

LABOUR SUPPLY AND THE GENESIS OF  
SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION IN THE 1870S<sup>(1)</sup>

by

Norman A. Etherington

Between 1874 and 1878 Britain's Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon, devised large plans for Africa which came to nothing. Natal and the Cape Colony were to be federated with the Boer republics to form a single South African dominion. A concessionary company would, with the blessing of the British government, undertake to open East Africa to "commerce and civilisation". Until recently, historians treated Carnarvon's schemes as something of a puzzle. Robinson and Gallagher discussed them as attempts "to uphold a traditional paramountcy for the old strategic reasons". (2) C. F. Goodfellow proved that Carnarvon's plans were far too vast to fit Robinson and Gallagher's "reactive" theory of British expansion but could find nothing better than Carnarvon's personality to account for them. (3) In a seminal article, Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore have recently suggested that the solutions to this and other puzzles can be found in the imperatives of the developing southern African economy. (4) In particular, the need for a secure and regular flow of migrant labour may have provided a powerful new incentive for confederation under the British flag. Marks and Atmore go on to argue that, whether or not Carnarvon fully grasped the economic advantages of Confederation, Theophilus Shepstone certainly did and spelled them out clearly in official memoranda written during his governorship of the Transvaal.

The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that it was indeed Shepstone who most clearly understood the connection between labour supply and imperial prosperity in southern Africa. Behind Shepstone stood a dedicated group of expansionists in Natal. From their perspective the road to central Africa lay along the eastern border of the Transvaal. The road was destined, they believed, not only to carry European agents into the interior but also to carry black labour south. It was vital that Transvaal Afrikaners, Portuguese and the rulers of formidable African kingdoms be precluded from blocking the developing two-way traffic. Shepstone's advice to Carnarvon during the period of attempted confederation emphasized these economic factors and echoed similar advice proffered by Lt-Governor Southey in Griqualand West.

Expansionists in Natal

It is important at the outset to understand the social and economic background of expansionists in Natal. When Carnarvon came to the Colonial Office in 1874 the white population of Natal was tiny - about seventeen thousand persons, seven thousand of whom lived in the villages of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. (5) In the

historiography of Natal, these people usually figure as an undifferentiated master class. But there was always a clearly discernible economic and social élite. It comprised, at most, one or two hundred families who for various reasons were acutely aware of the importance of the African hinterland beyond. Economically most important were coastal sugar planters. It was estimated in 1872 that £3,000-5,000 were required to establish a viable plantation. (6) Reliable supplies of labour were vital to investors on this scale. Despite the perennial cries of inland farmers and townspeople (the "up-country" party) for high taxes which would drive Africans on to the labour market, the coastal planters knew from experience that the black population of Natal, with or without reserves, polygamous or monogamous, could not support itself and, at the same time, supply a reliable labour force to the plantations. The coast men were keen to import labour from outside, whether African, Indian or Chinese, and realized that Natal could not prosper as a self-contained island. (7) The great interest of the planters was to see that labour migration from the east and central African interior was established on a systematic and reliable basis. (8)

Importers of trading goods were equally concerned with Natal's African hinterland. Since the 1840s, the inland trade in items destined for African consumers had grown enormously. Its progress can be measured directly in the import statistics recorded in Natal's Blue Books. The duties charged on these imports - first beads and blankets, later axes, ploughs and greatcoats - were one of many ways in which the white settlers of Natal batted upon the African economy. Legislative councillors, unconcerned either with internal trade or the interior itself, imposed steadily mounting tariffs. A major debate occurred in 1872-3 between the importers and the taxers on the sensitive issue of guns. Durban merchants, backed by some newspaper editors, complained that as a consequence of the imposts on firearms and the prohibition against selling guns to local Africans Natal was losing trade to the Cape. (9) Even after the expedition against Langalibalele in 1873 had raised a general alarm on firearms, Legislative Council members for coastal districts continued to oppose the raising of imposts.

Important planters, traders (and missionaries interested in converting the populations of Central Africa) were the natural allies of imperial expansionists at Government House. Their interests in imported labour, exported goods and the development of the African interior led most of them to support the work of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Natal's most dedicated expansionist.

### Shepstone's Role

Shepstone is sometimes portrayed as the dedicated defender of African lands and culture who consistently opposed rapacious schemes of exploitation devised by white settlers. (10) This image neglects his organization of the labour market, his unstinting support for the interests of larger capitalist investors, and his grand schemes for the eventual exploitation of southern Africa's human and mineral resources. In the first place, it is not true that Shepstone was perpetually at odds with the settlers. The Natal Witness called him "a hero and a sovereign whose name is a strong tower" when he was made a CMG in 1869. (11) The nabobs of Maritzburg elected him President of the Natal Rifle Association; his sons were officers of the militia; he was the leading layman of the Church of England and a promoter of railways and trade into the interior. (12) It was above all, as Bishop Colenso wrote before he broke off his long-standing friendship, "the most influential planters on the Coast - those who have most invested in the colony, and therefore most to lose from mismanagement" - who were "warm supporters of Mr Shepstone". (13) The principal reason for this support was Shepstone's widespread reputation among big employers as an "unfailing source of labour". (14)

Shepstone's efforts to direct black labour to white employers went back to the earliest stages of his career as Secretary for Native Affairs. In 1852 he attempted to prod Africans on to the labour market by remitting the taxes of those who served colonial farmers. (15) In collaboration with Lt-Governor Pine, Shepstone supported the Refugee Law of 1854 which made every black immigrant to Natal liable to

three years of service at fixed wages. Later he arranged exemption from the regulations for all "single natives entering the colony to seek service under engagements for twelve months or more". (16) Officials who required labour for public works and farmers who needed extra help at harvest time applied to Shepstone's magistrates and chiefs for cheap black workers. Nor did Shepstone scruple to interfere with the operations of the free market. He drafted legislation for Pietermaritzburg in 1873 which forced Africans who remained more than five days in the town to accept any work offered to them at a standard monthly rate. This would, Shepstone conceived, prevent "combination to exact from the necessities of employers, higher wages than as a rule the service is worth" and would encourage "the natural and desirable relations of master and servant". (17)

As Natal's labour reservoir expanded northwards towards the Zambezi, Shepstone came to believe that the reorganization of African governments was inevitable. He had long believed that circumstances would always "force the civilised man, when he inhabits the same country with the savage, to encroach upon the unoccupied lands claimed by the latter". (18) His abiding fear was that a general anti-European combination of independent African rulers might prevent the peaceful extension of imperial rule. Such considerations made Shepstone a theoretical expansionist. His experience in "managing" the population of Natal convinced him that expansion could be made to pay for itself and was, therefore, eminently practical as well. The hut taxes, fines and imposts levied on Africans not only paid the salaries of police and magistrates but supported most of the entire government of Natal. Far from believing that his system of indirect rule especially suited the Nguni people, as his admirers sometimes assert, Shepstone thought his administrative procedures would easily govern "any class, country or nation" of Africans south of the Zambezi. (19) From the early 1850s he actively sought an opportunity to prove his theory by establishing a black kingdom free of white settlers, with himself as "supreme chief". (20) With Sir George Grey he plotted to partition Zululand in 1860 and throughout most of the following decade mulled over schemes to ingest Lesotho. (21) The editor of the Witness hailed him proudly in 1868 as "the one-day-to-be Governor General of all the native tribes residing between the Cape and the Zambezi". (22) Shepstone's imagination focused particularly upon a disputed piece of territory between the Transvaal and Zululand which he looked upon as the "golden bridge" to African empire, a corridor which could carry black labour to Natal and export British imperialism to the far interior. Had he accomplished his dream, he would have created a via regia to eclipse the celebrated "missionary road" through Bechuanaland to Rhodesia. (23) Shepstone's interest in the interior was more than merely official or vainglorious, for the Shepstone family was from time to time directly involved in schemes for the economic exploitation of African resources. Shepstone prospected for gold, sent his sons to dig at the Kimberley diamond fields and did what he could to further the mining ventures of friends. (24)

For all these reasons Shepstone was the willing ally of the important private interests who were pushing expansion into the interior. So, too, were a number of his associates and subordinates in government. Captain Lucas, Resident Magistrate of Klip River, had great success as a big game hunter and diamond digger in the interior. (25) Two sons of Major Erskine, Natal's Colonial Secretary, used their official connections to set up business as traders and labour recruiters in Mozambique. (26) Taken together, the expansionists of coast, port, and Government House were not numerous, but their interests were intertwined and in the special new circumstances of the 1870s they exercised an influence disproportionate to their numbers, or even their capital.

