Paper No. 24

Coloured Farm Labour and Farm Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper* is to put forward some questions and suggestions rather than to give answers. The basic question underlying this paper is why Coloured farmers - independent farmers and employees in the agricultural sector - do not play a more important role in the South African agricultural scene, as far as management, control and/or ownership of farming enterprises are concerned. Phrased in this way the question is not unrelated to questions concerning the relative significance of Coloured business managers/entrepreneurs and industrialists in the other sectors of the economy.

This paper was not preceded by detailed interview studies or other empirical research, even though this was contemplated at an earlier stage. Critical assessment of the arguments put forward may, perhaps, lead to such empirical research, notwithstanding considerable obstacles to be expected in its way. The writer has studied the Report of the Theron Commission, as well as certain background material, in particular a study by the Bureau for Market Research on the Socio-economic Position of Coloured Farm Workers. Preliminary discussions were also held\textsuperscript{1} with a wide range of persons in the farming sector as well as in training institutions.

The Theron Commission has given detailed attention to the problems of Coloured Farm Labour, both from the view of the (white) farmer-employer and the employee. Some of the evidence collected by the BMR in its survey has been included in the relevant chapter of the Report. In particular the survey revealed the very low cash wages, the inadequacy of housing, the low educational standards and, in general, an extreme lack of articulateness of the farm workers. These aspects

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* Prepared for the SALDRU Conference on Farm Labour, University of Cape Town, September 1976. The writer is Director of the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape.

\textsuperscript{1} Assistance by Mr A. C. Redelinghuis, researcher at the Institute is gratefully acknowledged.
are, however, not the substance of this paper. Nor are the particular problems of the rural Coloured areas (the so-called "Reserves") per sé subject of this paper, even though both aspects are relevant.²

In this paper the focus falls on a very small segment of the economically active Coloured labour force engaged in agriculture. The latter includes about 105,000 male and 9,000 female persons (cf. Table 1). Of the men about 10,500 are resident in the rural Coloured areas and the rest on white owned farms, or in villages, working on white owned farms. Only about 2,500 of the men actually work on a full-time basis on "Coloured farms", i.e., inside the "rural reserves".

In the BMR survey, which is based on interviews with 300 (white) farmers and 450 regular (Coloured) farm workers, there is no mention of any supervisory or managerial work undertaken by Coloured farm workers. In fact 80,4 per cent of the 1,638 regular farm workers employed at these farms were found to undertake "manual labour" as against 3,1 per cent doing "specialised work" and 16,5 per cent doing "technical work". This is in line with the information on educational levels attained by those interviewed, as shown in Tables 2 and 3 in Annexure B. A mere 6,5 per cent of the regular farm workers had an educational level above Std 4. Even in the Western Cape the latter percentage was only 10,7.

If we look at these trends the actual number of independent Coloured "farmers" is probably not much more than 1,500 (see par. 7.91 - 7.96 of the Report) while another 1,000 might possibly be added to include persons engaged in some managerial function on white-owned farms. Together, this amounts to a mere 2,2 per cent of those economically active in agriculture. Alternatively, we can compare these 2,500 Coloured "farmers" with about 78,000 white "farmers", while the population ratio is 2,5 mill. to 4,0 mill. for the two groups.

² The recommendations of the Commission on the three main issues related to Coloured agriculture - labour, rural areas and independent farmers - are summarised in Annexure A. Some crucial statistics are presented in Annexure B.
2. EXPLAINING THE LACK OF COLOURED FARM MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

The situation briefly outlined in the first section calls for detailed explanation, in particular since the general approach of the Theron Commission and present demands by leaders of the so-called "Coloured" community suggest that unrestricted opportunities should be given to them in all spheres of the economy. Thus, the question is not only why the present size of the farmer-group is so small, but how it can be increased. The former aspect will be discussed in this section, while the latter aspect will be tackled in section 3.

