¹.

Milton wished to project a no-nonsense approach but his devotion to ‘Mr Rhodes’ – who ‘is in great spirits and very kind to me’⁵⁹² – was the most important factor in determining his future. Milton, who was appointed Chief Secretary, had little time for the other leaders and wrote of Sir Richard Martin, the High Commissioner’s representative and nominal overlord of post-Raid Rhodesia: ‘I do not think there is much in him’. Grey was summed up as ‘R[hodes]’s clerk and does what he is told’⁵⁹³, whilst Milton’s dislike for the military presence was expressed in his relief that ‘Rhodes is trying to induce Carrington to clear out his troops’⁵⁹⁴.

Progress in the Matopos was slow. Jan Grootboom, a fearless coloured scout from the Cape, ventured into the hills several times to make communication,⁵⁹⁵ and cleared the way for Rhodes to meet the Matabele and begin the process from which he would extract a promise of peace⁵⁹⁶. Jordan ‘marvelled at Mr Rhodes’s patience ... The native mind moves slowly, and even when the chiefs had grasped a simple fact they always returned to their people in the hills, where they would sit round their fires and repeat and repeat what they had heard ... till everybody understood the position. The chiefs would then take their own time about

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 2 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁸⁸ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 30 October 1914

⁵⁸⁹ Milton to his wife, 2 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 25 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid*, 11 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹² *Ibid*, 2 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹³ *Ibid*, 11 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 25 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

⁵⁹⁵ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 467. He wrote of Grootboom: ‘He was not only an incredibly brave, but a highly-skilled scout, worthy to associate with the great white scout whom he admired and called “Colonel Baking Powder”.’

⁵⁹⁶ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 567-69

returning to camp. They had no conception about the value of time...⁵⁹⁷ After several weeks of negotiation and journeys unarmed into the Matopos, Rhodes ‘concluded his finest hour on 13 October, when all the rebel leaders submitted themselves and their arms’. He received widespread praise. An old adversary, John Merriman, wrote to the *South African Telegraph* to express ‘strongly my sense of the physical and moral courage shown by [Rhodes]’ and Grey reported that Rhodes was ‘looked upon by the natives with the greatest respect as the big white chief and the conqueror of their country’. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, was forced to silence Martin, knowing ‘how foolish he and the British government would have appeared if they had even tried to cross Rhodes ...’⁵⁹⁸ And, said Milton, ‘[Rhodes] has undoubtedly saved the country from ruin and of course has made the military people green with anger’.⁵⁹⁹

The white population dropped from 4863 in 1895 to 2737 by the end of 1896.⁶⁰⁰ Tasked with the reorganisation of the civil service, Milton slated the Company’s record in government. Finance stood as an ever-present problem, but ‘worse still was the amateurish incompetence which offended all Milton’s instincts as a civil servant’. He told his wife that he had been working hard but the ‘whole place is topsy turvy [with] the military element being quite in the ascendant and mere civilians having to get on as best as they may’. He continued:

Everything official here is in an absolutely rotten condition and will continue so until we can clear out the honourable and military elements which are rampant everywhere and are expecting to be rewarded with fat billets after the war. If they get them I am off. The country has been very nearly ruined by them already under the wing of Jameson and if it is to continue the Imperial Government will be quite justified in stepping in.

In the same letter Milton continued: ‘it is perfectly sickening to see the way in which the country has been run for the sake of hob-nobbing with Lord this and the Hon. that’. He remarked bitterly that ‘Lady Dudley’s son, a youngster of the la-di-da class, has just been sent up here probably with an expression of Jameson’s wish that half a country may be given up to him’.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes*, 39

⁵⁹⁸ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 570

⁵⁹⁹ Milton to his wife, 11 September 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁰⁰ A. Samler Brown and G. Gordon Brown (eds.), *The Guide of South Africa: For the use of tourists, sportsmen, invalids and settlers, 1903-04*, (London, 1904), 105; James A. Chamunorwa Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) 1898-1923* (New Jersey, 1980), 26

⁶⁰¹ Milton to his wife, 25 September 1896 (MI 1/1/2, NAZ)

Blake thought Milton had ‘something of a middle-class chip on his shoulder and it does not follow that he was right in regarding all army officers and sons of peers as idle dunderheads. But he was correct about the reckless way in which Jameson allocated land.’⁶⁰² Milton placed the entire blame for the fiasco in land-grant policy on Jameson who, he said, had ‘given nearly the whole country to the Willoughbys, Whites and others of that class so that there is absolutely no land left of any value for the settlement of immigrants by the government’. Jameson, he claimed, ‘must have been off his head for some time before the Raid. The worst is that Rhodes will not clear himself at Jameson’s expense’.⁶⁰³ The issue was not as clear-cut. ‘Rhodes as Milton portrayed him,’ wrote Galbraith, ‘was a noble leader who refused to censure an erring subordinate.’ This was not entirely accurate because ‘it had always been Rhodes’s policy to gain and retain the support of the British governing class for his ventures ... Jameson faithfully followed what he believed to be Rhodes’s wishes by allocating vast tracts to [such people]’. His great deficiency therefore ‘was not that he did not act in accordance with Rhodes’s intentions but that he was an incompetent administrator. When he was removed from office, his successors found appalling acts of misfeasance during his tenure’.⁶⁰⁴

Milton found himself drawn increasingly into solving problems in government because there was no one better equipped to construct an administration on the Cape model. At the time though, he did not feel agreeable to any long-term involvement in the development of the territory. Milton told his wife: ‘I hope to get Rhodes to see if he is coming back to office at the Cape – as seems to be anticipated – I can be of more use to him in Cape Town than here ... I am not at all prepossessed by the country or the work’. In the course of his six-week stay in Bulawayo, Milton’s letters reflected the anxiety he suffered, a mood tempered only by his admiration for Rhodes. He wrote that he had not decided whether to ‘take a permanent appointment’, pointing out defiantly, ‘if Salisbury is not a better place I do not think I can stay and £2 000 is no catch up here I have found already’.⁶⁰⁵ Little more than a week later, he was forced to admit, ‘Mr Rhodes says that I cannot get away from here under nine months’, before adding with a sense of importance: ‘R[hodes] tells me that I am to manage the country including Grey, who is only out here a few months. What will happen afterwards nobody

⁶⁰² R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 116

⁶⁰³ Milton to his wife, 18 September 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁰⁴ John S. Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The Early Years of the B.S.A. Company (Perspectives on Southern Africa)*, California, 1975, 280-81. The country’s first administrator, A.R. Colquhoun, wrote of Rhodes’s ‘population at any price’ policy in the November 1908 issue of *Fortnightly Review*.

⁶⁰⁵ Milton to his wife, 2 September 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

knows, but don't say anything about this. I have today and tomorrow to draw up a scheme of civil service and take something in writing out for them to look at ...'⁶⁰⁶

Milton looked forward to leaving Bulawayo,⁶⁰⁷ although advice received encouraged mixed feelings about the capital: 'Salisbury is a much nicer place, but it is fearfully dull, there being no business done there at all, everything being centred in Bulawayo'.⁶⁰⁸ The trek to Salisbury was by mule-wagon although each member of the party had a horse and Jourdan recalled they 'rode most of the way, a distance of about 300 miles. Mr Rhodes was very fond of shooting, and we had grand sport. We travelled about twenty-five miles a day.'⁶⁰⁹ On reaching Salisbury on 4 November, 'the town had reached the nadir of depression – the *Rhodesia Herald* stated "There is doubtless a very dull time in front of us for the next few months ... but there is no doubt something should be attempted"⁶¹⁰ Milton was indeed disappointed to discover the capital was 'a straggling settlement with a few brick buildings scattered haphazardly about the veldt'⁶¹¹. He recalled asking excitedly at the time, 'Where is Salisbury? Where is Salisbury?', only to be informed by Judge Vincent that it is 'hidden around the Kopje.' Another warning voice added, 'You cannot expect anything very large; it is much less than Bulawayo.' To make matters worse, the town was still surrounded by Mashonas: 'one of the few cities,' said Milton, 'in which every citizen at that time was in gaol'.⁶¹² He admitted that he found Salisbury slightly less odious than Bulawayo though 'a god-forsaken place to spend one's life in'.⁶¹³

After securing peace in Matabeleland, Rhodes had promised 'a fresh start, a reformed white administration ...'⁶¹⁴ He recognised the shortcomings of Company rule and realised that prosperity in the region depended upon the establishment of 'complete confidence between the two (white and black) races and henceforth I shall make that part of my work, but all must help'.⁶¹⁵ Rhodes negotiated the surrender of the indunas 'on the basis that they could return to their old grazing grounds, but he had only done this by persuading the white owners, most of whom had not even occupied their farms, to allow the Ndebele undisturbed

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 11 September 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 9 October 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁰⁸ G.A. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1890-1900*, Salisbury, 1965, 177

⁶⁰⁹ Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes*, 44

⁶¹⁰ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, Salisbury, 1965, 176

⁶¹¹ W.D. Gale, *Heritage of Rhodes*, Cape Town, 1950, 72

⁶¹² *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 October 1914

⁶¹³ R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 148

⁶¹⁴ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 569.

⁶¹⁵ L. Michell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes, 1853-1902*, London, 1910, 168

possession for the next two years'. The arrangement bought time but was fraught with problems. Grey hoped 'to implement Rhodes's promises by large scale purchase, but the Company lacked the money'.⁶¹⁶ As a consequence, the indunas were unhappy that at the end of two years they should find themselves having to pay rent to a white landlord, a development that suited white farmers who were in need of labour.

In Mashonaland, no comparable attempt was made to reach peace. The most-informed whites 'were antagonistic to the Company's rule, blaming it for the Shona rising and their initial defencelessness'. Robert Blake wrote of lost opportunities but accepted that 'even the Colossus could not bestride two places so far apart'.⁶¹⁷ The task of quelling the rebellion was in imperial hands and dragged on until well into 1897. Rhodes was against the imperial troops staying in Mashonaland. Apart from the expense to the Company, 'Alderson's force had failed to bring about a decisive engagement' at a time when the town was surrounded by the Mashona.⁶¹⁸ 'The whole truth,' wrote Milton, 'is that the imperial troops here have done nothing ... CJR's little expedition at Enkeldoorn did more in six hours than the imperial forces in five months'.⁶¹⁹ It was a critical period and Milton noted:

The Police in Mashonaland are destroying crops of natives who refuse to give up their guns. It seems wicked to destroy food when we have none in the country but it is the only way to make them surrender. In Matabeleland there is no food for the natives except government supplies. They are feeding 3000 a day in Bulawayo. I don't know how the Company is going to stand the cost. CJR said he would pay if the Company would not.⁶²⁰

Father Alphonsus Daignault of the Jesuits of the Zambezi Mission was impressed with the Company's action 'in supplying the natives [in Matabeleland] with seed and food, and trying to find employment for them'. He thought it was creditable that they should behave magnanimously after the Matabele had 'caused the Company such a loss of life, money and property'. He could not 'instance a similar case of equal generosity',⁶²¹ yet the imperial representatives had little time for the Company. Sir Richard Martin, who had acquired the nickname 'Dilatory Dick',⁶²² had been appointed as Resident Commissioner and Commandant General of Rhodesia and therefore controlled the movements against the rebels. His tactics were widely questioned. Blake refers to Chief Makoni's offer of surrender in

⁶¹⁶ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 162

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid*, 141

⁶¹⁸ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 112

⁶¹⁹ Milton to his wife, 28 December 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶²⁰ *Ibid*, 1 February 1897 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶²¹ H.C. Thomson, *Rhodesia and its Government*, London, 1898, 212

⁶²² Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 180

return for an amnesty; a case in which Judge Vincent, Acting Administrator at Salisbury, favoured acceptance but ‘Goodenough, Martin and the imperial government ... insisted on unconditional surrender’ and thus prolonged the fighting.⁶²³ Martin was not only against the destruction of crops and the ‘blowing-up’ of caves from which the rebels fired on attackers, but was prepared ‘to treat those concerned in the murders with clemency’. Milton ‘found this deferment of action irritating, particularly as it was supported by Earl Grey, who saw himself carrying out a peace settlement made in the same way as that of Rhodes in the Matopos’. It was not until June 1897 that firm action was taken when Major Gosling attacked Chief Kunzi’s kopje and used dynamite to destroy the caves into which the rebels disappeared: ‘The news of the action had a very definite effect on those chiefs who had regarded themselves as safe in their rocky fastnesses’.⁶²⁴ Not long afterwards, the Seventh Hussars under the command of the legendary cricketer, Captain Robert Poore, made a successful and decisive attack on the stronghold of Matshayangombi in the Charter area.

In Salisbury, there was relief that the warfare had finally come to an end but the rebellions left a legacy of fear and hate, which encouraged segregation. A *Rhodesia Herald* editorial complained that the Mashona was ‘a worse class of native to deal with than can be found throughout the whole length of and breadth of South Africa. They are cowardly, cruel, treacherous and without an atom of gratitude in their nature ... We should treat them with firmness but justice, always impressing upon them the wholesome fact that they are our inferiors, morally, socially, and mentally, and can never be otherwise’. It added, ‘The Matabele are not much better. The vice of cowardice, however, cannot with equal truth be attributed to them’.⁶²⁵

Ironically, Milton had been no more impressed by the quality of whites that were full of grievances and made requests ‘on every conceivable pretext ... They have simply plundered [Rhodes], deserving and undeserving alike.’⁶²⁶ Rhodes had, shortly after his arrival at Salisbury, met representatives of the people at Government House: ‘About a dozen were deputed to represent the different interests at Salisbury ... agitators had said they were to “make it hot for Mr Rhodes” [but] as he sat there at the head of the table with the full light on his face and his commanding forehead, he looked every inch a Colossus and a giant amongst pygmies ... they were more like lambs than the lions they were represented to be’. Milton and Jourdan looked on as the deputation listened to Rhodes ‘with the greatest attention and

⁶²³ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 141

⁶²⁴ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 185

⁶²⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 1 August 1897

⁶²⁶ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time* 178

seemed in awe of his personality'. Rhodes had his way on virtually every issue and 'his visit seemed to encourage and put new life into the people'.⁶²⁷

Heartened by an end to the fighting, the citizens of Salisbury arranged a Sports Carnival in September 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee as well as the victory over the Mashona. Preparations had begun early but, as the scheduled date loomed, Umtali and Fort Victoria withdrew. The organisers pressed on regardless, determined not only that the event should project the cultural and moral power of the white population, but that it should be a show of Salisbury's sporting supremacy. The Seventh Hussars, fresh from helping quell the rebellion, were disappointed at the reception they received, especially the men who 'had marched in forty miles with donkey wagons'. They were deemed to be late for the shooting and barred from taking part, whilst no ground could be found for the polo.⁶²⁸

The cricket unveiled feelings of intense community identity as Salisbury strove to avenge their defeat at Bulawayo two years earlier. They controversially 'declined' to engage the Seventh Hussars and arranged to play Bulawayo twice, prompting the *Rhodesia Herald* to describe the term 'tournament' as 'somewhat of a misnomer'.⁶²⁹ Bulawayo arrived two hours before the start of their opening match and Milton (60), aided by the Taberers, pulverised their bowling to set up a convincing victory. Bulawayo won the return match but the innings best remembered was that made against them by the Seventh Hussars batting star, Captain Poore, who is best remembered for being invited to represent both the English and South Africans in the 1895/96 series of matches.⁶³⁰

The Sports Carnival failed because of the ill-feeling that it fostered. 'Salisbury is the most uninteresting and uninterested place we have struck in Rhodesia,' said Poore. 'At the cricket match, Salisbury versus Bulawayo, there were seven onlookers, other than players, of whom three were visitors.'⁶³¹ In contrast, a Bulawayo player expressed enthusiasm about a match played in Gwelo on the way home. 'Gwelo are the most sportsmanlike and hospitable crowd we met on our cricket tour and we all thoroughly enjoyed our stay in the little town'.⁶³² Milton was not discouraged and hoped sport would heal the rift between Rhodesia's leading towns, confident that it would shape the hegemonic national identity that was desired. It was a matter of how long he was prepared to stay in the country.

⁶²⁷ Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes*, 48-49

⁶²⁸ *Bulawayo Chronicle* and *Rhodesia Herald* 7-23 September, 1897

⁶²⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 16 September, 1897

⁶³⁰ Jeremy Lonsdale, *The Army's Grace: The Life of Brigadier-General RM Poore*, London, 1992, 47. Poore's unbeaten 75 was described as a 'splendid exhibition ... combining sound defence with resolute hitting'.

⁶³¹ Lonsdale, *The Army's Grace*, 47; *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 16 September, 1897

⁶³² *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 23 September 1897

It appeared to be a case of being ready to stay as long as the 'Founder' was there. Rhodes's presence was comforting; perhaps exemplified by Hugh Marshall Hole in his recollection: 'I see him again in '97, playing pool with Lord Grey, Mr Milton and some of the younger civil servants at George Pauling's roomy house in Salisbury, making prodigious flukes and chuckling with glee as he picks up our "tickies" from the edge of the table'. The support of Rhodes was an undoubted strength at a time when Milton had uneasy relationships with Lord Grey and the Resident Commissioner.

Grey wrote to Milton in July 1897 to 'once more beg you to remain for a further period with us, as I consider your presence most essential to the efficient administration of this country'.⁶³³ Two weeks later, after Milton had taken over as acting Senior Administrator, Grey wrote again, this time from Cape Town. He told Milton that 'as the Administrator is the first Representative of the Queen and the Resident Commissioner is only the Deputy of the High Commissioner, the Administrator and not the Resident Commissioner has the right to the Flag.' In addition, he said 'Milner agrees it is Martin's duty to carry into effect the wishes of the Administrator re the disposition of troops, so long as he is satisfied that imperial interests (qua raids etc.) are not affected.' He further scribbled across the top of his letter that he had provided the information 'in case Martin tries to arrogate himself privileges as the Queen's Representative when you are her Representative'.⁶³⁴

At the end of 1897 Rhodes had to go to England to face the committee of enquiry into the Jameson Raid and 'prevailed upon Milton to remain longer than he had intended, not by dwelling on the advantages but on the disadvantages of the position'. Milton told his wife that Rhodes had mentioned 'he would not be surprised to hear I was leaving, though he hoped I would stay ... I think I must stay for six months at least'.⁶³⁵ Milton had been Acting Administrator since July 1897 and Rhodes wanted him to succeed Grey although the matter was not entirely simple. Grey had with the consent of the London Board offered the position to his former private secretary, Captain Arthur Lawley, a son of Lord Wenlock, who had been deputising for Grey at Bulawayo. Milton was not unduly bothered and let his wife know that Rhodes had told Herbert Castens (who had been appointed acting public prosecutor) that 'I was going to stick to him and remain here so he evidently intends to square the London Board'.⁶³⁶

Grey wrote to Rhodes with the suggestion that 'Lawley should receive precedence over Milton, in view of Lawley's ability; his popularity at Home and in Matabeleland, as well as

⁶³³ Grey to Milton, 13 July 1897 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶³⁴ *Ibid*, 28 July 1897 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶³⁵ Gale, *Heritage of Rhodes*, 72

⁶³⁶ Milton to his wife, 15 March 1897 (MI, 1/1/1, NAZ)

Milton's willingness to accept such an arrangement'.⁶³⁷ This evidently confidential letter came into Milton's hands and he promptly informed Grey that he was 'not willing to surrender his seniority to Lawley'.⁶³⁸ As it transpired, Rhodes would have his way⁶³⁹ and Milton was appointed, a sensible decision because while Lawley 'was a good soldier and a man of charming personality, he had not the requisite experience to organise a government and civil service, and Rhodes intended that Milton should do this'.⁶⁴⁰ In December 1898 Lawley was officially gazetted Administrator of Matabeleland and remained subordinate to the Administrator of Mashonaland and Senior Administrator of Southern Rhodesia. The arrangement lasted until 1901 when Lawley resigned.

As Rhodesia was in many respects a northward expansion of the Cape, so Milton took advantage of the situation in importing experienced men. He admitted, 'John Graham is horrified at my taking away his good men, but it must be done'.⁶⁴¹ The new arrivals who modelled the Rhodesian civil service on that of the Cape 'soon gave an entirely different tone to the administration', one that 'lacked the distinctive British upper-class background which came to characterise the administrative machine in tropical dependencies like Nyasaland'⁶⁴². Milton told his wife that he was 'unpopular with local civil servants for bringing in so many men from the Cape'⁶⁴³ but he was against employing the 'down-and-out job-seekers thronging Salisbury during and after the rebellion'.⁶⁴⁴ It was observed that cricket was the principal qualification of his civil service appointees, a development that stemmed from Milton's belief that 'employers and heads of department would find that if they have a good player in their employ he will be a good worker as well'.⁶⁴⁵

In the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, six of South Africa's first ten cricket captains as well as other notable players crossed the Limpopo. In most cases, they had retired from the game and were furthering their careers in the civil service or through business. The reorganisation of the civil service in 1898 provided for the appointment of a secretarial staff

⁶³⁷ Grey to Rhodes, 20 August 1897 (MI, 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶³⁸ Milton to Grey, 15 October 1897 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶³⁹ After lengthy correspondence between Rhodes and Grey, the former spoke to Lawley and became relatively forceful in dealing with the matter. He concluded a letter to Grey by stating: 'I think it would be nice if you sent Milton a wire to say that you intend to propose him as your successor at some time' (MSS Afr s.69 File 1 ff 108-114, Rhodes House).

⁶⁴⁰ Gale, *Heritage of Rhodes*, 72

⁶⁴¹ Milton to his wife, 1 February 1897 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁴² Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 146

⁶⁴³ Milton to his wife, 1 February 1897, (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁴⁴ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia, A History of Rhodesia*, 152

⁶⁴⁵ *Cape Times Weekly*, 2 September 1896

on the permanent establishment; a situation which enabled Milton to appoint Herbert Castens as his Chief Secretary.⁶⁴⁶ An enigmatic character, Castens had only recently arrived in Rhodesia when, in April 1897, he served as the acting public prosecutor at the well-publicised trial of the tribal spirit medium, Mbuya Nehanda. She was hanged for the murder of native commissioner, Henry Hawkins Pollard, with Castens' role being singled out and remembered by the African people. In sharp contrast, Castens's tenure as Chief Secretary was unremarkable in that he was tasked with dealing with most of Milton's correspondence, whilst putting his legal training to good use on occasion. The partnership was perhaps better known for spreading the domain of cricket across Rhodesia as reflected by GH Tanser's comment: 'Where previously, one had to be a member of the la-di-da class to get a job in the Civil Service, now you had to beat the hide off a ball.'⁶⁴⁷

Milton's impact on sport resulted in a marked change in attitude towards cricket and rugby. Prior to his arrival, the games ethic had flourished within the towns as an honourable social pursuit to demonstrate solidarity and signify a British presence. Milton was aware of sport's potential value for identity-building and worked towards improved structures and organisation. He called for the revival of the Kopje Cricket Club⁶⁴⁸ and helped it establish a field on the race course. Then, not satisfied with Cecil Square as a venue for the Salisbury Cricket Club, he looked for a more spacious setting.⁶⁴⁹ Milton, who had earlier purchased Newlands, proceeded to obtain the present site of the Harare Sports Club. He was responsible for the grant of free title to the ground ahead of other applications and soon had the site cleared by convicts. The first match was staged on 7 August 1897 and, thereafter, all cricketers about to begin a game were ordered to bring a badza (a hoe) and use it for half an hour before any play could commence.⁶⁵⁰

At a meeting of the Salisbury Cricket Club, Milton expressed his dislike of the nomenclature used in matches such as 'New Chums' versus 'The World' or between teams selected by the ladies with the titles 'Beautiful' and 'Hideous'. A match that interested him was the 'Public Schools and Universities XI versus All-Comers' fixture on the first Saturday in January. It had gained in significance and developed a great deal of 'needle' since it was first played in 1892, partly because the *Rhodesia Herald* referred to the game as a contest between the 'Educated' and the 'Uneducated'.⁶⁵¹ The press built up interest by inserting

⁶⁴⁶ See Heinrich Schulze, *South Africa's Cricketing Lawyers*, Halfway House, 1999, 17-23

⁶⁴⁷ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 179

⁶⁴⁸ It was named the Alexandra Cricket Club after the reigning queen.

⁶⁴⁹ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 179-80 and 200

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 186

⁶⁵¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 8 November, 1892

details of the schools and universities that the 'Educated' had attended, whilst after-match dinners were attended by the 'Old Boys' of such institutions. Milton, who encouraged the growth of cricket in Rhodesia as part of imperialist ideology, accepted the chairmanship of the Public Schools and Universities Association as a means of fostering social control rather than dividing the white community.⁶⁵² For a while, such attempts to define and reinforce social cleavages were characteristic of white attitudes in Rhodesia. There was a fine but all-important line that stretched across Victorian society and 'distinguished those who were gentlemen from those who were not'. As was the case in South Africa, it was temporary and would struggle to exist in a white frontier society 'where men were judged rather for their own exertions than for their antecedents'.⁶⁵³ And, in time, the trend was apparent where some 'Home-born' fixtures were taken up by 'South African-born' teams.

The arrival of the railway line at Bulawayo in 1897 had opened new opportunities for the sporting community. It enabled Rhodesia to begin sporting relations with South Africa in 1898 by entering the highly competitive Currie Cup rugby competition. The venture owed much to the arrival of the inspirational Tom Brown Hepburn, whose parents had been drawn to the moral fervour of Thomas Hughes's famous story when christening their son.⁶⁵⁴ When South Africa won their first-ever rugby international – against the touring British team at Newlands in 1896 – Hepburn converted Alf Larard's try in the historic 5-0 victory. At that stage, he was a well-known name in South African sport but, yearning for the space that the Shoshong mission had given him, he decided on a move to Bulawayo in 1897 and joined the Native Affairs department.⁶⁵⁵ A number of the South African players who had participated in the 1896 Test series against the British joined Hepburn in moving to Rhodesia. They included Francis Myburgh, Hamish 'Spanner' Forbes, Sonny Taberer, Ben Andrews and 'Patats' Cloete. There was no co-ordinated plan to strengthen Rhodesian rugby and the players branched out far and wide on arrival, making their homes in Bulawayo, Selukwe, Salisbury and Umtali.

The touring team exceeded expectations, drawing with the mighty Transvaal and defeating Eastern Province and the Orange Free State. Glowing accounts of their achievements of the side appeared in the local press and sporting heroes emerged. Hepburn

⁶⁵² Milton chaired a committee which comprised Major Hall (Cheltenham), H. Taberer (Oxford), C. Bayley (Rugby) and R. Fairbridge (Bedford Modern).

⁶⁵³ J.R. DeS. Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, Grahamstown, 1972, 18.

⁶⁵⁴ see J. Hepburn, *Twenty years in Khama's Country and Pioneering among the Bataunga of Lake Ngami*, London, 1895

⁶⁵⁵ His father – Reverend James Hepburn – had always opposed Dutch interference in Bechuanaland and a letter to the *Daily Independent* (19 March 1889) from 'Fairplay' complained: 'Unfortunately missionary Hepburn is imbued with a bigoted hatred of the Dutch'.

was a tower of strength, ably assisted by Colin Duff, a former Western Province player whose transfer to Rhodesia had been arranged by Milton. A huge welcoming reception greeted the side on their return to Bulawayo station. The awaiting band struck up a lively strain and accompanied them throughout the day. Percy Ross Frames, the first President of the South African Rugby Board, (1889-93) and later a member of Milton's Legislative Council,⁶⁵⁶ occupied the chair whilst manager, ESTJM Hutchinson, said that in Cape Town 'all eyes were on Rhodesia and we might expect a strong influx of young footballers next season'. Hepburn thought an awareness 'of the strong support that the team had at home had much to do with their success' adding that 'every man in the team had done his duty'.⁶⁵⁷

Milton was alert to rugby's efforts in fostering a national consciousness and at the annual general meeting of the Salisbury Cricket Club on 17 August 1898, he advocated the formation of a Rhodesia Cricket Union. He said that he believed 'nothing had been done in the matter as yet, notwithstanding a resolution to this effect passed at the previous annual general meeting'. Keen to be at the forefront of such a development Milton told members that he would personally see that the matter was taken up. He also thought that after unification they should join the South African Cricket Association without further delay: 'Rhodesia has just sent down a football team [to South Africa]. 'Why not cricket?''⁶⁵⁸ There were calls of 'Hear!! Hear!' despite cricket lacking rugby's support and Salisbury being much the weaker of the country's two main cricket-playing areas. There might also have been a sense of despair when Milton turned out for Veterans against Juveniles that season. His team was all out for 24 of which he made 19, prior to the Juveniles rattling up more than 100 whilst batting with pick handles.⁶⁵⁹

Fortunately for Milton, several important developments conspired to give impetus to his launch of a national cricket body. In the first place, East London turned down a match against Lord Hawke's touring side which created an opening for Bulawayo to host two matches. The opportunity injected urgency into the process of amalgamation because cricket authorities in Bulawayo sought to construct a 'Rhodesian XV' and wished to do so 'on a proper basis either in connection with or separately from the parent union in Salisbury'. The country's cricket

⁶⁵⁶ Percival Ross Frames, a lawyer, established a business in Bulawayo, later in partnership with Charles Coghlan, Rhodesia's first prime minister. Ross Frames left the country in 1905 and became Chairman of De Beers Consolidated Mines and the Cape Explosives Works.

⁶⁵⁷ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 1,3 September 1898

⁶⁵⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 18 August, 1898

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 1 November, 1898

unification was effectively sealed when Henry Taberer – the chief native commissioner – agreed to take up the matter and ensure Salisbury’s representation in the side.⁶⁶⁰

There was no arrangement whereby the newly-formed Rhodesian Cricket Union was obliged to affiliate to the South African Cricket Association in order to be granted tour fixtures. Members of the latter body were more concerned at the time that a fire at the Wanderers Club had destroyed their records, although the secretary did respond to press coverage of Milton’s achievement. ‘You will have noted with pleasure,’ he said, ‘that Mr Milton, the Administrator of Rhodesia, has succeeded in forming a Union in the country, but official notice has not yet reached me.’⁶⁶¹

Little more than eight years after the Pioneer Column had embarked on its historic venture, Rhodesia hosted Lord Hawke’s English team. The tour was viewed as an opportunity to cement ties with the old country and aroused great interest in the game. The writing of English cricketer, Pelham Warner, provided insight into the progress that had been made in the country, recalling at the outset that ‘it was almost impossible for us to realise that a few short years back Bulawayo was the capital of a great savage nation – a spot, indeed, where a white man’s life depended solely on the temper of the king’.⁶⁶² He also touched on the ground which had been laid out a mere three weeks after the rebellion was quelled and was composed of ‘sandy soil devoid of grass but dead level’. Turf wickets were unheard of in southern Africa but Warner described it as ‘the most wonderful ground in the world ... a tribute to the splendid enthusiasm with which the men of Rhodesia regard the great national game.’⁶⁶³

The match against the Rhodesian XV was eagerly anticipated. Milton was unable to make the trip but the five Salisbury cricketers set off in hope. The capital was not linked by rail to the south until 1902 and the first challenge for the travellers was the Hunyani River in full spate. The driver lightened the coach and tried to manoeuvre it across the river while it was being drawn by the swimming mules. The players attempted an alternative method of transporting themselves and their gear to the other side. The wire rope which carried a skip had been broken, but Taberer, with the best throwing arm on the continent⁶⁶⁴, came to the rescue by nailing a cord to a ball and hurling it across the river. A rope and then a wire were

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 7 February 1899

⁶⁶¹ South African Cricket Association minutes, 29 August 1898

⁶⁶² Pelham Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, London, 1900, 239-40

⁶⁶³ Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, 240. Another of the visitors commented on the fact that there was ‘a good pavilion with spacious room, quite equal to many grounds in England where an occasional county game is played’ (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, 1 March 1899).