#### New Factors of the 1870s

Three new factors changed the face of southern Africa in the late 1860s and eventually produced a revolution of opinion at the Colonial Office. Each of these factors involved an aspect of African labour supply as well as agents of empire located in Natal. It will be argued that, as a result of these intrusive new considerations, the perceptions of Shepstone and the expansive interests of Natal became, for a brief period, British imperial policy. The three new factors were

mineral discoveries, the establishment of regular labour migration routes, and the campaign against the slave trade which Livingstone had extended to central and east Africa.

From 1867, diamond discoveries in Griqualand West made headlines around the world and attracted thousands of white and black diggers. But they were only one result of many ventures in mineral exploration. Encouraging traces of gold were found in Zululand; copper was thought to exist in significant quantities in the Transkei; gold had been found in many places in the Transvaal; and, though the treasures of the Witwatersrand would remain hidden until 1886, ten years earlier Englishmen were already hoping for the annexation of what was said to be "one of the world's richest countries". (27) At Lydenburg on the eastern border of the Transvaal (Shepstone's bridge to the north), gold mining began in the territory claimed by Chief Sekhukhune. Further to the north Mauch's discovery of the ruins of Zimbabwe (reported in Natal newspapers with speculations about King Solomon's mines and the Biblical Ophir) coincided with gold-seeking in the territory of Lobengula's Ndebele. (28)

Shepstone and Natalians were in the thick of these ventures. Not long after Captain Lucas and Shepstone's sons tried their luck at the diamond fields, the Rhodes brothers Herbert and Cecil gave up their cotton plantation and followed after. (29) Successful gold-seekers also followed Shepstone's leads. G. J. Black, who took an exploring party north from Potchefstroom, Transvaal, praised the information he had received from Shepstone "whose name is a host in itself among the native tribes of Central Africa". (30) Nearly twenty years before the famous Rudd concession laid the foundation for Rhodes's British South Africa Company, Shepstone smoothed the way for the London and Limpopo Mining Company which won a mineral concession from Lobengula. In 1870, Sir John Swinburne's agent, A. L. Levert, was accompanied by Shepstone's trusted messenger, Elijah Kambule, and one of Natal's Border Agents, Captain Frederic Elton, formerly of the Indian Army. (31)

The second new factor in official thinking about southern Africa was the sudden burgeoning of migrant labour moving along several clearly identifiable streams. Demand at the diamond fields for a long time exceeded supply, and as a result wages were paid far in excess of anything offered to unskilled African workers in Natal or the Cape. Within a few years large streams of labour had been diverted from existing channels. The new British government of Griqualand West took an active interest in labour supply and studied with particular care the sources of the various streams. (32) There are some surprises. While nearby Sotho groups supplied so much labour that "Basuto" was for a time the generic term for all blacks on the fields, astonishingly large numbers came from distant territories. Thousands came from Shangane territory in the eastern Transvaal and Mozambique; by 1874 Shona from beyond Matabeleland were arriving in increasing numbers. There were also some surprising absentees: Zulus and Ndebele stayed away. Private enterprise speedily recognized an opportunity for surer and steadier profits than could be had sifting gravel. "Labour touts" and recruiting gangs fanned out in search of friendly, industrious workers who would not "set an inordinate value upon their labour, as most of the natives have been taught to do". (33) They were to find that the principal obstacle to labour recruitment lay not so much in the supply but in the supply routes which ran through or along the Afrikaner republics. Tales of labour piracy became widespread.

Meanwhile, white Natalians reacted with predictable anger against the diversion of labour away from the colony. As early as 1866, over one thousand Sotho workers had passed through the Newcastle Division on their way to jobs in Natal. (34) Now the traffic was reversed. Planters set out to find ways of diverting additional migrant workers to Natal. A "Labour League" was established in Durban late in 1872 with the special object of facilitating the passage of labour through neighbouring territories. Most of their early effort was directed toward Mozambique and Zululand. After some negotiation the governor of Lourenço Marques allowed the League to build "Kraals" at Delagoa Bay, where men from the interior could obtain food and shelter while awaiting a sea passage to Durban. (35) An alternative overland route lay through Zululand, where the power of the monarch presented difficulties. At first the League employed John Dunn, Cetshwayo's famous "white induna", but cut its links with him when Dunn began making individual labour contracts on his own account. It then

turned to Shepstone, who had already won the League's respect for effective negotiations on its behalf. (36) The invitation to represent Natal at the coronation of Cetshwayo as Zulu monarch, in 1873, presented the opportunity Shepstone had been seeking to regularize the passage of labour through Zululand. The coronation is chiefly remembered by historians as the occasion on which Shepstone recommended "laws" to the new king which later became one excuse for the Zulu War. But Shepstone's recommendation that the Zulu invitation be accepted placed the labour supply question foremost:

It gives us an advantageous position in any arrangement facilitating the ingress of the labourers who may wish to come into the Colony and in providing for their safety on the shortest way back to their homes with their earnings, it also gives us the right to interfere in the external policy of the Zulus. (37)

A planters' delegation to Governor Pine in August was told that their labour needs would be ameliorated by the arrangements Shepstone was then making. Coastal representatives in the Legislative Council expressed considerable satisfaction at the final agreement.

It was from Shepstone and his border agent, Elton, that a Select Committee of the Legislative Council obtained most of the information used to support its report on the "Introduction of Native Labourers from beyond the Border of the Colony" in 1872. (38) The report confirmed the conclusions being reached at the same time by the government of Griqualand West. The great labour catchment area of southern Africa was a coastal strip of 150-300 miles wide which extended from the Natal border northwards to the Zambezi, excluding only "the military Zulu tribes, who as a rule are disinclined to manual labour". Here was a potential pool of several million workers. Throughout those territories the name of the Natal government was said to be known and respected. No advertisements were necessary to "create a desire in this immense mass of foreign native population to seek service in Natal"; the parties of men arriving daily proved that the desire already existed. What was required was an agent to be stationed near Lydenburg in the Transvaal to whom job seekers could go for up-to-date information about wages and routes to Natal. All along the main paths of migration inexpensive resting places and depots of food and fuel should be provided.

The Committee identified three principal migration routes. One ran over difficult and inhospitable country in the Transvaal, striking the colony about eighty miles west of the lower end of the Newcastle division. Another ran from coastal Mozambique directly through Zululand, where migrants were likely to be robbed. The third route ran roughly midway between the first two and straight through the middle of the disputed territory between Zululand and the Transvaal. This was none other than Shepstone's bridge to the interior, the area he had long hoped to rule as a black kingdom, the outlet for Natal's surplus population. It was the road to the north.