2.1 Historical Factors

In the chapter on agriculture the Report of the Theron Commission almost starts out by stating that historically as far as Whites and Coloureds are concerned, the former have been the owners/employers/entrepreneurs, while the latter have ever since the times of early European settlement been employees, usually employed on a family basis. One can trace this pattern back to the early contact between European settlers and the original inhabitants of the Western Cape, the Hottentots, who were gradually pushed inland to make way for land use by the settlers. The slave immigrants were also barred from landownership. Only the few missionary stations allowed for independent farming of some scale, forming the basis for most of the present small rural "reserves". On these mission stations communal land ownership rather than individual freehold tenure was the general pattern. Similarly, in the larger "tribal" areas of the Northern Cape, where some of the early groups of the "Coloured" population group had settled initially, communal land ownership was the rule as was found elsewhere amongst Blacks in South Africa.

At the time when slavery was formerly abolished in 1836 most of the agricultural land in areas formerly inhabited by the slaves, was already in the possession of Whites or was under tense dispute between Black Africans and the White Settlers. What is more, liberated slaves

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possessing skills and some capital applied this to the trades more familiar to them rather than to agriculture, while those traditionally fulfilling unskilled farm labour tasks had neither the capital nor the expertise and drive to embark upon owner-farming.

In addition to the abovementioned factors it should be borne in mind that ever since European settlement at the Cape land ownership and independent farming played the central role in the White settler economy. A pattern of land ownership which was initially determined by superior knowledge and technical expertise was at a latter stage protected and expanded as a way of safeguarding a superior living standard. It is interesting, in this regard that while Coloured servants and workers accompanied the Voortrekkers in large numbers (in some cases numerically in similar strength) very little land was obtained by them in the northern territories.

The point to be made here is that the "historical pattern" according to which Coloured people were employees rather than employers in agriculture cannot be regarded as altogether "natural" and certainly not as acceptable pet &c to the present day Coloured community. In particular we now find a pattern whereby only 1.7 mill. hectare of agricultural land is set aside for this group, compared to about 90 mill. hectare of agricultural land owned by Whites. What is more, the 1.7 mill. hectare largely consist of small patches of land situated in the more fertile areas and located closer to the urban centres (e.g. Pniel, Mamre, Saron, Genadendal), while 83.5 per cent of the total area (including Lieliefontein, Mier, Richtersveld and Steinkopf) are relatively infertile areas located quite out of reach of all mere dynamic developments.

Put differently, if it is said that only about 11 mill. hectare of the White-owned agricultural land can be utilised effectively, the equivalent area for the Coloured community is probably only about 250 000 hectare, i.e. less than one fortieth.

2.2 The Rural Areas

All the 23 Coloured rural areas together accommodate only about 60 000 people, or about 2.5 per cent of the Coloured population. (For a
complete list see Table 4, Annexure B). None of them has a population in excess of about 6 000, while some of the areas are not suitable for agriculture at all, and, in fact, obtain their major income from other activities (mining, fishing etc.).

For the development of a dynamic class of independent farmers the Coloured rural areas have always been a hindrance rather than a stimulus. Even the areas suitable for more intensive agriculture maintained a system of communal land ownership which until the present day inhibits the efforts of individual farmers. In addition to this crucial impediment, the isolation of most of these areas from the more modern farming communities, the relatively strict control by local and church authorities and the prevailing poverty are further inhibiting factors.

At present, modernisation of the agricultural system is further hampered by the relative overpopulation of the areas. This stands in the way of land consolidation and re-allocation on a basis of freehold tenure. In some cases change-over to private ownership is also dependent on the completion of overall town planning and adjustments in the pattern of land use all of which is costly and riddled with delays.

In principle, some of the rural areas have agricultural land of sufficient quality, to attract Coloured agriculture entrepreneurs, yet the principle of exclusive preference to local residents and their relatives largely inhibit this.

Looking at the rural areas in a wider perspective and bearing in mind these obstacles it can hardly be expected that these areas would ever be a mainspring for agricultural leadership. At their best these areas can expect to develop faster once their approach towards outsiders has changed and more dynamic farmers are allowed to settle there.

