

pp. 49-50) as a considered opinion of a widely representative gathering of leaders of both races.

Supply of Native Convict Labour to Private Employers.

The recent undertaking that Native convict labour should be made available for farms in the Bethal District is not without precedent. Not only are gangs of such labourers used on Government work such as road-making (e.g. on the Pretoria-Johannesburg road) but they are also employed on certain mines on the Witwatersrand, by the De Beers Company in Kimberley, and are available for hire by private employers for garden work, etc.

Under the arrangements with the De Beers Company the working convicts are accommodated at night in suitable barracks, are under adequate supervision, and receive the necessary medical attention. It is doubtful if such conditions can be obtained on farms. The gangs will be small, and if proper accommodation is stipulated for, the Government will have to provide it, together with food and other supplies. The class of warder available will probably be of a less reliable type, and constant supervision will be necessary to prevent abuses. In fact, it seems probable that in the case of small detachments in isolated districts even serious abuses might continue for a long period without being discovered.

The Joint Council takes a serious view of the suggestion to make more general the use of this type of labour, and holds strongly the opinion that it should not be made available for use by private employers. Furthermore, the low rate which is paid for convict labour, in contrast with rates paid to ordinary employees, renders such labour undesirable from an economic point of view.

With these additions the Johannesburg Joint Council desires to endorse the views expressed in the article referred to at the beginning of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

E. W. GRANT,

Hon. Secretary,

*Johannesburg Joint Council of
Europeans and Natives.*