Renewed interest in the suppression of slave trading was the third factor which upset established opinion about southern Africa in the 1870s. Livingstone's discoveries, his meeting with Stanley, the dramatic circumstances of his death and burial, stirred an unprecedented public curiosity concerning East Africa. In 1872 the Foreign Office announced its intention to negotiate an anti-slavery treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar. Dr John Kirk, the seasoned acting Consul at Zanzibar, seemed an obvious man for the mission but he had not got along well with Livingstone and was in bad odour at the India Office, which kept a close watch on the interests of Indian nationals on the African coast. (39) Instead, Lord Granville chose Sir Bartle Frere, a former governor of Bombay who was on excellent terms with religious and philanthropic bodies in England. Frere took a spacious view of East African affairs. "There is", he noted, "a tempting opening for an Empire in East Africa at the disposal of any great naval power; but common honesty forbids us to undertake a great Philanthropic enterprise of this kind, and to find in it the coarse material reward of extended dominion." Britain had "succeeded without seeking it and almost without knowing it, to a dominant position and immense commercial interests in East Africa".(40)

Interested parties were not slow to catch the drift of Frere's thinking. William Mackinnon, the shipping magnate, philanthropist and future founder of the British East Africa Company, made plans for increased mail and passenger services to East Africa via Suez. (41) In Natal there was jubilation at the news that anti-slavery measures and passenger services were to be extended down the Indian Ocean coast. The jubilation had nothing to do with philanthropy and everything to do with the labour market. The editor of the Mercury predicted that the packet service to South Africa would soon convince the Sultan of Zanzibar that sending free labour to Natal was infinitely more profitable than sending slaves to Persia or Arabia. (42) Slaves freed on the east coast would find a "natural home" in Natal and could be carried cheaply on Mackinnon's ships. (43) Furthermore, British intervention in East Africa would

open up the trade all along the coast, and place Natal in a better position for pressing on the Imperial Government the necessity of buying the Portuguese Government out of the country south of the Zambezi ... Natal must consequently carry out a Monroe doctrine of its own, and insist that the Anglo-Saxon race shall hold undisputed sway from Capetown to the Zambezi. Besides, we wish to obtain a supply of labour for our coast planters from these localities, and this we will never be able to do satisfactorily until we have control of the various ports. (44)

The Foreign Office in large measure sympathized with Natal's aspirations. Frere's suggestion that some freed slaves could be sent to French islands was vetoed on the ground that British colonies, particularly Natal, could take an indefinite number. (45) The Colonial Office agreed that the needs of South Africa should be preferred even to those of the Seychelles. (46) All these suggestions were seconded enthusiastically by Frederic Elton, Shepstone's general factotum on labour affairs, who in March 1873 was sent by the Natal Government to Mozambique and Zanzibar to explore the possibility of obtaining labour along the coast north of Natal. (47)

By the early 1870s mineral discoveries and plantation agriculture had effected far-reaching changes in the labour market, which affected a vast sweep of the African continent from Cape Town to Mombasa. There was every prospect that the changes would be permanent. Far-sighted individuals perceived that political fragmentation was a formidable bar to the effective organization of labour supply and were therefore attracted by schemes for confederation under the British flag. Continued prosperity depended on an unimpeded movement of labour which was difficult, if not impossible, to guarantee among independent African kingdoms, Afrikaner republics, Portuguese Mozambique and the rival colonies of Natal and the Cape. There were two aspects of political fragmentation and the strengthening of independent African chiefs which particularly worried Natal's officials and expansionists. One was the possibility that the Boer republics and the Portuguese, working separately or in tandem, would block southern access to the human and material resources of the northern interior. The other was that Africans would use their new wealth to arm themselves against the whites.

Experience at the diamond fields seemed to show that the Transvaal would maliciously interfere with labour migration. At least three important migration paths to Kimberley ran directly through the republics: one from Lesotho; one from northern Natal; and the third from the interior of Mozambique, beyond the eastern Transvaal. The diggers considered the republics as hostile territory. Chiefs were said to be refusing to endanger their people's lives by allowing them to travel through the Transvaal where they were likely to be impressed as farm labour or worse. (48) British administrators backed up the diggers' complaints; they were particularly concerned about the large numbers of workers coming from the Pedi people under Chief Sekhukhune. Of potentially greater moment was Transvaal interference with labour coming down the "missionary road" from beyond the Limpopo. Lt-Governor Southey worried constantly about Boer commando raids on migrant workers and about the ever more extensive western land claims put forward in Pretoria. (49) Owen Lanyon, who replaced Southey in 1875, warned the Colonial Office that, "if there be any intention of keeping this country as a separate colony, some day you will have to annex all the country

lying to the north". Until that time there would be "continual strife going on between the Kafirs and the Boers, and there will be consequently a difficulty in getting sufficient labour for the mines". (50) President Burgers of the Transvaal was widely rumoured to be plotting western annexations which would block obvious future labour supply routes to Kimberley and the Cape. (51)

Natal's experiences were very similar, but in her case the Portuguese and Zulus loomed largest as obstacles to labour supply. Shepstone's mission to Zululand in 1873 alleviated part of the problem, but the Portuguese remained. There had been continuous complaints about Portuguese interference with trade since the 1850s; labour problems arose in the 1870s. (52) David Leslie, a private trader from Natal, complained to Shepstone that every sort of obstacle was being thrown in the way of his efforts to establish a labour supply business at Delagoa Bay. (53) St Vincent Erskine, the son of Natal's Colonial Secretary, was unable to carry out his mission to discuss labour supply with the inland chief Mzila because of Portuguese officiousness. He explained that "the fact of the matter is that a considerable revenue is derived from direct traffic [in migrant labour] with Natal [from Delagoa Bay] and the authorities are alarmed at the possibility of its being diverted to another channel". (54)

Gun-running posed more complicated questions because it enriched colonial ports and traders even as it raised the potential stakes in any future war between black and white. Southey thought it impossible to stop gun-trading at Kimberley because there were so many points of ingress from territories under different governments who profited from the transit trade. (55) All British colonies deplored the landing of firearms in Mozambique, but when it was proposed to ban the trade to Africans in Natal there was an immediate protest from Durban traders. (56)

A similar dilemma arose with respect to the independent and semi-independent African kingdoms. If, like the Zulu and the Ndebele, they did not export labour, they were condemned for erecting barriers to trade. If, like the Pedi and the Sotho, they supplied a great deal of labour, they were suspected of arming themselves for evil purposes. As obstacles or potential enemies, important African polities stretched half-way around the compass from Zululand to Matabeleland. Fear that these peoples would combine cast a shadow over South African questions. It was abetted by Shepstone, who knew that important chiefs had long been in touch with each other and who had always believed in the possibility of a general anti-white conspiracy. (57)

Each of the new factors in the southern African environment - mineral discoveries, renewed anti-slavery activity and labour supply problems - involved Shepstone and his agents in a direct way. He brought to these questions not only his long experience but also his perceptions of the colonial environment, which were shared by the expansionists in Natal. It remains to show how these perceptions and the conclusions Shepstone drew from them became for a time Britain's official policy for southern Africa.