⁶⁶⁴ Taberer held the Natal cricket ball-throwing record of 126 yards. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 213, refers to Taberer being able to ‘throw a cricket ball a hundred yards while standing in a barrel’.

attached to the cord, eventually allowing for a skip to transport everyone successfully to the opposite bank. The driver and mules were not so fortunate, having been washed downstream before clambering back to the Salisbury side of the raging river. The cricketers waited a day or two before the coach from Bulawayo arrived; it was promptly turned around to begin an unexpectedly early return journey. Conditions were appalling – ‘for four nights no one had a wink of sleep’⁶⁶⁵ – and, for a good part of the journey, the players had to walk alongside the coach, ever ready to assist the struggling animals.⁶⁶⁶ The English were impressed by the efforts of the Rhodesians to play the game. ‘There were a fine manly lot of fellows in Bulawayo,’ wrote Pelham Warner.⁶⁶⁷

Taberer quickly shrugged off any after-effects of the nightmare journey and bowled superbly to take five wickets in 38 immaculate overs. He achieved a lively pace and Warner said of him that he ‘was the fastest bowler we played against on the tour’.⁶⁶⁸ The Rhodesians were not at any stage able to gain the upper hand but their performance was an encouraging indicator of progress being made in a new colony.⁶⁶⁹ The events of the cricket venture were applauded by the visitors, including JD Logan, a member of the Cape Legislative Council. He donated a cup valued at 100 guineas to be used for inter-town competition in Rhodesia and invited Taberer to accompany a South African side that he intended taking on tour to the United Kingdom.

Taberer was an interesting figure. He had succeeded the ‘rough and ready, illiterate’ J.S. Brabant, who was dismissed as chief native commissioner by the Company. Described as ‘a very different man’, the Oxford-educated Taberer ‘told the native commissioners that they should not think of themselves primarily as collectors of taxes’. He put the Department on a more orderly basis in acquiring knowledge of native customs and grievances, drawing maps

⁶⁶⁵ Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, 245

⁶⁶⁶ Accounts of the journey are recorded in Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*; Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*; J. Thompson, *The Story of Rhodesian Sport: 1889-1935*, Bulawayo, 1935, and in the Rhodesian newspapers of that time.

⁶⁶⁷ Warner, *Cricket in Many Climes*, London, 1900, 240. Warner recalled, ‘At luncheon and dinner in the club you can see men in their shirt-sleeves and at the dinner that was subsequently given us at the club, one man – an old Rugbeian – informed me that he had not worn a collar for nearly a year!’

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 245

⁶⁶⁹ The English total of 275 (P. Warner 80, J. Tyldesley 71; H. Taberer 5/62) proved too much for the Rhodesians who were bowled out for 121 and 89. For Rhodesia, H Hallward, the old Lancing captain, compiled a well-played 52 in the first innings and C. Duff top-scored with 27 not out in the second. S. Haigh’s accurate medium-paced bowling posed the greatest problem, the Yorkshireman returning match figures of 13/44.

and compiling statistics.⁶⁷⁰ He had arrived in Rhodesia too late to attempt to avert trouble but was expected to play a significant role in rebuilding the country. A strong personality and brilliant all-round sportsman,⁶⁷¹ Taberer was not someone who would simply fall in line when it came to enforcing policy on native affairs. Milton was wary of the influence Taberer exerted, possibly seeing him as a threat, and indicated as much in 1897 when he informed his wife that he did not want Taberer to run native affairs: 'I think I told you that I am trying to get Glen Grey Sweeny; Taberer is too young and off-hand for the headship of the department.'⁶⁷²

In rebuilding Rhodesia after the rebellions, Milton's administration 'was anxious to keep its hands clean and avoid any act of oppression'.⁶⁷³ Milton had for some time concentrated most of the work in his own hands, partly because he regarded 'Grey as incompetent as ever'.⁶⁷⁴ He had not only acted as secretary of native affairs but, until Castens' appointment, was his own chief secretary. Milton of course 'was not devoid of defects. He was an engrosser of power and reluctant to delegate'. He was criticised for becoming 'too much absorbed in detail' but then did much to dispel the Colonial Office criticism of the quality of the Company's servants: 'Colquhoun had been a prickly pedant insistent on his "rights"'. Jameson had been an erratic adventurer prepared to gamble on the turn of a card. Grey had been an engaging idealist tilting vaguely at windmills. Milton was the first Administrator whose abilities actually warranted his title'.⁶⁷⁵

Milton emerged strongly at a time when reform became necessary to curb the Company's powers. The Order in Council of 1898 – with some subsequent modifications – formed the new 'Magna Carta of Company government'. It established the first Legislative Council (consisting of six company representatives and four other members elected by the white community) and a voting system that was notably 'colour-blind', although restricted to males and determined by property and literacy qualifications. There were two reasons why Rhodes was ready to accept the settlers' demand for representation in the running of the colony: firstly, he had always envisaged that Rhodesia would develop towards the status of a self-governing colony, and then form part of a South African Federation under the British flag. Secondly, if there was a certain amount of power-sharing, then it would be harder for

⁶⁷⁰ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 121

⁶⁷¹ Taberer, a fine sportsman, had captained Natal at cricket; was an athletics and rugby 'Blue' at Oxford, and played rugby for the British Barbarians.

⁶⁷² Milton to his wife, 1 February 1897

⁶⁷³ A. Hanna, *The Story of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, London, 1960, 180

⁶⁷⁴ Milton to his wife, 24 November 1896 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁶⁷⁵ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 152

Whitehall to assert its authority: 'They may bully the Company ... but they won't dare to bully a representative Council'.⁶⁷⁶

The Order in Council gave the Administrator much power as he presided over both the Executive and the Legislative Councils. 'Milton,' wrote Blake 'was both head of the civil service and Secretary for Native Affairs. He was therefore responsible for two separate administrative systems which corresponded with the division of the country into "two nations"'. Milton controlled the magistrates and civil commissioners who were responsible for the white population, whilst also supervising the chief native commissioners of Matabeleland and Mashonaland who, in turn, headed a hierarchy of native and assistant native commissioners in their respective provinces. 'Constitutionally,' explained Blake, '[Milton's] position was in many respects like that of a colonial governor but with two important differences; first he was responsible to the Chartered Company and only indirectly to the Crown; secondly he had an indefinite tenure unlike the customary four years or so of the typical governor.'⁶⁷⁷

Milton's responsibilities were enormous but the extent of his task was recognised by Henry Wilson Fox of the Company's London office. He wrote to Milton: 'More of the Augean stable of the past to sweep up I suppose you will say. It certainly is hard that the cleaning of all the dirty corners left by Jameson should fall on your shoulders'.⁶⁷⁸ Damage inflicted by Jameson was going to take time to put right. The Company was not even in the position 'to recover some of the land which the grantees of the Jameson era ought to have forfeited through non-compliance with the conditions of grant'. Blake records that when Milton attempted to do this there was 'uproar on the Legislative Council – some of the elected members had connexions with the absentee companies – and little or nothing was done'.⁶⁷⁹ There is, nevertheless, a record of Milton's refusal to confirm H.F. White's title to land in the Inyanga District promised by Rhodes after the Raid.⁶⁸⁰

Rhodes wanted Milton to take on the position of Native Affairs in addition to that of Senior Administrator. He wrote: 'Do you wish for the appointment of a Secretary for Native Affairs or will you continue [to] perform duties of the office. I prefer you retaining natives. You will receive of course extra remuneration.'⁶⁸¹ Not unexpectedly, Milton replied that he did not 'desire a separate secretary for native affairs'. The British South Africa Company

⁶⁷⁶ Rotberg, *The Founder* 575

⁶⁷⁷ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 151

⁶⁷⁸ Fox to Milton, 14 October 1898 (A 1/5/1, NAZ)

⁶⁷⁹ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 162

⁶⁸⁰ MSS Afr. s 228 C 27 (75) 6, August 1898, Rhodes House

⁶⁸¹ Rhodes to Milton, MI 1/1/1 f164

promptly agreed; they realised that the position would involve a salary of £1200 whereas they need pay Milton no more than £600 in addition to his salary and allowance as Administrator. The Company secretary sought the imperial government's approval in informing the under secretary of state in the colonial office that:

[Milton's] acquaintance with native affairs, both in the Cape Colony and Rhodesia, has given him special qualifications for the position. My Directors are satisfied that no more suitable selection could be made, and, in view of the tact and experience displayed by Mr Milton in the past, in discharging the duties of this important office, are reluctant that any change should for the present be made.⁶⁸²

Although there was some Colonial Office opposition, Milton kept the post of Secretary of Native Affairs in his own hands, thus establishing an administrative tradition that lasted until the end of the Company's rule in Southern Rhodesia. In being entrusted with such responsibility, Milton was clearly highly regarded. He would, however, discover that the country's Africans had no immediate desire to absorb white culture: they enjoyed their contented idleness and frustrated a white community that required their labour. They had been used to an economy where money played no part and 'saw no reason for change'.⁶⁸³ To appease the imperial overlords in the aftermath of the rebellions, Lord Grey had stated that native policy was calculated to produce 'those industrious habits which are so essential to civilisation, without interfering more than absolute necessary with the customs and habits of the natives themselves'.⁶⁸⁴ The policy accepted there could be no immediate assimilation into European society, a position monitored by the Resident Commissioner who was tasked with protecting African rights through reporting discriminatory legislation to the High Commissioner.

The process of establishing native reserves had begun in Matabeleland in 1894 and, two years later, it was agreed that they should be set up throughout the country. The Order in Council of 1898 stated that 'The Company shall from time to time assign to the natives inhabiting Southern Rhodesia land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes, or portions of tribes, and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases a fair and equitable proportion of springs or permanent water.' A governing condition was that the 'imperial government could 'call upon the Company to provide more land if it

⁶⁸² J.F. Jones to Colonial Office, 12 April 1899 (MI 1/1/1 f167)

⁶⁸³ P. Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*, London, 1958, 219

⁶⁸⁴ Lord Grey, then Administrator, to the Martin Commission (C. Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1934*, Athens, 1994, 89)

believed the current assignment to be inadequate ... the task of demarcating the reserves fell to the native commissioners'.⁶⁸⁵

A visitor to the country in the aftermath of the rebellions, H.C. Thomson, published *Rhodesia and its Government* in which he congratulated the British South Africa Company on inducing Milton 'to transfer his services to themselves – for no man is more likely to deal fairly with the black population as well as with the white.' Thomson believed that an important factor in favour of Milton was that he had 'drafted the Glen Grey Act (the measure on which Mr Rhodes's reputation as a legislator chiefly rests) for the enforcement of compulsory native labour'. The Act had gained in support at the Cape but the very mention of it suggested some conflict with the policy being devised for the black people of Rhodesia. Thomson did at least admit that Milton had 'a Herculean task before him', prior to stating that 'the general feeling was that he would prove equal to it.'⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁵ Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, California 1977, 58

⁶⁸⁶ Thomson, *Rhodesia and its Government*, 127

Chapter 8:

‘An absolute monarchy with him as king’: the last years of Cecil John Rhodes

After dinner, Cecil John Rhodes liked to talk to his guests. Sometimes, he would speak ‘for hours with hardly an interruption from any of his hearers’. According to Philip Jourdan, he had ‘a most curious way of expressing his ideas about people’. On one occasion, he ‘was in great form and expressed his opinions very freely’. He told his guests that he had ‘a few glass cases’ in which he put those people who by their excellence deserved them. He mentioned having a fine glass case for Lord Salisbury, because ‘as a statesman he stands alone’ whilst ‘in finance, again, we have Beit. There is no one who can approach him in that line ... there is Jones, the secretary of the Chartered Company ... as a man of business he cannot be excelled.

‘And in the same way,’ Rhodes continued, ‘I have my glass case for Milton. As an administrator you cannot beat him. He never decides hurriedly, and when he does speak his words are well considered and have only one meaning. He says exactly what he means. He is a grand man at the head of an office. He is the most competent official I have ever had to deal with. I have my glass case for him’.⁶⁸⁷

Milton was unlike Rhodes’s other secretaries who ‘were all much more companions than secretaries’. Some had been chosen because ‘Rhodes warmed to the face – and he preferred those with piercing blue eyes like his own’. Milton was not one of the young men with whom Rhodes shared an ‘almost adolescent relationship; banter, horseplay and practical jokes’.⁶⁸⁸ He had risen through the ranks of the civil service to head the Prime Minister’s Office, and was first choice when it came to setting up the Rhodesian Civil Service. It was written of Milton that he ‘enjoyed the complete confidence of Cecil John Rhodes’⁶⁸⁹ whilst he, in turn, regarded himself as a ‘servant to Rhodes’⁶⁹⁰.

Despite early claims to the contrary, there did not seem any likelihood that Milton would ever leave Rhodesia. His devotion to Rhodes was a powerful factor; so was the chance to prove himself in a position of great responsibility. By late 1898, prospects in the country appeared a great deal more promising. Advancement was dependent on the railway – ‘the lifeblood of the Rhodesian economy’⁶⁹¹ – and Milton was in Umtali to meet the first train from Beira. A year later, the line was extended to Salisbury, thereby placing the capital in a

⁶⁸⁷ Philip Jourdan, *Cecil Rhodes, His Private Life*, London, 1911, 215

⁶⁸⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, Oxford, 1988, 405-06

⁶⁸⁹ L. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934*, London, 1965, 145-46.

⁶⁹⁰ *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 October, 1914.

⁶⁹¹ Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 145

position where it possessed a link to the outside world. A period of relative peace and prosperity followed that was recorded vividly in letters written by Mary Blackwood Lewis. She wrote of the town's 'extraordinary community; there are no old people excepting the surveyor general and his wife. Everybody is young and trying to make the best of everything in life.' She added interestingly: 'Most of the women are pretty and pleasant and the men one meets are all public schoolboys and mostly members of good county families.'⁶⁹²

Life was never easy for Milton. His wife spent considerable time overseas looking after her boys. She also suffered several periods of ill-health and it was deemed advisable for her to stay in England. Milton's letters to her were regular, and entertaining. He was a keen gardener – often assisted by convicts⁶⁹³ – and he wrote of 'getting plants and shrubs from Durban and the Cape'. He mentioned planting 'the first pawpaw tree' and provided information as to when the 'hard green balls turned to luscious golden-brown fruit'. Milton distributed flamboyant seedlings among his friends and 'fenced a paddock for the ostriches which Rhodes had sent' but 'was unable to explain why the eggs were always infertile'. Tony Tanser was amused by the fact that Milton's delight was his flowers: 'He had beds of them, but his favourite were his roses and violets'. When he was about to write to his wife, 'he would pick violets, put them in the envelope awaiting his letter so that it would carry the scent of Rhodesian violets to her'.⁶⁹⁴

As the Miltons were central to the social scene in Salisbury, the white community always looked forward to their return after they had been overseas. It meant the resumption of the 'G.H.' monthly dances and the weekly 'At Homes' on Thursdays at four o'clock. They were relaxed occasions and Blackwood Lewis wrote of a dance at Government House in January 1898:

The Miltons are delightful people. He is an old Marlborough boy, and his wife is a member of an old colonial family at the Cape. She is a wonderful housekeeper and has a very good staff of native servants. The house is a bungalow surrounded by a huge verandah. It stands in what will some day be a very nice garden ... We danced on the verandah as the rooms are rather small for dancing. It was a narrow ballroom but the floor was very smooth and well waxed.

⁶⁹² *Rhodesiana*, number 5 of the Rhodesian Society 1960; letter dated 1 February 1898, 34

⁶⁹³ Rhodesia's prison service made convicts available to work for government departments and the mines. Charles van Onselen states that 'in the colonial economy there was only one group that held less bargaining power than the young or the old – the black convicts' (Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, London, 1976, 126). H.U. Moffat, the Minister of Mines and Public Works, would later point out that such labour was 'a commercial and economic proposition' (Southern Rhodesia, Debates in the Legislative Assembly, Volume 3 Number 11, 1925, Columns 324-25)

⁶⁹⁴ G.H. Tanser, *A Sequence of Time: The Story of Salisbury 1900 to 1914*, Salisbury, 1974, 26-27

The supper was laid in the dining room and I noticed then the lovely table decorations. Mrs Milton is very artistic and has such good taste.⁶⁹⁵

Mrs Milton was praised by the Mayor, Dudley Bates, for her ability to ‘lighten and brighten the somewhat dull social life for Salisbury’⁶⁹⁶, and Government House dances were always well patronised. Blackwood Lewis recalled a dance that she attended in July 1899 when ‘Mr and Mrs Milton met us after we had shed our coats in her bedroom – the bed being covered with cloaks and sleeping babies and soon the music struck up a waltz.’ In this letter she complimented Mrs Milton on being ‘a splendid hostess and made us all feel at home’. Blackwood Lewis also mentioned that those who attended the dances were ‘not very up-to-date ... Some of the Heads have smart clothes,’ she observed, ‘but no one cares much. My first partner was the A.D.C., the second the local barber, and the third the Chief of Police.’⁶⁹⁷ The men did outnumber the women in the town at that time but the Company badly wanted ‘to attract female colonialists’ and ‘emphasised this by offering an increase of pay to those of its employees who become Benedicts’.⁶⁹⁸

Milton seemed to enjoy the lifestyle. He maintained his interest in sport and turned to golf. In early 1899, eight enthusiasts met in his office to establish the Salisbury Golf Club. Tony Tanser notes ‘the first holes were laid along the banks of the Makabusi ... the bush and scrub were cleared by garden-boys of the players and Mrs Milton was invited to perform the opening ceremony and did so with “a pretty drive”, receiving a set of clubs for her efforts’.⁶⁹⁹ It was not long before a new and better course was established and Milton, ever competitive, let his wife know, ‘Last Saturday I had my first game on the new links and beat the Judge [Vintcent] by eleven which disgusted him. I am going to play him again today. The new course is much nicer than the old one and a little longer.’ Keeping her up to date with the social scene he added, ‘Lots of people play during the week tho’ the Kopje lot have resigned as they say it is too far off. I saw three ladies going round one afternoon but do not know who they were.’⁷⁰⁰

Cricket had become a little too demanding of his time and stamina, but the usual attempt to gain sympathy occurred when he let his wife know that he ‘was to have played in the Judge’s Veterans cricket team [but] was a little gouty and stayed at home and was all right the next day’. The bowling green was not making much progress with ‘so much watering and

⁶⁹⁵ *Rhodesiana*, number 5 of the Rhodesian Society 1960; letter dated 1 February 1898, 34

⁶⁹⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 May 1902

⁶⁹⁷ *Rhodesiana*, number 5; letter dated July 1899, 45-46

⁶⁹⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 3 February 1902

⁶⁹⁹ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 214

⁷⁰⁰ Milton to his wife, 20 July 1902 (MI 1/1/1: NAZ)

other work to do' but Milton intended turning 'the convicts on to it for a day or two and finish the digging and levelling'. He was delighted that Mrs Fleming had appointed him a member of the Crocks Tennis Club and he reported, 'I am going to play there this week. What do you think of that?'⁷⁰¹ The Miltons became interested in tennis and were members of the local club. Blackwood Lewis wrote: 'Saturday afternoon is the great social day and everybody turns out to watch the games and also to have a chat. The Miltons invariably come and in that way get to know the people under less formal circumstances than at their own official parties.'⁷⁰² A tennis court was planned at Government House but Milton complained that he couldn't get the maintenance department under Oliphant 'to tackle it. He says he has no time but he is doing a court for Castens whose garden is now being made'.⁷⁰³

The thought of Castens being better prepared for their social tennis would have genuinely worried Milton. The fanatical manner in which he entered sporting contests was well-known, but seemed to reach an almost bizarre extreme when the ping-pong craze arrived in Salisbury. Milton was determined to dominate a game that featured at tea and dinner parties. He asked his wife to get him some new bats in England as all those in Salisbury were second-hand and, 'having beaten a redoubtable opponent, declared proudly, "I find that I am a great swell at it"'.⁷⁰⁴

There was much travelling and time spent apart for members of the Milton family. The eldest sons, Cecil and Jumbo went to school in Bedford, a favoured centre in the late Victorian period for cheap or free day-school education. They attended Bedford Grammar School, which catered for more than 800 boys and was particularly successful under its Wykehamist and former Rugby master, HS Philpotts. The institute was well-known for serving 'the phenomenon of "sojourners" ie widows or grass-widows of Britons in India and the colonies ... who settled in public-school towns.'⁷⁰⁵ Milton, however, would have been swayed by accounts of 'the remarkable standard of football kept up at Bedford School. As everybody knows who follows the game, this is nearly always the best Rugby football school in England'. Another report recalled, 'Before 1900 the First XV were at one time undefeated by any other school for eight consecutive seasons, and for five football terms running no

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid*, 10 October, 1901 (MI 1/1/1: NAZ)

⁷⁰² *Rhodesiana*, number 5 of the Rhodesian Society 1960, 35

⁷⁰³ Milton to his wife, 10 October 1901 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁷⁰⁴ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 62-63

⁷⁰⁵ J.R.De S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Public School in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1977, 124-25. Bedford School was officially known as Bedford Grammar School until 1917.

schoolboy crossed our line.’⁷⁰⁶ The Milton boys thoroughly enjoyed Bedford and excelled at rugby, but their father, who had gained much from his years at Marlborough, was also keen to renew links with his *alma mater*. He therefore decided to send his youngest son, Noel, to Marlborough.

Education interested Milton and he moved quickly to address the needs of the scattered white population in Rhodesia. In his publication, *Teaching Rhodesians*, Norman Atkinson notes that Milton followed the accepted tradition of frontier societies by endeavouring ‘to play down denominational distinctions’. The Salisbury Udenominational Public School opened in 1898 and Milton encouraged the London Board of the British South Africa Company to pass a resolution during 1899 which declared the grants for European education should be paid to undenominational schools alone’.⁷⁰⁷ The initiative was promptly criticised by Father Daignault as being ‘unfair’ because it ignored ‘the services rendered by denominational organisations in the past’. Rhodes – like Milton, the son of a vicar – was approached by a number of people including the Duke of Norfolk ‘as representative of Roman Catholic interests in England’. It emerged, says Atkinson, that Rhodes had already written to Milton in early 1898 that he hoped denominational schools would play a part in future educational policy:

I should not do anything about education until your new Council sits. I should then submit a scheme for education, as you desire it, namely on the basis of [the] Cape Colonial system, but with this amendment on the English basis, namely a grant per head to voluntary schools with a certain assistance for building. I must say that experience teaches us [that] the world prefers religion in its instruction to the young.⁷⁰⁸

‘Rhodes’s influence,’ concluded Atkinson, ‘proved decisive as it turned out. Nothing more was done to implement the terms of the Milton Resolution.’ The Legislative Council subsequently followed a ‘blueprint’ set out in a memorandum that Rhodes forwarded to the London Board. They would also accept Rhodes’s request for religious instruction and where parents do not wish them to receive it ‘some other subject should be taught, otherwise as [Charles] Metcalfe says, they will get into the habit of saying, “Thank goodness my old dad is an atheist and I can get an extra half-hour in the playground”’.⁷⁰⁹ An Education Ordinance passed in 1899 recognised two classes of schools that would receive government aid:

⁷⁰⁶ GMK Fletcher, *The History of Bedford Rugby*: adapted from RGG Squibbs’ 1970 Centenary Account (Bedford School).

⁷⁰⁷ N.D. Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians: A History of Educational Policy in Rhodesia*, London, 1972, 40.

⁷⁰⁸ Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*, 41

⁷⁰⁹ Basil Williams, *Cecil Rhodes*, London, 1921, 230

voluntary public schools under the direction of an accepted religious body and 'public undenominational schools which were non-sectarian institutions under managers appointed by government authority'.⁷¹⁰

Milton would return to the subject in years to come but there were numerous other problems to be attended to at the time. He had confronted the issue of the unpopular Sanitary Board by recognising that 'a Municipality, with a Council, was the only answer'. However, once it was formed, 'he was very disinclined to allow it much scope'. The Council was critical of the British South Africa Company, unemployment and the shortage of money and, not surprisingly, struggled against the over-riding powers of the administrator. Milton would not agree to even 'reasonable requests such as approval for by-laws to compel cyclists to use lights at night; a control over the discharge of fire-arms in the township; an insistence on entertainments being carried out in properly ventilated rooms, and the prevention of damage to roads by the two traction engines, which had lumbered up from Beira to the dismay of the natives who thought they were monstrous guns'.

Milton did concede that the gardens should belong to the Council but 'he refused to hand over Cecil Square, a decision which could not be understood'.⁷¹¹ The area was no longer required as a parade ground and, since the opening of the cricket field on North Avenue, the Square had become grossly neglected; it was 'criss-crossed by footpaths which meandered through the stubbly grass'.⁷¹² Milton attempted to get business premises to move from Pioneer Street to the area around Cecil Square. This would in time occur but until then it was a meeting place for some less-than-fortunate characters. In Bulawayo there was as much unemployment as in Salisbury, and those out of work tramped between the towns. The plight of these men was brought to public notice when a trooper 'who had been discharged on the grounds of ill-health and was penniless and starving, hurled himself through the second-storey window of the Cecil Hotel in a suicide attempt while the Police band was giving a concert in the Square'.⁷¹³

Milton's office was a relatively short distance from his home. He had learnt to ride a bicycle – 'they were rapidly superseding horses as a form of transport' – and was delighted to inherit Grey's red-coloured bicycle when he became Senior Administrator.⁷¹⁴ The Cecil Hotel, situated between Second and Third Streets, had been converted into the Legislative Assembly and Government offices. The first step towards democratic government for whites

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid*, 42

⁷¹¹ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 198

⁷¹² Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 23

⁷¹³ Tanser, *A Scantling of Time*, 200

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid*, 212

was taken there with the formation of the first Legislative Council on 15 May 1899. And what had been the hotel dining-room became the debating chamber: the five nominated members were seated on Milton's right with the four elected members sitting opposite. The rooms on the ground floor became the offices of Milton and his staff, as well as those of the Executive Council and the Resident Commissioner, one-armed Sir Marshall Clarke. The bedrooms of the former hotel were refurbished to accommodate the Attorney-General, the Public Prosecutor and the Surveyor-General.⁷¹⁵

The peaceful, organised existence that was gradually developing in the fledgling country was soon to be interrupted. When a Rhodesian rugby team participated in the 1899 Currie Cup tournament, they discovered that refugees were already 'pouring down the railway lines'; production at the Rand gold mines had slackened, and shops and offices in Johannesburg were closing. The shadow of the Anglo-Boer War was spreading across the country and a somewhat depleted entry of only four teams competed in the rugby. It was a tournament that Balfour Helm – son of the Hope Fountain missionaries – might have helped the Rhodesians win. The opening match against Eastern Province was lost 9-11 but the final whistle went as Helm failed to gather a pass with the line at his mercy. Rhodesia subsequently beat Border 31-0 (Colin Duff kicking four drop-goals) and drew 0-0 against Griqualand West.⁷¹⁶

The protracted South African War that 'tarnished the glamour of Empire'⁷¹⁷ was essentially peripheral because Rhodesia was never invaded.⁷¹⁸ There was nevertheless terrible uncertainty within the country. The British South Africa Company was concerned by the outbreak of war just over its boundary and the impact it would have on the African and Afrikaner communities within its jurisdiction. Milton travelled to England in November to press for an imperial force which could attack the Transvaal from the north and, at the same time, deal with any local disturbances. The War Office agreed to a proposal that an army of 5 000 troops and 7 000 horses should be sent to Rhodesia. The men were to be obtained either in Rhodesia or from the Empire outside Britain. The business of enlisting and equipping was to be carried out by the Company, but everything was to be paid for by the imperial government. From England, Milton liaised with Sir Thomas Scanlen, the acting administrator, and very quickly, the Company's agents 'set to with a will in North and South America and Europe, as well as Australia, buying horses, harness and transport requirements,

⁷¹⁵ Tanser provides an interesting sweep of the town in *A Sequence of Time*, 17-27

⁷¹⁶ I. Difford (ed.), *The History of South African Rugby Football 1875-1932*, Wynberg, 1933, 223. 'The Griquas won,' wrote 'Fairy' Heatlie, 'but ... were inferior in attack to Rhodesia'.

⁷¹⁷ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 140.

⁷¹⁸ A. Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, Kingston, 1983, 589.

forage and mealies, bringing slaughter cattle from Bechuanaland and northern Rhodesia, and purchasing oxen and wagons locally'.⁷¹⁹

The administration had, in anticipation of war, recognised the need to establish a volunteer force. There was an enthusiastic response and, on his return to the country, Milton called for the list to decide which men could be spared. If all who had offered their services were to go, it would have severe repercussions for the civil service, the mining industry and the commercial services. But, with the imperial forces struggling in the field, Milton was forced to let more men join the military effort than he had initially intended. A Rhodesia Regiment was formed and inspected by Milton when it paraded in the Market Square. After speeches and three cheers for the Queen, it is recalled that the small force 'moved off, somewhat raggedly, for there had been considerable entertainment, towards participation in the fighting around Mafeking'.⁷²⁰

The British South Africa Police 'took a distinguished part' in several conflicts until the end of the war.⁷²¹ Rhodesians also served in various other units and, in addition, the railways made a contribution to the war effort through the construction of armoured trains. The burden was very much on English-speaking whites: Rhodesia 'contained a very high proportion of young men trained in the use of arms, familiar with horsemanship and veld-lore, with the result that by 1900 something like 1700 men had gone to war out of a total white population of little more than 11 000'.⁷²² The men had 'a great dislike for the Transvaal,' wrote Blake, 'and regarded the British cause as entirely righteous'.⁷²³ Not surprisingly, the country's 1 000 Afrikaners were viewed with suspicion, particularly the 'Mangwe Dutch' in the south-west who, it was believed, 'would rise and join an invading Boer army. Others were certainly spying for the republics'. Clarke was of the opinion that the Rhodesian 'Boers' did not want to fight on either side, but admitted 'they would give trouble if the country were invaded' or if the British met with 'a serious reverse in the south'.⁷²⁴ The problem was partly defused when a telegram was sent to Rhodes from [J] Martin of Melssetter in the south-east, 'conveying the local Dutch community's condemnation of Kruger's policy and the support of settlers in the event of war'.⁷²⁵

⁷¹⁹ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 28-29

⁷²⁰ *Ibid*, 33

⁷²¹ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 152

⁷²² *Ibid*, 151; Colonel Jack Spreckley, who was appointed CMG after his role in the Matabele Rebellion, was killed in action at Die Klip Drift, north of Pretoria in August 1900.

⁷²³ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 153

⁷²⁴ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 602

⁷²⁵ MSS Afr. s 228 C27 1899 (102) 6, Rhodes House

There was the possibility of Africans seizing the opportunity to avenge their recent defeat. As soon as the war began, Milton, his native commissioners and Clarke summoned and addressed indabas all over the country where they would assure the Africans that they had nothing to fear and would not be called upon to fight.⁷²⁶ Alarming reports from native commissioners were always shown to be unfounded or greatly exaggerated. They pointed to the Africans “‘watching events”, keeping their own counsel and keeping their options open’.⁷²⁷ They also prompted Milton to wire Milner that ‘reports of native attitude [are] rather more unfavourable since my last telegram’. But, as it turned out, the potential rebels made no move and there was the general belief that war did not appeal to African leaders: ‘Sikombo expressed astonishment that the Boers had dared to fight the queen for “if a man tries to catch the sun, surely he will burn his fingers”’.⁷²⁸

The Boer offensive was launched on three fronts, one being to sever British communications along the railway from Cape Town to Bulawayo. The railroad was cut, telegraphic communication ceased and the only supply route to Rhodesia was from the east through Beira. The destruction of the railway to prevent relief was one of the besiegers’ objects, a serious situation as the railway was ‘a kind of jugular vein’ for Matabeleland. Milton, Lawley, Sir Marshall Clarke and John S. Nicolson, Commandant-General of the British South Africa Police and Inspector-General of Volunteers, had assessed ‘the danger to the country in the last weeks of 1899 as grave’. There was the fear that the Boers intended invading Rhodesia after the fall of Mafeking, although it has since been argued that ‘the possession of Rhodesia by the Boers would have had little if any effect on the decisive operations of the war’.⁷²⁹

Milton was able to inform the Legislative Council in late March 1900 that whilst every precaution was being taken to ‘prevent any incursion ... it may be hoped that the danger of attack upon this country has been averted’. Speaking at the opening of the second session of the first Legislative Council, he said ‘the work of developing the wealth of this country has not been seriously retracted. The output of gold has been fairly maintained.’⁷³⁰ This was hailed as a fine achievement because so many Rhodesians were engaged in war across the border.