2.3 Agriculture in "Controlled" Areas

In terms of the Group Areas Act (Act 36 of 1966) all land in the Republic - except the group areas themselves, rural Coloured areas,
mission stations and/or settlements, land which belonged to Coloured farmers before 1950, and the Bantu Homelands - has been a so-called "controlled area" since the coming into operation of the 1950 Group Areas Act, and unless Coloured people have a permit, they may not acquire any farms from Whites in the "controlled areas" by purchase or lease or subletting (RP 38/1976, Recommendations, par. 66, Engl. Translation). This restriction has to be read in conjunction with par. 26 (1) of the same Act according to which Coloured persons are not entitled to fill supervisory positions in White group areas, except by permit.

Rigorously interpreted the above two clauses effectively prevent Coloured persons outside the rural areas to become farm managers or independent farmers. Given the great sensitivity with respect to land ownership in South Africa it can be expected that such clauses are seldom transgressed and thus constitute an effective method to prevent the formation of a virile class of Coloured farmers, quite irrespective of other factors like training, capital and know-how. As we know from a number of areas where land ownership by Coloureds is provided for, even in such cases numerous obstacles are possible in the way of unhampered ownership (cf. CRC Debates).

2.4 Limited Upward Mobility of Labour

Closer examination of the BMR survey results as well as other data on Coloured employment in agriculture suggest that most of the Coloured labour on the farms is of such a low level of education and is limited to such unskilled tasks that even the potential for meaningful upward mobility is lacking. In a document prepared by the Administration for Coloured Affairs (1975) the situation was put quite bluntly:

"Die gelaenthede vor vordering is minimal, en waar dit wel bestaan, bereik die Kleurlingswerker gou sy plafon. En hoewel pleaarbeid, benewens die kontantlone, heelwat byvoordele mag inhou, word hierdie tipe arbeid deur die deursnee Kleurlings beskou as die werk van die onopgelaide; van die man wat nie in staat is om vir hom 'n beter heenkome te vind nie en daarom tevrede moet wees met sy voortgesette onderhorige posisie op die plaa. Die plaaswerker kan,
onder anders, nooit 'n huiseiener of groonbasitter op die plaas word nie al werk hy ook sy lewe lank op dieselfde plaas."

The above statement, put in the form of a comment to a motion of the Boland Agricultural Union, was rejected outright by the latter Union on the basis (i.a.) that there are already Coloured persons employed on farms as managers and foremen, while the fact that not more persons are employed in such positions should only be seen as a result of insufficient training.

The Boland Union may be correct, as will be discussed below, but the present pattern of remuneration of farm workers as revealed in the BMR survey (annual average cash wages ranging between R 240 and R 485 in the four regions surveyed), together with other disincentives of the working and living environment certainly dampen any ambitions for further upward mobility. An additional factor, emphasised by the Administration, is the general absence of clearly outlined wage scales tied to specific types of training and job descriptions, similar to other technical job patterns. So far the courses offered by Kromme Rhee offer only a first few steps in the direction of more advanced training and can hardly be regarded as sufficient for such upward mobility.

2.5 Emigration and the Negative Appeal of Agriculture

In the Coloured community agriculture is almost always identified with low incomes, long working hours, absence of training, an unappealing social and recreational environment and declining employment opportunities (with Black labour sometimes substituting Coloured labour). It is only logical that youngsters grown up in a farming environment have, whenever they showed some drive and ambition, gone away to more centrally located High Schools and have planned for the inevitable emigration from their home areas. As a result only the less dynamic youngsters have stayed behind, thus further dampening the image of farming in the eyes of the next "generations". One can almost say that with very few exceptions there are virtually no outstandingly successful and
sufficiently well-known Coloured farmers which could act as a frame of reference for these youngsters.

Unfortunately, a number of factors interact in forming such a negative image, which is to some extent unjustified. For example, under normal conditions the emigration of some should ease the chances for those remaining.

More recently the relative appeal of the rural sector is improving dramatically, mainly as a result of the lack of housing in urban areas and because of improved transport links between urban and rural areas. It also relates to the steps undertaken by some farmers to improve the relative wage level and the general employment conditions of their Coloured farm workers.