#### Natal's Influence on Plans for Confederation

Confederation appealed to Lord Kimberley while Colonial Secretary in Gladstone's government, primarily as a money-saver. Questions of labour supply did not at first affect his thinking. In 1870 he regarded immigrant black labour in Natal as a temporary phenomenon which would disappear as the "labour of the Natives of Natal" was "gradually becoming more available". (58) It was the annexation of Griqualand West which brought into sharp focus the problems of migrant labour in a politically fragmented subcontinent. Before the annexation, Knatchbull-Hugessen at the Colonial Office adhered to the established wisdom of twenty years' standing: "we do not wish to extend our South African possessions." (59) After the annexation, when the republics began to interfere with labour supply, he changed his tune:

These Boers must be taught to respect British subjects. Every day shows in a stronger light the mistake that was made in abandoning the Orange River territory [in 1854] - these people are worse neighbours than the Kafirs. (60)

Kimberley agreed with this assessment, just as he came to agree that the destiny of the Transkei was "consolidation under British rule" and that a "little war" in Zululand leading to the same result was on the cards. (61) The great obstacle to confederation was the Cape Colony's refusal to accept the gift of Griqualand West. Afrikaners in the Cape Colony sympathized with Afrikaners in the republics who felt they had been robbed when Britain claimed the territory. Though the diamonds were worth millions, the tiny colony could not pay for itself and hence was a burden on the British treasury. By the time of the general election of 1874, a way had still not been found to attach Griqualand West to the Cape while at the same time persuading the republics to join a confederation.

Griqualand West neatly (and fearsomely) brought together accumulating problems of labour supply, defence and imperial expenditure. Its annual deficit in government accounts was a festering symptom of troubles which would not go away, because they arose from irresistible and irreversible forces of economic change. The connection between diamond-digging, labour supply and Natal became dramatically apparent at the end of 1873. Langalibalele, Chief of the Hlubi of north-western Natal, refused to answer a summons charging him with failure to register guns brought into the colony by Hlubi labourers returning from the diamond fields. (62) An escalation of fear among white farmers and Hlubi peasants caused the latter to flee into neighbouring Lesotho. At the first and only military encounter between fleeing Hlubi and pursuing colonials, the settler forces panicked and ran away, leaving six of their fellows dead on the field. News of the event ran through white Natal like sheet lightning, discharging thirty years' store of accumulated hate and fear. Atrocities committed on the Hlubi and their unoffending neighbours were trumpeted in the press. Apart from Bishop Colenso, who courageously took the Hlubi side, divisions in the white community were submerged in a rare display of unanimity. When Colenso announced his intention to go to London and plead on behalf of the Hlubi, the government hurriedly arranged for Shepstone to state the other side of the case.

The Langalibalele affair was precisely the sort of crisis which the Colonial Office had always feared would arise in Natal. But the close reading of despatches had barely begun when Disraeli turned Gladstone out of office and Lord Carnarvon replaced Kimberley as Colonial Secretary. Carnarvon was justifiably outraged by the reports from Natal but uncertain about the course he should take. The continuing problems of Griqualand West inspired him to write in August 1874 that "these South African questions are a terrible labyrinth of which it is hard to find the clue". (63) Shepstone arrived in London in the same month to give him a great many of the clues he wanted.

Most historians have echoed the complaints of his contemporaries that Shepstone was excessively reticent about revealing motives and policies. (64) But there is enough in Carnarvon's private papers and Shepstone's memoranda to reconstruct the substance of the advice he respectfully tendered in September 1874. The Colonial Office at first hesitated to approve Shepstone's visit, but when he arrived Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary, recommended that Carnarvon see him at once. Shepstone was, he explained, "a gentleman of high character and ability" and "probably there are very few men in the Colonial service equal to him". (65) Carnarvon met Shepstone several times in September, and shortly afterwards he announced to his staff that he had decided what should be done about Native Policy in South Africa. (66) Shepstone's exposition of South African affairs began with an explanation of the Langalibalele fiasco. The intrusion of Governor Pine and hot-headed settlers into the punitive expedition was the source of all troubles. What was needed, according to Shepstone, was a new constitution which would protect African administration and finance from the rapacious and irresponsible "up-country party". This could be done by strengthening either the official or the coastal representation in the Legislative Council. (67)



For the orderly administration of the African population of Natal, Shepstone recommended a paradoxical combination of immigration and emigration. Three years earlier, he had drawn attention of the Lt-Governor to the problems of administration posed by the influx of migrant workers. (68) Indirect rule through chiefs and the principle of "tribal responsibility" could not be applied to these temporary residents whose numbers might soon rise as high as 20,000 men. A force of Natal Nguni police under the command of Shepstone's own white staff was needed to record the movements and curb the misbehaviour of the migrants. (69) At the same time that these measures were taken to control temporary residents, urgent attention should be paid to the problem of "surplus" resident Africans. Shepstone's solution was, of course, his old scheme for a black kingdom to be located between the Transvaal and Zululand on the golden bridge to the north. (70) By this simple expedient, uncongenial African groups in Natal would find a happier home, a vital labour supply route would be permanently secured, the Boer republics would be denied access to the sea and a road would be kept open to the north in an expanding dominion where Africans would be governed in accordance with Shepstonian precepts:

That ultimately this will also be occupied by Europeans cannot be doubted, but if the land can be acquired, and put to the purpose I have suggested, the present tension in Natal will be relieved, and time be gained to admit of the introduction of a larger proportion of white colonists ... But it will be a mistake to suppose that the relief afforded by this measure would be but temporary or that the difficulty it is proposed to abate could ever again reach its present dimensions; because the outlet being to the North, the abatement admits of permanent extension towards a climate unsuited to Europeans but not so to natives ... (71)

For Shepstone, keeping the peace among millions of blacks in southern Africa was far too important to be left to ignorant settler politicians, or even to imperial troops without special knowledge of local conditions. At any time a false move might provoke a general rising of African kingdoms from the southern coast to the Limpopo. The best general police force was that which he had recommended for Natal in 1871 (and would later recommend for the Transvaal): "a Zulu force with a European officer (gentleman) to say every 50 men - no white sergeants." (72) This device was but one part of the general model of administration Shepstone had evolved in Natal, where he had proved that the governance of Africans could be made to pay its own way. Taxes, fines and duties imposed on Africans supported practically the entire public administration of Natal; they could pay for the administration of all Africans south of the Zambezi. (73) The methods used by Shepstone to regulate the supply and behaviour of migrant labour were equally capable of extension to other places.

This conception of an expanding British dominion was visionary, but it could be soberly defended by arguments founded upon its inner logic and the public record of Shepstone's work in Natal. It recognized that Africans would always outnumber whites and that the development of established colonies required a permanent supply of black labour. The future reservoirs would be, not the already overcrowded little locations of Natal, but the vast northern hinterland. All that stood in the way of the achievement of the vision was political fragmentation and the threat of hostilities with African rulers.

There is no definite proof that Carnarvon adopted Shepstone's vision in its entirety, but subsequent events indicated clearly that Carnarvon was profoundly impressed by the meetings of September 1874. Bishop Colenso fumed to see his former friend (now his bitter enemy) heaped up with honours and a special commission. He felt that Carnarvon had been gulled by Shepstone on the question of the disputed territory in Zululand, just as he himself had been gulled years before, and that Shepstone's mistaken views on confederation had perverted Carnarvon's judgement. When Shepstone was made a KCMG and given the vital task of bringing the Transvaal under British rule, Colenso accused Carnarvon of sacrificing justice for Hlubi to the "mere policy" of Confederation. (74) On the great questions of labour supply, African administration, negotiations with African states and even forecasting mineral discoveries, Shepstone possessed a unique combination of knowledge and

experience. Until Carnarvon's resignation in 1878, Shepstone's opinions were continually sought on all these matters and his views were to a considerable extent transferred verbatim to Colonial Office memoranda.