When the Boers did eventually withdraw from Mafeking and troops entered the town on Friday, 16 May 1900, there were wild celebrations. By ten o’clock that evening news of the

⁷²⁶ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 602

⁷²⁷ *Ibid*, 603

⁷²⁸ *Ibid*, 602

⁷²⁹ Keppel-Jones, 593-96

⁷³⁰ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 24 March 1900

relief had reached London but, owing to censorship, Salisbury did not hear the news until ten o'clock the next morning. This was a Saturday, the day and time of the weekly auction in the Market Square. Milton received details and 'phoned the mayor, Harry Deary, at his store in Pioneer Street. Deary rushed down to the Square shouting, 'Mafeking's relieved. Milton just 'phoned me.' There was loud cheering and much hand-shaking and back-slapping.' Deary offered free drinks outside his store and a street party developed. Business was suspended and flags and bunting were displayed. Milton and Clarke made speeches and when the bonfire failed to ignite 'someone set fire to the veld and soon there were thick clouds of smoke drifting across the town'. Portraits of Queen Victoria, Rhodes and Baden-Powell were displayed at the Square to loud cheers and Milton announced that the following Monday would be a holiday.⁷³¹

The *Rhodesia Herald's* heading, 'End of War in Sight', was somewhat premature. The first passenger train left the town for the Cape on 15 June but severe military restrictions meant that those travelling from the south to Bulawayo required permits.⁷³² A New Zealand rugby team drawn from men in the services was welcome to travel and played against a 'Matabeleland XV'; the *Bulawayo Chronicle* reported that the New Zealanders celebrated their 10-3 win with a war cry that presented 'a strange and weird ending to a most exciting tussle'.⁷³³ Such a spirited moment contrasted with the frustration that accompanied developments on the other side of the country. The arrival of 1000 British troops, together with a further 4000 from Australia, Tasmania and Australia created chaos at the poorly-equipped port of Beira. The men were forced to camp for several weeks in swampy, fever-stricken territory with malaria and dysentery soon rampant. Horses were dying in great numbers and fed to the vultures and hyenas. Milton sent Sir Raleigh Grey to the area in order to provide assistance and, gradually, the depleted convoy was moved into Rhodesia. Meanwhile the conflict switched from Mafeking to the Transvaal, thereafter turning into a guerrilla war that would last another two years.

The arrival of the army in Mashonaland compounded the difficulties faced in obtaining supplies and caused food shortages. The cost of food rose and Milton called upon the Chamber of Commerce 'to peg prices of essentials' with a promise that fresh supplies were on their way. The Chamber, 'indignant at what it called coercive measures, wrote a letter complaining of Milton's proposals to the London Board of the [British South Africa

⁷³¹ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 30-31

⁷³² Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 609

⁷³³ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 4 August 1900. The match was played on the 28 July 1900.

Company]’. Milton stood his ground ‘and under Martial Law, laid down prices and supplied only those who agreed to keep them’.⁷³⁴

In Bulawayo, Lawley was in the process of leaving as he had been appointed Governor of Western Australia: ‘a big step’, said the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, although his departure was over-shadowed somewhat by the news of the death of Queen Victoria. The town felt aggrieved that they would no longer have an Administrator but Rhodes deemed that a further appointment was unnecessary. Matabeleland had become more accessible to Salisbury than in the early days and there seemed no likelihood of another rising. The Board of Directors thus concurred in Rhodes’s recommendation; the office disappeared and the Administrator became directly charged with matters in Matabeleland. The editor of the *Bulawayo Chronicle* accepted Lawley was ‘not a heaven-born administrator; he did not initiate any great measures’ but he possessed ‘what is appreciated almost more than cleverness, an honesty of purpose which is not too common in South Africa’. There were reservations about Milton being allowed to ‘reign supreme and alone’ in governing Matabeleland; the editor claiming that life ‘in Matabeleland and particularly Bulawayo is as different from that of Salisbury as light from darkness’. He explained:

Salisbury is, we fear, too much of the Washington style of town; the civil servants are in the ascendant while in Bulawayo the civil servants only form a small portion of the population. Therefore it will be impossible to govern Matabeleland from the Metropolis, and Mr Milton will have to spend a fair portion of his time in this province. He must not allow himself to be swayed wholly and solely by Salisbury opinion, but must investigate for himself, unless he wishes to have this province bitterly opposed to the existing government.

There was a call for a deputy and that ‘Mr Milton must delegate powers ... and not demand that every tiny detail should be submitted to him’.⁷³⁵ Milton was not swayed by the strongly-worded comment. A city that had appeared content with Jameson’s haphazard rule struggled to adapt to the new administration, although time would prove Milton was conscious of the need to gain the confidence of the people of Bulawayo. The problems confronting him were compounded by the fact that the price of imported goods in Matabeleland doubled within a very short time – Milton reporting that ‘only the barest necessities were allowed through’ on the railway from the south.⁷³⁶

Matabeleland was the country’s rugby stronghold and Milton was delighted to succeed Lawley as president of the Rhodesia Rugby Football Union. His election was not unanimous and owed much to the fact that his former Villager colleague, Clarkson Tredgold, chaired the

⁷³⁴ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 36

⁷³⁵ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 6 February 1901

⁷³⁶ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 603

meeting.⁷³⁷ The appointment did help renew Milton's interest in the game and when the pavilion blew down at Queen's, he assisted Colonel Melville Heyman (the club president) in securing an overdraft to build one of the best pavilions in the country. Milton was also instrumental in establishing inter-provincial rugby in 1901 when black imagery was invoked through white sport as Hepburn's 'Matabeles' challenged Mashonaland. It was the last sporting trip to be made by mule-drawn coaches over several days. The Matabele were pitted against a strong Mashonaland side that included two South African internationals, Francis Myburgh (who, four years later, became a Member of the Legislative Council) at fly-half and Sonny Taberer at centre. In a hard-fought clash, Hepburn proved the difference between the teams. He scored three tries, the last from an intercept on his own 25-yard line, to enable Matabeleland to win 16-0.⁷³⁸

The inclusion of leading rugby personalities added much to the local rugby scene, but was not appreciated to the same extent on the cricket field. The fact that Henry Taberer was considered good enough to play at the highest level raised important issues. Rhodesia at that time offered little inter-town cricket, let alone outside competition, and was therefore rooted in an awkward predicament. The majority of the country's players participated in the game as a social recreation, thereby restricting Milton's ideal of creating the image of a competitive cricket-playing nation. Taberer was of a vastly superior ability to all but his brother and Colin Duff, a situation that was seized upon by the *Rhodesia Herald* in a report that feared a small but dominant cricket elite had become counter-productive. In an unprecedented attack, it attributed a lack of interest in Salisbury's club cricket to Taberer's ruthless approach that a team should endeavour to win 'by as large a margin as possible', contending that continued reverses should simply act as an incentive to the losers to achieve better things in the future.⁷³⁹

In the same season, there was further controversy for Taberer when his selection for Logan's touring side in 1901 did not materialise. The episode exposed the vulnerable position of Rhodesians with regard to their involvement in South African sport. Horrified by the insensitive manner in which Logan's side was assembled, the *Rhodesia Herald* stated: 'Apart from being the sole Rhodesian, his [Taberer's] fast bowling would have materially strengthened the side'. It did appear as if Rhodesians were being overlooked when it came to selecting 'South African' teams and the snub might have contributed to Taberer's decision to leave Rhodesia. He told a *Rhodesia Herald* reporter that he had not been on holiday for five

⁷³⁷ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 1 May 1901

⁷³⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 28 September, 1901. In a second match that lacked the intensity and interest of the first, they did even better winning 25-0.

⁷³⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 6 October, 1900.

years,⁷⁴⁰ then took leave prior to obtaining a transfer to Pretoria where he was appointed Native Commissioner of the Central Districts of the Transvaal.

The value of Taberer in cricket terms was such that a matter of months after he crossed the Limpopo, he was invited to captain South Africa against the touring Australians at Johannesburg. There was no mercy on the opposition at that level and Taberer – who bowled Victor Trumper for a duck – relished the chance to enforce a follow-on after his side had gained a first innings lead of 158. It was to be nearly fifty years before South Africa was in a similar position against the Australians.⁷⁴¹

Rhodesia could ill afford the departure of a man of Taberer's calibre but it became increasingly clear that difficulties were inevitable as Milton wished to make decisions in a matter as sensitive as labour control. Serious issues would surface dramatically over the next few months. Whilst Rhodesia was not a 'Second Rand', gold mining was 'the largest and most powerful employer in the labour market'. It was also one dominated by speculative capital.⁷⁴² The rebellions had helped delay the realisation that great fortunes would not materialise but, by 1898, it was already clear that Rhodesian mines faced disadvantages such as the widespread nature of the reefs, lengthy rail travel, and shortages in skilled manpower and machinery. The greatest obstacle to overcome, however, was that of establishing a stabilised labour force.

The outbreak of the South African War could be used as an excuse to justify the slow growth in production and the absence of profits. In reality, the Transvaal goldfields were severely disrupted by the fighting and, for a short time, the Rhodesians were spared the competition of their powerful neighbour. The surprising situation arose whereby Witwatersrand mine owners viewed 'with dismay the rising wages in Rhodesia and the build-up of the much sought-after Shangaan labour force'.⁷⁴³ For a very brief period, African miners from the Transkei, Orange Free State, Bechuanaland and Basutoland sought employment in the north and Rhodesia became a temporary centre for the regional economic system. It was a relatively successful period for Rhodesian mining although labour remained the problem. Philip Mason wrote:

Open any Rhodesian newspaper ... skim through the columns for a month ... and the odds are that you will find as many on the shortage of labour as on all the other subjects put together.

The reason is very simple; settlers wanted labour and Africans did not want to work ... After

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 7 April 1901

⁷⁴¹ It was to be Taberer's only Test, one in which he clean bowled the legendary Victor Trumper in Australia's second innings.

⁷⁴² Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, London, 1976, 126. The quote was made by Valdemar Gielgud, manager of the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau.

⁷⁴³ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 87

the rebellions of 1896 when one-tenth of the settlers were murdered, there was a latent bitterness and distrust. But they were dependent on African labour and could never get enough of it.⁷⁴⁴

The shortage of labour ‘in the face of the need for rapid development produced consistent upward pressure of African wages between 1898 and 1903’.⁷⁴⁵ The cash to pay for this increasing wage bill had to be raised on the London market through the largely speculative mining companies. It could not continue indefinitely. Prominent figures in Rhodesia’s mining industry explored ways and means of obtaining the necessary labour supply. Members of the ‘migrant school’ called for a Glen Grey-type Act in Rhodesia, and between 1900 and 1901, men such as Colonel Heyman and Major Heany, ‘pressed for legislation, supplemented with increased taxation, to supply more local migrant labour’⁷⁴⁶. In Rhodesia, as elsewhere, the purpose of taxing the African peasants and restricting their access to land was to push them from the countryside into white-owned enterprises requiring cheap labour. At the annual meeting of the BSA Company, Earl Grey stressed that ‘natives ought to make a larger contribution than they do to the expenses of the administration ... a kafir can earn today in Rhodesia from £20 to £40 a year in addition to his food.’⁷⁴⁷ But the problem for mine owners ‘was that the process of proletarianisation took time, and all that it offered in the short-term was the progressive lengthening of the spells that Africans were prepared to spend labouring for cash in the agricultural off-season’.⁷⁴⁸

The mining chiefs were soon in conflict over the best method to obtain labour. The ‘migrant school’ were opposed by Phillip Wrey, the Chamber of Mines president, who argued in favour of a more stabilised force, one which would establish African families on land provided by the mines. Wrey did, however, fall in line with most other leaders of industry when he claimed that the ‘real source of difficulties of our position, the real point where danger comes from is the imperial government’. He argued that as long as the imperial government controlled all matters relating to the African people in South Africa – ‘and in that control allows itself to be influenced by the unscientific, sickly sentimentality of the body known as Exeter Hall’ – then matters will ‘get infinitely worse’. The matter was taken up in the Legislative Council where there was a demand that they should exert control over ‘native policy’.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁴ P. Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*, London, 1958, 219.

⁷⁴⁵ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 75

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 76

⁷⁴⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 28 March 1902

⁷⁴⁸ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 161

⁷⁴⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 31 May 1902

Fiscal pressure was regarded as being essential if Africans were to take up work that was 'labour intensive and very disagreeable ... [they] did not in the least want to work for the white man'.⁷⁵⁰ Local labour was particularly reluctant to seek employment as they could sell their agricultural products to the mines and other markets within the country. It was a case of men who had been 'independent farmers in traditional societies' stubbornly resisting 'compulsion or administratively created market mechanisms to sell their labour to those who owned the new resources for creating wealth'.⁷⁵¹ For Milton, the matter was exacerbated by a forced delay in the increase of taxation. Wilson Fox admitted:

Your cable saying the High Commissioner wishes you to postpone your Labour and Hut Tax Ordinance has come as a great shock to us. To say we are to wait for the general settlement of South Africa when we are starving for labour is like telling a starving man there will be plenty of bread after he is dead.⁷⁵²

The bare facts of the situation were put forward somewhat bluntly by a letter to the *Bulawayo Chronicle* in February 1901. It noted that Rhodesia had reached 'a point in regard to the labour question which may almost be termed desperate and which demands a remedy equally strong ... We must have unskilled labour for our sole industry'. The writer mentioned mines 'hanging up stamps of non-crushing companies curtailing or suspending further work; of other propositions postponing development, through inability to get boys' and added 'how desperate will it be when the greed of the Rand and adjoining fields has again to be satisfied'. If the mines should fail, he said, 'what use is there in Rhodesia for any of us?'⁷⁵³

As early as 1895, Henry Taberer had urged native commissioners to promote the idea amongst the African population that 'it would be for the good of the natives themselves and of their districts that they should earn by labour the money with which to pay their tax'.⁷⁵⁴ In the aftermath of the rebellions, Taberer was forced to take a different line and to let his native commissioners know that 'under no consideration whatever is any compulsion to be exercised in obtaining natives for labour'.⁷⁵⁵ He did not wish to circumvent imperial authority and the message was forwarded to native department messengers that they should do no more than liaise with chiefs.

⁷⁵⁰ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 156

⁷⁵¹ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 195

⁷⁵² Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, London, 1988, 32-33

⁷⁵³ Letter to *Bulawayo Chronicle*, written by R.F. Taylor, 20 February 1901

⁷⁵⁴ H.M. Taberer to Native Commissioners, 12 November 1895 (N 4/1/1)

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 26 May 1897 (N 4/1/1)

Charles van Onselen points to radical attempts that were made to meet the labour requirements. In his book, *Chibaro* ('slavery' or 'forced labour'), he mentions native commissioners in the country districts forcing Africans to undertake work in the mining industry. He noted that in twelve months before 1901, the Labour Board in Mashonaland 'engaged' 2000 workers, while 'the native commissioners in the same period sent 29 000 Africans to work on the mines'. The latter method was particularly popular for the mine managers because 'it did not involve the expense of a capitation fee'. Employers also needed a system 'which aimed at total control of the worker both in and outside of his working hours'. And to ensure that the reluctant workers stayed in the mine compounds, 'the chief native commissioner authorised government "native police" to live there and prevent desertions ... It was through the coercive compound system that forced and reluctant labour was made productive'. The compounds were advertised as vastly improved accommodation but were in practice a means to control the work force. They combated desertion at a time when the industry lacked the benefits of the pass system.⁷⁵⁶

The secretary of state for the colonies was alerted to what was happening and in October 1901, Taberer issued a general circular that ordered his staff to follow 'to the letter' the instruction that 'no influence either direct or indirect may be used to induce or cause natives to seek work'. Native commissioners were informed that their duties were 'simply to register natives offering for work and guide them to places where labour is required; and to assist natives in obtaining fair treatment and observance of contracts'. He stressed 'native commissioners are under no circumstances to enter into contracts or to interest themselves on behalf of any employer' and that 'contravention of this instruction will be regarded as a serious offence and dealt with accordingly'.⁷⁵⁷

The intervention of the British government and Taberer's circular to native commissioners created a period of tension for Milton. In a letter to his wife in November, he emphasised the strain he was under. He began by apologising that he was unable to meet her when she arrived at Cape Town. 'I cannot even get away to Bulawayo,' he explained, 'as I am so worried by rinderpest, native labour and Arabs that I cannot spare a few days for the journey'. He blamed his 'very worrisome time' on Sir Marshall Clarke 'who eighteen months ago wrote an awful report stating that we were forcing the natives to work and doing everything we ought not to'. The criticism was 'pigeon-holed', said Milton, until 'brought out with the threat that native administration will be taken away from us unless native commissioners leave off dealing with labour'. He was furious that Clarke – who worked in

⁷⁵⁶ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 80

⁷⁵⁷ Carol Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1934*, Ohio, 1994, 92-93. Taberer's report was dated 17 October 1901.

the same building – had failed to inform him when making the report. It led to the British government protesting to the British South Africa Company and recruitment thereafter being undertaken by a private organisation.⁷⁵⁸

As secretary of native affairs and honorary president of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines, Milton would have been aware of what was happening because reports were forwarded to him. He had every reason to be concerned but was also aware that in reality the native affairs department did not have the staff to round up thousands of reluctant labourers and herd them to the mines. The effects of the rinderpest, the struggle for land, the matter of tax and indifferent agricultural seasons were also influential factors in driving men to the mines. The situation was far from satisfactory, but the *Rhodesia Herald* deplored overseas comment that suggested the Rhodesian administration was organising ‘a slavery department of its own’. The newspaper was not prepared to dwell on claims that the government was ‘taking over boys from the Portuguese at a point on our boundary, bringing them to a depot, distributing them to the mines’. In brushing aside criticism of the mining industry, the *Rhodesia Herald* stated:

The people of Mashonaland who are conversant with the treatment of the pampered native, and who also have reason to know that the government cannot exercise the least particle of compulsion in inducing him to work, will be inclined to laugh at the insinuations about ‘slavery’ and ‘wallopings’.⁷⁵⁹

Milton worked hard and, like Rhodes, had no sympathy with those men – white or black – who were not prepared to make a similar effort. ‘The white man,’ noted Blake, ‘brought up in the Victorian creed of thrift, individualism, self-help and hard work saw nothing immoral – quite indeed the contrary – in compelling the African to enter the labour market ... Rhodesia had to be developed, and as with all new countries – Australia, Canada, the American west – shortage of labour was the chronic problem’.⁷⁶⁰ Years later, Lawrence Vambe criticised the nature of the work which ‘reduced human beings to the level of cattle or donkeys’⁷⁶¹. Carol Summers thought the native department’s primary concerns were supposedly ‘preventing resistance, maintaining order, collecting taxes, and extracting labour and agricultural resources’, but that its officials ‘initially worried more about results than methods’. Despite overseas suspicion, Milton gained widespread support, with even the radical journalist, Henry Labouchere, being moved to write in the *Times* that the Rhodesian Africans were ‘the laziest

⁷⁵⁸ Milton to his wife, 11 November 1901 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁷⁵⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 31 May 1902

⁷⁶⁰ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 156

⁷⁶¹ Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 95

race in the world' and 'spent their time boozing and brawling'.⁷⁶² Father F.J. Richartz, described as the 'most vocal critic' of attempts to increase tax, informed Milton that he accepted 'the popular characterisation of Africans as lazy with that laziness reinforced by the African community'. Somewhat naively, Richartz opposed taxing the native people because it forced men to seek wage labour and 'would destroy his plans to create civilised Christian communities apart from European towns or the African villages'.⁷⁶³ At a Farmers' Association meeting, white dissatisfaction was expressed that labour supplies through the native commissioners would be stopped because 'all at once an order came from 6000 miles away, telling them to cancel this arrangement. By a stroke of the pen ... the farmers were brought to a standstill'.⁷⁶⁴

The imperial government's influence resulted in native commissioner, J.H. Williams, being fired for what Clarke termed 'lawlessness combined with personal violence'. This occurred in the troubled Gutu district soon after Sonny Taberer had succeeded his brother as chief native commissioner for Mashonaland. Milton accepted the Resident Commissioner's arguments that Williams would have to leave the service but was aware that his men were working under great pressure in difficult conditions. He wrote to the High Commissioner that, 'Mr Williams has undoubtedly rendered good service in the past' and 'acted in what he considered to be the interests of the natives'.⁷⁶⁵ It was no easy task being a native commissioner. 'He had to steer an awkward line,' wrote Blake, 'between disapprobation of the Colonial Office, expressed through the Resident Commissioner, of anything that looked like forced labour, and the pressure of assimilationists, both the officials of the Company and the settlers who needed African labour in order to develop the country'.⁷⁶⁶

The Rhodesian government searched far afield in making every effort to meet labour requirements. A letter to the *Rhodesia Herald* recorded that 'nearly every possible quarter of Africa' had been exploited 'with very poor results'.⁷⁶⁷ Milton's frustration at developments was apparent in his letters to his wife. He described the Arabs brought in as mine labour as being 'not much use'. He continued, 'The last straw is that the Arabs sent down by [Hugh Marshall] Hole absolutely refuse to go down the mine and as Piper refuses to give them other work there is a deadlock. Hole is on his way back with a few more, luckily not many, and

⁷⁶² *Times*, 1 May 1900

⁷⁶³ Father F.J. Richartz to Administrator, *Rhodesia Herald*, 1 March 1902; Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 86.

⁷⁶⁴ *Rhodesia Herald* 7 December 1901 reproduced in Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 99

⁷⁶⁵ Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 120

⁷⁶⁶ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 164

⁷⁶⁷ Letter to *Bulawayo Chronicle*, written by R.F. Taylor, 20 February 1901

what to do with them I do not know'.⁷⁶⁸ Milton did not provide the full story to what was effectively a failed enterprise on the part of Rhodes. The Arabs had left Aden because of famine and, according to a mine manager, were 'less interested in the money than in having sufficient to eat'.⁷⁶⁹ Yet the problem was a great deal deeper as Hole appreciated when he told Milton, 'It will be many years before the average South African miner can be educated to regard the Arabs as something different from the ordinary kaffer [*sic*]'.⁷⁷⁰ Mine managers were unable to cope with the behaviour of workers who had not been exposed to the discipline imposed by colonial administrations in southern Africa. Furthermore, the imported Arab workers 'were not covered by the Masters and Servants Ordinance and thus, unlike African workers, [their] breach of contract did not constitute a criminal offence'.⁷⁷¹

Efforts were made to import labour from further afield. Blake notes the 'West Indies, Abyssinia, Somaliland and Aden were also considered but without result' and echoed Gann in stating 'success would have turned the country into a sociologist's paradise and a statesmen's hell'.⁷⁷² Early in 1901 a party of labourers 'comprising Abyssinians, Somalis, Arabs, Shamis and Indians were illegally shipped from Djibouti to Beira in Mozambique. Some deserted, others refused to consider underground work ... [and when] sent to work on road construction [were unsuitable] because they showed little or no respect for white gangers'.⁷⁷³ Greater progress was achieved with regard to countries north of the Zambesi and Portuguese East Africa where Africans could not easily get jobs, although the Barotse were disinterested; the Pondos were not keen on the underground work, and there were insufficient Shangaans to satisfy the demands of the Rhodesian and united South African demand. Local labour, as most people were aware, was the best solution.

Rhodes was responsible for the introduction of the Mfengu – 'Cape-boys' – before and after the rebellions. He modelled his agreement with them on the Glen Grey Act, hoping that this would increase the supply of labour for the mines, but his hope was largely disappointed. Rhodes's initial plan was that the Cape-boys would either work in the mines themselves or that they would 'take the place of natives [local Africans] who would be free to work on the mines'. It was an ambitious arrangement but lacked support from all sides. Blacks regarded Cape-boys as unacceptable because of their support of the white government and their part in the suppression of the rebellions. Whites objected to them because of their colour and a

⁷⁶⁸ Milton to his wife, 11 November 1901 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁷⁶⁹ Manager, Surprise Mine, to Milton, 5 April 1901, reproduced in Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 83, 282

⁷⁷⁰ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 83

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 82

⁷⁷² Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 162-63; Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 177

⁷⁷³ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 81

tendency to incite problems amongst the African population. According to official statistics, Cape-boys were responsible for 75% of the more serious crimes committed by ‘Africans’; but, interestingly, in 1900, a Cape-boy was found not guilty of contravening the Vagrancy Act because ‘the Magistrate of Salisbury argued that ‘such people could not be classed with the ordinary aborigines as long as their habits and manners of life did not conform with them’.⁷⁷⁴ The Cape-boys – there were about 1300 by 1905⁷⁷⁵ – ‘learned to live by their wits rather than labour’. Cases were reported of their signing on for ‘soft jobs’ at the mines, moving in with their wives and earning ‘the bulk of their income through selling kaffir beer’.⁷⁷⁶

Milton might have viewed Rhodes’s experiment with apprehension because a small black petty bourgeoisie played cricket in Bulawayo for some years after the rebellion. As he well knew, the immigrants from the Cape not only enjoyed the game but hoped their interest would gain them a measure of social acceptability. The Loben Club was established in 1898 with the committee – FR Shelton (captain), D Faku (vice-captain), RH Sioka (secretary) and JB Nxahe (treasurer) – reflecting the group’s mixed ancestry. Details of their cricket achievements were not covered in the local media but reports were forwarded to King William’s Town where they were published in the black newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*. In 1901, the club played ten matches and won them all, according to their secretary.⁷⁷⁷ They were promising achievements and do much to prompt the question as to why Milton did not encourage mines to influence workers through using sport as a vehicle for controlling the social process. His earlier statement that if the employers ‘have a good player in their employ he will be a good worker as well’ did not extend across the colour barrier during his long period of office.⁷⁷⁸

The ‘Cape-boy’ and ‘Arab’ projects were failures but Rhodes was determined not to be beaten on the labour issue. He constantly sought new ways in which to assist his country. He regularly corresponded with Milton and, writing from Egypt in November 1901, mentioned that he had been reading native commissioners’ reports in which he had noticed there was a good deal of ‘kafir beer brewed outside the mines and sold illicitly to the natives who have a

⁷⁷⁴ J. Muzondidya, ‘Towards a Historical Understanding of the Making of the Coloured Community in Zimbabwe 1890-1920’, in *Identity, Culture and Politics*, CODESRIA, Dakar, Volume 3, Number 2, December 2002, 79.

⁷⁷⁵ James A. Chhamunorwa Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) 1898-1923* (New Jersey, 1980), 93-94

⁷⁷⁶ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 101-02

⁷⁷⁷ *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 4 September 1899 and 2 July 1901. A. Odendaal, *The Story of an African Game: Black Cricketers and the Unmasking of one of Cricket’s Greatest Myths, South Africa, 1850-2003*, Cape Town, 2003, 59.

⁷⁷⁸ *Cape Times Weekly*, 2 September 1896

passion for it'. He said he thought that Milton should issue permits 'to managers of mines to have kafir beer for sale to their natives, great care being taken to limit the supply'. He thought 'Kafir beer is good for the native' but did not 'think that a native appreciates a gift'. Rhodesia should therefore 'get into a system of selling a pint of kafir beer to each man every evening when they came up from the mine'.⁷⁷⁹

'For so long as he lived,' wrote Rotberg, 'Rhodes was concerned for and interfered directly in the development of white Rhodesia.'⁷⁸⁰ The arrangement was accepted without question, not least because of the understanding he had with Milton. Rhodes was 'a great developer', wrote the High Commissioner, Alfred Milner, '... but not a good administrator'.⁷⁸¹ Milton fulfilled the limitations that Rhodes had in that regard although it was accepted that the latter's viewpoint held sway on the major issues of the day. The Founder's 'gifts to his created country were many' and there was tremendous concern as how best to overcome his loss when he died on 26 March 1902.⁷⁸² Speculation followed with regard to the country's future position in southern Africa. Rhodes had provided the 'organisational and capitalist framework' and personally sustained 'his offspring, his conscious and half-conscious embodiment of immortality'.⁷⁸³ As Milner had foretold, the Colony became 'virtually an absolute monarchy with him as king'.⁷⁸⁴ His death brought home to everyone the extent of his influence: 'There could hardly be another of like authority to sway the imaginations of men, or to gain a *Fortunatus* purse in moments of need ... now he was gone, the game was any man's'.⁷⁸⁵

After a funeral service at the Cathedral in Cape Town, Rhodes's body was transported in his private train through Kimberley to Bulawayo. The coffin was then transported by gun carriage to the place he had chosen in the Matopos and called 'a view of the world'. The administrator and representatives of Salisbury's institutions, with detachments of the Police and Volunteers travelled by train to Que Que, and then by Zeederberg's coaches to the funeral ceremonies at Bulawayo. The last part of the route was lined by the Matabele, thousands there to give him the royal salute reserved for their kings. At the graveside Rudyard Kipling read the lines he had composed as an epitaph. Leading figures arrived from all parts of southern Africa to be present at the ceremony. Colonel Frank and Arthur Rhodes, William Milton, Sir Charles Metcalfe, Dr Jameson, Dr Smartt and Sir Lewis Michell stood around the

⁷⁷⁹ Rhodes to Milton, 26 November 1901 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁷⁸⁰ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 574

⁷⁸¹ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 149

⁷⁸² Rotberg, *The Founder*, 578

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 687.

⁷⁸⁴ J. Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, Bulawayo, 1972, 61.

⁷⁸⁵ Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, 62.

grave where a granite slab was lowered and Frank Rhodes entrusted his brother's grave to the Matabele.

The death of Rhodes and the fact that Rhodesia should struggle financially in the aftermath of the South African War made for a difficult period. After twelve years of Company administration, the lack of commercial and industrial development in the territory could not be disguised whilst there were difficulties in recruiting and retaining labour at cheap enough rates. Rhodesia looked to Milton for guidance in dealing with the manifold administrative, economic and social problems in the post-war depression. The responsibility was enormous but Milton welcomed the opportunity. He was ready for it and had the support of the High Commissioner. Milner wanted a Rhodesia that 'should not cost money and not give trouble. If the Company was to go on ruling – and considerations of expense favoured its continuation – then it must be closely controlled'.⁷⁸⁶ In this regard, he appreciated Milton was the man for the task and wrote of him: 'A gentleman honourable, trustworthy, zealous in his duties; well-versed in official business.'⁷⁸⁷

Milton had other strengths that would assist him in carrying on his work in the post-Rhodes era. The very force of his personality was such that his opponents thought carefully before openly disagreeing with him. 'It may not always be possible for the Administrator to have seen eye-to-eye with the people,' said the Mayor of Salisbury, Dudley Bates, when Milton departed for the Coronation festivities in May 1902.⁷⁸⁸ Bates, an awkward member of the community, had opposed Municipal government and refused to pay his rates, but was unsuccessful when he clashed with Milton. The volatile councillor had challenged Joseph van Praagh's eligibility to become Mayor in mid-1900 when Milton decided to intervene. He claimed Bates 'had no power to declare an elected councillor unfit to be Mayor, and reminded the council, with a veiled threat, that he could appoint whomever he liked as Mayor, even if he were not a councillor.'⁷⁸⁹

When Bates addressed the gathering at Salisbury station to bid *bon voyage* to the administrator, he recalled 'the last time his Honour was in England he used his best endeavour to get Salisbury and Bulawayo connected by a railway. We know that on this journey Mr Milton goes two-thirds of the journey to Bulawayo by rail and we hope when he and Mrs Milton return to Rhodesia they will be able to travel all the way from Cape Town to Salisbury by train.'⁷⁹⁰ The hatchet had been buried where Bates was concerned but Milton

⁷⁸⁶ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 149

⁷⁸⁷ Herbert Baker, *Cecil Rhodes by his Architect*, London, 1934, 89

⁷⁸⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 May 1902

⁷⁸⁹ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 48-49

⁷⁹⁰ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 May 1902

was wary of the reception that he would receive when stopping over in Bulawayo. In his address to the people there, he ‘very much regretted for several reasons, with which the Mayor was acquainted, he had not been able previously to make the acquaintance of the citizens of Bulawayo’. He admitted he ‘was afraid that amongst many people it had been considered that the administrator – indeed the administration itself – belonged to Salisbury, and that Bulawayo and Matabeleland had the second place in their thoughts’. He wisely used the moment to speak movingly on ‘the greatest loss and the greatest disaster that Rhodesia had suffered – [Rhodes] – but he felt sure that the greatest memorial to the genius and statesmanship of that great man would be achieved by the people of this country endeavouring to raise Rhodesia to that position which he wished it to hold in the Empire.’⁷⁹¹ Bulawayo accepted Milton was chosen by Rhodes to lead the country, and that he should be given time to prove himself.