2.6 The Managerial Function

One of the central theses of this paper is that official figures on independent Coloured farmers or farm managers probably grossly understate the extent to which Coloured farm workers already perform such managerial functions. Official statistics largely focus on ownership of the enterprise which, as indicated above, has been very effectively curtailed through the past centuries. In the light of legislation and, possibly, the fear of government action, it is unlikely that individual (White) farmers who do allow Coloured farm workers to fulfill supervisory or managerial functions, will state so openly. At least it will hardly be reflected in the official statistics.

Only a micro-study, concentrating on in-depth analysis of the work and supervisory pattern on a sample of farming-enterprises of different types of agriculture can shed sufficient light on this question. Since occupational categories are not well established in agriculture, in particular as far as non-white employees are concerned, such an analysis would be all but simple, quite besides the wall of distrust that any researcher might expect. What is required, after all, is a detailed analysis of job performance of farm workers with particular focus on
all those who are not merely labourers. The reason is that supervisory, managerial and marketing functions may be disguised and fragmented to a very large extent, with the result that probably even those that fulfill some of these functions are themselves not aware of it. In addition, the owner(-manager) may also not be aware (or be willing to admit) that some of his employees fulfill these functions. The latter may be most pronounced where average wages of even the more stable farm workers are very low.

Such an analysis would have to give due recognition to the diversity of farming enterprises, i.e. differences with respect to size, type(s) of products, capital intensity, size of the White staff, degree of absenteeism of (white) owner(-manager)s, geographical location relative pay structure, and the particular management style. In the basis of these variable a number of hypotheses can be formulated, of which the following are just examples:

a) At the small farming units located near the metropolitan centres, where the owners occupy other paid jobs, the bulk of the managerial task may be transferred to de facto (Coloured) "foremen"

b) In the case of very large, capital intensive farming enterprises specific supervisory functions (with circumscribed content) are delegated to (Coloured) farm employees, though these will probably not include the more complex managerial and marketing functions.

c) There is a gradual process of "job enrichment" going on in most of the farms, though the progress is hampered by the out-migration, as a result of which workers with little potential for upward mobility remain on the farms.

Informal discussion with farmers has resulted in two apparently contradictory conclusions:

a) Far more than is generally realised and admitted Coloured farm employees are in fact fulfilling the bulk of the supervisory,
managerial and marketing function, even though this is not reflected in recognised status, pay and formal delegation of authority. The latter may then be a factor inhibiting an even faster advance in this direction.

b) Due to the extremely low level of education and training, and the emigration from rural areas, very few, if any, Coloured farm employees with a real potential for independent management/entrepreneurship exist on the farms.

These two conclusions can to a large extent be reconciled if we admit that de facto fulfilment of certain functions does not mean that the incumbent is either qualified for it nor that he does it effectively. It is precisely this shortcoming expressed in (b) which affects performance in the agricultural sector and is cause for concern.

In the light of the above the following developments seem to be important for further progress:

a) The principle of Coloured (Black) person holding supervisory/managerial and marketing functions in farming enterprises has to be accepted, including the corollary that such person might then also be in positions of seniority over Whites.

b) Job content analysis and job description has to be pushed in agriculture so that persons able to do, or in fact doing managerial work, will do so formally.

c) Payment structures have to be adapted to the job content.

d) Authority has to be delegated to those holding de facto (and de jure) managerial posts.

e) Training has to be made available both in-service and more formally, to those holding the relevant positions or able to hold such positions.
In addition to these pre-requisites for more rapid progress two other aspects seem to be essential for a real break-through, viz.:

f) The farming sector should recruit Coloured (Black) potential managers from outside the area/sector to fill key posts inside farming enterprises, in as far as present employees reveal no potential. The argument is that upward mobility of Coloured persons in all segments of the farming sector should not be hampered by the fact that at one particular time and in a particular enterprise the existing staff reveals no potential for advancement. If there is out-migration, there should also be in-migration, with the very same initiating factors, i.e. opportunities and remuneration.

g) A considerable number of potentially very active agricultural entrepreneurs can be found amongst the Coloured (Black) urbanised middle class. They may be interested, may possess managerial expertise and entrepreneurial drive and may even have some capital (or be able to mobilise it), but cannot find land of optimum quality (i.e. taking into account group areas restrictions, location of Coloured rural areas, type of farming suitable in such areas etc.). It should be expected that many of these potential entrepreneurs would not want to leave the urban centres entirely, and might even prefer to operate as part-time owner-managers, which would exclude settlement in the far-away rural areas.