C. F. Goodfellow singles out the historian J. A. Froude as the greatest influence on Carnarvon during the period in which he evolved his confederation strategy. (75) But it is clear from official memoranda that, on the vital questions set out above, Carnarvon's mind was essentially made up after Shepstone's visit in September and before Froude's letters from South Africa began arriving in December 1874. Goodfellow himself admits that Froude had no part in the preparation of the famous despatch of 1875. (76) In fact, Froude was always lukewarm on confederation; late in 1875 Froude wrote to Colenso that Carnarvon "is under a misapprehension as to the character of the agitation which has been raised here and imagines that the Colonies are ripe for Confederation. I must hasten home to undeceive him." (77)

If Shepstone's influence has been underestimated in the standard accounts of Carnarvon's great experiment, the influence of Frederic Elton is simply ignored. Yet Elton was also ideally situated to provide information Carnarvon required on South-East and East Africa. He served on Shepstone's staff, recruited labour, secured mining concessions and helped to suppress the slave trade. From the early 1870s until his death in 1877, Elton moved nimbly backwards and forwards across the increasingly intricate web of economic relationships which linked the affairs of East, Central and Southern Africa. As a special envoy from Natal he undertook three commissions in 1873: to confer with the governor-general of Mozambique concerning labour migration from Delagoa Bay; to consult with the Sultan of Zanzibar and Portuguese officials on the use of the telegraphic cable to be laid from Aden; and to assist Sir Bartle Frere in his anti-slavery mission. Frere valued Elton's experience in India, found him an invaluable source of information on the lower East African coast and promptly appointed him assistant political agent and vice-consul at Zanzibar. (78) In April 1875 Elton became Britain's first full-time consul at Mozambique. (79) His links with Natal were maintained not only through frequent correspondence but also through a brief return as temporary Protector of Indian Immigrants during a period of convalescent leave in July 1874. (80)

Elton's advice to Frere and to the Foreign Office reflected his Natal experience. He particularly emphasized the connection between labour supply and slave trade suppression. The people called "Amatonga", he informed Frere in 1873, extended under several different names from Delagoa Bay to the Zambezi:

These tribes who but a few years past were actively employed in 'collecting' men and women for their neighbours, have totally discontinued and could not now be tempted into resuming the slave traffic in any form. They have discovered that all their wants can be sufficiently supplied by sending their young men down to Natal to work for three or four years ... (81)

Genuinely believing that the growth of labour migration would drive out slave trading, Elton continued his work as a labour recruiter. The Natal Mercury congratulated him for "not losing sight of his former interests in Natal". (82) In his consular reports, which were routinely passed on to the Colonial Office to be filed with papers on Natal (another indication of the key role of the colony in this period), Elton revealed himself as an enthusiastic imperialist. He took every opportunity to denigrate Portugal's moribund colony whose real influence, he claimed, extended only a few miles inland along the whole coast. (83)

Elton's immediate hope was the acquisition of Delagoa Bay; his ultimate ambition was the extinction of Portuguese rule on the east coast. He argued cogently that possession of Delagoa Bay was essential to the success of confederation. (84) In addition to the danger to British supremacy presented by the proposed Transvaal-Delagoa railway, Elton emphasized the importance of controlling the firearms and labour trade. (85) His argument for the removal of Portuguese influence elsewhere

arose from his interests in mineral exploration and labour recruitment in Central Africa, as well as from his anti-slavery fervour. He was indignant at the blocks thrown in the way of Natal's labour recruiters in Soshangane country and alarmed at the claims Portugal was attempting to stake out in the region of Lake Malawi and in Lobengula's country. (86) Elton had been a close friend of Herbert Rhodes since his residence in Natal and followed with interest Rhodes's career as an explorer and prospector after he left the diamond fields. By 1876 Rhodes was deeply involved in schemes for developing Central Africa and recognized the importance of Mozambique as the most direct route to the interior. Elton was very willing to help and did much to smooth the way for Rhodes and a party of Australian gold seekers in 1876. (87) The reports of mineral prospects emanating from Rhodes and Elton were enough to stir even the jaded imaginations of Colonial Office clerks. On one of the reports W. R. Malcolm wrote: "There are rumours that the mountainous country about Lake Nyassa is enormously rich in minerals; a settler in the O.F. State said to me the other day that it would be one day the 'Nevada' of Africa." On the same despatch Carnarvon railed against Portuguese protectionism:

there is not much information in this Office as to the character of the Country; but that which there is tends to the belief (if one can say as much) that there are minerals etc. That whether this be so or not, I object strongly to the grant of these [Portuguese] monopolies which either close the trade of a country which ought to be open to all the world and which thus maintain a detestable state of savagery and barbarism or which confine all commercial advantages to a few traders belonging to a country which had done less for the initiation and welfare of mankind than any with which I am acquainted. (88)

Elton regarded the opening of Central Africa as a logical sequel to Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal and proposed to use his acquaintance with Lobengula to prepare the ground:

... it becomes evident from Sir T. Shepstone's ultimatum that the Transvaal Republic is positively to be brought into Confederation with the South African colonies, and Matabili Land, with its undoubtedly rich mineral resources, will practically, after Confederation, become the Frontier Native State of the countries under British Protection ... it will be a matter of both obvious duty and necessity for the cordial maintenance of good relations with the Chief Lobengula, of advantage as being a direct and practical, although at the same time possibly an unavowed, assertion against Portuguese Territorial Claims, for Her Majesty's Government to despatch an Envoy to ... explain to the King the changes that have taken place and to assure him that he may rely upon British Friendship and Recognition of his Independency. I am personally acquainted with this Powerful Chief and have travelled in his Country. (89)

In the event, Elton did not revisit Lobengula. Instead, the Foreign Office gave him leave to investigate the slave trade around Lake Malawi. In July 1877 he travelled up the Zambezi and Shire rivers; on December 19, in central Tanzania, he died of fever and dysentery and was buried under a baobab tree by his companion, Herbert Rhodes. (90)

While Elton could not in any sense be said to have inspired South African confederation, it is evident that his reports from Mozambique clarified the inner logic of confederation for Carnarvon. Service in Natal and Zanzibar had shown Elton the profound inter-relation of labour supply, mining development, the suppression of the slave trade and the opening of East and Central Africa. Carnarvon always read Elton's reports with interest and admiration. Whenever possible, Elton's recommendations were implemented, except for the purchase of Delagoa Bay, which the Portuguese refused to give up for any consideration. (91) The Foreign Office readily agreed to Elton's request for an assistant consul at Mozambique on the grounds that

We are every day assuming a more active Policy on the East Coast of Africa both as regards the suppression of Slave Traffic and the exploration of Africa and development of its resources, and from this Policy we can scarcely withdraw, even if we wished, considering the interest taken by the Public in African Affairs. (92)

Both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office turned to Elton for advice on how to regard King Leopold's scheme for opening Central Africa to "commerce and civilisation". (93) But for his untimely death, Elton might well have displaced Harry Johnston as the pioneer of British East Africa and Nyasaland. Elton's valedictory remarks on the northern limits of gold deposits and Ndebele power were immediately printed for circulation to the Royal Geographical Society, William Mackinnon, Disraeli and Queen Victoria. (94) Carnarvon's assessment of Leopold's African proposal echoed Elton's advice:

I should not like anyone to come too near to us to either on the south towards the Transvaal, which must be ours; or on the north too near to Egypt and the country which belongs to Egypt.