The next few years would pose a severe test for a country increasingly referred to as Southern Rhodesia – the designation being adopted in 1901 as a result of developments taking place north of the Zambezi. Milton’s first task was to become involved in a series of moves designed to restructure the basis on which the mining industry had been established. The Rhodesian Chamber of Mines was in the process of drafting a Pass Law which would assist in preventing desertion and controlling the flow of unskilled labour. The British South Africa Company in the mean time recognised the need to reorganise the basis on which the mining industry was capitalised. Its first move in 1902 was to reduce its share in mining companies from 50 to 30 per cent.

Unfortunately, it was too little too late in combating a ‘basic-over-evaluation of the country’s resources’.⁷⁹² By April 1903 the London market for Rhodesian mining stock had collapsed and the industry was in a state of depression. Shareholders discovered that ‘Rhodesian gold costs more to win than it’s worth’.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid*, 17 May 1902

⁷⁹² C. Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, Oxford, 1959, 7

⁷⁹³ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 17

Chapter 9:

Milton's 'second phase' in office: 'one of reconstruction and hard work'

The fourth Legislative Council opened on Monday, 15 June 1903 'with all due ceremony ... a guard of honour under Captain McQueen received His Honour the Administrator with a general salute as his equipage drove up at noon'. The report went on to state that the Administrator was attended by a mounted escort of the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers under Captain Carson. A lively crowd gathered outside the building and further entertainment was provided by the band of the British South Africa Police. It was observed that inside there was 'a large company presented in the Chamber' despite the fact that 'invitations had been considerably curtailed'.⁷⁹⁴

Milton's address was eagerly anticipated because of interest in the reconstruction programme. Since the London market for Rhodesian mining stock had collapsed, a severe depression gripped the country which 'sank to its nadir in the later part of 1903'. The Company was in a bad way: 'administrative deficits were piling up, and in Rhodesia men, good men, either had departed, were departing or would depart if they could'.⁷⁹⁵ Amidst such circumstances, the Rhodesian press marvelled at the positivism of Milton's address. It began:

In spite of the difficulties which have had to be met during the past year, distinct signs of progress can be recorded. The mining industry has advanced and its position generally has been strengthened. The recent returns of production show a marked improvement which it may confidently be expected will not only be maintained but will show substantial progress during the current year ...⁷⁹⁶

The *Rhodesia Herald* commented that it was 'impossible to select a single statement from His Honour the Administrator's speech which was not ample assurance of uninterrupted advance'.⁷⁹⁷ The *Bulawayo Chronicle* might have had a mischievous dig at Milton by inserting a mocking, 'Our King's Speech' as its heading, but admitted 'there is a distinctly optimistic tone about the Administrator's speech ... so that we may fairly assume that the days are not as dark as we are feign sometimes to admit ...'.⁷⁹⁸

Milton's major gripe was the inability of the African male population to contribute to the economy. He pointed out that the 'number of natives who have sought work [bears] a very small proportion to the number of adult males in the territory'. The mining industry's

⁷⁹⁴ *Rhodesia Herald* (weekly edition), 20 January 1903

⁷⁹⁵ J.P.R. Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, London, 1950, 69

⁷⁹⁶ *Rhodesia Herald* (weekly edition), 20 June 1903

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 27 June 1903

⁷⁹⁸ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 17 June 1903

requirements had to be met by outside sources and, whilst being sufficient, it commanded 'high rates of wages'. Milton expressed his concern that 'the local population showed neglect towards availing themselves of their opportunities to enter into remunerative service'. The position was one which proved 'prejudicial to the interests of the country at large and especially the natives themselves'. It was therefore 'expedient with the least possible delay to devise means by which natives be induced to raise themselves from a condition of idle barbarism and become useful members of the community'.⁷⁹⁹

In his frustration, Milton might have reflected on and feared Dean Farrar's pessimistic view of the African that 'each century sees them in the same condition as the last, learning nothing, inventing nothing, improving nothing, living on in the same squalid misery and brutal ignorance; neither wiser nor better than their forefathers of immemorial epochs back, mechanically carrying on only a few mechanical operations' From an administrative point of view, Milton's attitude towards Africans did not differ much from that of Rhodes. He had noted and followed the manner in which Rhodes 'fostered territorial acquisition by English speakers with a Cape bias' but 'did so out of no hatred for Africans'. For both men it was a case of Africans who 'simply stood in the way of imperial progress. They represented an anachronistic barbarianism'. Africans were 'important for their labour but otherwise largely in the way'.⁸⁰⁰

Milton's address to the Legislative Council with its carefully-worded facts and figures gave hope to a struggling white population. A few days later it was announced that a knighthood had been conferred upon him in the King's Birthday Honours. It came at an appropriate time as the Legislative Council was still in session. Colonel Heyman and Sir Thomas Scanlen congratulated the Administrator on behalf of their respective sides, the elected and government members. The editor of the *Rhodesia Herald* commented: 'If years of hard work in the track of pioneering, on the outskirts of civilisation, keeping a remote portion of the Empire in touch with the centre and advancing it by strides counts for anything, then it may be truly said that Sir William Milton fully deserves the honour given him and the congratulations of all Rhodesians.'⁸⁰¹

The imperial government had earlier recognised the Administrator's influence with the C.M.G. in 1900, and a knighthood was considered to be a timely move in reaffirming their faith in his commitment to a common cause. All sides realised the difficult time that lay ahead for Southern Rhodesia. The British South Africa Company described the period immediately after Rhodes's death in 1902 as 'the second phase in Milton's period of office ...

⁷⁹⁹ *Rhodesia Herald* (weekly edition), 20 June 1903

⁸⁰⁰ R. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, Oxford, 1988, 457

⁸⁰¹ *Rhodesia Herald* (weekly edition), 27 June 1903

one of reconstruction and hard work'. His efforts would attract relatively little attention because Rhodesia was almost forgotten except by a few of the British troops who were quartered there during the Anglo-Boer War and by the Company shareholders who met every year to be told that 'the corner would shortly be turned' in the fortunes of the country.⁸⁰² The Company did offer the advantage of supplying capital without making demands on the taxpayer. It also took risks that the British government was unable to take, whilst administering the country 'at a time when the British authorities lacked the resources, finance and manpower'. Furthermore it helped counteract the ambitions of the Transvaal and to 'redress the balance of power in the sub-continent'.⁸⁰³

Milton's optimism was frequently conveyed to the London office of the British South Africa Company. He provided news that they wanted to hear. At a time when Milton was anxious to attract labour, he gave the Board a glowing account of the situation:

At every centre where mining operations are carried on the administration has officers, with all necessary powers, civil, police and judicial. Labourers' compounds at all working mines are systematically and regularly inspected by government officers appointed for the purpose and no opportunity is lost of endeavouring to ascertain and provide for the wants of the labourers.

'In practice,' wrote Charles van Onselen, 'most opportunities were lost.'⁸⁰⁴ It was a sweeping statement, perhaps not entirely accurate. Whilst Milton's reports served propaganda purposes, an attempt to make the working conditions more attractive was one of the methods tried in order to improve the system of recruitment. Rhodesian mines were in competition for labour with the richer Witwatersrand mines and there were efforts to narrow the gap in living conditions. In fact, reports appeared of the Chamber of Commerce objecting to Rhodesian Africans 'not receiving a fair deal in South Africa'. The situation prompted Milton to comment that 'the sudden solicitude evinced by the [Rhodesian] chamber for the health of the natives working abroad is very touching'.⁸⁰⁵

Milton's determination to project an atmosphere of progress provided cheer for settlers and shareholders. His accounts were seized upon by the Board of the British South Africa Company, with the secretary publishing a series of flattering reports of the territory. The publicity misfired insofar as the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, decided not to include Rhodesia in his southern African tour – the country's prospects were so promising that they did not require further support! The Rhodesians had to send a delegation

⁸⁰² W.D. Gale, *Heritage of Rhodes*, Cape Town, 1950, 73

⁸⁰³ Rotberg, *The Founder*, 257-59

⁸⁰⁴ Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro*, London, 1976, 67

⁸⁰⁵ Milton to Fox, 15 February 1906 (A 2/9/3, NAZ)

to Johannesburg in order to place pressure on Chamberlain, 'not only to speed up his approval of the Pass Laws, which would help control labour in Rhodesia, but also to sanction massive increases in tax on peasantry'.⁸⁰⁶

It was the Pass Laws together with the compounds which denied Africans the right to respond to 'market forces' and sell their labour in the best market. It was the compound, with 'its state-sanctioned system of industrial violence, which converted reluctant and forced labour into forced production'. As an institution, it provided the framework for the total exploitation of the back workers. Under these conditions it was not surprising that mine and compound managers should experience great difficulty in getting black workers to occupy the barracks-like accommodation ... the total absence of privacy proved most unacceptable'.⁸⁰⁷ In addition, the longer contracts enforced through the Masters and Servants Ordinance were disliked by black mine-workers because it reduced them to what they considered to be slave status.

The labour shortage continued to be the country's greatest problem. The new Chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland, Sonny Taberer,⁸⁰⁸ argued that recruitment 'has got to be done somehow or the mines will have to close down'.⁸⁰⁹ The start of the exodus of the Shangaans from Rhodesia was an important consequence of the collapse of the London market. They had to be replaced and various methods were used. The Native Labour Bureau, which had arisen out of the difficulties experienced by miners and farmers in obtaining workers, became a business organisation assisted by a government subsidy. The Rhodesia Native Labour Board was formed and remained in operation until 1906. It was then replaced by the Rhodesian Native Labour Board, again with two of its members appointed by the Administrator. Its manager, Val Gielgud, spoke plainly to the committee – 'the labour business is not a particularly nice business at the best of times, there is always more or less underhand work.'

Charles van Onselen wrote that the two organisations 'supplied cheap coerced labour between 1903 and 1912.' He notes the continuation of a system which amounted to virtual slavery, stating, 'For hundreds, probably thousands of black peasants in the territories in and around Rhodesia, *chibaro* meant exactly what they stated it to mean – "forced labour".' It was in the remote districts of north-eastern and north-western Rhodesia that peasants were 'simply rounded up by the native commissioners' African messengers and sent to the "boma"

⁸⁰⁶ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 94

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 36

⁸⁰⁸ Taberer honoured the Administrator by naming his son 'Walter Hereford Milton'

⁸⁰⁹ Carol Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1934*, Ohio, 1994, 17

where they were handed over to the agents of the Rhodesian Native Labour Board and their black assistants, and then marched to the Southern Rhodesian mines'.⁸¹⁰ The labour could be obtained in this way in those areas because they were under the direct control of the British South Africa Company.⁸¹¹ In the east, says Van Onselen, a Rhodesian Native Labour Board agent, Walkden, made use of a 'middle-man', Manuel Vira, who would gather labour in Mozambique and march his 'captives' to the Rhodesian border. From there, Walkden was able to take over the operation. The managing-director of the Rhodesian Native Labour Board during this period, HW Kempster, pointed out to Milton that 'Manuel Vira obtains natives who would otherwise, either not turn out at all, or proceed to the Rand, and thus legitimately increases the labour for Southern Rhodesia.'⁸¹²

In subsequent research, Summers argued that 'with prosecution and cautioning of specific offenders, the new regulations did restrict forcible labour recruitment by native commissioners'. She stresses that imperial pressure meant 'the calling out of labour was increasingly limited to specific work carried on for the native commissioner or the native commissioners' station'.⁸¹³ The Africans would also be employed in greater numbers as native policemen, messengers or mission-trained teachers which created further sources of authority. As a consequence there was an increasing reliance on the use of local Africans to identify labour sources and assist recruitment, whilst working under the control of a professional organisation.

The structures implemented by Milton as Secretary for Native Affairs were such that he was able to distance himself from any suggestion of 'forced labour' taking place. He was able to focus his efforts on attempts to lure Asians to the Rhodesian mines. In August 1903, he wrote to the Board of the British South Africa Company in London about the importation of Indian labour. The Indian Government was not keen and the *Bulawayo Observer* issued a warning that 'the Asiatic once introduced cannot be got rid of, but will wander over the country entering into injurious competition with the European ...'⁸¹⁴ Milton nevertheless persevered and later told the Board that Rhodesian opposition to the plan was 'practically non-existent, it being now understood that such labourers would only be introduced under indenture which would not expire until they had been repatriated.'⁸¹⁵ The imperial government became impatient with Milton's persistence and in June 1904, he admitted in

⁸¹⁰ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 104

⁸¹¹ *Ibid*, 108

⁸¹² Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro*, London, 1976, 105-08

⁸¹³ Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, 93

⁸¹⁴ *Bulawayo Observer*, 11 April 1903

⁸¹⁵ Administrator to British South Africa Company, 5 August 1903 (A 2/9/2, NAZ)

corresponding to Fox that a recent 'Colonial Office letter about Indian labour appears to close the question for the present'.⁸¹⁶

The importation of Chinese labour did for a while appear more promising. After consulting with Heyman and the Chamber of Mines, Milton was able to write to Fox in November 1903 that 'local objectors have been pretty well convinced or squared'.⁸¹⁷ He paid careful attention to developments on the Transvaal mines and told his wife in August 1904, 'The Chinese are a great success and some of them are going back this week to induce their pals to come out in large numbers as everything is alright. This ought to help us later on.'⁸¹⁸ Although there was support for Chinese labour, some Rhodesians were suspicious of their setting up in trade in opposition to them. Rhodes had been against their importation 'except as a very last resort'. Milton was conscious of the opposition but hoped that 'a more subtle variation of it would solve the problem'. He reasoned that 'if Chinese labour was part of the larger and more powerful Transvaal mining industry as was being proposed at the time, this would relieve pressure on labour supplies within the regional economic system and leave more Africans available for Rhodesian mines'.⁸¹⁹ Interest in the introduction of Chinese labour was not dropped until Gielgud visited the Rand and found that the costs would be prohibitive to Rhodesia.

Mine managers were not blind to the fact that the indigenous native was the answer to their problems but that he had not acquired either the habit or the need for regular labour. Milton believed increased tax would both stimulate African agricultural production and build up the labour force. His involvement in the Glen Grey legislation of 1894 influenced his thinking and his judgement regarding African workers. The implementation of Glen Grey policy had allowed the Cape government to tap vast reservoirs of manpower thus preventing mines from shutting down.⁸²⁰

An important consideration for Milton was that Rhodes intended applying sections of the Act 'well beyond Glen Grey, to many of the other African areas'. Milton would have been

⁸¹⁶ Administrator to Fox, 24 June 1904 (A 2/9/3, NAZ)

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid*, 7 November 1903 (A 2/9/2, NAZ)

⁸¹⁸ Milton to his wife, 25 August 1904 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁸¹⁹ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 83

⁸²⁰ R. Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, Oxford, 1988, 688. The key thrust of Glen Grey, wrote Richard Parry, 'lay in the recognition of traditional instillations as mechanisms for the maintenance of control.' In reducing the size of black properties and fostering an increased labour force for the mines, it introduced 'a differentiated franchise, limited home rule, individual tenure, and territorial partition'. ('In a Sense Citizens, But not altogether Citizens ...: Rhodes, Race and the Ideology of Segregation at the Cape in the late nineteenth century' in *CAAS Newsletter*, University of Saskatchewan, 1983, 386)

fortified by the knowledge that liberalism in South Africa ‘succumbed to the new paradigm, and by 1905 Rhodes’s “native” policy was acclaimed by all sections of the ruling class’. R.W. Rose-Innes recalled in a South African Native Affairs Commission Report that he had changed his view over a decade from one of opposition to Glen Grey to an acceptance that ‘the segregation of the races within certain limits ... is the policy to aim at for the future’⁸²¹. In Rhodesia, the administration took Glen Grey on board in its efforts to increase the labour supply. It restricted further African access to land during a period when the peasantry was expanding its production, whilst increasing taxation and consequently the peasants’ need for additional cash earnings.

Early in 1903 the Chamber of Mines recommended that the Company should impose a uniform poll tax of £2. The Legislative Council accordingly passed an ordinance putting up the tax and, shortly afterwards, Milton wrote to his London office supporting this suggestion. The Administrator considered that adult men should pay £2 and contribute an extra 10/- for each wife beyond the first. In putting his case to the High Commissioner, Milton pointed to the improvement in African living conditions, and added that Africans were in fact contributing a mere 4/4 per head to the expense of government, whilst administrative expenditure amounted to £1.6.8 per head of population.⁸²² He was supported by a *Rhodesia Herald* editorial which compared the white man’s burden of £42 per annum ‘against which the native is debited with a trifle under five shillings’. In a call for ‘levying a more substantial sum on the Kafir’ the newspaper referred to Milton’s point that both Mashonas and Matabeles were ‘better able to bear the proposed increased taxation than they were formerly able to pay for the ten-shilling tax when first imposed’.⁸²³

The Resident Commissioner disagreed, basing much of his findings on communication with Father Richartz, head of the Jesuit Mission at Chisawasha. Milton, in turn, opposed the missionary’s interference which he indicated was biased. He again asserted: ‘... it is, I think, universally recognised that it is only by inducements to abandon their idle habits that the native population can be assisted to raise themselves from their present low level’.⁸²⁴ As it turned out, the Colonial Office was unwilling to sanction the increases outlined by the British South Africa Company, but agreed to raise the tax to £1 per annum and imposed an extra levy on the peasants of 10 shillings for each wife beyond the first. The increase was half the amount that the mining industry had wanted but it produced a rate of taxation in Rhodesia ‘20

⁸²¹ Richard Parry, ‘In a Sense Citizens ...’, 387

⁸²² Administrator to High Commissioner, 28 May 1903: Annex 13 to British South Africa Company minutes of 1 July 1903 (LO 1/2/24, NAZ)

⁸²³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 27 June 1903

⁸²⁴ Milton to Board of the British South Africa Company, London, 14 August 1903 (A 2/9/2, NAZ)

to 30% higher than that for most Africans in the regional economic system'.⁸²⁵ It would also reduce polygamy, an institution to which most missionaries objected on moral grounds. Never happy to lose a battle, Milton wrote not long afterwards, 'At present our natives are paying the new tax almost faster than native commissioners can receive it especially at Inyanga. What a pity it was not £2 instead of £1.'⁸²⁶

Milton's early optimism was offset by a Rhodesian Chamber of Mines report in December 1905 that noted the Rhodesia Native Labour Board 'cannot at present provide labour at any price'. It referred to an 'alarming decrease' in the number of 'alien natives', while at the same time thousands of local natives had left for the Rand.⁸²⁷ Milton reacted by appointing a committee under Herbert Castens to investigate the existing difficulties. It found that Wenela was helping itself to labour from neighbouring territories. It recommended a fixed mining wage, as was done by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association – although their minimum wage was above that affordable by Rhodesian mines. Concern was expressed that in passing through Rhodesia, the Witwatersrand recruits inflamed local workers with tales of their higher wages. The Johannesburg-based organisation exploited the situation through poaching Africans who were dissatisfied. Castens' committee recognised 'the difficulty in which the administration was placed in view of instructions the British government had issued on inaccurate and misleading information'. It strongly recommended that 'His Majesty's Government should be approached with a view to a modification of its instructions, in the interests of the country, and especially of the native population'.⁸²⁸

The movement of labour through the region contributed to a complicated situation. The Rhodesian Chamber of Mines reported that there was a high death rate of Rhodesian Africans on the Rand – said to be 118.6 per thousand – and gave this as one reason for recommending that the High Commissioner be asked to stop Rand recruitment from Rhodesia. In early 1906, Milton prevented the request being forwarded, having reservations as to 'whether we can go so far as to prohibit natives going out of the country, I am not sure that would be advisable'.⁸²⁹ A different matter was that of Africans recruited for the Rand from outside Rhodesia being allowed to go to the Rand via Rhodesia. It prompted new regulations being drafted in terms of the earlier Pass Ordinance, and then submitted by Milton direct to the High Commissioner. The latter pointedly replied by means of a letter addressed to the Resident

⁸²⁵ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 94

⁸²⁶ Milton to his wife, 25 August 1904 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

⁸²⁷ Memo from the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines about the drastic shortage of native labour, 18 December 1905 (A 13/1/1, NAZ)

⁸²⁸ A 13 1/1, NAZ; Particular reference was made to the Secretary of State's despatch of the 3 October 1901.

⁸²⁹ Minutes of meeting of Rhodesia Chamber of Mines with Milton, 9 February 1906 (A 13/1/1, NAZ)

Commissioner. He wished workers to be given permission to pass through Rhodesia and was unhappy that Africans travelling to the the Rand should be detained in Salisbury. Milton raised objections to those involved being allowed transit because he found that they were recruited in German East Africa ‘where sleeping sickness is known to exist. They have no medical certificates ...’ The problem was compounded by a later batch of the same consignment of workers being detained at the border. Milton was in a difficult position because the Transvaal Government, the High Commissioner and Wenela all wanted freedom of passage until new regulations were passed, while everyone in Southern Rhodesia – the mining and farming communities, as well as the Legislative Council – wanted them sent back. After further correspondence Milton acceded to the demand for passage. And, when the High Commissioner finally approved new regulations – with some amendments accepted by Milton – they did not prohibit transit, only regulated it.⁸³⁰

Milton was forced to exercise great caution throughout the reconstruction period. The British South Africa Company was informed that ‘instructions had been given to native commissioners to advise natives to work when they wanted and not all at the same time, as the latter also caused wages to be reduced’. The tax problems were mainly in Mashonaland, as the Matabeleland Africans were better off and able to pay at the required times. Milton recommended that mine contracts be longer – they were mainly for one month – as that ‘would lead to greater stability and improvement of the supply’. Native police were employed to collect taxes but Mashona messengers were unwilling to join the force. They were ‘wild and suspicious’ about the arrangement and Milton advised the retention of the *status quo*.⁸³¹ The day-to-day problems in maintaining the national labour force were certainly enormous, a problem acknowledged by the British South Africa Company. Fox wrote a revealing ‘strictly private’ letter to Milton in which he stated:

As an illustration of the difficulties which confront us in connection with Native Labour, one cannot have a better instance than the situation in which Lord Milner now admits he placed himself by winking at certain irregularities in regard to flogging. It is easy to see what a case the Radicals could manufacture against us were we to place ourselves in their power ... I notice that Greer [NC, Wankie] in his last report states that natives have been flogged because they had made reports to him. If this were got hold of by our enemies, the position might easily be made really hot for us.⁸³²

⁸³⁰ Milton to High Commissioner on 3 January 1908 and 14 January 1908. The High

Commissioner finally approved the Regulations on 20 March 1908 (A 13/1/1, NAZ).

⁸³¹ Milton’s Private Secretary to the Secretary of the British South Africa Company, London, 31 January 1906 (A 13 1/1, NAZ)

⁸³² Fox to Milton, 2 March 1906 (A 1/5/7, Strictly Private)

The period of reconstruction, observed Van Onselen, was most remarkable for the reduction in the black wage bill that ‘ensured the long-term survival of the industry, its expansion and development’.⁸³³ Through the employment of large numbers of *chibaro* workers, the industry was able ‘to undercut the bargaining power of the black workers, and make possible dramatic wage cuts between 1904 and 1908’.⁸³⁴ During this period, the cuts, together with the impact of the Rhodesia Native Labour Board, ‘made the largest contribution to cost minimisation during reconstruction’.⁸³⁵ The number of black workers employed rose from about 7 000 to nearly 20 000, resulting in overcrowding. With the exception of ‘about half a dozen of Rhodesia’s 300 mines, accommodation was everywhere inadequate – periodically in quantity and almost always in quality’.⁸³⁶ African wages presented the most important and obvious target for mine owners but there were also efforts to curtail expenditure on ‘among other things, food, accommodation, hospitals and compensation for injury’.⁸³⁷

Van Onselen describes the reconstruction begun in 1903 as being ‘neither instant nor painless for shareholders’. He refers to a detailed study that J.W. Gregory, Professor of Geology at Glasgow University, made of the industry in 1905. Gregory found evidence of ‘extravagant over-capitalisation’ from which there were no immediate profits – only two Rhodesian companies managed to pay their shareholders dividends.⁸³⁸ In 1905 the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines, the most powerful association within the industry, ‘advocated the removal of the 30% clause, but the British South Africa Company was not willing to make this further concession without more general economic pressures’. It was only with the recession in the southern African regional economic system in 1908 that the British South Africa Company ‘dropped the clause and at the same time reduced the royalty payments from gold producers. This further concession helped to place the capitalisation of the industry on a sounder footing and attracted new investment’.⁸³⁹

During this period, Milton recognised the advantage to be gained through sharing the responsibility of government with the country’s white population. He was conscious of white demands for ‘free institutions and representative government’⁸⁴⁰ and knew elected members were generally of like mind and committed to achieving success. In 1903, Milton was instrumental in creating equality of representation between official and elected members in

⁸³³ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 25

⁸³⁴ *Ibid*, 219

⁸³⁵ *Ibid*, 26

⁸³⁶ *Ibid*, 38

⁸³⁷ *Ibid*, 34

⁸³⁸ *Ibid*, 22

⁸³⁹ *Ibid*, 20

⁸⁴⁰ *Bulawayo Observer*, 22 August 1902.

the Legislative Council. There would be fourteen members, seven to be directly elected and seven nominated by the British South Africa Company, with the administrator retaining his seat *ex officio* in order to have the casting vote. Milton also put forward a new scheme whereby the smaller mining and farming communities would get a greater say in electing members.⁸⁴¹ A new Order-in-Council provided for parity between official and elected members, whilst concessions were made over royalties and railway rates, but not on two vital matters. The Company insisted that the Colony if and when it became self-governing must accept responsibility for the Company's past administrative (as opposed to commercial) deficits, whilst 'unalienated land' belonged to the Company.

Chamberlain did not feel entirely happy about an increase in elected members. The Colonial Office anxiously pointed out that as long as the Company bore the expense of governing the country, there must be no chance of the official members being outvoted by elected members. Such misgivings were quickly addressed with final arrangements satisfying the imperial authorities and becoming law.⁸⁴² Fox felt it necessary to advise Milton to keep on the best of terms with the 'unofficials' because good relations with them 'were essential and because they must be educated to the realities of government'. He should give them 'full latitude in debate to discuss and criticise the administrative estimates; they should feel that their interest was welcome, for we do need their assistance and want it to be given ungrudgingly'.⁸⁴³

The action of the Company in granting the people a voice in the Legislative Council also pacified a disgruntled white population that subsequently believed it would be very involved in the decisions being made. It did of course become evident that the elected members would be outvoted on measures that did not agree with the Company. The effects of this inadequate representation upset the people and to allay discontent, the number of members nominated by the British South Africa Company was reduced from seven to five, with the Administrator sitting on the Council *ex-officio*. The elected members were thus granted a majority in 1907 and 'ceased to be mere minority mouthpieces'.⁸⁴⁴ By this stage, there was much to commend in the Legislative Council and 'though young and small, it already had its tradition of senatorial dignity'.⁸⁴⁵

The 'native question' occupied much of the Legislative Council's time. As urban conditions improved, wrote Gann, 'the white public became more conscious of the "native

⁸⁴¹ Milton to High Commissioner, December 1902 (A 3/20/4, NAZ)

⁸⁴² Colonial Office to British South Africa Company, 3 December 1902 (A 3/20/4, NAZ)

⁸⁴³ Fox to Milton, 14 April 1904 (A 1/5/6, NAZ)

⁸⁴⁴ L. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934*, London, 1965, 145.

⁸⁴⁵ Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, 97

problem” and demanded that Africans living in towns should be better supervised either by their employers if in domestic service or by the municipality’. In 1905 the Administration brought in the Urban Locations Ordinance which was modelled on Cape lines and ‘empowered the Administrator to define the limits of locations and make rules for the way in which they should be run’. The law added that ‘no native may reside within the municipal or other prescribed area, within or near which he may labour or reside, save and except within the area of the location established ... by such notice’. Those Africans living beyond the limits of such locations could be removed from their dwellings ...⁸⁴⁶

The Cape influence meant a similar approach to the ‘native franchise’. The law, wrote Milton, was one in which ‘a native has the same rights as a European, practically Mr Rhodes’ policy of “equal rights for all civilised men”... [“civilised” being underlined]’. It was a situation that Milton addressed and in a letter to the British South Africa Company, he stated ‘there is no doubt that public opinion in this territory is practically unanimous in condemning the grant to natives of any right to the franchise, as is also the case in the Transvaal and Natal’. He noted that there were only 51 black people on the voters’ roll,⁸⁴⁷ men who had come into the country with the 1890 Pioneer Column and had received eighty-acre land grants. Milton argued ‘if any action is to be taken [as recommended by the Legislative Council] this would undoubtedly be a favourable time, as there would not be any considerable vested interests to deal with, and it would anticipate any movement in favour of the franchise which might be set on foot by the emissaries of the Ethiopian Church or otherwise’. There would normally be a registration of voters towards the end of the year, at which there would probably be some African claims, so Milton thought it ‘best to try to resolve the matter before then’ or ‘postpone the registration of voters to 1907’. The idea had been formulated by Sir Thomas Scanlen and discussed in Executive Council where, said Milton, ‘it was resolved that it would be advisable to sound the High Commissioner confidentially with a view to ascertaining whether he would be prepared to support the suspension of the right to claim the franchise, those natives now on the roll being allowed to retain their rights so long as they continue to possess the necessary qualification.’⁸⁴⁸

The Legislative Council debates reveal that members of the Council did speak against the ‘native franchise’, although Milton remained tactfully quiet. The goal was to prohibit more Africans from becoming voters⁸⁴⁹ and when Milton approached the High Commissioner, he

⁸⁴⁶ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 192

⁸⁴⁷ There were 5199 European voters and 52 Asiatics at that time

⁸⁴⁸ Milton to Fox, 18 January 1906 (A 2/9/3, NAZ)

⁸⁴⁹ Claire Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1965*, Oxford, 1966, 169-70

was encouraged by the response. Lord Selborne, who had succeeded Milner, offered to support the Ordinance should the Executive Council decide to introduce it, but was of the opinion that such a move might well be vetoed. He advised Milton to make use of non-discriminatory language to achieve his ends. It did but the Board of the British South Africa Company became nervous and wanted to delay any such move. Milton acknowledged this standpoint when he informed Fox that 'in view of the opinion expressed by the Board's cable ... I consider it best to mark time.'⁸⁵⁰ Milton remained patient and it was not until 1912 that further action was taken.