2.7 Investment in Agriculture

It may not be evident immediately but the availability of managerial and entrepreneurial abilities should be seen as closely interrelated with the availability of open-ended investment opportunities. More recent trends of capital formation amongst the Coloured population, reveal quite clearly the availability a relatively large amounts of private capital, looking for good investment opportunities. The attractiveness of specific opportunities increases if the expected return is very high (as e.g. in the liquor retail of past years) or if other advantages are linked to the investment, as e.g. property
ownership. In the latter case opportunities with even a relatively modest monetary rate of return will probably attract much interest and be able to mobilise funds.

In as far as many of such investors would take a further interest in the enterprises the investment opportunities might be forerunners of broader entrepreneurial engagement.

The point to be emphasised here is quite obvious: as long as investment in the agricultural sector (including full land ownership) was practically impossible for Coloured investors, one major catalyst in the creation of Coloured farm management was precluded from functioning. This has had various other consequences, some of which have further retarded any such possible development: e.g. dynamic young persons do not see agriculture as an area with any potential; school leavers with even an interest in such a career turn to other fields; white farmers are reinforced in their belief that "Coloured" persons cannot possibly become efficient and enterprising farmers etc.

It might be argued here that at a stage when the number of white independent farmers is declining and has to decline even further to effect the necessary rationalisation of the agricultural sector, it would be futile to encourage Coloured investors to enter the agriculture field, thus possibly increasing the number of Coloured farmers. It seems almost obvious that this would either directly endanger white farmers or would run counter to the process of rationalisation.

Such reasoning seems faulty on various counts. In the first place one should admit that if Coloured people in this country do not move towards a separate economy obstacles in the way of full economic participation should be removed wherever they exist and whatever their nature may be. Secondly, investment in agriculture does not mean starting a new enterprise; it means financial involvement for the sake of a rate of return. This may be done on a basis of partnership or joint share holding with others, or it may be as a result of other owners, moving out of the field,
notwithstanding the existence of a real potential. The process of gradual decrease of farming units and the rationalisation of agriculture are not irreconcilable with individual farmers/investors entering the field - and in those cases Coloured persons should have the same opportunities as whites. In the third place the significance of Coloured agricultural entrepreneurship does not primarily lie in the total number, but in the existence of clear evidence as to opportunities and their realisation. They may have a major impact in various directions: upon White farmers, Coloured investors, Coloured farm workers and school leavers, Government officials and the public as a whole.

2.8 Training in Agriculture

The overall picture emerging from the Report of the Theron Commission as well as from other evidence about the availability and use of training in agriculture for Coloured persons is quite bleak, and can be summarised as followed:

a) At the school level no education is given in agriculture-related subjects, although this could be done if requested by the communities and if trained teachers would be available.

b) There is no movement like "Landsdiens" which might instill some enthusiasm about agriculture into school children.

c) Kromme Rhee, the training station near Stellenbosch so far only offers short-term courses with very limited scope as far as supervisory and managerial functions are concerned.

d) None of the agricultural colleges or universities play any role in training Coloured persons for more advanced positions in agriculture. (The Universities Pietermaritzburg and Rhodes, which are two more or less "open" universities which have faculties of agriculture, are inconveniently located and not properly specialised for the advanced training for the potential needs of agriculture in the areas where Coloured people are predominantly resident.)
e) In-service training of Coloured farm workers seems to be minimal if not absent and there is no evidence of any short-term training programmes arranged by groups of farmers (outside the scope of Kromme Rhee).