In fact when I speak of geographical limits I am not expressing my real opinion. We cannot admit rivals in the east or even the central part of Africa: and I do not see why, looking to the experience that we have now of English life within the tropics - the Zambezi should be considered to be without the range of our colonisation. To a considerable extent, if not entirely, we must be prepared to apply a sort of Munro [sic] doctrine to much of Africa. (95)

Goodfellow interprets this remarkable statement as a momentary outburst of enthusiasm arising from the plans Carnarvon was then laying for the annexation of the Transvaal. It would be more appropriately interpreted as evidence of Carnarvon's complete conversion to the expansionist policies preached by the men from Natal. Since the 1860s, Natalians had been speaking of a Monroe Doctrine for British Africa and looking forward to the extension of Shepstone's African administration as far as the Zambezi. Carnarvon's key agents in the drive for confederation were men who had acquired the Natal perspective developed by Shepstone and the expansionist party of planters, prospectors and merchants.

Sir Garnet Wolseley, who was given the task of changing Natal's constitution so as to overbalance the irresponsible up-country element, relied heavily on Shepstone's advice and repeated Shepstone's opinions in his despatches. (96) Sir Bartle Frere, whom Carnarvon sent as Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa in order to supervise the making of confederation, came almost directly from Zanzibar, where he had absorbed Elton's views on labour supply, the suppression of slavery, the opening of Central Africa and the elimination of the Portuguese from East Africa. Shepstone was sent to the Transvaal as governor, where he might try his theory of cheap government through black chiefs, black taxes and black police.

#### The Significance of Carnarvon's Confederation Plans

Clearly the failure of Carnarvon's confederation plans cannot be taken as proof that southern Africa was not ripe for British imperial expansion in the 1870s. The forces which shaped Carnarvon's thinking on southern African problems were permanent features of the region. The objects for which Shepstone worked - the annexation of African nations, the organization of orderly labour migration, the exploitation of new mineral discoveries, the governance of African locations through a form of indirect rule: these would be the dominant features of the South African environment in the twentieth century. The roles which Mozambique and Central Africa

would play as reservoirs of labour were perceived very early by Elton, Southey and the coastal party in Natal. The plans discussed by Elton and Herbert Rhodes for developing gold-mining in Lobengula's kingdom and thus forestalling both Transvaal and Portuguese expansion would be fulfilled little more than a decade later by Herbert's younger brother.

The factors which scuttled Carnarvon's plans, on the other hand, were mostly temporary and peculiar to the 1870s. Later mineral discoveries would erase the rancour aroused in the legislatures of the Cape Colony and Orange Free State by the annexation of Griqualand West, which fatally obstructed the passage of confederation legislation. (97) The individual failures of Carnarvon's chosen agents were equally unrelated to long-term forces in South African history. Wolesley, for instance, produced a constitution for Natal which still left room for obstruction from the up-country party; Frere became involved in three dangerous and unsatisfactory African wars at the same time; Shepstone, for all his theories of cheap government, proved to be incapable of balancing the Transvaal budget; Elton died; Carnarvon even failed himself by resigning his ministry on a point of principle unrelated to African affairs. Different men in the same circumstances might have produced different results.

### Summary

Lord Carnarvon's scheme for a South African Confederation in the 1870s owed much more than has generally been recognized to influences emanating from Natal. Large employers of African labour recognized in the 1860s that the local population could not provide a cheap, stable work-force and that immigrant workers from the African interior would be increasingly important to the prosperity of the colony. Theophilus Shepstone, Natal's Secretary for Native Affairs, used all the resources at his disposal to smooth the way for migrant labour. The development of diamond mining in Griqualand West and, to a lesser extent, gold-mining in the Lydenburg district of the Transvaal diverted large numbers of African workers away from Natal and set off a frantic search for new sources of labour which underscored the importance of Mozambique and Central Africa as reservoirs of black labour. While planters, traders and officials in Natal worked to keep labour supply routes open between the Transvaal and Portuguese territory, officials in Griqualand West were recommending annexation of territories along the "missionary road" in order to stop Transvaal Afrikaners from blocking labour supply routes from Central Africa. The revival of an active British campaign against the East African slave trade opened another potential source of African labour which Shepstone's former border agent, Frederic Elton, tried to divert to Natal while serving, first, as an assistant to Sir Bartle Frere and John Kirk in Zanzibar, and later as British Consul in Mozambique.

Shepstone arrived in London at a crucial point in the development of Carnarvon's thinking on southern African affairs and impressed him with his lucid analysis of the inter-relation of African administration, economic development and labour supply. Carnarvon's plans for confederation reflected the advice which he was continuously receiving from Shepstone and Elton. Their argument for confederation emphasized the essentially unitary nature of the developing southern African economy.

Notes

- (1) The following abbreviations are used in this essay: CO, Colonial Office Records, Public Record Office, London; FO, Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office, London; WO, War Office Records, Public Record Office, London; CP, Carnarvon Papers, Public Record Office, London; PP, Parliamentary Papers; SNA, Secretary for Native Affairs Papers, Pietermaritzburg depot of the South African Archives; GLW, Griqualand West Papers, Cape Archives, Cape Town; COL, Colenso Papers, Killie Campbell Africana Museum of the University of Natal; SPG, Archives of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.
- (2) R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (London, 1961), p. 61.
- (3) C. F. Goodfellow, Great Britain and South African Confederation (Cape Town, 1966), pp. 218 ff. Until the publication of Goodfellow's book, the standard work on South African Confederation was C. W. de Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa (Cambridge, 1937).
- (4) A. Atmore and S. Marks, "The imperial factor in South Africa in the nineteenth century: towards a reassessment", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, III, i (1974), 105-39.
- (5) Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1874 (Pietermaritzburg, 1873), p. 171.
- (6) F. Algar, The Diamond Fields (London, 1872), p. 38.
- (7) See, for example, the Legislative Council debate on Indian immigration reported in the Natal Witness, 13 November 1874, and the speech by the LC candidate Aitken to his planter constituents, Natal Colonist, 23 September 1873.
- (8) The large holdings of the Natal Land and Colonisation Company enabled large numbers of Africans to engage in profitable small-scale farming: both government and the absentee share-holders of the company depended on these Africans for revenue and would not willingly see them pushed on to the local labour market. See Henry Slater, "Land, labour and capital in Natal: the Natal Land and Colonisation Company, 1860-1948", Journal of African History, XVI, ii (1975), 257-83.
- (9) Natal Witness, 12 July 1872 and 19 December 1873; Natal Colonist, 25 March 1873.
- (10) David Welsh, The Roots of Segregation. Native Policy in Colonial Natal, 1845-1910 (Cape Town, 1971), passim. Shepstone's place in South African history is due for reappraisal. Afrikaner historians have always seen him as an arch-imperialist whose annexation of the Transvaal was the culmination rather than the postscript to his career in Natal: cf C. J. Uys, In the Era of Shepstone (Lovedale, 1933). English historians have been, like Welsh, more interested in Shepstone's experiments in indirect rule and segregation; see, for example, J. R. Sullivan, The Native Policy of Sir Theophilus Shepstone (Johannesburg, 1928), and Edgar H. Brookes, The History of Native Policy in South Africa, 1830 to the Present Day (Cape Town, 1924), Chapter I. The economic consequences of Shepstone's policies have been relatively neglected and the way is open for a study which will demonstrate the integral relationship between Shepstone's imperialism and his African administration.
- (11) Witness, 16 February 1869.
- (12) Milles to Kimberley, 28 May 1872, CO 179/107.
- (13) Colenso to Shaen, 14 December 1873, COL, folio Y.
- (14) Natal Mercury, 19 December 1872; Witness, 15 November 1872.
- (15) Shepstone, Testimony before Natal Native Commission, 1852, SNA 2/1/2-3.
- (16) Shepstone, Memorandum, 20 January 1868, in reply to Bird to Shepstone, 10 January 1868, SNA 1/3/18.
- (17) Shepstone, Memorandum, 26 May 1873, SNA 1/7/8.
- (18) Shepstone to Pine, 9 December 1851, PP, 1852-3 (1697), vol. LXII.
- (19) Ruth E. Gordon, Shepstone: the Role of the Family in the History of South Africa 1820-1900 (Cape Town, 1968), pp. 192-3.