Blake recalls that two important measures were duly ratified by the Legislative Council. They arose after 'a Portuguese native was tried for attempted rape of a European lady in Bulawayo' and 'was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour'. A mob managed to get hold of the man and was in the process of hanging him when 'a strong force of police, horse and foot' came to his rescue and he was 'sent off secretly to Salisbury'. Bulawayo had 'never known a more incensed and vehement audience' that gathered afterwards and with future prime minister, Charles Coghlan, threatening the adoption of lynch law, it denounced the government's 'apathy and inaction'. 'Nothing was done' wrote Coghlan's biographer and it was only when a strongly-worded resolution was sent to Milton that he 'paid heed, and promised a Bill for the next session'.⁸⁵¹ The Immorality Suppression Ordinance followed 'which made extra-marital intercourse between a black man and a white woman illegal'. There was 'no corresponding penalty for a white man engaging in relations with a black woman' and frequent efforts made by women's organisations to 'equalise' the law ended in failure. 'Rhodesia,' wrote Blake, 'was a white-male dominated society.' An ordinance was then passed which imposed the death penalty for attempted rape: 'One argument was that a white woman who admitted to having been actually raped by a black man would find social life in the white community impossible thereafter, but she could give evidence of an unsuccessful attempt without the stigma, and therefore the attempt ought to merit the death sentence too.'⁸⁵²

The enlarged Legislative Council meant sharing responsibility, a development that would ease the pressure on Milton. He told his wife in August 1904, 'I have been playing the usual golf and tennis most days ... I am playing Fleming at golf this afternoon and some tennis tomorrow'. And, on his appointment as President of the Polo Club, he remarked, 'I suppose I must look out for some ponies.'⁸⁵³ The following year he was able to visit the Zambezi and

⁸⁵⁰ Milton to Fox, 3 May 1906 (A 2/9/3, NAZ)

⁸⁵¹ Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, 67-68

⁸⁵² Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 159

⁸⁵³ Milton to his wife, 25 August 1904 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ)

see the Victoria Falls. A grandstand was erected at a point a mile or so above the Falls on the north side, where gathered ‘a motley strange crowd of whites and blacks from the Administrator, Sir William Milton, and his party to Lewanika, Paramount Chief of Barotseland, and his followers.’⁸⁵⁴ The occasion was the first Zambezi Regatta in 1905 when ‘racing fours were brought up from distant South African ports and no expenses were spared to make the meeting a success’. At night in the boating camp ‘dinner was served in a large marquee erected on the river bank and a convivial evening was spent. While [Bob] Coryndon [British South Africa Commissioner in Barotseland – North-West Rhodesia] was making a speech, a big bull hippo, attracted by the light, swam to within a few yards of the bank and grunted loudly’.⁸⁵⁵

Particularly rewarding for Milton during these early years of the twentieth century was the progress made by his sons on the rugby field. Cecil and John ‘Jumbo’ Milton were outstanding members of the Bedford School First XV and went on to play representative rugby in October 1902, when they appeared for the East Midlands XV. In the winter of 1903/04, eighteen-year-old ‘Jumbo’ was chosen to play for England in Home Nations matches against Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The English newspaper *Land and Water* reviewed his performance in March 1904:

JG Milton, captain of the Fifteen and head [school captain] of the Bedford School, is the first English schoolboy who has ever played football for England. That the Rugby Union has made no mistake is shown by the fact that he has been selected for all three of the season’s matches, and, indeed, never from the first has there been the slightest doubt about his being selected ... Standing at over 6ft and scaling 14st 8lb in footer kit, John Milton is a worthy chip of the old block, his father, Sir WH Milton, now Administrator of Rhodesia, having played for England.⁸⁵⁶

As a consequence of their attending Bedford, the Milton brothers became friendly with the Brooks boys – William, Freddie, Frank and Paddy – who were born in India but moved to England in the 1890s when their father, Arthur, died of cholera.⁸⁵⁷ The Miltons and Brooks shared a love for the sports-field. The Administrator of Rhodesia came to know the Brooks

⁸⁵⁴ Details from the diary of Rev. Alan Williams (Chaplain to South Africa) in *Zambia Lowdown*, October 2004

⁸⁵⁵ Details from the *Northern Rhodesia Journal* in *Zambia Lowdown*, October 2004

⁸⁵⁶ *Land and Water*, March 1904

⁸⁵⁷ They returned from India with their mother and sister, Millicent (who attended Bedford Ladies College). The details were provided by P. Shand in a letter to the Headmaster of Bedford School, dated 11 November 2001.

family and showed an interest in their well-being, demonstrating particular interest in the outstanding sporting talents of one of the sons.

Freddie Brooks was regarded as the finest schoolboy sportsman in England. He was a dashing cricket captain and the public schools' athletic champion in four events.⁸⁵⁸ The *Morning Post* described him as 'a born rugby player' and it was in this sport that his brilliant attacking play saw him stake a claim for a place in the England team. In important 'trial' matches in 1901/02, the talented schoolboy scored the only try for the Rest of the South versus London and Varsities and then the only two tries for the South against the North. Thought to be 'the fastest man now playing football', he was surprisingly overlooked for England, causing 'a considerable measure of comment, for his play warranted his being considered a certainty'.⁸⁵⁹

Milton arranged for the Brooks boys and their sister to take up positions in Rhodesia's civil service on completion of their schooling.⁸⁶⁰ The Bedford Grammar School magazine expressed disappointment that 'the exigencies of life' did not permit Freddie Brooks the opportunity to go to one of the Universities⁸⁶¹. He was nineteen years old when he arrived in Salisbury at the start of the 1902/03 cricket season and played his first innings for Causeway in their derby encounter against Kopje. He batted with his usual freedom to move swiftly to an unbeaten 121. Then, a week later, he struck another century for All-Comers against Home-born.⁸⁶² It was an auspicious start for a young man in a new land. The Administrator

⁸⁵⁸ His unbeaten scores in successive matches of 162 and 196 were the highest made for Bedford Grammar School. He was the Public Schools athletic champion in the 100 yards, the hurdles, long jump and high jump.

⁸⁵⁹ Details of his early rugby achievements are recorded in the 'Journal of Bedford Grammar School' – *The Ousel* – during 1901-02.

⁸⁶⁰ All four brothers would represent Rhodesia at rugby. They would also experience successful careers in the Rhodesian Civil Service where William became Chief Magistrate; Freddie, the Chairman of the Public Services Board; Leslie was Secretary for Mines, and Frank the Secretary for Lands (personal correspondence with Jane Reid-Rowland, Harare).

⁸⁶¹ *The Ousel*, Xmas edition, 1901, Vol. V, No. 181: *The Ousel* noted that Brooks – the Head Boy – 'has a great influence over others; we doubt whether there is a boy in the school who does not respect him and who would not attach great importance to all he says or does'.

⁸⁶² Brooks played for All-Comers because he was born in Bombay, India. His innings on this occasion was largely over-shadowed by a remarkable bowling performance by William Blanckenberg. A product of the Diocesan College in Cape Town, Blanckenberg claimed all ten wickets for 17 runs in Home-born's first innings and a further eight for 33 in the second innings. His match analysis of 19/4/50/18 established a new Rhodesian record for all levels of the game.

watched Brooks plunder 51 out of a total of 81 for Causeway against Umtali on a treacherous wicket. It was reminiscent of the way he used to play.

In 1903, sport briefly diverted attention from political conflict and, for once, Milton was happy to arrange a period of residence in Bulawayo. His stay coincided with the rugby matches between Mashonaland and Matabeleland at Queen's. It was Brooks's first inter-provincial appearance and partnering him at centre was Cecil Milton, his successor as rugby captain at Bedford Grammar School. The latter was home for the summer holiday, before moving on to the Camborne School of Mines. The matches were played on a Saturday and Monday with the opening game captivating a large crowd as 'it raged fast and furious'. Milton 'made the most brilliant dash of the day' three minutes before the end of the game to seal victory in 'the best match ever seen in Bulawayo'.⁸⁶³ Two days later, offices and stores closed as people streamed into Queens to witness an epic struggle that was decided by an individualistic try from Brooks. The rugby was again impressive and frantic efforts were made to arrange for the British side touring South Africa to visit Rhodesia. They were unsuccessful, prompting rugby supporters to reflect on the inept administration of the local game.⁸⁶⁴

Various sport were being played – often to a high standard – but the general organisation left much to be desired. In a period when trade languished and there was a scarcity of African labour and supplies, few Rhodesian men were in a position to assist on sports' committees. Those who did have administrative responsibilities thrust upon them were often ill-prepared. Such was the case when Rhodesia affiliated to the South African Cricket Association in early 1904, and indicated their desire to participate in the Currie Cup during the following season's competition. Through a withdrawal and a bye the Rhodesians were propelled into a semi-final against Transvaal. The draw for venue created interest until the South African Cricket Association chairman suddenly remembered that he had previously decided Rhodesia should play away because they had not as yet travelled. The minutes were altered to reflect the decision.⁸⁶⁵

The Rhodesian players were caught off-guard by the match at Johannesburg in March 1905. For a start, there was some delay in the resumption of Salisbury's club matches after the Christmas break. Rhodesian summers seemed to go on for ever and a number of the

⁸⁶³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 17 August 1903: the comment was attributed to the referee and long-serving Bulawayo sports administrator, Charlie Gill, who was noted as having been 'an English international reserve'.

⁸⁶⁴ The Mayor of Bulawayo, JE Scott, said that 'strenuous efforts would be made to attain that object – all Rhodesians would co-operate'.

⁸⁶⁵ An early match in the competition did not materialise as Rhodesia's opponents, the Orange River Colony, were recorded as 'scratching' from the competition (*Rhodesia Herald*, 9 March 1905).

cricketers became preoccupied with tennis championships and athletic meetings. During that period, Brooks won the first of his national tennis singles and athletic sprint titles, whilst also setting a record for the high jump.⁸⁶⁶ At the Alexandra Sports, he collected prize-money from Lady Milton in the handicap races – without harming his amateur status – and won the long jump, place-kicking and longest golf drive.⁸⁶⁷

The Matabeleland Cricket Association agreed to handle arrangements for the trip to Johannesburg but there was ‘slackness and a happy-go-lucky style’ which resulted in passages not being booked and insufficient beds on the train. After Mafeking, it was necessary for the Rhodesians to travel by a mule-driven coach to Potchefstroom as there was no connecting link by train. Heavy rains made progress hazardous but the team could not afford to be delayed and frightening risks were taken. There was always the chance the coach might go into a washed-out hole and be capsized or that the swimming mules would lose their direction when crossing rivers. At night those dangers were increased. For twenty-six hours the coach battled against the elements before the team boarded the train at Potchefstroom.⁸⁶⁸

A powerful Transvaal team that included five of South Africa’s leading Test players⁸⁶⁹ batted first and reached 340.⁸⁷⁰ When Rhodesia replied the next day, Freddie Brooks was in fine form. He struck the ball fluently to reach a half-century that was punctuated with nine 4s and a 6. He contributed 61 out of his side’s total of 115. The *Rand Daily Mail* cricket correspondent recalled that Milton’s Chief Secretary, Herbert Castens, had offered the view a year or two earlier that Brooks ‘was good enough to play for South Africa’. From what he saw, the correspondent was inclined to agree with Castens: ‘Brooks played all round the wicket like a finished cricketer and was quite at home’ against leading South African bowlers.⁸⁷¹ He took a while to work out the googly deliveries of Reggie Schwarz but relished

⁸⁶⁶ J. Thompson, *The Story of Rhodesian Sport: 1889-1935*, Bulawayo, 1935, 209 and 260-61. Brooks won six singles, eight doubles and six mixed doubles national titles, as well three sprint championships and, in 1904, the long jump at the Rhodesian Championships.

⁸⁶⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 28 January 1905.

⁸⁶⁸ G. Tanser, *A Sequence of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1900 to 1914*, Salisbury, 1974, 108-09. Tanser’s report states that the team arrived shortly before the start of play but this is not true as they were in Johannesburg as scheduled. They had time to look up old friends and Colin Duff travelled to Pretoria to see his brother, Ben, the rugby international. Abe Bailey also did much to ensure that the Rhodesians were entertained, organising a visit to one of the ‘show’ mines and inviting them as his guests to the Standard Theatre (*Rand Daily Mail*, 15 March, 1905).

⁸⁶⁹ The Transvaal team included five South African Test players: Jimmy Sinclair, Ernest ‘Barberton’ Halliwell, Maitland Hathorn, Louis Tancred and Reggie Schwarz.

⁸⁷⁰ George Anderson bowled admirably to take seven for 91.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid*, 16 March 1905.

the medium-pace bowling of Jimmy Sinclair and struck a mighty six off him into the adjacent baseball ground.

The Rhodesians were defeated inside two days⁸⁷² and a match was arranged against Wanderers – a side that included eight of the Transvaal team. Grand bowling, backed up by some superb fielding, dismissed the star-studded line-up for 42. It was a total that the Rhodesians passed with ease.⁸⁷³ There was much to be encouraged by the team's efforts yet it was Rhodesia's last cricket venture to South Africa for a quarter of a century. A number of factors contributed to this state of affairs: a weak cricket administration; limited finance available; an inability on the part of players to obtain leave; the travelling conditions⁸⁷⁴, and a lack of communication between Rhodesian officials and their South African counterparts. The Currie Cup tournaments over the next few years were at centralised venues but the distances involved and matches played still presented considerable time away from work. The *Rhodesia Herald* pointed out that it was hard enough fulfilling local fixtures and concluded: 'Staffs are small in these times of depression and [Salisbury] has to thank business firms and civil authorities for the generosity they have shown'.⁸⁷⁵

Milton remained keen that Rhodesia was engaged in international sport. It was important that those sportsmen who had taken up residence in the country were fully extended. Milton was therefore pleased to let his wife know that '[Friedrich 'Fieten'] Rahe the great German tennis man is staying here and knocking spots out of [later Sir] Percy Fynn, Brooks, etc ...'⁸⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the Rhodesians were unable to seize initiatives such as hosting a match against the MCC in 1905-06⁸⁷⁷. It had an adverse effect on cricket. Brooks realised that he would not be able to fulfil his cricket potential whilst living in Rhodesia. He chose to focus his

⁸⁷² The scores were: Transvaal 340 (J. Slatem 154, J Sinclair 57; G Anderson 7/91); Rhodesia 115 (F. Brooks 61, R Schwarz 4/29) and 55 (R. Norden 8/12). Transvaal won by an innings and 170 runs.

⁸⁷³ The scores were: Wanderers 42 (C. Duff 5/15; G. Anderson 5/24) and 121-4 (L. Tancred 52 not out); Rhodesia 91 (S. Taberer 30). Rhodesia won by six wickets on the first innings.

⁸⁷⁴ After the match against Transvaal in 1904/05, only Robinson and Tummell were happy to trust their luck by taking a return coach trip. The other members of the tour party preferred the round-about train trip through Kimberley.

⁸⁷⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 26 August 1905.

⁸⁷⁶ Milton to his wife, 9 December 1904 (MI 1/1/1, NAZ). Fynn, a leading South African tennis player who came from an old Cape family, served as acting prime minister in later years.

⁸⁷⁷ Negotiations for a match against the 1905-06 MCC were left until the tour was underway. The tourists agreed to visit Rhodesia after the South African tour but discovered that the professionals were committed to returning home. Eventually, four amateurs together with players from the Transvaal agreed to play matches in Bulawayo and Salisbury, provided a sum of £250 was guaranteed. The Rhodesians declined the offer (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, 17 February 1906).

efforts on rugby, returning to England over several Christmas periods to play for Bedford.⁸⁷⁸ During Rhodesia's winters, he strengthened his defensive qualities on the dusty, thorn-scrub fields where inter-provincial clashes were likened to wars of attrition. He emerged 'a stronger, a more resourceful and in every way a better player'⁸⁷⁹. In 1904, he scored twice when Mashonaland won 8-3 and then another in a 3-3 draw.⁸⁸⁰ Underpinning inter-provincial rivalry with its deeper social implications was the manner in which Matabeleland responded in 1905, grinding out a tense 9-8 victory before drawing the second game 0-0.⁸⁸¹

Such fixtures helped prepare Rhodesia for their return to the Currie Cup in 1906. There was great interest in the tournament which served as a trial to select the first South African rugby side to tour overseas. The crucial question of who was qualified to represent South Africa entered another controversial phase, and this time Milton was linked to the victim of an unfortunate boardroom conspiracy. The minutes of the South African Rugby Football Board indicate that discussions prior to the Currie Cup tournament were held with Brooks in mind. Rhodesia was represented by proxy at these meetings. In June 1905, G Orpen (Transvaal) seconded by M Louw (Rhodesia) moved that 'players who are not South African-born but who have three years residential qualification be eligible' for selection.⁸⁸² L.A. Myburgh (North-Eastern Districts) seconded by L.A. Cox (Griqualand West) moved an amendment that the residential qualification 'be five years instead of three'. The amendment was carried by eight votes to five. At the next meeting on 18 August 1905, E. Allen (Rhodesia) objected to 'the tentative resolution' having been passed and it was again moved

⁸⁷⁸ N. Roy (ed.), *100 Years of the Blues (the Bedfordshire Times Centenary History of Bedford RUFC)*, Bedford, 1986, records that Brooks represented the club in the 1901/02; 1902/03; 1903/04 and 1906/07 seasons.

⁸⁷⁹ *Morning Post*, 8 November 1906.

⁸⁸⁰ The *Rhodesia Herald*, 27 August 1904, records that in the latter part of the drawn match, Hepburn 'pluckily saved an ugly rush by falling on the ball', an action that bore an uncanny resemblance to the famous encounter that Thomas Hughes had described nearly fifty years earlier. In the football game which takes place in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* a numerically superior school team surge after the ball which 'rolls slowly in behind the School-house goal.' A score is imminent. Tom Brown risks life and limbs as he dives on the ball to save the day for School-house. When players are hauled off him, he is noticed by old Brooke whose praise is full of meaning: 'Well, he is a plucky youngster and will make a player' (Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, London, 1971, 78).

⁸⁸¹ Herbert Keigwin of St Paul's and Cambridge was said to have inspired the Matabeleland forwards in the narrow victory (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, 26 August 1905).

⁸⁸² South African Rugby Football Board minutes, 30 June 1905

that the residential qualification be three years. The vote was lost by the same 8-5 margin and the original resolution duly carried.⁸⁸³

Outstanding play by Brooks created early interest. He scored two glorious tries to enable Rhodesia to defeat the strong Griqualand West side in their opening match but thereafter a spate of injuries played a part in several close defeats.⁸⁸⁴ With certain players being lobbied as likely contenders for the tour, *The Star* 'hoped the best team would be picked without prejudice to any centre'. The newspaper wrote of Brooks that he 'must surely be selected to go to England'⁸⁸⁵, a view the *Rand Daily Mail* endorsed by stating that he was 'the best wing three-quarter who has taken part in the tournament'.⁸⁸⁶

Brooks was not chosen for a tour designed to help unite the two white races in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War. The selectors adhered to the ruling by the South African Rugby Football Board that players had to have served a five-year residential qualification and it found Brooks missing out by a matter of a few months.⁸⁸⁷ Paddy Carolin, an attorney and vice-captain of the Springbok side, objected to the ruling and when he discovered that Brooks would be in England, he arranged a meeting at Southampton. Carolin said that a telegram would be sent to the South African Rugby Board asking permission for Brooks to join the side because of injuries to two players. An emergency meeting of the South African Rugby Football Board was held in late October at which the telegram was read: 'Morkel, Burmeister unavailable month cable authorisation play Brooks Rhodesia'. According to the minutes: 'there was practically no discussion on this point as the chairman – [W.V. 'Billy' Simkins] – referred to the resolution of the Board to the effect that no player be eligible for the team who was not South African born or had five years residential qualification ...' Simkins, who had been Milton's stooge in the 'Hendricks Affair', now asserted himself by preventing a Rhodesian with strong imperial ties from representing the Springboks.⁸⁸⁸ The secretary,

⁸⁸³ *Ibid*, 18 August 1905

⁸⁸⁴ It was argued that too many of the team were past their best but there was nevertheless great interest in the likes of Hepburn and 'Patats' Cloete whose efforts were remembered in the celebrated conquest of the 1896 British tourists. The urge to play rugby regularly had caused Cloete to move from Umtali to Bulawayo in 1900 but he was forced to wait some six years for national representation. He, like the rest of the team, would suffer from the rigours of a tournament which involved seven matches in thirteen days on the rock-hard fields of the Transvaal.

⁸⁸⁵ *The Star*, 21 July, 1906.

⁸⁸⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 July, 1906.

⁸⁸⁷ In contrast with the selection of previous South African teams, every member of the touring side was born in the country with the exception of 'Piet Neill' who arrived there at the age of three.

⁸⁸⁸ When attempts were made to include Hendricks in white 'championship' matches at the Cape, it was Simkins who referred to the resolution that had been drawn up and would not consider deviating

Louis Smuts, immediately moved that ‘Carden be not authorised to avail himself of Brooks’s services’ and that a replacement be sent from South Africa.⁸⁸⁹

The tour was of interest to Milton, who would ensure Brooks had sufficient leave to press for a place in the English team. Milton might well have regarded an England jersey as preferable to the South African equivalent, without necessarily agreeing with a *Sunday Times* writer who marvelled at the team ‘dressed in immaculate white, a modest emblem of the stainless purity of the national life’.⁸⁹⁰ Two of Milton’s sons had played in recent ‘home’ internationals – Jumbo was selected for England against Scotland in 1905 and Cecil played against Ireland in early 1906. The two boys attended the Cambourne School of Mines and often played for Cornwall, with Jumbo representing the county side when they went down 3-9 to the Springboks at Redruth. Cecil was unavailable for that game but the youngest Milton boy, Noel, who was the first Rhodes Scholar from an English school, played against the tourists when he was chosen for an Oxford University team that included seven South Africans.

Brooks was in wonderful form for Bedford, scoring nine tries in four matches. Selection followed for the South against North when he ‘was the best man on the field ... his four tries were equally masterly in conception’.⁸⁹¹ He represented an England XV against the Rest at Coventry in a final trial, scoring again through ‘a grand run down the left wing ... without doubt the effort of the match’.⁸⁹² Selection for England followed against South Africa at Crystal Palace on a soft and greasy ground with play being hampered by showers of rain. It was for good reason that the South Africans feared the Rhodesian speedster who was quite at home in such conditions. Concern swept through their ranks when Brooks became the first player to stir the partisan 40 000 crowd. According to the *Morning Post*, ‘he put everyone on the tip-toe of expectancy in the first few minutes by a dashing run’.⁸⁹³

The tight marking that ensued drew comment from the *Daily Telegraph* that several of the touring team had fought with the Boers and ‘doubtless showed the same dogged and

from it. The same strict adherence to a ‘ruling’ was demonstrated in the case of the residential qualification regarding Brooks.

⁸⁸⁹ L. Laubscher and G. Nieman (eds.), *Carolyn Papers: A Diary of the 1906-07 Springbok Tour*, Pretoria, 1990, 109 and 114; South African Rugby Football Board minutes, 25 October 1905

⁸⁹⁰ A.G. Hales in the *Sunday Times* (London), 6 January 1907

⁸⁹¹ The *Morning Post* noted that the ‘gem of the lot was the third when racing down the wing like a hare, he held a cross punt from Shewring and raced over with the defence looking as slow as a tortoise’ (Scrap books titled ‘Adrian Stoop, His Playing Days’, 1902-1912, RFU Museum of Rugby, Twickenham).

⁸⁹² Scrap books ... Adrian Stoop, Museum of Rugby, Twickenham

⁸⁹³ *Morning Post*, 9 December, 1906.

brilliant qualities'.⁸⁹⁴ The Springboks led 3-0 at half-time but the English equalised in the second-half through a mixture of skill and opportunism. It was Brooks who dribbled the ball into the South African half. Raphael Jago and Harry Shewring then became involved in a movement that led to a rolling pass to Brooks. He kept the ball at his feet before the forwards joined the action and a ruck developed. At the right moment, recalled the *Morning Post*, the ball was quickly heeled:

Jago gave an excellent pass to Stoop; the latter gently kicked over the defensive wall and the speedy Brooks, waiting for something to turn up went for the leather like a shot from a gun. He was there first; a storm proclaimed his try. Yes his deed was done; the scores were equal.⁸⁹⁵

The *Sunday Times* recalled 'the English try roused the sodden crowd to wild excitement. Cheer after cheer boomed out on the heavy air.'⁸⁹⁶ EHD Sewell's account in the *Daily Graphic* saw the movement slightly different in the misty gloom and thought Stoop's 'pass' had gone loose before 'Brooks, who is the best player living at seeing half a chance and making the most of it, "went", to use Roos's own words, "past me like a flash just as I was going to kick dead".'⁸⁹⁷

The Springbok captain, thought the drawn match 'had shown them all as equals' and that the tour had united the South African [white] nation. 'From Cape Agulhas to the Zambesi,' he said, 'South Africa was one and all differences have been forgotten.'⁸⁹⁸ He had obviously missed the significance of the Brooks debate – the only player from the territory immediately south of the Zambezi had played for England.

Not long afterwards, Brooks was on his way back to Africa, having turned down the opportunity to play rugby for England against Wales and France. He had proved that he was

⁸⁹⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, 9 December 1906, reported in Laubscher and Nieman, *Carolin Papers*, 192. Conditions deteriorated to the extent that the match was described as 'mud-larking'. One notable scribe, CB Fry, thought that 'only play of the most brilliant order saved the game under such conditions from bathos'.

⁸⁹⁵ *Morning Post*, 9 December, 1906; *Sportsman*, Scrap books ... Adrian Stoop, Museum of Rugby, Twickenham. Reports state that in the last part of play, the match became 'a succession of thrills'. Adrian Stoop and Brooks were both nearly over but the South Africans held on courageously for the draw. The rugby was the prominent topic in the following day's newspapers. 'Shewring and Brooks were the heroes of the three-quarters,' said one report. 'These two men always had a keen eye on an opening and were fearless to a degree.'⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹⁶ A.G. Hales in the *Sunday Times* (London), 6 January 1907

⁸⁹⁷ *Daily Graphic*, 10 December 1906

⁸⁹⁸ B. Spies, 'The imperial heritage' in A. Grundlingh, A. Odendaal, and B. Spies (eds.), *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society*, Johannesburg, 1995, 75.

good enough to play international rugby and had done so in spite of the disadvantage of being a Rhodesian. Brooks did to an extent keep his options open on both sides but historical references have since failed to appreciate the full social and political implications of the selection dilemma. Carolin alone confronted the problem and even he, partly tongue-in-cheek, reduced it to one of Brooks 'really should have been playing for us, as he was a Rhodesian on holiday in England'⁸⁹⁹.

The story of Freddie Brooks encapsulated Rhodesia's predicament at a time when moves were being made to include the territory in the proposed 'Union of South Africa'. Pressure was placed on Milton by the imperial government but he deflected their demands by stating that he was 'unable to express firm opinion on political federation of South Africa' and that 'the High Commissioner should review the situation'.⁹⁰⁰ Unification was an important issue but Rhodesia's 'interest in joining the Union was at best marginal'.⁹⁰¹ Sport was an area where Rhodesians might have been encouraged to form a close relationship with their southern neighbours. Brooks captained Rhodesia on their 1908 rugby tour. The side won one match against North-Eastern Districts but lost narrowly to sides as strong as Transvaal (5-12) and Griqualand West (9-11) – an indication that they were not out of their depth in the competition. The South African Rugby Board then put forward its own plan for accelerating the unification process by making the impractical suggestion that 'Rhodesia should be merged into Griqualand West's rugby'.⁹⁰² They paid little heed to the fact that rugby gave white Rhodesia a sense of national worth and that its teams travelled great distances to hold their own with South Africa's best sides. Within Rhodesia there was widespread diffusion of a game that appealed to the aggressive masculinity of the rural white settlements. Comment on a match at Eiffel Flats, for example, recalled that wagon journeys might force men to inhale 'several cubic yards of dust' and defeats might be heavy against men of 'unexpected physique' but 'a bath, a good dinner, drinks, speeches and songs made for an enjoyable day'.⁹⁰³

Milton gave rugby his support through attending meetings and matches, while ensuring jobs were available for players of note. Two former South African rugby captains, Herbert

⁸⁹⁹ Difford, *The History of South African Rugby*, 360. Brooks would not play overseas again but returned to Rhodesia where the public had keenly followed detailed press reports. The tour inspired the first-ever game in Gwelo – Home-born overcoming the November heat to beat the 'Springboks' 10-3 (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, 24 November, 1906).

⁹⁰⁰ Administrator to High Commissioner, 14 December 1906, in papers of the Gell family of Hopton, Derbyshire Record Office (D3287 BSA/4/221)

⁹⁰¹ T. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, Bergvlei, 1989, 246.

⁹⁰² *Rhodesia Herald*, 26 May 1911.

⁹⁰³ *Ibid*, 25 June 1910.

Castens (the Chief Secretary) and Francis Myburgh, were members of the Legislative Council which also included at various stages, Percy Ross Frames (the first president of the South African Rugby Football Board), Colonel Melville Heyman (the first president of the Rhodesia Rugby Football Union) and Clarkson Tredgold (the Attorney-General and vice-president of the Rhodesia Rugby Football Union). At times, Rhodesia's rugby administrators became concerned that association football threatened their hegemony. Such a situation occurred when a national football team was selected soon after the rugby side returned from the tour to South Africa in 1908. At a time when sporting identities were being constructed, football encroached on rugby's domain by selecting Brooks for their Currie Cup tournament. He pointed out that he had no leave available but football's administrators were persistent. The *Rhodesia Herald* allocated space over a two-week period in an attempt to pressurise the civil service into releasing the player. Brooks displayed his talent by scoring a hat-trick to help the touring side defeat 'The Rest' 4-3 in a final preparation match. His pro-rugby employers were unmoved. 'Not a stone has been left unturned to obtain this player,' announced the *Rhodesia Herald*, before admitting to 'the worst blow to all soccer enthusiasts'.⁹⁰⁴ There is no evidence to indicate the matter reached Milton's desk, but the outcome was one in which it was made clear that rugby was the preferred game.

Brooks chose to limit his sporting commitments in the ensuing years in order to devote his attention to building a career.⁹⁰⁵ Rhodesia's uncertain future had filtered into all facets of life with Salisbury particularly vulnerable as its white population dropped from 1725 in 1904 to 1648 in 1907.⁹⁰⁶ At a time when Bulawayo possessed twelve cricket teams, the capital could field just two in 1906/07 but neither was able to find eleven players who could get leave to fulfil away fixtures in Umtali. The Salisbury Cricket Club withdrew from the league in the following season, a move that prompted an irate letter to the *Rhodesia Herald* in November 1907: 'It is little short of a catastrophe to see the Salisbury Cricket Club, the "premier institution of cricket in Mashonaland" go to the wall ... It is not from lack of cricketers; there are plenty of them. It is lack of co-operation and finance.'⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 14 August 1908. Three years later, Brooks would again be forced to turn down football selection because 'he could not get away'. On that occasion, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* joined those clamouring for his inclusion, claiming, 'It is doubtful whether there is a player in South Africa so dangerous as he in front of goal' (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, 26 August 1911).

⁹⁰⁵ He served as Master of the High Court and then Chairman of the Public Services Board before his death in 1947. He was awarded the OBE.

⁹⁰⁶ Richard Parry, 'Birds on a Flat Rock: Black workers and the limits of colonial power in Salisbury, Rhodesia 1890-1939' (unpublished thesis), Queen's University, Kingston, 1988, 93.

⁹⁰⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 2 November, 1907.

Widespread problems experienced by white settlers led to a visit in 1907 by British South Africa Company directors. Known as the 'Visiting Commission', they addressed grievances of the European population and looked to ways in which the Company could save money. The most obvious cost-saver was to reduce a 'cumbersome and elaborate' civil service, a task completed in consultation with Milton. It advocated a policy of retrenchment that would effect a saving established at £30 000 per annum.⁹⁰⁸ The Department of the Chief Secretary was abolished and Castens went on sick leave from 7 December 1907 until he retired on pension from 1 October 1908. Castens had not been a successful appointment and was only forty-three years old when he departed. In order to keep him away from the forefront of political activity, Milton had transferred Castens to Bulawayo but the move did little more than delay the inevitable. The Administrator helped his old friend by arranging for his pension to be increased by 100% less than a year after his departure but a drinking issue that was evident from Castens' Oxford years would contribute to his inability to hold down a position. He died in relative poverty in London in 1929.⁹⁰⁹

A major outcome of the visit of the Company directors was the decision to undertake 'an entirely new policy of promoting European settlement on the land, and this more than any other legacy of Company Rule, determined the pattern of the future'.⁹¹⁰ The deputation recommended that 'the white population must be accelerated – a programme of encouraging European farmers could reduce the country's dependence on imports and raise the value of the Company's own assets in the form of both land and railways'.⁹¹¹ The necessity for immigration, particularly of the farming type, became an increasing pre-occupation of the Board. Offices were opened in the Strand and Glasgow for publicity and the display of Rhodesian produce, whilst a Land Settlement Department was started in Salisbury 'which, as the land was still regarded as a commercial asset, was not under the Administration'. As the result of these endeavours, 'there began a steady, if not very large, stream of immigrants of a good type, many being experienced farmers'.⁹¹²

The British South Africa Company realised the error of a policy that had seen little reason to encourage agriculture in the early years. It therefore began investing heavily in the farming industry with up-to-date scientific equipment. Ranches were established, as were

⁹⁰⁸ *Declaration of Policy, Bulawayo, 19 October 1907.*

⁹⁰⁹ Heinrich Schulze, *South Africa's Cricketing Lawyers*, Halfway House, 1999, 17-23; Castens' pension was 303 pounds; in 1927 he was getting 25 pounds five shillings per month, "Less Widows' Fund £1 per month – Register of Pensions (U 2/2/1, NAZ).