On the whole the present situation resembles a typical vicious circle where low productivity and wages are factors determining a lack of interest in training programmes on the basis that it would not be worthwhile, while the absence of such efforts and the lack of any appeal of agriculture results in a perpetuation of low productivity.

2.9 Conclusion

In this section a range of impediments in the way of Coloured advancement towards managerial and entrepreneurial participation in agriculture have been reviewed very briefly. Their inter-action results in a virtually complete block of effective and rapid advancement. What is more, it results in the widely held belief that Coloured people cannot function on such a level, or, as expressed in the Report of the Theron Commission, that there is some historically determined division of functions according to which Whites are the employers and Coloureds (Blacks) the employees.

It is suggested here that not only is the absence of a managerial and entrepreneurial class in agriculture amongst Coloured people unnatural and resented by the latter, but its absence is probably an important factor contributing to the low productivity of Coloured labour in agriculture. This is because no real scope for advancement is evident for the more dynamic and achieving youngsters in this field. If agriculture is to become more than a reservoir for residual, un(der)-employed and un(der)skilled Coloured (Black) labour this image has to change. Naturally, this in itself is not sufficient (better pay, improved employment conditions and training, being some of the other requisites), but it is an important contributing factor.

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3. SCOPE FOR CHANGE

In the previous section the present situation has been outlined and problems have been articulated. The question now is to what extent the situation is changing and how such change can be accelerated.

In the Report and Recommendations of the Theron Commission the emphasis falls on the improvement in the conditions of employment of farm workers. This is understandable since the BMR survey focused on this category and since they constitute the vast majority of the Coloured persons active in agriculture. As far as the Coloured rural areas were concerned the Report does not advance a strategy for a progressively increasing involvement of Coloured people in all levels of agriculture. The proposals with respect to training and land ownership are not advanced as key elements of such a progressive strategy but almost appear as concessions with only limited impact.

The Report in its entirely could, however, be seen as a first step in the direction of a strategy of dynamic development, if the next steps are perceived and implemented. Within the limits of this paper it is only possible to make some suggestions as to such a broader based strategy on the assumption that all the elements are in principle feasible within the wider perspective of the Commission’s Report.

3.1 Labour Cost and Productivity

The emphasis on better cash wages and improved overall conditions of employment of Coloured farm workers will inevitably increase the labour cost component unless compensated by higher labour productivity. The mining sector as well as mere general labour theory suggest that this may, in fact, lead to a greater willingness to undertake on-the-job and more formal (outside) training. This may trigger-off a number of important adjustments, including better job description, productivity-pay and channels for upward mobility. It may also accentuate the need and scope for managerial tasks, some of which might be filled by Coloured staff.
3.2 Land Ownership and Investment Opportunities

According to majority recommendation No 66 of the Commission Coloured persons are to be permitted to purchase or hire agricultural land without permits in any part of the Republic for farming purposes.

This recommendation, if accepted as such and implemented (after the necessary legislative amendments) could be the cornerstone of a new, dynamic strategy of Coloured advancement in agriculture. It does, in fact, pave the way for the adjustments found necessary in sections 2.6 and 2.7. At this stage there is, however, some doubt as to the impact of the particular recommendation:

a) The minority recommendation, that additional land be made available adjoining Coloured rural areas (only), indicates the very limited perspective of the minority group (which was the white majority group). They certainly do not hold the view that Coloured agriculturalists should be encouraged to progress wherever they find sufficient potential.

b) Even the majority group was somewhat inconsistent in framing the recommendation, by limiting it to the acquisition of land "for farming purposes" only. Interest in the acquisition of agricultural land as a longer run investment is often dependent on the expectation of longer run appreciation in the value of the land, which may again depend on the possibility of eventual resale for residential/industrial purposes. Thus, in its present form the recommendation gives the impression of a compromise, which gives little hope for immediate and dynamic implementation.

c) One sphere where the implementation of private landownership by Coloured farmers could have been effected long ago is that of the rural areas, which hitherto have communal ownership. The need to change such pattern is all too obvious for decades already, yet various local vested interests and administrative considerations have so far prevented the inevitable change in the ownership pattern.
Thus, e.g. it is sometimes argued that the local boards need the income out of rental, and that the land has not yet been properly surveyed. The crux is that if we really want the dynamic development of Coloured agriculture such steps would have to be taken without delay and notwithstanding certain local opposition.