- (20) J. W. Colenso, Church Missions among the Heathen in the Diocese of Natal (London, n.d.), p. 8; Colenso to Hawkins, 8 June 1859, SPG, D8; Colenso to Shepstone, 5 March 1863, COL, folio M.
- (21) Shepstone, Memorandum, 30 March 1861, SNA 1/7/5; Gordon, Shepstone, pp. 192-93.
- (22) Witness, 12 May 1868.
- (23) Shepstone had been suggesting this annexation since the early 1860s. The first suggestion that the disputed territory should be annexed for the specific purpose of providing a corridor for the passage of African workers was made by Percy Whitehead, a settler who proposed in 1870 to form a company to buy 1,500,000 acres from the Zulus. See Murdoch (Emigration Board) to Rogers, 5 July 1870, CO 179/100.
- (24) Colenso to Shepstone, 7 October 1868, Colenso to Domville, 20 December 1871, COL, folios B and N.
- (25) Witness, 26 June 1863, 22 November 1870, 10 February 1871.
- (26) Keate to Kimberley, 22 July 1871, CO 179/102; Shepstone's instructions in 1870 to St Vincent Erskine emphasized the importance of ascertaining the size of the potential labour pool in Shangane territory; Keate to Kimberley, 22 June 1871, CO 179/102.
- (27) Shepstone to Liege Hulett, Jr, 14 December 1871, SNA 1/8/3; Barkly to Kimberley, 14 November 1873; Lanyon to Ommaney, 26 May 1876, CP 30/6/36.
- (28) Mercury, 18 June 1872; Witness, 26 February 1869.
- (29) Witness, 7 March and 1 September 1871; Charles A. Payton, Diamond Diggings of South Africa (London, 1872), p. 215.
- (30) Witness, 2 March 1869.
- (31) Lucas to Shepstone, 24 July 1871, SNA 1/3/21; Keate to Kimberley, 23 September 1870, CO 179/99; Levert to Shepstone, 30 May 1870, SNA 1/1/20; Witness, 29 July 1870.
- (32) Coleman to Currey, Monthly Returns of African Labour, GLW, folio 71.
- (33) Coleman to Currey, 18 November 1873, 25 July and 14 December 1874, GLW 71; Mercury, 20 July 1872.
- (34) Osborn, Newcastle Annual Report, 1866, SNA 1/3/7.
- (35) Mercury, 23 September 1873.
- (36) Colonist, 18 April 1873; Witness, 24 December 1872. He deserved the commendation. When Chief Mzila of the Shangane in Moçambique sent a messenger to the government of Natal in 1871 to ask for the establishment of official relations, Shepstone had immediately grasped the opportunity to open a new source of labour. In conversations with Von Zeller, Portuguese Consul General in Cape Town, he pointed out that "it would be of great advantage to this Colony if some arrangement could be made by which the large mass of unemployed labour at present sealed up in the territory over which Umzila is Chief might be available to it either through Portuguese Ports, or overland ..." (Keate to Kimberley, 22 June 1871, CO 179/102). Lt-Governor Keate fully supported Shepstone's initiative but the Colonial Office worried about the diplomatic irregularity of the contact with Von Zeller and unwitting connivance in what might be "a possible nucleus of another Portuguese kidnapping station".
- (37) Shepstone Memorandum, 3 March 1873, enclosed in Musgrave to Kimberley, 10 March 1873, CO 179/111; Mercury, 23 August 1873; Speech of M. L. C. Polkinghorne, reported in Witness, 24 October 1873.
- (38) Natal Legislative Council, 3rd session, 6th Council, 1872, LC No. 12; Musgrave to Kimberley, 6 January 1873, CO 179/111. The Committee estimated the total number of immigrant workers in Natal at 6,000 with 3,000 coming in each year and 3,000 going out.
- (39) Granville, Memorandum, 26 August 1872, FO 83/1386.
- (40) Frere, "Memorandum on the Position and Authority of the Sultan of Zanzibar", 17 August 1873, FO 84/1391. The application of classical gun-boat diplomacy soon produced the desired treaty.

- (41) Granville to Frere, 15 January 1873, FO 84/1388.
- (42) Mercury, 25 March 1873.
- (43) Mercury, 24 June 1873.
- (44) Witness, 11 October 1872.
- (45) Memorandum by Wylde, 24 May 1873, FO 84/1393.
- (46) Barkly to Kimberley, 15 November 1873, CO 48/466.
- (47) Kirk to Granville, 21 March 1873; Frere to Granville, March 1873, FO 84/1389. For further evidence of Elton's work to direct freed slaves to Natal, see Hammond to Herbert, 8 October 1873, CO 179/113; Prideaux to Derby, 15 July 1874, FO 84/1399; Pine to Carnarvon, 14 September 1874, CO 179/115; Bulwer to Carnarvon, 1 February 1878, CO 179/126.
- (48) Colonist, 23 May 1873.
- (49) Southey to Barkly, 28 August 1874, GLW 184; Lanyon to Ommaney, 26 August 1876; Lanyon to Carnarvon, 14 September 1876, CP 30/6/36.
- (50) Lanyon to Ommaney, 26 May 1876, CP 30/6/36.
- (51) Mercury, 24 June 1873.
- (52) Extract from Consul McLeod's Report to Lord Malmesbury on the Resources of Eastern Africa, 30 November 1858, CO 179/105; Keate to Kimberley, 8 December 1870, CO 179/99.
- (53) Keate to Kimberley, 12 September 1871, CO 179/102.
- (54) Ibid.; see also Musgrave to Kimberley, 8 August 1872, CO 179/107; João de Andrade Corvo to Murray, 8 July 1872, FO 84/1386; Mercury, 24 July 1873.
- (55) Southey to Barkly, 18 March 1874, GLW 183.
- (56) Pine to Carnarvon, 13 August 1874, CO 179/115.
- (57) Fear of the "general combination" is a constant factor in official thinking from the 1850s onwards. See, for example, Shepstone's transcript of a message from Mswazi, 12 March 1862, SNA 1/6/2; Keate to Kimberley, 22 June 1871, CO 179/102; Sargeant to Carnarvon, 22 November 1877, PRO 30/6/23; FO to CO, 28 November 1878, CO 179/128.
- (58) Minutes on Keate to Kimberley, 24 October 1870, CO 179/99.
- (59) Minute on Berkly to Kimberley, 1 February 1871, CO 48/454.
- (60) Minute on Barkly to Kimberley, 4 April 1873, CO 48/465; see also Barkly to Kimberley, 2 November 1872, CO 48/462.
- (61) See minutes: Keate to Kimberley, 17 January 1872, CO 179/106; Barkly to Kimberley, 23 August 1872; and Bisset Memorandum, 5 June 1874, CO 179/116.
- (62) Edgar H. Brookes and Colin de B. Webb, A History of Natal (Pietermaritzburg, 1965), pp 113-23; N. Etherington, "Why Langalibalele ran away", Journal of Natal and Zulu History, I, 1 (1978), 1-25.
- (63) Minute of 27 August 1874 on Barkly to Carnarvon, 25 July 1874, CO 48/469.
- (64) Brookes and Webb, History of Natal, pp. 57-58.
- (65) Minutes on Pine to Carnarvon, 12 June 1874, and 20 July 1874, CO 179/114-115.
- (66) Minutes on Lucas, Memorandum, 9 August 1874, and Pine to Carnarvon, 24 September 1874, CO 179/115-116.
- (67) Carnarvon, "Notes of conversations with Shepstone", September 1874, in CP 30/6/49. For Shepstone's views on the ignorance of most white settlers, see Bulwer to Carnarvon, 27 May 1876, CO 179/121.
- (68) Shepstone, Memorandum, 18 December 1871, enclosed in Keate to Kimberley, 20 December 1871, CO 179/104.
- (69) Most white settlers were outraged by the suggestion of an expanded black police force; see Witness, 26 November 1872.
- (70) Minutes of 9th, 12th, 16th and 18th September on Lucas to Carnarvon, 9 August 1874, CO 179/116. Shepstone continued to advocate the plan as late as 1882 (Colenso to Chesson, 5 February and 3 May 1882, COL, folio Z).