⁹¹⁰ Colin Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, Oxford, 1959, 9

⁹¹¹ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 166

⁹¹² *The British South Africa Company Historical Catalogue and Souvenir of Rhodesia*, Johannesburg, 1936-37, 17

citrus estates with large irrigation schemes, and farms where mealies were the main crop. Tobacco was encouraged and the Company assisted a small but active farming community. Milton described the progress as ‘real and substantial’, but complained to the Legislative Council of the difficulty of obtaining reliable information from the farming community; his criticism being taken up by the *Rhodesia Herald* which warned farmers that it was ‘a complaint which it is hoped in their interests will not be heard again’.⁹¹³

There was a growing confidence amongst Rhodesians as their financial position strengthened. When, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a South African politician, mining financier, pioneer of the fruit industry, and author of the children’s classic, *Jock of the Bushveld*, visited Southern Rhodesia, he was encouraged by the progress. ‘There is no Rand here. There is the gravest doubt about depths,’ he said, ‘and most of the things are small. The average is low. But all about the country individuals are making it pay.’⁹¹⁴

⁹¹³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 June 1908.

⁹¹⁴ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 11

Chapter 10:

Milton concludes a period of ‘wise, calm and prudent guidance’

Rhodesia had by mid-1908, virtually reached the stage of being self-supporting, a situation that owed much to the mining industry. From being a speculators’ paradise which produced mainly promises before 1903, the industry changed within a few years to provide ‘a modest but consistent £2½ million-worth of gold annually’.⁹¹⁵ The country freed itself from the depression and ‘from about 1909 almost every important financial group on the Witwatersrand owned some sort of stake north of the Limpopo’. The Globe and Phoenix mine, which first began work in 1900, quickly stood out as a successful example of enterprise on a larger scale; it was later followed by Shamva, Lonely and Cam and Motor. The country’s total output leapt up in a way that surprised even the optimists, and mining dominated the country’s economy. In addition to precious metals, mining men also began to interest themselves in the country’s base mineral resources. The most important of these was coal of which the territory possessed enormous wealth. Prospectors discovered a number of additional base metal deposits, notably copper which was first mined at West Nicholson in 1906.⁹¹⁶

The steady improvement in the financial position enabled the Company to embark on commercial expansion. The necessity for immigration, particularly of the farming type, became an increasing pre-occupation of the Board. A Land Bank was also founded, to give advances for farming purposes on the security of first mortgages on land. The Company had become involved in farming and ranching, whilst establishing a policy whereby each farm would be a business proposition. The land was carefully selected for its suitability, and the undertaking was on a scale large enough ‘to justify the heavy overhead expenses inseparable from Company management and the provision of up-to-date and scientific equipment’. Over the next ten years ‘ranches with pure-bred dairy of beef stock, citrus estates with large irrigation schemes, experimental tobacco estates with warehouses, and farms where mealies were the main crop, were acquired, stocked and equipped’. The local farming community learnt much from the Company’s example, one which showed faith in farming through its large investment and the experiments made’.⁹¹⁷

⁹¹⁵ Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia*, 1900-33, 26

⁹¹⁶ L. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934*, New York 1939, 160-61

⁹¹⁷ Ethel Tawse-Jolie, ‘The Chartered Company in Rhodesia’ in *The British South Africa Company Historical Catalogue and Souvenir of Rhodesia Empire Exhibition*, Johannesburg 1936-37, 22

An unprecedented optimism prevailed. Milton was able to say that ‘the revenue and expenditure of the country approximated with healthy nearness – in fact there was a small surplus’. His country was therefore in a position of relative strength when an Inter-Colonial Customs Convention was arranged at Durban in 1908 to set in motion the machinery that would bring about South Africa’s unification. In this regard, Milton told the Legislative Council that Rhodesia’s position was ‘one of detachment’. He hoped that the form of union would be federation and that ‘the voices of all sections of the southern communities will be heard at the preliminary conferences’.⁹¹⁸

The Company’s London office decided that Milton and Sir Lewis Michell would be its representatives at the Convention. Charles Coghlan, the leader of the elected members in the Legislative Assembly, promptly raised an objection that elected members had been overlooked and the South Africans accepted him as a late addition. The Southern Rhodesians attended as observers without the right to vote when the Convention assembled ‘on a hot, sweltering October day’.⁹¹⁹ Considered to be ‘the most momentous gathering of politicians in the history of South Africa’, the occasion did not pan out quite the way Milton might have hoped. ‘The circumstances were by no means those envisaged by Rhodes,’ wrote Blake. ‘It was union not federation which was going to carry the day, and in the bargaining over seats in the parliament and their relation to population, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State gained a disproportionate advantage’.⁹²⁰

White Rhodesians had no incentive to throw in their fortunes with the new state. Milton remained cautious over making a decision and delayed any move to join forces with the southern colonies. Shortly before returning to Southern Rhodesia from England in November, 1909, he told Reuters that ‘time must elapse before we can join the Union. The time is necessary to help us get thoroughly on our feet and to increase our population and importance’.⁹²¹ Milton was wary of Coghlan who demonstrated enthusiasm for the new South African nation and an ardent hope that his own country would form part of it. Coghlan had been impressed by the ‘tone and spirit’ of the Durban Convention, although he knew that ‘many of his countrymen distrusted the Dutch, just as a number of Dutch distrusted them’⁹²². He went so far as to beg Rhodesians ‘to recognise that the future of [their] country lies in the

⁹¹⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 June 1908.

⁹¹⁹ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 215

⁹²⁰ Robert Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, London, 1977, 167

⁹²¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 5 November 1909

⁹²² J. Wallis, *One Man’s Hand*, Bulawayo, 1972, 107.

union' and not to see 'the idea as an attempt on the part of the Boers to get back by chicanery what they did not get by force of arms ...'⁹²³

Milton was under some pressure in that the Colonial Office was in favour of the Union of South Africa ultimately absorbing Southern Rhodesia. Section 150 of the South Africa Act 1909 'made provision for the admission into the Union of South Africa of the British South Africa Company's territories on the advice of the Privy Council after addresses from both Houses of the Union Parliament'. That Southern Rhodesia should ultimately be admitted to the Union would in time be reaffirmed by the Colonial Office and the High Commissioner on the basis that it 'would be the cheapest course for Britain'. The Company's financial claims were so strong that the matter could only be settled by a third party. If Southern Rhodesia entered the Union '... it would be for the Union to settle with the Company, an arrangement which would be very convenient to His Majesty's government'.⁹²⁴

Lord Selborne visited Southern Rhodesia in November 1909. It was an opportunity to assess opinion with regard to Union. He noted the country had changed since his first visit three years earlier. Where previously there was 'doubt sitting as a nightmare on every brow, today he met smiling faces and that firm confidence and convinced hope ...' Selborne acknowledged the influence of Milton and alluded to the qualities of 'stubborn calm' which were required in an administrator, prompting Milton to remark that Southern Rhodesia 'had had stormy waters for many years, but he hoped that the period of calm was now to come'. The stubbornness, he thought, simply referred to the use of the word 'no' and for many years he had been in the unenviable position of having to say 'no' far more frequently than he had been able to say 'yes'. Even with their growing prosperity he was afraid that it would be necessary sometimes to say 'no'.⁹²⁵

Selborne certainly sensed Southern Rhodesia's rejection of Union. The feelings of the white population were probably most effectively conveyed by Gertrude Page whose novels had done much to give British readers knowledge of Rhodesia. She was a fearless critic of the injustices of the day, notably those she tackled in 1909. She infuriated white Rhodesians with her article, 'Rhodesian Slavery' – 'Which is worse, I wonder, to be a slave, and know ... or be told you are a free man, and treated like a slave?'⁹²⁶ – but was influential in her role as a

⁹²³ Wallis, *One Man's Hand*, 102

⁹²⁴ Claire Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1965*, Oxford 1966, 194

⁹²⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 November 1909

⁹²⁶ *Ibid*, 7 July 1909; The article referred to 'boys' from the north arriving in the country but not wanting to work on a mine – 'why, the miners themselves no doubt know best' – yet being forced into such an environment and compelled to 'sign on'. They would then run away if the chance arose, and would tend to find themselves on a farm, where the farmer would be only too glad to employ them.

passionate opponent of Union. She feared it would bring ‘immersion and a general swamping of the spirit of the early days, followed probably by obliteration’. She reminded her readers that all the ‘unsung heroisms of the pioneers were almost solely British; and any talk of fellowships is only feasible for us if it secures absolutely and indisputably the British atmosphere and British paramountcy in this British-won land’.⁹²⁷

The Union of South Africa came into being on 31 May 1910. Milton was invited to a celebratory dinner in Cape Town where he made it clear that before any assimilation involving Rhodesia took place, his people wanted to see what was happening in South Africa.⁹²⁸ Amongst Rhodesians, there was a general ‘desire for self-government, an instinctive dislike for Crown Colony status and a feeling that amalgamation with the south would mean a loss of individuality’.⁹²⁹ Before long, a picture was created in the Rhodesian press of General Botha making heavy weather in his premiership, whilst ‘Hertzog’s fanaticism’⁹³⁰ was ‘positively alarming’. The Afrikaner appeared to be steering his own course and ‘would take from the British connection only what might serve the Volk’.⁹³¹ Concern was expressed when it was learnt that at Paarl a resolution had been passed which involved imperial assistance in introducing bilingualism into Rhodesia.⁹³² And delegates attending the dedication of the Rhodes memorial at Groote Schuur noted the boycott of the ceremony by the Prime Minister of South Africa and all his ministers, except one.⁹³³ At the Drill Hall, Salisbury, loud cheers greeted a resolution which stated, ‘It is inadvisable for

This would then come to the notice of the Native Department and the Police, and they would end up arrested and punished or sent back to the mine. When the labourers returned to their home, they would spread the word about their poor treatment in Southern Rhodesia. Page appealed to the Native Department to take up the matter as it is ‘a grave slur upon Rhodesian justice’.

⁹²⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 25 June 1909

⁹²⁸ *Ibid*, 4 November 1910

⁹²⁹ Ethel Tawse Jolie, *The Real Rhodesia*, London 1924, 51

⁹³⁰ JBM Hertzog was from 1907 to 1932, ‘the generally accepted champion of the rights of the Afrikaner’. His insistence on enforcing Dutch language rights was particularly unpopular with English-speakers (Trehwella Cameron and S.B. Spies, eds., *An Illustrated History of South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1986, 261).

⁹³¹ Wallis, *One Man’s Hand*, 111

⁹³² G.H. Tanser, *A Sequence of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia 1900-1914*, Salisbury, 1974, 260

⁹³³ Wallis, *One Man’s Hand*, 121: Wallis described it as a ‘a sign fraught with the keenest political significance’

Rhodesia to become merged in the Union of South Africa'. It was passed unanimously for onward transmission to the Secretary for the Colonies.⁹³⁴

Rhodesians became increasingly aware that 'union' would not protect local interests as a loose form of federation might have done. Coghlan was forced to admit that there was a 'waning faith in the fair promise of the Convention' and Rhodesia 'found less than ever to tempt her into partnership with the south'.⁹³⁵ He echoed Milton when he said he realised they 'must not be caught up and wheeled into Union' by the 'fair promises without performance of South Africa'.⁹³⁶ He then declared his belief that to continue the Charter was the only way to keep out of Union. It was a claim that gained support. Dr Jameson arrived with London Board officials to drive home the unpalatable truth about what would happen when the 'Rhodesian child gets into the bed of that large and corpulent mother'. He told his audience that their aspirations would be 'killed' and that they should therefore accept their 'lot and make the utmost of what advantages might accrue from having the Chartered purse to draw upon'.⁹³⁷

Jameson's argument was opposed by that of General Botha who was determined to accommodate the Rhodesias within the Union. The land question was of course a complex issue and the key factor in delaying a decision over the future of the territory. Coghlan questioned the claim of the British South Africa Company to be owners of the land. It was going to take some time before a decision would be reached and the whole position as to land remained unsettled. White settlement, according to Milton in 1909, went 'on steadily ... there continues to be a steady demand for land in all portions of the territory. It is to be hoped that the large land companies will take steps to settle most of the blocks which they hold in favourable positions'.⁹³⁸ A Director of Settlements was appointed and travelled to England to discuss plans for future development with the Board.

The promotion of white agriculture and immigration placed pressure on land, causing the Company to turn to the reserves. At a conference of the Native Department's senior officials in 1909, it was agreed that some reserves were excessive, others were insufficient, and hence 'a careful re-adjustment' was needed. In *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, Robin Palmer wrote that the manner in which the reserves were created demonstrated 'the falsity of viewing colonial administrations as monolithic'. He pointed to the wide differences of opinion among the native commissioners, the two chief native commissioners and

⁹³⁴ *Ibid*, 111

⁹³⁵ *Ibid*, 118

⁹³⁶ *Ibid*, 111.

⁹³⁷ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 261

⁹³⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 5 November 1909

Administrator Milton'. He said that the native commissioners generally 'tried to obtain as much good land as was available and were even on occasion prepared to recommend expropriation of European land', while the chief native commissioners 'attempted to balance the respective demands of Africans and Europeans'. Milton, he wrote 'always tended, in cases of conflict, to back the settlers and point out that Africans who found difficulty obtaining land could always move to other districts ...'⁹³⁹

Sonny Taberer, the Chief Native Commissioner, Mashonaland, believed that Africans could learn from Europeans: 'If every reserve were cut down to one half it would be the best thing that could happen. Get them out of the reserves – throw them in contact with civilisation and progress, and you will make useful citizens of them'. At the same time Taberer conceded that while some reserves might appear excessive on paper, in reality 'owing to the nature of the country, it is often necessary to include large tracts which are entirely useless to anyone'. It was a view with which Milton 'was in accord'.⁹⁴⁰ He observed that large portions of some of the reserve areas were 'totally unsuitable for occupation by Europeans or natives, either because of the absence of water or because of their mountainous or rugged nature'. Whilst water supplies might have been adequate when reserves were first selected, droughts had taken their toll. Milton hoped the reserves 'would suffice for another fifty years' but, says Palmer, it was not long before 'serious doubts were being cast on those assumptions'.⁹⁴¹

There was difficulty in reducing the reserves as the Native Department generally opposed the moves that were made. A 'reserves' commission was proposed but subsequently rejected. Milton was warned against agreeing 'to any final settlement which will for all time to come prevent European settlement in areas which are suitable for white occupation'.⁹⁴² It was an argument that the imperial authorities supported. Milton saw the advantage of Africans receiving instruction from white farmers and was in favour of 'encouraging natives to live on farms ... and not to provide reserves in convenient localities'.⁹⁴³ The Native Commissioner at Makoni revealed that Milton had told him 'that it was not desirable to make a native reserve on the railway line'.⁹⁴⁴

The Company was concerned about the situation in Matabeleland where absentee landlords were earning substantial amounts through living off their tenants' rents. The

⁹³⁹ Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, California 1977, 66

⁹⁴⁰ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 84, 89

⁹⁴¹ Milton to Newton, 29 January 1904 (L 2/2/117/8 NAZ); Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 99

⁹⁴² Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 85-86

⁹⁴³ Minute by Milton, 3 August 1914 (T 2/29/64/12 NAZ)

⁹⁴⁴ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 77

practice which was widespread in southern Africa ‘was disliked by native commissioners on the grounds that it was immoral and by *bona fide* white farmers on the grounds that it locked up both land and labour which could be put to better use’. The latter would persuade Milton and the Company to introduce legislation, ‘with a view to limiting the numbers of Africans allowed on European farms and penalising the absentee landlords’. The Private Locations Ordinance was therefore implemented, designed ‘for the benefit of imperial officials as an attack upon absentee landlordism’ but its main motive was more likely to be ‘the desire to increase the labour supply’.⁹⁴⁵

In 1910, the London Board’s Wilson Fox instructed Milton and Percy Inskipp, the Commercial Representative, ‘to put your heads together and make an attack in force upon the existing conditions’.⁹⁴⁶ Later in the year Milton was told that reserves which were in excess of the original estimates, ‘will have to be dealt with at no distant date by way of surrender to the Company’s Estate of all such portions as are not actually needed for native purposes’.⁹⁴⁷ In time, it was argued that the situation in Matabeleland was unsatisfactory as there were ‘practically no reserves at all in the centre and huge reserves in the outer districts’. Milton was of the opinion that it was not possible to create reserves in central Matabeleland. To take farms in that region [central Matabeleland] for native reserves ‘would be impolitic and even impossible ... without resorting to expropriation’.⁹⁴⁸

The solution that Africans should work on European farms had clear limitations. James Mutambirwa thought that ‘the significance of the land and labour policies of the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia, the setting up of reserves and the introduction of taxes, lies in Africans’ loss of freedom to determine their lives’.⁹⁴⁹ He pointed to dissatisfaction being expressed by Africans who were restricted to reserves and therefore ‘rendered incapable of living where they had lived for generations before the Europeans had arrived’.⁹⁵⁰ Marshall Hole, Secretary to the Administrator, contributed to the debate when he reminded Milton: ‘As the white population increases ... the squeezing-out process is inevitable, and it was for this reason that the reserves were created’.⁹⁵¹ By the time the setting up of a Native Reserves Commission had become inevitable, the ‘squeeze’ was clearly being felt.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 90

⁹⁴⁶ Fox to Milton, 29 April 1910 (A 1/5/8 NAZ)

⁹⁴⁷ London Office to Milton, 17 December 1910 (A 3/18/39/2 NAZ)

⁹⁴⁸ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 115

⁹⁴⁹ James A. Chamunorwa Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1898-1923*, New Jersey, 1980, 30

⁹⁵⁰ Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power*, 48

⁹⁵¹ Hole to Milton, 26 November 1909 (A 3/15/11 NAZ)

The campaign to prohibit more Africans from becoming voters was also revived. Earlier support had been given by High Commissioner Selborne but the London Board of the British South Africa Company had weakened and requested Milton not to proceed with the proposed legislation. The final outcome was a watered-down Ordinance 14 of 1912 which ‘raised voters’ qualifications, with the covert intention of reducing the numbers of black voters’ The leader of the elected members of the Council admitted that ‘if they had the power they would have got rid of the native franchise altogether’.⁹⁵²

Whilst the question of the franchise may be viewed as a blot on the credibility of the Legislative Council, its record was one of considerable progress in terms of setting up a system of government. In his biography of Coghlan, Wallis writes of ‘intelligent co-operation between the two sides of the House [which] made for efficiency and saved time, so that evening sittings were unknown’. He attributed this ‘admirable and harmonious temper’ to ‘compact membership – thirteen ... and to its president, Sir William Milton [who] organised its agenda and governed its discussions with the foresight and firmness conducive to smoothness and dispatch’. The often forceful and frequently impulsive Coghlan was prepared to attach importance to the guidance that the Administrator provided: ‘Though of different temper, [Milton] was a man after Coghlan’s own heart, which made it easier, through private agreement beforehand, to expedite the conduct of business’.⁹⁵³

The imperial government’s methods changed ‘from about 1909 onwards to more subtle methods of influencing Southern Rhodesian legislation’. This could be partly ascribed to the Colonial Office recognising that elected members enjoyed a majority in the Legislative Council – ‘and was anxious not to provoke conflict by drawing attention to its vast powers which in any event could as effectively be exercised in a more discreet fashion’. Control in the form of disallowance and non-assent was ‘enforced in questions concerning the African and Asian populations, in cases where financial measures might affect the future of the country, and in respect of laws where uniformity throughout the Empire was required’. An example occurred in the Southern Rhodesian Regulations of 1910, which set the pattern for the Native Affairs Act of 1927 and ‘contained provisions inserted at the insistence of the High Commissioner against the wishes of the Administration’.⁹⁵⁴

In June 1911 the long-deferred Order-in-Council confirmed the elected members in their tenuous majority – twelve members against six nominated members – ‘but their impotence was emphasised by a reaffirmation of the chartered privileges’. There was debate on the

⁹⁵² Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia*, 171; see also *Legislative Council Debates* 1912, col. 53

⁹⁵³ Wallis, *One Man’s Hand*, 97

⁹⁵⁴ Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia*, 156-57

redistribution of seats before Milton ‘quietly and incisively declared that the government proposals were designed to meet the increase in population – [the white population had risen from 12 586 in 1904 to 23 606 in 1911] – and give fairer representation to rural districts’. He was not prepared to go beyond the offer and further increase the elected majority. He promised, however, to acquaint the ‘proper authorities’ with what he understood to be the opinion of the people’s representatives.⁹⁵⁵

Opposition to the continuance of the Company’s administration did gather in strength after Southern Rhodesia came of age on 28 October 1910, twenty-one years after the signing of the Royal Charter. The revision of the Charter, which was to take place in 1914, was seen as an opportunity to seek ‘added power for the settlers – a more effective majority on the Council, representation on the executive, a revision of the basis of the franchise, of the number of constituencies, and payment of members’. With the future undecided, a period of great political activity began. The Company declined to make large advances which would merely be added to the administrative deficit, whilst the imperial government would not permit a loan to be raised upon the liability of settlers. To counter rising unhappiness, the vice-president of the Company, Rockfort Maguire, visited the country in March 1913 and issued a ‘Statement of Policy’ which ‘promised constitutional and financial reforms calculated to prepare the ground for self-government. *Inter alia*, the Company agreed to complete the separation of the administration and commercial recovery and abandon its claim to recover the accumulated deficits.’⁹⁵⁶

Milton’s everyday duties went beyond the administration of government. He was frequently tasked with overseeing the visits of prominent guests. On 30 October 1909, for example, he was informed that the Prince of Wales would open the first parliament of the Union of South Africa and thereafter take the opportunity to visit Rhodesia. The British government announced a London firm would erect a house in Salisbury for the Royal party and that this would become the new Government House. It was not an arrangement which Milton supported; he could see no reason why his house could not be extended. This was despite the fact that his home ‘was not particularly comfortable or commodious, and that it was over-run periodically with plagues of black ants’. His wife had also complained for a number of years about the waste ground in front of the house which served as a short-cut for those travelling between the police camp and town. During the dry season ‘there were clouds of dust from the mule waggonettes’ and when the rains came ‘big rats invaded her rooms’.⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵⁵ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 166

⁹⁵⁶ Eric Anderson Walker, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Volume 7, Part 1, 644-65

⁹⁵⁷ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 181

The news that Edward VII had died suddenly and the Prince of Wales had become George V did not affect the organisation to any great extent. Edward's brother, the Duke of Connaught, would make the tour and arrangements proceeded as before. The builders were unable to complete the work as promised and costs soared from £18 000 to £25 850. Salisbury residents could hardly believe that the Duke, Duchess, Princess Patricia and the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies would require a support staff of three maids, three footmen, eight valets, a clerk, a photographer and a baggage-master.

In November, 1910, the townspeople were well prepared for the Royal visit which set out from Salisbury Railway Station to the accompaniment of the British South Africa Police Band. Milton joined the Duke and Duchess in their coach when the cavalcade made its way along a route that would allow the visitors to see the best of Salisbury and pass through three triumphal arches. African children from Epworth Mission were provided with miniature Union Jacks to wave as the visitors stopped to perform their first duty. The occasion reflected the pomp and hypocrisy of empire: a grand fuss was made over the change of street name from 'Broadway' to 'Kingsway' and, as everyone departed, a municipal officer on his bicycle raced after the African children to reclaim the flags.

That afternoon, wrote Tanser, 'all Mashonaland trooped to the "At Home" given by Sir William Milton and Lady Milton on the lawns of Government House'. In struggling to sustain interest for three days, a suggested African Indaba to meet tribesmen did not materialise. The entertainment committee recalled that when Lord Selborne had been presented to the Matabele in Bulawayo, the assembled Africans had not given him the Royal salute to which he thought he was entitled. Then, to the embarrassment of everyone, he insisted upon receiving it.⁹⁵⁸ It was decided for the Duke's visit that Africans would be encouraged to line the streets as the Royal entourage drove from Government House to Town House for a fireworks display. The 'singing and dancing and waving' of the Africans would then give way to 'Oohs!' and 'Aahs!' of the Europeans as 'the firework set-pieces of the King, the Duke, Cecil Rhodes and Milton burned themselves out and the rockets shot up and scattered their multi-coloured sparks'. Then, to round off the festivities the Duke of Connaught conferred several honours at Government House – the Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) on Milton and Knight Bachelor on Justice Joseph Vincent and Charles Patrick Coghlan.⁹⁵⁹

Salisbury appeared to rise to the occasion for the visit of the Duke and Duchess but Milton did not enjoy a particularly good relationship with the Town Council. HW Ross, the

⁹⁵⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 12 November 1909 – the newspaper commented that 'to the few white people present the situation was awkward in the extreme'.

⁹⁵⁹ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 184-88

Mayor, was critical that ‘the [Town] Council was treated with lofty scorn’ by Milton’s administration. He referred to the Administrator’s unhelpful action with regard to a new Post Office, his non-acceptance of the morality law and the Company’s refusal to pay rates on any of its properties. When Harvey Brown – a member of the Legislative Assembly – succeeded Ross as Mayor, it was hoped that he would be able to bring to the Administrator’s notice the Council’s feeling on a number of issues.⁹⁶⁰

The Municipal Council had after its formation in 1897 set out to deal with the problems of the prostitutes in Pioneer Street. Milton in turn regarded the situation as a legal matter and asked his Attorney-General Clarkson Tredgold to investigate. The matter was subsequently shifted to Inspector Gordon Drury, the Officer Commanding the Southern Rhodesian Constabulary. The police recognised the problem as a ‘necessary evil’ and Drury thought there was ‘no better locality for these unfortunate people’. Tredgold and Milton were in agreement but the churches objected. The new mayor, Harvey Brown, travelled to England to speak to the London Office of the British South Africa Company and a cable was sent to Milton:

The Board is satisfied that continued existence of the disorderly houses in so public a thoroughfare as Pioneer Street is most undesirable and very properly constitutes grave offence to many inhabitants of Salisbury’.

Milton did not react, nor was he influenced by petitions signed by the town’s leading residents asking for ‘the suppression of immorality in Pioneer Street’. He waited patiently whilst the Town Council became ‘bogged down in legal argument’. Finally, on 21 May 1912, Milton wrote to the Town Council, ‘adhering to the opinion expressed at the beginning two and a half years earlier that so long as the women created no disturbance, action could not be taken. So the women remained.’⁹⁶¹

There were more pleasant matters for Milton to attend to over the years. A highlight was an invitation to represent Rhodesia at the coronation of George V and Queen Mary in June 1911. At home, the Miltons were frequently asked to open institutes, schools and buildings; to lay foundation stones and unveil statues; to attend dinners and consecrations, and to inspect the troops. Lady Milton was particularly busy with the Loyal Women’s Guild, collecting for the churches and organising fund-raising bazaars. Their days were certainly varied with Milton heading bodies as far removed as the Salisbury Rifle Club and the Aeronautical Society of Rhodesia, whilst his wife was presented with a silver spanner to turn on the water at Cleveland Dam. Milton attended to his tasks, often with a sense of humour. When he opened two completed wings of the new hospital in Salisbury, he finished his speech by

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 168-69

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 163-66

hoping that those attending would ‘take the opportunity of seeing the inside of the hospital and that, after the visit, it would not be necessary to see it again’.⁹⁶²

Milton’s interest in sport focused on golf, often in company with Freddie Brooks, and billiards. He also continued to attend annual general meetings of cricket and rugby bodies. There was optimism on the sporting front with developments indicating the tide of prosperity was beginning to turn. The Salisbury Cricket Club was rescued through the amalgamation of the cricket, rugby, football and hockey clubs in February 1908. Soon afterwards inter-provincial cricket was revived. It was ‘a good many years since Salisbury had the pleasure of a visit from Bulawayo’ and, at lunch, Milton entertained everyone with a short speech in which he recalled his last cricketing trip to Bulawayo as a member of a Salisbury team. Later, at the Salisbury Cricket Club’s annual general meeting, Milton, as honorary president, reported on the revived interest in cricket. He said that a well had been sunk in the north-east corner of the club’s ground and a good water supply was being obtained. It was hoped before long to erect a windmill pump and run water to various parts of the ground and so cope with the dust problem.⁹⁶³

The economic upturn also contributed to the expansion of sporting clubs and a corresponding improvement in standards in Bulawayo. North of the town the building of the railway to Victoria Falls and across the Zambesi was of interest to overseas sports bodies. Requests to visit the spectacular natural wonder influenced the planning of tour itineraries and forced South African sports bodies to include Rhodesia. Tennis,⁹⁶⁴ cricket and rugby sides arrived from Britain during 1909/10, whilst a football trip fell away through a lapse in communication.⁹⁶⁵ Such visits also provided a forum through which Rhodesians could hit back at their respective parent bodies.

⁹⁶² *Ibid*, 272

⁹⁶³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 9 October 1908

⁹⁶⁴ An English tennis side, led by Commander G.W. Hillyard RN who was also secretary of the Lawn Tennis Association, visited in 1909. They were generally too strong for the Rhodesians although Brooks and Taberer showed up well. The English visited again in 1911 with a British team following in 1912. Brooks later captained a Rhodesian tennis team which participated in the South African inter-provincial championships.

⁹⁶⁵ Early in 1910 a letter was written to the Rhodesian Football Association in Bulawayo in connection with including Rhodesia in the programme of matches for their tour of South Africa. No reply was ever returned. The Rhodesians were therefore not considered. It was regretted that the authorities in Bulawayo did not consider it necessary to ascertain from Mashonaland what their views were on the matter. No one knew the guarantee – ‘it may have been prohibitive but the terms of the letter should certainly have been furnished to this province’. The Rhodesian Football Association was forced to send a letter of apology to the Mashonaland Football Association for the neglect and indifference

In early August 1909, the South African Cricket Association requested a guarantee of £800 for which Rhodesia would be allocated two matches against the MCC in 1909-10 and be expected to arrange a visit to the Victoria Falls. The Rhodesians rejected the offer which amounted to 'one-fifth of the total cost of the tour' and it was left to Abe Bailey and the Chartered Company to finance a team of English amateurs, bolstered by Transvaal players, on a three-match visit.⁹⁶⁶ The touring captain, HDG Leveson-Gower, was openly critical of South Africa's cricket administration. He stressed the need 'to divide the profits of Test matches so that Rhodesia and other centres would have their share of proceeds'. Rhodesia's captain, Leo Robinson, responded by asking the Transvaal players to take note because they 'ought to give other places a chance'.⁹⁶⁷ The South African Cricket Association paid no attention, complaining that Leveson-Gower's 'ideas would be far more welcome if he waited until he was asked for them'.⁹⁶⁸

Dissatisfaction within sport strengthened the undercurrent of Rhodesian opinion opposed to amalgamation with South Africa. Milton entertained the touring British rugby team when they visited Bulawayo in 1910, and attended an after-match dinner where there was open criticism of the South African Rugby Football Board. Rhodesian captain, H.O. Coker, objected to just one match being played against tourists who readily supported him in stressing the lack of 'fair play from the strongest centres in South Africa'.⁹⁶⁹ The argument might have been justified but Rhodesians could not hope to host British visits on their own. Furthermore, profits which accrued through rugby's Currie Cup participation and international tours, as had occurred in 1906, were of great importance to Rhodesia's limited sporting coffers.

Rhodesian pride in holding the British touring side to 11-13 at half-time before going down 11-24, was heightened by news that two English internationals would be joining Rhodesian clubs in 1911. Milton was able to establish a 'responsible position' in the Company for Anthony Henniker-Gotley who arrived in Bulawayo a matter of weeks after captaining England to victory over Scotland.⁹⁷⁰ By the end of June, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* boasted, 'South Africa has no half to show of the English crack's quality'.⁹⁷¹ At the same

shown. It was too late to change the programme and send a team. Details were published in the *Rhodesia Herald* during February 1910.

⁹⁶⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, 3 September 1909

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 25 March 1910

⁹⁶⁸ South African Cricket Association minutes, 29 March 1910

⁹⁶⁹ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 25 July 1910

⁹⁷⁰ *Rhodesia Herald*, 17 February, 1911. Henniker-Gotley won six caps for England, including an historic Test against Argentina at Buenos Aires in 1910.

⁹⁷¹ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 30 June 1911

time, John Hopley, the former English forward⁹⁷², played for Mashonaland. His father, William Hopley, one of the instigators of Cape Rules and the first president of the South African Cricket Association, was well known to Milton and became Rhodesia's Chief Justice. The younger Hopley attended Harrow and Cambridge and gained further fame when he won the British amateur heavyweight boxing title – Denzil Batchelor described him as 'the most outstanding heavyweight boxer of his day, amateur or professional'.⁹⁷³ In Rhodesia, he joined the Native Affairs Department and was stationed at Mazoe, from where he would cycle twenty-eight miles into Salisbury three times a week for rugby practice and a weekend match, then ride back to Mazoe in the dark.⁹⁷⁴

The *Bulawayo Chronicle* hinted at their dissatisfaction with the game's administration in reiterating their view that it was 'a pity we couldn't send a side to Newlands for it is beyond question that at the moment "rugger" here is better than it has ever been'.⁹⁷⁵ There was some compensation in 1912 when four Rhodesians were invited to a week's trials at Cape Town from which a Springbok side was selected to tour overseas.⁹⁷⁶ It became immediately apparent that Hopley was looked upon as a possible captain of the touring squad. He led sides during the week and played in the main game on the last day, but when the team was announced, he was named as one of eight reserves. It provided a way out for selectors who might otherwise have provoked debate on Rhodesia's relationship with South Africa, an argument that would have been all the more intriguing if Hopley had been chosen to lead the side.

Despite dissatisfaction with parent bodies, it was clear that if Rhodesia was to progress in sport, its future would have to be tied in with that of South Africa. Cricket struggled to free itself from the shackles of a largely self-imposed isolation. Milton's close association with

⁹⁷² Hopley played against Wales and France in 1906/07 and Ireland in 1907/08. He also represented the British Barbarians (N. Starmer-Smith, *The Barbarians: The Official History of the Barbarian Football Club*, London, 1977, 223).

⁹⁷³ D. Batchelor, 'British Boxing', London, 1948, in S. Macdonald, *Winter Cricket: the Spirit of Wedza*, Harare, 2003, 145-46. In the same article, reference is made to E. Corri who wrote in 'Fifty years in the Ring': 'We never knew exactly how good a boxer he was because only one of his opponents ever lasted three rounds against him. No other boxer paid or unpaid, ever had such an amazing record as Hopley's ... a minute's sparring, a feint, a punch that travelled like a flash and landed like the kick of a mule – and that was another of Hopley's fights ended'.

⁹⁷⁴ M. Kimberley, 'Heritage', 1981, and P. Lewis, 'Wedza Gazette', 1968 in Macdonald, *Winter Cricket*, 145-50

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 21 August 1911

⁹⁷⁶ Four Rhodesians were nominated for the trials: John Hopley, Phil and Ben Rabinson, and Tom Louw

the Difford family resulted in a tour by a team of Transvaal cricketers in 1912. They played in a number of matches across the country and were guests of Milton at Government House. Unfortunately, little advantage was taken of the exercise as Rhodesia was again excluded from the tour itinerary when the MCC visited in 1913-14. It was recorded that clubs 'could not raise the funds to finance the matches'⁹⁷⁷. The standard of the game in Salisbury remained poor despite the white population more than doubling from 1648 in 1907 to 3479 in 1911. When Brooks, Duff and Sonny Taberer were unavailable, the capital suffered humiliating defeats in Bulawayo in 1911/12 (by an innings and 146 runs) and 1913/14 (by an innings and 203 runs).

One lesson that the vanquished learnt from Bulawayo was the need to promote sport in the schools. It was the beginning of a crucial new stage in the development of the country's games. Milton had long advocated 'a secular school system' based on the English public school and 'wholly under state control'. The undoubted appeal of the 'Tom Brown' formula saw white government schools offer cricket and rugby matches with accompanying traditions and rivalries encouraged. They operated in competition with private schools as was amply illustrated in the establishment of the first state-maintained high schools in Bulawayo. Eveline High School (named after Lady Milton) and Milton School⁹⁷⁸, named in honour of the Administrator were model institutes that would eventually be replicated elsewhere in the country. To the immense pride of the Miltons, the schools were opened on the same day:

At a little before ten o'clock on the morning of Monday 25 July 1910, a distinguished party crossed Selborne Avenue and walked some 150 yards along Borrow Street. The party, including His Excellency Sir William Milton, the British South Africa Company's Administrator of Southern Rhodesia; his wife, Eveline; the Director of Education; the Attorney-General; Sir Charles Coghlan and the Mayor and Town Council, had just witnessed the opening of the school named after Lady Eveline and was now on its way to see Sir William perform a similar ceremony ... As a memento of the Schools that would in future be called by their names, His Worship presented Sir William and Lady Milton with silver keys to the schools.⁹⁷⁹

Milton School replaced St John's and was equipped with facilities 'on a scale that had not been contemplated before by an educational institution in the territory'.⁹⁸⁰ The Administrator

⁹⁷⁷ P. Wynne-Thomas, *The Complete History of Cricket Tours at Home and Abroad*, London, 1989, 70.

⁹⁷⁸ By 1909, St John's facilities were quite inadequate for Bulawayo's requirements and the Company gave Milton permission to have separate boys' and girls' schools built to replace it. And so it was that Milton School came into being with an enrolment of eighty. (I.P. MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools, 1892-1979*, Bulawayo, 1981, 180)

⁹⁷⁹ MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools*, 180

⁹⁸⁰ Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*, 51-52

no doubt approved of Milton School's Greek motto which was loosely translated into 'Playing the Game'.⁹⁸¹

Sporting progress was also made at Plumtree where, in 1906, Bob 'Tambo' Hammond, a Cambridge graduate, was appointed headmaster.⁹⁸² Plumtree moved steadily towards the acceptance of a new role as a secondary boarding school for boys, making the transition from 'the village school environment towards the educational concepts and practices of the English Public School system'⁹⁸³. A later headmaster, JB Clarke, compared the early history of Plumtree School with that of Rugby and through reference to the latter's organised games, clubs and societies, concluded, 'It was towards these goals that Hammond and his small band of helpers directed Plumtree School'.⁹⁸⁴

The first inter-school cricket match to be played in Rhodesia was between Plumtree and St John's School in late November 1907. The idea of a two-day fixture proved popular and Milton delighted in Rhodesia's equivalent of the Marlborough-Rugby game; it was for him a poignant reminder of the days he enjoyed at the annual pageant of cricket at Lord's. Rhodesia would in time follow the pattern experienced in Britain whereby school athletic success was 'a noted asset in the scramble for status and pupils' and headmasters were determined to instil 'the best of British education and moral rectitude into his pupils'⁹⁸⁵. Within a few years, other centres became part of the athletic movement.⁹⁸⁶

The Salisbury Public School adhered to Milton's dictum that no [white] child, who knocked on the door of a school should be refused admission'.⁹⁸⁷ It catered for those

⁹⁸¹ MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools*, 181. It was the choice of the first headmaster, EB 'Dab' de Beer, a Cambridge graduate, who surprisingly showed little interest in team games. He was a very keen gymnast so 'whilst cricket and rugby were optional, gym was compulsory'

⁹⁸² The term 'Matambo's School' is still widely used by local Africans. It was derived from the nickname 'Matambo' bestowed on Hammond by the early pupils because of his penchant for string ties. Hammond recalled, 'My degree at Cambridge was not good enough to enable me to obtain a mastership in any decent school in England – so I had to make a decent school for myself' (J. Clarke, *Plumtree School*, Salisbury, 1978, 99).

⁹⁸³ MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools*, 214

⁹⁸⁴ Clarke, *Plumtree School*, 32

⁹⁸⁵ Excerpt from J. Baker, *Beloved African*, Weltevredenpark, 2000

⁹⁸⁶ The Gwelo Public School began in October 1900 but the government took control in 1906. When the Umtali Public School was formed in 1909, the schoolboys were encouraged by Major Alf Tomlinson to practise cricket at the Police Camp. It was not long before his son, Denis – born in Umtali in 1910 – would represent Mashonaland as a precocious fourteen-year-old leg-spinner *en route* to becoming Rhodesia's first-ever Springbok.

⁹⁸⁷ Tanser 250

European children whose parents were unable to pay fees and was completed on a rather less ambitious scale than that at Milton School in Bulawayo.⁹⁸⁸ Improvements in most schools focused on the acquisition of improved playing-fields and, in no time, ‘cricket and rugby flourished’.⁹⁸⁹ At the outbreak of the First World War, there were six institutions in Rhodesia that offered cricket – Plumtree, Salisbury, Gwelo, Umtali, Milton and St George’s – and all but the last named supported rugby.⁹⁹⁰

A dual system of education saw the Native Affairs Department devise an ‘industrial’ curriculum for black pupils that would serve the government’s intention to ensure mobilisation of labour for dominant industries as well as domestic service.⁹⁹¹ In an economy which centred largely on the need for a supply of cheap unskilled or semi-skilled labour, ‘settlers were exceedingly wary of giving Africans an education at all and in Rhodesia no government education was provided before 1920. Instead, the state chose to subsidise mission education which emphasised industrial training and habits of “discipline” and “cleanliness”’.⁹⁹² Sport would not play a part in the lives of the black schoolchildren, save for the few who attended schools in South Africa. Some blacks, including those sponsored by Rhodes, were able to attend schools in South Africa. Charles Lobengula, the son of the late Matabele king, played football for Zonnebloem College, an elite school set up in the 1850s to educate the children of chiefs. He was a centre-half in the side between 1905 and 1907, with his interest in the game being such that he also served as secretary of the club. There were other Rhodesians at the black South African educational institutes where games were popular.⁹⁹³ Ossie Stuart in a study of football in Rhodesia refers to students ‘who in the 1910s took the sport to Southern Rhodesia’.⁹⁹⁴ The early associations aroused curiosity in western sports but it would be some years before team games became an integral part of African society.

The emphasis on games traditionally had another purpose and, in conjunction with the cadet corps, fostered a concept of manliness that reinforced a colonial society’s national self-image of being physical. The playing-fields of the various schools would make an impressive

⁹⁸⁸ Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*, 52.

⁹⁸⁹ The biannual school magazine, *The Hararian*, was designed to cover the cricket and rugby seasons.

⁹⁹⁰ After moving to Salisbury in 1926, St George’s became a leading rugby-playing school.

⁹⁹¹ The leading strategist in promoting industrial education was Herbert Keigwin, educated at St Paul’s and Cambridge, and later the opening batsman for Rhodesia.

⁹⁹² Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 182

⁹⁹³ T. Couzens, ‘An Introduction to the History of Football in South Africa’ in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, Johannesburg, 1983, 199

⁹⁹⁴ O Stuart, ‘Players, Workers and Protestors’, in J. MacClancy (ed.), *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, Oxford, 1996, 174

contribution to the military when Rhodesians were called upon to support the 'Mother Country' in 1914. As in the case of the Boer War the contribution of a patriotic people was remarkable in the light of its slender resources. As many as 5 500 men out of a white population of 27 000 served in the armed forces during the First World War. Of this number, 1720 held commissions, prompting Robert Blake to state that 'there can be no question that young Rhodesians were excellent "officer material"'.⁹⁹⁵

On the afternoon of 4 August 1914 the German troops crossed the Belgian border. At midnight on that day, Great Britain declared war against Germany. At 10.30 am on 5 August, a Gazette Extraordinary was published and placed outside the Administrator's Office in Salisbury:

It is hereby notified for public information that a telegraphic despatch has been received from His Excellency the High Commissioner announcing that War has broken out with Germany.

W.H. Milton.

Administrator

The German Consul in Salisbury invited all Germans resident in the town to take up arms and return to Germany. Milton sent a contrasting message to London: 'All Rhodesia united in devoted loyalty to King and Empire and ready to do its duty'. There were 'enthusiastic scenes in the streets' and a list was opened at the Commandant-General's Office for 'signature by all Britishers desirous of giving their services to the Empire either for service overseas, in South Africa or for internal defence purposes'. The *Rhodesia Herald* published a special edition that stated 'Sir William Milton's assurance to His Majesty the King – judging from the spirit of the people – will be backed up by every able-bodied man in the country.'⁹⁹⁶

The British South Africa Company wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking whether there were any special defensive measures the Administrators of Southern and Northern Rhodesia could take in Rhodesia. They were advised that the High Commissioner stationed in Cape Town would be using his discretion in this regard. The response did not suit Rhodesians. They wanted action. The War Office was advised via the Board of the British South Africa Company that 500 men were ready and waiting to serve overseas. It was to no immediate avail: 'What was a matter of great consequence to the Rhodesians did not stir the London officials. No answer came for several weeks.'⁹⁹⁷

On 12 September after their annual flag-raising ceremony, the Pioneers sat down to an austerity dinner. They had agreed to forward the money saved to war funds. The *Rhodesia*

⁹⁹⁵ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 168

⁹⁹⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, 6 August 1914

⁹⁹⁷ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 277

Herald provided a poignant reminder for readers that the Union Jack had been first hoisted in 1890 ‘at a time when Germany still cherished the dream of driving a wedge across Africa and shutting the British off from the northern hinterland ...’⁹⁹⁸ Milton, who was invited as guest-of-honour, was well aware that he would be questioned on Rhodesia’s contribution to the War effort. In his after-dinner speech, he tried to explain that the control of military matters was in the hands of the imperial government. There was sullen acceptance of the information by men who were desperate to be involved in the action and fearful it would be over before they could get there.

News of the Germans’ activities on the northern border of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland brought the War nearer and prompted further criticism of the Company. ‘What is Rhodesia doing?’ asked Raleigh Grey.⁹⁹⁹ Volunteers were making their own arrangements to travel to England when it became known that some former Boer generals had refused to support their leaders, Botha and Smuts, in the war effort. The Union government agreed to accept a Rhodesian contingent of 500 men. By late October 1914, troops of the First Rhodesian Regiment began training.

The dramatic announcement of the War overshadowed efforts made to bid farewell to Milton after a lengthy seventeen-year period in office. His intended retirement had been known for some time. He and Lady Milton had been involved in a motor accident whilst on leave in England during 1913. They were travelling from London to Brighton in a chauffeur driven car when a front tyre burst. The car turned over and was completely wrecked. Both Sir William and Lady Milton, who was trapped underneath, suffered severe cuts and bruises. Neither had really recovered from the effects of the accident when they returned to their work in Rhodesia. It was three months before the Administrator was able to use his right hand and Lady Milton took even longer to recover. She, in particular, was said to demonstrate indomitable courage in carrying on with her social duties.¹⁰⁰⁰

It was decided that 29 October 1914, the twenty-first anniversary of the British South Africa Company’s Charter, would be as ‘a good date for the termination of the Administrator’s service’. The records state that he retired on the grounds of age and infirmity. Milton told Rhodesians that he was retiring ‘because I think my work is done’. He did concede that ‘my wife’s health, as you know, is not very good, and we feel the time has come when we should give way to others’.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 18 September 1914

⁹⁹⁹ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 278

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 242

¹⁰⁰¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 October 1914

Less than six weeks after the declaration of War, Milton began a series of ‘farewell’ functions. Various local organisations made presentations. The Pioneers marked their appreciation of ‘Sir William’s fine character and record by a most happily-chosen gift, which took the form of a miniature axe fashioned out of gold’. It was described as being ‘peculiarly symbolical both of the work and the romance of the pioneer and the frontiersman’.¹⁰⁰²

The Farmers Association of Lalapanzi and Iron Mine Hill marvelled at the manner in which Milton had taken over the reins in the troublesome times of rebellion and had established settled government. They also drew attention to the fact that the Directors of the British South Africa Company and the public of Rhodesia had often been in conflict, yet Milton had not only ‘retained the confidence of the Board to which he acted as advisor’ but had ‘commanded the respect of the people whom he governed’. They, ‘as a farming community, owed a great deal to Sir William; perhaps in no other British colony did farming interests receive more attention from the administration than in Rhodesia.’¹⁰⁰³

In the Legislative Council, Sir Charles Coghlan compared the position of the country at that time with what it was when Milton ‘took up the reigns of administration’. He said that it made one ‘realise the progress which had been made under [Milton’s] wise and able administration’.¹⁰⁰⁴ The editor of the *Rhodesia Herald* ventured to add ‘that the admirable tone which has characterised the debates in the Legislative Council has “largely been due to the influence and example of the President”.’ Whilst accepting there had been many political crises during the past sixteen years and that feelings had often run high, the editorial made a point of stressing that ‘if our legislative record is compared with that of many Crown Colonies it will be realised that much can be accomplished by the wise and moderating influence of one man’.

The Miltons were guests at a luncheon held at the Drill Hall and hosted by the Mayor of Salisbury, Lewis Lezard, who said the retiring Administrator had had to act as a buffer between settlers and the government:

As you know the function of a buffer is to restore equilibrium and in doing so, of course, it also receives knocks. Sir William Milton has borne these knocks with equanimity and fortitude, and his great dignity and his invariable tact, strong sense of justice and impartiality have always been great factors in adjusting any differences that have from time to time arisen and in restoring equilibrium.

In his reply, Milton said that he had endeavoured to carry out the ‘aims and aspirations’ of Cecil John Rhodes, thus ensuring Rhodesia should be ‘a home for British subjects and equally a crown to the Empire’. Amidst cheering, he went on to say:

¹⁰⁰² *Ibid*, 18 September 1914

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid*, 24 November 1914

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 23 October 1914

This is a new country; its period of being is a small item in history, but I think that in the generation that has passed since Mr Rhodes first conceived the idea of forming a state in the heart of Africa – a British state in the heart of Africa – more has been done than in any similar period in the history of any colony of which I can think (applause). I know that the people in the country think that we have not got on fast enough ... but still the twenty-five years that end next week have seen a remarkable change in this country from pure barbarism to a high pitch of civilisation and comfort.

Prior to leaving the hall, Colonel Raleigh Grey called for three cheers: ‘For the man who has done more than any other living man for Rhodesia’. The cheers were said to be ‘heartily raised’, together with further cheering for Lady Milton.¹⁰⁰⁵

An escort was provided to the railway station by an Administrator’s Guard of Honour drawn from the members of the British South Africa Police. The Miltons departed, perhaps a little apprehensive as to the reception they would receive in Bulawayo. They need not have worried as the people of Matabeleland were no less warm in their tributes. The Mayor of Bulawayo, Captain Duncan, said that the only complaint his people had against Sir William and Lady Milton was that they had seen so little of them. Duncan’s tribute was appropriately made in cricket terms and, in the course of which, he said, ‘Sir William had a very difficult pitch to play upon.’ The Mayor thought Milton had ‘played the game right royally. He had been a big sport – a very big sport’ and ‘had made a score which any man would be proud of and he was not out yet’.

The gathering in Bulawayo laughed when Milton said he appreciated ‘very highly the honour you have done me by asking me, in spite of my neglect of you in the past, to be your guest’. Once again, he turned to Rhodes as the theme of his speech. He recalled arriving ‘in a time of great stress and trouble’ when Rhodes was in the Matopos. It was the time of the ‘second indaba’ and, said Milton, ‘the future of the country seemed dark’. Yet Rhodes ‘never despaired. If he had despaired in those days we should not have been here. By his efforts, practically single-handed at the end, he pulled the country through ...’ After those difficult times, Milton referred to the fact that the two men had many talks on the future of the country, with Rhodes insisting, ‘We are not rich but we have got the men, and the country that has got men will pull through.’

In his last speech in Rhodesia, Milton concluded that ‘one cannot foretell what the future may bring, but one thing is certain, that there is no quarter of the globe – no spot in any quarter of the globe – in which I and my wife would rather be than in Rhodesia’. They had arrived ‘when the country was in quite a young and embryonic stage and to see a country

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 30 October 1914

grow, while you are staying there, watching, perhaps not able to do much, but doing what one can, such a thing grips one by the heart and never lets go'.¹⁰⁰⁶

Sir William and Lady Milton left Bulawayo by the morning train. The town councillors and most of the prominent citizens of the town were present to bid farewell to the retiring Administrator. A handsome bouquet was presented to Lady Milton by the girls of Eveline School which had been named after her ladyship.¹⁰⁰⁷

The British South Africa Company was grateful to Milton for his work during the period 1896 to 1914. Under his guidance the country had indeed turned the corner. Dr Jameson in his capacity as President of the Company wrote a detailed letter to Milton on his retirement in 1914. It gives not only an estimate of his work but a history in a few words of the period from 1897 to 1914, of which so little was known to the outside world:

... you found a country sparsely populated, struggling with a rebellion of the natives and ravaged by rinderpest. The territory was wholly dependent on supplies from outside, transport was costly and difficult; there were no railways. There was a mining law, but practically no gold production. The Civil Service was not organised and there was no system of education. It was a country of great but unfulfilled promise.

In 1914, eighteen years later, after you have filled in succession the offices of Chief Secretary and Secretary of Native Affairs, Acting Administrator, Administrator of Mashonaland, and, since December 1901, Administrator of the whole of Southern Rhodesia, you leave the country with a loyal, prosperous and rapidly increasing native population; a white population which has trebled itself since 1896; a gold production which runs into millions annually; an extensive system of railways; an educational system with which your name will always be associated, in advance of that of any British possession of similar standing; with every sign of material prosperity in its towns and villages; and with a Civil service which compares favourably in efficiency and zeal with that of any Colony under the Crown.

You found Rhodesia a small community engaged in a struggle for its existence; you leave it with the resources, the political aspirations and ambitions of a British Colony with an assured future.

The monument to your strenuous labours of the last eighteen years in Rhodesia as it exists today - thriving, vigorous, British ...¹⁰⁰⁸

Sir Dougal Malcolm, then a director and later President of the British South Africa Company, added: 'The early days of rinderpest, rebellion and an out-at-elbow Company must have been

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 30 October 1914

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 31 October 1914

¹⁰⁰⁸ Jameson to Milton, 10 October 1914 (MI 1/1/1 NAZ)

awful, and the country owes you an ineffaceable debt of gratitude for your wise, calm and prudent guidance'.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁹ W.D. Gale, *Heritage of Rhodes*, Cape Town 1950, 73

Chapter 11:

Conclusion and last years: ‘He sowed the seed often under great difficulties’

William Milton initially made a name for himself through sport. Tracing his attachment to games has provided insight into the part that Victorian public schools played in the dissemination of the moralistic ideology of athleticism. Milton is a particularly intriguing case study because he was more influential than anyone else in the diffusion of the imperial ball games to southern Africa. He had been an active player and committee man at a public school where ‘the games ethic held pride of place in the pedagogical priorities’. In such an environment, said Tony Mangan, a public schoolboy ‘learnt *inter alia* the basic tools of imperial command: courage, endurance, assertion, control and self-control’. The ideology, thought to be ‘a useful instrument of colonial purpose, created the confidence to lead and the compulsion to follow’.¹⁰¹⁰ Milton acquired the additional qualification of being an English rugby international, but his appointment to the Cape civil service owed much to people he knew: a famous relation, Anthony Trollope, and the pioneering telegraphist, James Sivewright.¹⁰¹¹

At the Cape, Milton’s progress was based on hard work, good fortune and an ability to seize opportunities. He recalled being ‘thrown amongst strangers’ on his arrival but that he ‘had met with a kind and generous treatment’.¹⁰¹² He was also swept up in a press-led campaign to promote ‘Englishness’ and was able to contribute by successfully fighting rugby’s cause at a time when rivalry between football codes was attracting attention. The *Cape Times* recognised Milton’s value as a standard-bearer for English sport and he was brought quickly into the public eye. It is now well-documented that he played an enormous part in placing South African cricket on a firm footing. The veteran cricket administrator, C. Neumann Thomas¹⁰¹³, said that Milton ‘revived and kept alive the manly sport of cricketing’ and the Western Province CC owed much to his indefatigable ‘zeal and energy’.¹⁰¹⁴ He was the force behind Newlands: responsible for the selection of the site and the task of summoning support for a project that culminated in the establishment of one of the most

¹⁰¹⁰ J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, Harmondsworth, 1985, 18

¹⁰¹¹ James Sivewright ‘became the manager of nearly all of the interconnected telegraphs in the sub-continent’ (Kenneth Wilburn, *The Life of Statesman and Industrialist Sir James Sivewright of South Africa, 1848-1916*, Queenstown, 2010, xvii).

¹⁰¹² *Wynberg Times*, 3 February 1883

¹⁰¹³ Neumann Thomas was a founder member of the Cape Town CC in December 1857 before becoming a member of the Western Province CC.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Wynberg Times*, 3 February 1883

beautiful grounds in the world. In a period of intense activity, Milton also organised the 1888/89 tour which galvanised an interest in cricket across a vast landscape. The achievement was not lost on Cape leaders, with J.H. Hofmeyr noting ‘the sporting associations of this country ... have set an example which politicians are all too slow to follow in the aim for a United South Africa’.¹⁰¹⁵ Moreover, the tours benefited cricket directly in a number of ways, not least the advent of the first-class game and the establishment of controlling bodies. In remarkable fashion, Milton also captained the ‘Test’ side, served as chief selector, headed the administration and edited the *South African Cricket Annual*. It is doubtful whether any other individual at a particular stage of his career has played a similarly powerful role in his country’s cricket.

Milton once declared that ‘next to his home and his work, cricket was the only thing he cared for’.¹⁰¹⁶ He was an irrepressible presence on the field of play, frustrating opponents ‘with his usual luck in winning the toss’¹⁰¹⁷ and invariably taking it upon himself to open the batting and bowling. A dominant personality will attract critics, and Milton’s obsessive desire to win led to unpleasantness with less able cricketers rarely keen to play alongside him as ‘his opinion of their shortcomings was sometimes expressed in language more forcible than polite, and not usually in a whisper’.¹⁰¹⁸ Herbert Castens recalled, ‘On match day, when anything goes wrong, he puts on a very big pipe and sits quite still, looking very solemn. At such time, we don’t, as a rule, think it appropriate to address him on frivolous subjects.’¹⁰¹⁹ Charles Finlason, who was frequently critical of Cape Town’s cricket, wrote that ‘we Kimberley men were ready to fall down to worship Milton, so great was his fame, so terrible his prowess’. Finlason suggested an uneasy friendship in daring to write:

I come to William H. Milton, Joey, loved and adored of cricketers who knew him. Joey will probably be annoyed at my being so deuced familiar in print with him seeing that he pals with prime ministers, and is a bug of considerable dimensions. But to quote that exasperating song, ‘What do I care?’ Not a brass button. Joey he is to me, and Joey it is here accordingly.¹⁰²⁰

Milton’s devotion to cricket and his efforts to promote the game were unfortunately off-set by his use of sport as a means to divide society along racial lines. Any balanced assessment of

¹⁰¹⁵ *South African Review*, 1 December 1893; Hofmeyr was speaking at a dinner – (which Milton attended) – in honour of the South African cyclist, Laurens Meintjes.

¹⁰¹⁶ G.H. Tanser, *A Scantling of Time: The Story of Salisbury, Rhodesia 1890-1900*, Salisbury, 1965, 178; *Rhodesia Herald*, 7 February 1899

¹⁰¹⁷ *South African Review*, 9 February 1894

¹⁰¹⁸ *Cape Times*, 8 March 1930

¹⁰¹⁹ *Cricket Field*, 11 August 1894, 348

¹⁰²⁰ *South African Review*, 11 August 1893

the role he played must take into account the means by which he developed the Western Province CC to the detriment of all the other clubs at the Cape. He saw cricket as a force for fostering imperial unity and was reluctant to build on the enthusiasm which existed amongst Dutch players at a time when the Western Province Rugby Football Union was encouraging their participation. Greater involvement in cricket by J.H. Hofmeyr forced Milton to react but by then Stellenbosch and its neighbouring villages were rugby nurseries rather than active breeding grounds for Dutch (Afrikaner) fast bowlers. Cricketers such as Neethling, Schroder, Melck, Scholtz, Du Plessis – even Theunissen and De Villiers – were quickly forgotten. The names of modern-day fast bowlers – Steyn, Morkel, De Lange, Theron – serve to reinforce the view that an opportunity was missed in those early years to set in motion a production line of athletic pace-men from Afrikaner backgrounds.

In the 1890s, politicians shaped the direction that South African sport would take, with the Cape government hardening its stance on the system of racial discrimination. Their refusal to permit the selection of Krom Hendricks for representative teams was made as part of a broader ideology and is ‘every bit as significant as the D’Oliveira Affair of 1968 in South Africa’s sporting history’.¹⁰²¹ Given the significance of the Hendricks controversy, it is remarkable that details should escape the scrutiny of sports historians for one hundred years. The South African Cricket Association, assisted by writer, M.W. Luckin,¹⁰²² chose not to tarnish the early white history by revealing the events that led to segregated sport. The published record was instead a proud account of the deeds of Milton and his committee members. Sir Clarkson Tredgold, who knew Milton well, wrote in 1929: ‘Joey was the apotheosis of sporting achievement in those far-off days and what he did for the advancement of sport must never be forgotten’.¹⁰²³

There is no evidence to indicate that Milton regretted the politically-inspired decisions made in the course of his involvement in South African cricket. He was employed by Rhodes and the Cape government and accepted their influence on the game. Co-operation between Rhodes and the Afrikaner Bond not only led to the government replacing the ‘limited tradition’ of Cape ‘liberalism’¹⁰²⁴ with a clear segregationist policy, but rendered cricket as

¹⁰²¹ Bruce Murray and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Empire and Cricket: The South African Experience, 1884-1914*, Pretoria, 2009, 8

¹⁰²² Luckin produced *The History of South African Cricket: Including the Full Scores of All Matches since 1876*, Johannesburg, 1915

¹⁰²³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 26 July, 1929. Tredgold was vice-president of the Rhodesian Rugby Football Union when Milton was president.

¹⁰²⁴ Shula Marks, ‘Class, Culture and Consciousness in South Africa, 1880-1899 in Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager and Bill Nasson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 2, 1885-1994*,

being susceptible to political pressure. Hofmeyr, as president of the Cape Town Cricket Club, had considerable influence on events leading up to the non-selection of Hendricks for the 1894 touring team but clearly was not prepared to be implicated in the decision – ‘in sport he declared repeatedly there was no politics’.¹⁰²⁵ André Odendaal blames the Newlands-based cricket establishment’ for being ‘directly responsible for racial segregation becoming official policy in South African cricket’, but it is necessary to add that the Western Province CC – ‘this most English of spaces’ – was not the only guilty party. The other side of the ground – where Hofmeyr’s Cape Town CC was situated – was also very involved in moves to segregate the game.¹⁰²⁶

Milton admired Rhodes deeply and was clearly influenced by him. Robert Rotberg’s comment that Rhodes’s ‘lack of shame and guilt was intrinsic to his success’ might have been written about Milton with regard to the latter’s cricket administration. Ends were everything; any means whatsoever ‘could be justified if it served great goals’.¹⁰²⁷ Milton was content that he had advanced cricket through forging international links and greatly increasing the number of teams that played at the Cape, yet it could be argued that he had hardly ennobled the game. Rhodes gave his position away through a casual breakfast remark to Pelham Warner, but it was Milton who bore responsibility for the decision over Hendricks and there is no evidence to indicate that he regretted it. His legacy was one which fixed the colour bar, leaving Cape sport well set along the segregation route.