- (71) Shepstone to Herbert, 30 November 1874, CO 179/116.
- (72) Shepstone to Frere, 29 June 1877, CP 30/6/33.
- (73) For Shepstone's views on the potential revenues to be raised from Transvaal Africans, see Shepstone to Carnarvon, 23 July 1877, CP 30/6/23.
- (74) Colenso to Chesson, 29 November 1875 and 4 March 1877, Anti-Slavery Papers, Rhodes House, folios C 131/89 and C 131/104; Colenso to Chesson, undated fragment, COL folio Z. Colenso became increasingly hysterical in his attacks on Shepstone, to the extent of insisting that the Transvaal Boers had a wiser "native policy" than Natal (Colenso to Chesson, 13 March 1881, COL, folio Z). But even Colenso would have been shocked to learn that it was proposed in the Colonial Office to pay the expenses of Shepstone's Transvaal mission by borrowing from the fund established to compensate Langalibalele's neighbours (the Ngwe) who had suffered unjustly during the punitive expedition! See Herbert's minute on Bulwer to Carnarvon, 3 January 1877, CO 179/123.
- (75) Goodfellow, Great Britain and South African Confederation, pp. 57-60.
- (76) Ibid., p. 65.
- (77) Froude to Colenso, 18 November 1875, COL folio Z. Goodfellow consistently underestimates the importance of Natal, regarding Griqualand West as the "vortex" of central problems, and the strategic position of the Cape as Carnarvon's chief concern (Great Britain and South African Confederation, pp. 63, 71-2).
- (78) Frere to Granville, n.d., FO 84/1389; F. Elton, "Slave Trade etc. Report on East Coast Portuguese possessions", 20 March 1873, enclosed in Musgrave to Kimberley, 25 April 1873, CO 179/112; R. Coupland, The Exploitation of East Africa (1939), p. 201. Coupland ignores Elton's concern to direct freed slaves to Natal, and so do more recent historians of East Africa, with the exception of R. Beachey, The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa (London, 1976), p. 90.
- (79) A. J. Hanna, The Beginnings of Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia, 1859-1895 (Oxford, 1956), pp. 52-3.
- (80) Prideaux to Wylde, 5 June 1874, FO 84/1398; Prideaux to Derby, 15 July 1874, FO 84/1399; J. F. Elton (ed. H. B. Cotterill), Travels and Researches among the Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa (London, 1879), pp. 110, 118. It should be noted that Elton's book, which was compiled from his papers after his death, presents a confused account of his movements between Natal and Zanzibar; pp. 112-16 appear to refer to events of 1874 but in fact refer to 1873 and should have been inserted between pages 60 and 64.
- (81) Elton, "Slave Trade", as cited in n. 78.
- (82) Mercury, 26 February 1874. For further evidence of Elton's success as a labour recruiter, see: Wolseley to Carnarvon, 24 June 1875, CO 179-117; Wolseley to Carnarvon, 24 August 1875, CO 179/118; Elton to Derby, 30 September 1875, enclosed in FO to CO, 2 December 1875, CO 179/119; Bulwer to Carnarvon, 28 August 1876, CO 179/121; Elton to Frere, 5 February 1877, FO 84/1479.
- (83) Elton to Derby, Political, Confidential, 25 October 1875, enclosed in Lister to Herbert, 21 December 1875, CO 179/119; FO to CO, 3 January 1876, CO 179/122. Carnarvon ordered twenty extra copies of the December report for Colonial Office use.
- (84) FO to CO, 31 July 1875, CO 179/119. Carnarvon's first reaction was to doubt "the force of Mr Elton's argument" but later threw his weight behind efforts to negotiate a purchase (Minute on Lister to Herbert, 26 January 1876, CO 179/122).
- (85) Elton to Bulwer, 8 October 1875, CO 179/118; Lister to Herbert, 26 January and 28 September 1876, CO 179/122.
- (86) Elton to Lloyd (Natal's Protector of Immigrants), 25 October 1875, CO 179/119; Elton to Derby, 30 September 1875, enclosed in FO to CO, 2 December 1875, CO 179/119; Elton to Derby, 23 April 1877, CO 179/125; FO to CO, 18 June 1877, CO 179/125; Elton to Derby, 4 March 1877, FO 84/1479.
- (87) Elton to Derby, 18 July 1876, FO 84/1448 and 6 April 1877, FO 84/1479.
- (88) Minutes on Lister to Herbert, 4 April 1876, CO 179/122.
- (89) Elton to Derby, 23 April 1877, FO 84/1479. Robert Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, agreed that "if a South African Dominion is

formed it will ultimately spread far within the Tropic [of Capricorn], inland, at all events" (Minute on Wolseley to Carnarvon, confidential, 27 August 1875, CO 179/118). See also minutes on George Thompson to Carnarvon, 25 July 1876, CO 179/122.

- (90) Elton, Travels and Researches, pp. 241 ff, 392-3; Proc. RGS, XXII (1877-8), 306-8; Hanna, Beginnings, pp. 55-6.
- (91) Under Elton's prodding, Carnarvon moved from viewing Delagoa Bay as peripheral to the work of confederation to regarding it as the "key position on the eastern coast" (Carnarvon to Queen Victoria, quoted in Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 59).
- (92) Wylde, minute on Elton to Derby, 21 April 1876, FO 84/1448.
- (93) Elton asked rhetorically, "Why should England who has placed herself in the van of Slave Trade Suppression and of Central African Exploration ... now, when the heat and toil of the day are almost over, form a National Committee for the accomplishment of these objects subordinate in a measure, and with its resources at the disposal of a Central Belgian Committee?" (Elton to Derby, 1 March 1877, FO 84/1479).
- (94) Elton to Derby, 13 October 1877, FO 84/1479.
- (95) Carnarvon to Frere, 12 December 1876, CP 30/6/4, quoted in Goodfellow, Great Britain and South African Confederation, p. 117.
- (96) See, for example, Wolseley to Carnarvon, 5 March and 16 May 1875, CP 30/6/38.
- (97) At the very beginning of the public propaganda on behalf of confederation Froude correctly observed that "Griqua-Land will make the whole difficulty. If we had not seized it when we did, it would have brought the Free state under English influence and Brand would long ago have petitioned to be taken under our flag" (Froude to Carnarvon, 8 July and 16 August 1875, CP 30/6/84).