The second period of Milton’s long stint as a civil servant in southern Africa began in 1896 and was by almost all accounts successful. The responsibility he shouldered was enormous and, in response to Lord Robert Blake’s assessment of the role of the civil servant, Milton’s work was far from ‘dull’. His ability to reshape the Rhodesian civil service according to the Cape model saw him rise swiftly to become Administrator. The critical period of a post-war slump brought the best out of him, with Tanser commenting, ‘The man who did most to revive the spirits of the people was Milton’.¹⁰²⁸ In the ensuing years, Milton gave ‘the country a degree of stability in the conduct of its affairs which it had not previously known’.¹⁰²⁹ He created ‘an administrative and judicial system which outlasted Company rule

Cambridge, 2011, 144. She stated that ‘Cape “liberalism” was always a minority creed ... and a rather frail one at that’.

¹⁰²⁵ J.H Hofmeyr with F. W. Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, Cape Town, 1913, 31

¹⁰²⁶ André Odendaal, ‘Newlands and apartheid in South African cricket’ in Anthony Bateman and Jeffrey Hill (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cricket*, Cambridge 2011, 219, 228

¹⁰²⁷ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Founder, Cecil Rhodes and the pursuit of power*, New York, 1988, 685

¹⁰²⁸ Tanser, *A Sequence of Time*, 176

¹⁰²⁹ The Historical Manuscripts of Rhodesia, 294

itself', thereby making 'a more lasting imprint on the country's early history than anyone, apart from Rhodes himself'.¹⁰³⁰

Milton's lengthy period in office was one in which he did well to retain the respect of all concerned. That he has received relatively little criticism might, to an extent, be attributed to a system whereby members of the Legislative Council or men in the field would take responsibility for decisions of which he approved. In a recently produced biography of Jameson¹⁰³¹, it is suggested that Milton's devotion to cricket affected his judgement in governing the country; an exaggerated claim as there was little time to devote to the game in the period of reconstruction, whilst the leading cricket connection – Herbert Castens – was made redundant. Of other critics, Robin Palmer suspected Milton's sympathies lay with the settlers and does provide examples to support this viewpoint.¹⁰³² Blake is critical insofar as he states that Milton was not 'devoid of defects', but concedes that these amount to little more than 'becoming too much absorbed in detail' whilst displaying a reluctance to delegate. He also notes Milton's 'original distaste' for Bulawayo but believes his weak areas are no more than 'venial faults'. Blake concludes his assessment of Milton's period as Administrator by stating: 'The country's debt to him is great and indisputable'.¹⁰³³

By February 1912 the Company's annual report showed a substantial surplus in revenue over expenditure, 'the condition defined by Rhodes as justifying their claim to responsible government'.¹⁰³⁴ It was a significant achievement, satisfying for Milton because he regarded himself as a 'servant to Rhodes' and would state: 'In all my work here I have endeavoured to the best of my abilities to fulfil Mr Rhodes's aspirations'.¹⁰³⁵ As he was inclined to do, Milton spoke publicly of his success, comparing the situation on his retirement with that when

¹⁰³⁰ Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 147

¹⁰³¹ See Chris Ash, *The If Man: Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, the Inspiration for Kipling's Masterpiece*, Johannesburg 2011

¹⁰³² The whites also had their differences. An interesting situation occurred with the appearance of a doughty Englishman, John Harris, who was organising secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society and an outspoken critic of the Company. He visited Rhodesia in 1914 'to collect evidence for the African case in the land question then before the Privy Council'. He hoped 'to collect affidavits from the African chiefs saying that the land really belonged to them. The Rhodesian administration reacted strongly; Harris was "shadowed" by detectives, forbidden to enter the reserves, and was eventually sent home'. There was the belief that he was a nuisance 'who did not understand the natives,' but Milton argued that he could not see 'how or why [Harris] can be arrested before he commits any offence'.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid*, 152

¹⁰³⁴ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 118

¹⁰³⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 October, 1913.

he arrived in the country: ‘Now what do we find? Magnificent roads – not all of them magnificent, but some¹⁰³⁶ – a water supply that would be a credit to any town in South Africa, an electric light system, and everything done in the best style ...’ In a triumphant conclusion, he added, ‘I think in later years when people read the history of this country, the difficulties and trials that it had to surmount, and still has to surmount, they will be astonished at the progress that has been made’.¹⁰³⁷

Milton described his association with the Legislative Council as his ‘life’s work’. He accepted that over the years there were difficulties and differences of opinion but it had always been a pride to him ‘that the proceedings of this Council have been on a high level; they have never degenerated and, to my opinion, can bear comparison with the proceedings of any Assembly in the British Empire’. In fact, he could not ‘recall since the opening day of this Council, that it has been necessary to call any member of this Council to order for improper language or behaviour. That, gentlemen, in a period of fifteen years, in the circumstances of this country, I think it is a remarkable feat.’ The editor of the *Rhodesia Herald* added that while ‘legislative labours certainly represented one very important part of his life work – the other and scarcely less important part was the building up of an administration in a country in which previous to his arrival the government had been of a somewhat rudimentary character’. Milton, it was said, had ‘in laying the foundations of the state ... played a notable and unforgettable part in the history of the country’, effectively guiding the country ‘to the gateway of self-government’.¹⁰³⁸

Some fifty years after Milton left Rhodesia, Robert Tredgold looked back on the period in his autobiography, *The Rhodesia that was my life*.¹⁰³⁹ Widely respected, having served as

¹⁰³⁶ Charles Duly imported the first car into Bulawayo in November 1902 but it was not until Milton returned from leave late in 1909 that he considered correspondence over proposals to import a motor car. Newton, the Acting Administrator, had asked the London Board for consideration for a sum of money for the purchase and maintenance of a motor car. Milton recommended that a sum of £1400 should be placed on the estimates for one car, its maintenance and chauffeur’s wages for one year. He pointed out that cars could only be used for eight months in the year as the conditions of the roads during the rainy season made motoring impossible. On Christmas Day 1909, a ten-year-old Parhard came roaring into town and drew up outside the Commercial Hotel, having made the first motor-car journey from Bulawayo and completing the journey despite ‘gloomy prognostications’ (*Rhodesia Herald*, 27 December 1909).

¹⁰³⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, 30 October 1914

¹⁰³⁸ *Ibid*, 23 October, 1914

¹⁰³⁹ Sir Robert Clarkson Tredgold (2 June 1899 – 8 April 1977) was born in Bulawayo to Clarkson Henry Tredgold, the Attorney-General of Rhodesia, and Emily Ruth Moffat, and was grandson of the missionary, John Moffat.

Federal Chief Justice, Privy Counsellor and acting Governor-General, Tredgold commented on a time when Rhodesia was governed by ‘the last of the great Chartered Companies that played so large a part in the history of the Empire’. He noted: ‘When teething troubles had been overcome, it gave us a very good government; probably the best we have ever had.’ He did think it was perhaps fortunate for the young colony that ‘the adventurous spirit of Jameson, always bordering on the reckless, should remove him from the scene before the more solid foundations fell’, namely ‘the reign of Milton which continued for sixteen years to the great benefit of Rhodesia’.

Tredgold saw advantages in the arrangement whereby Company officials were not responsible to a predominantly white electorate. ‘They could afford to be reasonably objective,’ he said, adding, ‘They had been brought up, for the most part, in the old Cape Colony, which had, on the whole, a very creditable record of native administration.’ Years later, observed Tredgold, the ‘particular brand of benevolent paternalism’ that the Milton administration offered would not seem advanced in the light of modern developments ‘but it was certainly a long way ahead of the ideas of many of their white countrymen’. He pointed to early Hansards revealing that most disagreements between elected and nominated members ‘turned on the issue of race relations’.¹⁰⁴⁰

Tredgold was not blind to weaknesses within Company administration. Individual members were held in respect but ‘the Administration in the abstract was cordially disliked’. It was undemocratic in that elected members to the Legislative Assembly increased over the years until a majority was achieved, but key decisions rested with the nominated members. ‘It was a striking example,’ wrote Tredgold, ‘of the fact that good government can never be an altogether satisfactory substitute for self-government. Would that the white people of Rhodesia had remembered this when, in the due passage of time, power to govern the great African majority passed into their hands.’

As the son of Milton’s Attorney-General, Tredgold was in a relatively good position to comment on Milton’s strengths and weaknesses. He wrote humorously of Milton’s ‘bristly moustache’ that was of a pattern associated with His Imperial Majesty William II, Emperor of the Germans, and caused the Administrator to become known affectionately as ‘Kaiser Bill’. Tredgold did add that it was not only the moustache that inspired Milton’s nickname ‘but a

¹⁰⁴⁰ Percy Ross Frames probably summed up the settlers’ views when he told the Legislative Council in 1902 that the ‘natives must be made to understand that they cannot claim the same privileges as the white people enjoyed after 2000 years – that they cannot attain that in one generation ... [the whites] were a small community and it was necessary that the small intelligent and enlightened community should control (LC Debates 1902: 113: NAZ)

touch of autocracy that did not come amiss in the head of a young country in which firmness and clear, incisive decisions were imperative’.

Above all, Tredgold thought Milton to be ‘a good picker’ and that ‘he built up a civil service with a tradition of which we have every reason to be proud.’ It was acknowledged as perhaps an exaggeration that ‘every individual recruit was [Milton’s] personal choice’ but, said Tredgold, ‘certainly every recruit came under his personal notice and ... had direct access to him’. If the new arrival to the service did not measure up to the very high standard that Milton demanded, then:

‘Kaiser Bill’ would summon him to the presence and say something to this effect: ‘My boy, there just isn’t a future for you in this Service. There are many fields in which your undoubted qualities could be used to great advantage, but this is not one of them. Just look around quietly and in your own good time find yourself something else to do. Goodbye and good luck to you.’ Coming from such a man, the mild hint was invariably sufficient.

Milton was ‘without doubt the benevolent dictator’, wrote Tredgold. ‘In the wrong hands such powers might have been much abused, but in this instance they were given to the right man.’ Even the most disgruntled victim would probably have expressed his feelings in the well-known, if somewhat backhanded, tribute to Dr Temple, of Rugby that he was “a beast but a just beast”.¹⁰⁴¹

Milton had the ability to weather storms, partly because he was able to rely on the men he had assembled under him. In bringing to the country former associates, many sporting, Milton surrounded himself with men similar in outlook. He followed the view of Sir Hercules Robinson that ‘a similarity of taste in amusements is a guarantee for common sympathy in more important matters’.¹⁰⁴² One of the most prominent of his official members was Francis Newton who had been Robinson’s aide but was not a sportsman. He became Milton’s Treasurer, and in the Assembly handled the elected members’ ‘challenges and probings with the wit and skill bred of Oxford and much varied diplomatic experience’.¹⁰⁴³ Newton thought particularly highly of Milton’s work in native administration ‘which had stood the stringent and searching test of the imperial government’. He believed that there was ‘no country – certainly no community in South Africa – which could boast a more capable native administration than that in Rhodesia’. He added that ‘a large and generous treatment

¹⁰⁴¹ Robert Tredgold, *The Rhodesia That Was My Life*, London, 1968, 61

¹⁰⁴² R. Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford, 1989, 215. Sir Hercules Robinson was well-known to Milton. He had served as the Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa during the late 1880s and early 1890s.

¹⁰⁴³ Robert Tredgold, *The Rhodesia That Was My Life*, London, 1968, 61

had been accorded to the natives and the country would reap the harvest of that in years to come'.¹⁰⁴⁴

African writers have said little about Milton, largely because 'a new political consciousness among the "educated" Africans [did not] make its voice heard in Rhodesian politics ... until the end of World War I'.¹⁰⁴⁵ There is of course the general grievance that 'a small immigrant white minority arrogated to themselves the right to determine the pace and the direction of the nation's development at the expense of the majority'.¹⁰⁴⁶ There is also an acceptance that the black people were divided and one writer points out that had the rebellions succeeded, then 'the Ndebele and the Shona armies would have fought each other afterwards to settle an earlier, pre-colonial score – as indeed they did between 1982 and 1987 in Matabeleland'.¹⁰⁴⁷ James Mutambirwa notes the Europeans under Milton's guidance eventually succeeded because 'they were united and their attitudes and behaviour towards the African were the same.' He does add that a sense of insecurity – 'the fear of being swamped by the Africans' – would lead 'Europeans to develop and maintain policies that were intended to keep the Africans at a distance educationally, socially, economically and politically. The settlers practised politics of exclusion.'¹⁰⁴⁸

Milton might be seen as going some way towards fitting this mould. It was accepted that in the case of white people he was 'very reserved in his manner, it took some time to get on easy terms with him'.¹⁰⁴⁹ With people of colour, he stayed aloof, rarely mixing. In Cape Town, he was prepared to hire facilities to the Malay and Coloured cricketers but, unlike other white players, did not participate in multi-racial matches. The greatest of the black batsmen at that time, Robert Grendon – a talented cricketer/ rugby player; respected academic and 'pioneering "coloured" South African poet and journalist' – arrived at Cape Town in the same year as Milton but they experienced sharply contrasting opportunities and never met on the cricket field.¹⁰⁵⁰ Later, as Southern Rhodesia's Secretary of Native Affairs, Milton headed

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 31 October 1914

¹⁰⁴⁵ James A. Chamunorwa Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1898-1923*, New Jersey, 1980, 74

¹⁰⁴⁶ Alois Mlambo, 'Building a White Man's Country: Aspects of White Immigration into Rhodesia up to World War I' in *Zambezia*, Harare, 1998, XXV (ii), 123

¹⁰⁴⁷ M. Sithole, Review of Canaan S. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1999*, Harare, 1989 in *Zambezia*, 1991, XVIII (ii)

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power in Southern Rhodesia*, 27

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 15 March 1930

¹⁰⁵⁰ Grendon, the son of an Irish father and Herero mother, is the subject of an unpublished PhD by Grant Christison, 'African Jerusalem: the vision of Robert Grendon', University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2007

a structured administration in which white men in the field reported back to him on every issue. There are few reports of his meeting with black communities. It did not mean that he was not interested in their welfare and progress; there is, for example, reference to his showing ‘great interest in the preservation of the ancient monuments’ and that he assisted those involved in such work.¹⁰⁵¹ He was perhaps more consistent with the ‘typical European dependency’ that A.P. Thornton refers to whereby ‘the native races were never admitted to the mental life of their masters ... this was the true barrier. All other forms of segregation were flimsy compared to it’.¹⁰⁵²

There has been no detailed study of Milton’s role as Secretary of Native Affairs. Revisionist writers have steered clear of him, a surprising development in the light of his considerable influence in African matters. Milton’s involvement is illustrated through his apparent disregard of a new position of ‘Secretary’ that was created within the Administrator’s Office in 1907 to deal with ‘matters affecting natives’. Two years later, a commissioned report noted that ‘the Administrator concerned himself too much with detailed work and left no independent power of action to the Secretary’. The report went on to complain that ‘all correspondence on native questions went through [Milton’s] hands ... even the most trivial transaction required the Administrator’s personal sanction’. Despite the criticism, the situation did not change; ‘this was perhaps inevitable as [Milton] remained his own Secretary of Native Affairs’.¹⁰⁵³

Rhodesia had to be developed and labour was crucial. Milton’s unwavering belief that the African should work gained approval from all sectors of the local white community. Apart from the fields of mining and agriculture, he received outspoken support from churchmen united in opposing the idleness of the African. The Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland wrote that ‘every man is bound to justify his existence by labour. There should be no loafers in the kingdom of earth or Heaven.’¹⁰⁵⁴ The Jesuit Father Richartz said that the white man had ‘to teach the native the obligations and reward of labour and to fight against idleness as the source of immorality’. He ‘strongly believed that as long as Africans remained in the village living their lives undisturbed by European intrusion, they would become useless and dangerous members of the society’. Father Daignault argued that ‘habits of industry ... cannot be attained by mere moral persuasion, authority must necessarily be used.’ The Rev Isaac Shimmin, superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions thought Rhodesia

¹⁰⁵¹ Richard Nicklin Hall, *Great Zimbabwe, Mashonaland, Rhodesia*, Methuen 1905, xxx

¹⁰⁵² Michael D. Biddiss, *Images of Race*, Leicester, 1979, 25

¹⁰⁵³ Guide to the Public Archives of Rhodesia, 9

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Bulawayo Observer*, 26 December 1903

to be a country plagued with ‘thousands of savages living in sloth; and thus ready for all kinds of mischief ...’¹⁰⁵⁵

A.J. Hanna believed the ‘natural gulf between the [Rhodesian] races ... was essentially a culture-bar, not a colour-bar’. It was not an insoluble problem but he thought it required time.¹⁰⁵⁶ Education was an important factor in addressing the existing differences. Milton and the Public School ‘old boys’ who were prominent in shaping the first stage of the country’s education policy advanced the dominant values of the Victorian Public School model. Schools reserved for whites fostered elite virtues of self-reliance, leadership, teamwork and loyalty as ideal qualities for the small ruling class that exercised control over a large African population. The children were brought up on tales of imperial conquest, with the spirit and manliness of the pioneers replicated through the rigours of the games field and the cadet corps. Cricket and rugby were an essential part of a process through which the games-playing ideals of late-Victorian Britain would not only continue in Rhodesia but thrive in a wonderful climatic setting.

In a country deeply influenced by Rhodes, his views on education carried weight and were outlined through a scholarship scheme that bears his name and came into being in 1903. It is not unlikely that he had Milton in mind when he advocated support for the all-rounder in choosing Rhodes Scholars. The selection was to take into account not only ‘literary and scholastic attainments’ but also ‘fondness for, and success in, manly outdoor sports, such as cricket, football and the like’, as well as other qualities such as courage and devotion to duty, ‘fellowship’ and ‘leadership’.¹⁰⁵⁷ Rhodesian headmasters supported these ideals because they conformed to public school ideals, but raised an objection when Rhodesia’s early ‘Rhodes Scholars’ were drawn mainly from boys educated outside the country. According to *The Times*, schools in Rhodesia desired ‘to retain the scholarship entirely as a stimulus for local institutions’.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁵ Mutambirwa, *The Rise of Settler Power*, 113-14

¹⁰⁵⁶ A.J. Hanna, *The Story of the Rhodesia’s and Nyasaland*, London, 1960, 178-79

¹⁰⁵⁷ J.R.De S. Honey, *Tom Brown in South Africa*, Grahamstown, 1972, 16-17. It is of interest that the scholarly scheme included the provision that ‘no student shall be qualified or disqualified ... on account of his race or religious opinions’. There was no attempt to test Rhodes’s request at a time when imperial administrators faced the task of devising educational programmes especially suited to the African people committed to their care (Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*, 11). It was to be sixty-four years before a schoolboy of colour was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. The first was Raman Gokal (Morgan) in 1967, with an African, Oliver Ncube (Goromonzi Secondary School), similarly honoured in 1972 (I.P. MacLaren, *More Rhodesian Senior Schools*, Bulawayo, 1981, 340, 344).

¹⁰⁵⁸ *The Times*, 13 October 1904. The trustees, on the other hand, did not wish to discriminate against boys who were sent to schools outside Rhodesia. They therefore adhered to the principle that ‘the

The award of one of the country's scholarships to Noel Milton, the son of the Administrator, prompted debate because he 'had never set foot in the Rhodesias'.¹⁰⁵⁹ He was however a fine rugby player and at that stage no locally-educated boy could have hoped to emulate his success in winning three successive 'Blues' and being invited to represent the British Barbarians.¹⁰⁶⁰

In an economy which relied on a constant supply of cheap or unskilled labour, no government education was provided for Africans before 1920. Van Onselen thought Milton's administration was 'exceedingly wary of giving Africans an education'.¹⁰⁶¹ The Education Ordinance of 1907 'established a new level of administrative control over schools for Africans' that would ensure training 'in the disciplines of the workplace'.¹⁰⁶² The state chose 'to subsidise mission education which emphasised industrial training and habits of "discipline" and "cleanliness"'.¹⁰⁶³ Southern Rhodesia differed from South Africa in the nature of its mission-school education with no attention, for example, being given to tuition in western team sports. Whilst the son of one of the early missionaries went on to play rugby for England and another for Rhodesia,¹⁰⁶⁴ the indigenous people were left to take part in their traditional forms of dancing and fighting.

This formative period in Rhodesian sport was influential in laying the foundations for the country's position in the modern era. Milton was instrumental in cricket and rugby being the games that define a white, male-centred society tied to concepts of British civilisation, culture and imperial power. Blacks would later be encouraged to participate in other sports – such as boxing, soccer and athletics – but cricket and rugby, remained the preserve of whites until independence in 1980. Unlike South Africa, the new Zimbabwe found itself with no historical black cricket or rugby culture. The fact that Milton had actively encouraged the acquisition of English-speakers with a Cape and sporting bias had a marked impact on society. Such men not only brought their social attitudes but many of them would have sub-

merit of the candidates, irrespective of where they attended school, should be the sole criterion of selection' (I.P. MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools*, Bulawayo, 1979, 338).

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 339.

¹⁰⁶⁰ N. Starmer-Smith, *The Barbarians: The Official History of the Barbarian Football Club*, London, 1977, 227.

¹⁰⁶¹ Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 182

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid*, 127

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid*, 182

¹⁰⁶⁴ Wardlow Brown Thomson represented England from 1892-95. He was born in Matabeleland in 1871. Balfour Helm, who played for Rhodesia in 1899, was the son of a prominent Matabeleland missionary – his sister married Tom Hepburn, a South African player and the son of the missionary to King Khama of Bechuanaland.

consciously subscribed to a games ethic that played a part ‘in the manifestation of the moral supremacy of white Motherland and her Dominions over black, brown and yellow “races”’.¹⁰⁶⁵ This mind-set ensured there was no plan to imbue the indigenous inhabitants with a love of games. For the foreseeable future ‘the notion of batting for hours using the forward stroke’ would be anathema to the non-English cultures of Rhodesia.¹⁰⁶⁶

Milton’s successor as Administrator, Francis Drummond Chaplin, was an academic rather than a sportsman. He ‘could read the *Times* at five’ and ‘tried for the school cricket eleven [at Harrow], but never reached it’.¹⁰⁶⁷ Chaplin knew that it would be a difficult task succeeding Milton, who was ‘a very popular man and much beloved as Administrator ... the Southern Rhodesian natives had been quiet and contented under [him]’. Chaplin, however, knew where to find an apparent weakness in the previous administration and set out to exploit it. His biographer wrote that he:

... spent a long tour through the country south-west of Bulawayo towards the border of British Bechuanaland, holding indabas with natives as he went. ‘Quite a successful time,’ he wrote to his sister. ‘Milton,’ his predecessor, he added, ‘never for years past went to any of these places and the people had a standing grievance, which I am now in course of removing.’¹⁰⁶⁸

Chaplin’s wife, Marguerite, then wrote to London ‘the moment after’ entertaining the Governor-General and Lady Buxton in Bulawayo.

I like both Lord and Lady Buxton very much ... He said very nice things about Drummond and I was told that they gave Drummond really a tremendous reception when he got up to reply for the toast of the Administration. It ought to be ‘The Administrator’ really, but as old Sir William Milton never went to Bulawayo it got turned into ‘Administration’.¹⁰⁶⁹

On leaving Southern Rhodesia, the Miltons spent some time on the East Rand with their son, John¹⁰⁷⁰, daughter-in-law Mary Louise and grandson William John Ehret Milton, before departing from Durban on the Walmer Castle and arriving at London on 14 April 1915. John Milton was working on the East Rand Proprietary Mines, a position that he had obtained through his father’s close friendship with Sir George Farrar, the company chairman. John was mine captain at the Driefontein Section, whilst he continued to show an interest in sport. It was suggested that he might have developed into the fastest bowler in the country if he had

¹⁰⁶⁵ Mangan, *The Games Ethic*, 51.

¹⁰⁶⁶ T. Chandler and J. Nauright, *Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce*, London, 1999, 32

¹⁰⁶⁷ B.K. Long, *Drummond Chaplin: His Life and Times in Africa*, London, 1941, 4-5

¹⁰⁶⁸ Long, *Drummond Chaplin*, 201-03

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 220-21

¹⁰⁷⁰ Known at school as Jumbo, he was later referred to as ‘Bim’

been able to devote more time to the game. He did represent a Transvaal XI against the touring M.C.C. in 1913/14, but also devoted time to pursuing an interest in golf, becoming the longest driver amongst amateurs in the Transvaal.

Not long after his parents had departed for overseas, John Milton took his wife and family on a holiday at the Cape as he wished 'to recuperate after an arduous spell of underground work'. A matter of days after returning from holiday, he fell ill with pneumonia and died on 15 June 1915. He was buried at the Boksburg cemetery before a large gathering. The mining community and sports clubs were there in force, with many beautiful wreaths being placed on the grave, including one from 'Billy to Daddy'. It was terrible news for Sir William Milton and Lady Milton who were noted in the *East Rand Express* as having begun their retirement years in the 'Old Country'.¹⁰⁷¹

The Miltons were not in fact to see a great deal of their other two sons. The oldest, Cecil who had also qualified at the Camborne School of Mines, served in the First World War before becoming Inspector of Mines for the Bulawayo district in Rhodesia. The youngest, Noel, spent four years at Oxford (1905-08) before working for the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation which was formed in 1863 by the Scottish Merchant House, Wallace Brothers and Company. It was the leading colonial enterprise in Burma, trading in teak, tea, timber, shipping, rubber and cotton.¹⁰⁷²

Milton was in a position to enjoy his retirement. When he left office he wrote that his pension was worth about 2,400 pounds¹⁰⁷³ – the Pensions Ledger records that it was in fact worth 2,433 pounds six shillings and eight pence. Of this, 184 pounds 12 shillings and four pence was from the South African government. It meant that the Miltons could for health reasons move to Cannes on the French Riviera. A pension of 202 pounds 15 shillings and sixpence in 1927 enabled them to join a growing English community made up of the titled and the wealthy.¹⁰⁷⁴ The Miltons stayed in the Hotel des Anglais and would return to England for family occasions, often staying with Milton's sister, the widowed Frances Emily MacLeod who lived at Pinelands, Tilford Common, in Farnham, Surrey. Milton kept contact with former associates in both Rhodesia and at the Cape. He would write to the clubs he served – always remembering the important anniversaries – whilst retaining membership of a number of organisations.

¹⁰⁷¹ *East Rand Express*, 19 June 1915

¹⁰⁷² Sir William and Lady Milton attended Noel's wedding Noel at the All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, in October 1927 – a daughter was born soon afterwards. Noel died in Sussex on 7 February 1940.

¹⁰⁷³ MI I/I in a letter covering folios 286-88 NAZ

¹⁰⁷⁴ Pensions Ledger S 1891/1, NAZ

Milton died on 6 March 1930. There is a reference to his funeral service in the 'Cannes Echoes', a section of the *Menton and Monte Carlo News*. The service was held at St Paul's Church on a Saturday afternoon. The Reverend Gilbert Elliot officiated and was assisted by the Reverend F. James who had been chaplain of the church in the early days of the Miltons' taking up residence at Cannes. The newspaper records that 'among others present in addition to Lady Milton were Mr Brand Whitlock the former American Ambassador to Belgium and his wife; Major P.S. Inskipp of Le Cannet who had served in Milton's administration; Commandant and Madame F. Bret ... the two sons of Milton were unable to be present, one being in Rhodesia and the other on his way home from Rangoon.' The interment took place in the English Cemetery, Route de Grasse.¹⁰⁷⁵

There was a memorial service at Milton School in Bulawayo. After the singing of Kipling's 'Recessional' the Rev Alan Munn addressed the congregation and paid a moving tribute. 'Sir William Milton,' he said, 'in his day laboured for Africa and especially for Southern Rhodesia and into whose labours you in this school have entered. He sowed the seed often under great difficulties. You are now reaping the harvest.' After noting Milton's special association with the school and his wife's name with Eveline School, Munn concluded: 'And today, when his loved ones are mourning him, it is but right that we should remember him with gratitude for all that he has done and for the inspiration which his memory gives us.'

The Rhodesian newspapers covered his death in detail. Speaking on behalf of the government, Percy Fynn said: 'I had the greatest admiration for his capacity for work and his ability to pick out the essentials of any matter which was placed before him. It was a pleasure and experience to work with him. He captured the affection and admiration of all who got to know him.'

Sir Cecil Rodwell, His Excellency the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, said that he had seen more of Sir William Milton as all his correspondence with three High Commissioners over a period of ten years passed his hands. He remembered the conciseness and lucidity of the letters and he remembered the keen and level-headed manner in which he dealt with the difficulties of the territory. He remembered also his latent humour and his sympathy for the younger and less experienced.

The President of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines, Sir James MacDonald, spoke of Milton as having been 'for long our honorary president and latterly as one of our honorary members'. He said that in the early days of the country, Milton 'did a very great deal towards assisting our mining industry to get on its legs and he helped largely in the production of our early mining laws which have withstood the test of time to a remarkable extent.' He went on

¹⁰⁷⁵ 'Cannes Echoes' in the *Menton and Monte Carlo News*, 15 March 1930

to say that Milton had kept up his keen interest in Rhodesian mining to the very last and in his death the country lost ‘one of the firmest friends it ever had the good fortune to possess’.¹⁰⁷⁶

On his death, Lady Milton returned to England and stayed at the Langham Hotel in Portland Place, London. The effects of Milton’s will amounted to a relatively modest £7517 3s 11d but his wife lived comfortably at a hotel said recently to have ‘enchanted royalty, dignitaries and celebrities since 1865, when it opened as Europe’s first “Grand Hotel”’.¹⁰⁷⁷ She died there on 29 April 1934 and was buried alongside Milton at Cannes; her name being incorrectly spelt as ‘Evelene’ on the gravestone.

There were several memorials to Milton in Rhodesia, some still exist in Zimbabwe. In the entrance hall of Parliament there is a tablet in his memory. The inscription reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR WILLIAM HENRY MILTON K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.,
ADMINISTRATOR OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA 1898-1914, A WISE PRESIDENT OF
OUR COUNCILS, TRUE FRIEND OF THE PUBLIC AND OF THE SERVICE, LOVER OF
ALL MANLY PASTIMES AND LEADER IN MANY, A WORTHY DISCIPLE OF OUR
FOUNDER, THIS TABLET IS DEVOTED BY MEN WHO HONOURED AND
ESTEEMED HIM.

VIR JUSTUS ET PROPOSITI TENAX; CONSUL NON UNIUS ANNI

Milton Buildings were renamed after Independence in 1980 but Milton Park is still in existence, a large suburb that borders central Harare. There is also Milton School which replaced St John’s School, Bulawayo, in 1910 and is still one of the country’s best known educational institutes. In 1915, its most famous product – Hendrik Verwoerd, a future prime minister of South Africa and the ‘architect of apartheid’ – was awarded a Junior Beit Scholarship.¹⁰⁷⁸ Milton’s connection with St John’s is perpetuated by the central light of a stained glass window in the east (ecclesiastical south) transept of St John’s Cathedral; the window depicts the Milton crest and motto. And the silver key that Milton was presented with on the day that the new School opened now hangs in the headmaster’s study. Cecil Milton returned the key to the School on the occasion of its silver jubilee. He spoke proudly of his father and stated that the key should serve ‘as a symbol to remind successive generations of Miltonians, for all time, of the opening of the door in Matabeleland of a great system of education to Rhodesian boys.’¹⁰⁷⁹

A splendid monument to Milton’s vision and work is the Harare (formerly Salisbury) Sports Club ground. It is a beautiful part of the city, with a majestic Cape-Dutch pavilion

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Bulawayo Chronicle and Rhodesia Herald*, 7-15 March 1930

¹⁰⁷⁷ Langham Hotel advertising material, <http://www.langhamhotels.com>; accessed 29 March, 2012

¹⁰⁷⁸ Verwoerd became prime minister of South Africa in 1958 and was assassinated in 1966

¹⁰⁷⁹ MacLaren, *Some Renowned Rhodesian Senior Schools*, 180

serving as a significant reminder of the country's early history. Milton's influence in the establishment of two Test venues is another interesting reflection on his crowded, contrasting – combative yet cautious – and controversial life.

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