Again it should be clear that the systematic implementation of such new ownership pattern would fundamentally change the structure of the rural areas: from the perpetuation of a "closed shop" for area inhabitants and their families it would change towards a more conventional area of private agricultural (and semi-urban) development where land could be resold to any outsiders. Obviously this would lead to some resentment, but it is in any case impossible to reconcile such two conflicting aims - progress and the perpetuation of a closed system.

3.3 Upward Mobility

In sections 2.3 and 2.4 reference was made to certain restrictions on the upward mobility of Coloured farm workers. This relates to the Group Areas Act as well as the general principle of Coloured persons not being in supervisory positions above Whites. The Report of the Theron Commission has discussed these matters in some detail in the section on Labour, and in Recommendation 38 proposed that all forms of statutory and conventional work reservation be abolished with respect to Coloured persons. The recommendation did not specifically refer to par. 26 (1) of the Group Areas Act, but it is hoped that all such impediments are included and that it also applies to agriculture. Assuming that this proposal is accepted, the real task is to ensure its implementation in all spheres of agriculture and at all levels. In the short-run it may at its best result in greater frankness in admitting de facto situations, while the medium-run effects are more dependent on training and performance.

3.4 Training

Proposals contained in the Report of the Commission can be expanded to suggest the following steps as part of a broad strategy of advancement on all levels of agricultural activity:
a) All more advanced agricultural training facilities should be opened for Coloured persons, i.e. all the universities with agricultural faculties (in particular Stellenbosch), on the undergraduate as well as graduate level.

b) Agricultural Colleges offering training beyond the matric level should also be opened for Coloured students. If their intake is limited, a quota system should ensure that at least some Coloured students (meeting the minimum entrance qualifications) are admitted.

c) Two to three specialised agricultural high schools should be started, located in areas which have real potential in agriculture (rather than in some isolated and unattractive rural reserves). Kromme Rhee might become one of these schools, though it should not be the only place.

Teaching staff at such centres should be multi-racial, as is the case at Colleges and universities. Thus, the lack of Coloured teachers with a training in agriculture should be no impediment to the development of such schools. In fact, in as far as agricultural subjects should be introduced at ordinary high schools, and the lack of Coloured teachers constitutes a bottleneck, such special schools might pave the way for the training of such teachers in as far as graduates from such special schools would be admitted to Colleges or University for more advanced training.

d) Existing University faculties of agriculture and advanced colleges for agriculture (e.g. Stellenbosch and Elsenburg) should in conjunction with Kromme Rhee (and, if necessary, UWC) initiate a wider range of part-time training courses for farm workers, supervisors and other job categories. The crucial point is that neither Kromme Rhee nor UWC can be expected to first develop the specialist staff and other facilities for such more diversified training. Besides being too costly there is as yet no guarantee that large
numbers of trainees could be recruited at an early stage. Thus, flexibility is of the greatest importance. Furthermore, it is quite possible that within a few years present barriers to the unrestricted admission of Coloured students to the "white" centres may largely disappear so that duplication of costly facilities should be prevented.

e) Any courses developed jointly by these organisations should be in close co-operation with the agricultural unions in as far as these bodies may at present be more enlightened in their attitude towards the advancement of Coloured farm workers than the majority of individual farmers.

f) In the light of the wide scattering of farm workers it seems necessary to initiate a scheme whereby more promising farm workers can be subsidised in their transport to and accommodation at the training venues. This is important since farmers may be reluctant to advance such funds if there is some probability that such workers might change jobs afterwards.

3.5 Organised Agriculture

In as far as the creation and strengthening of a group of (Coloured) farming enterprises is at the root of the strategy advanced in this paper it is only natural to also focus on the need for some representative body through which such entrepreneurs can further their interests. The experience with organised commerce and industry may provide some lessons for such a movement:

a) Exclusive "Coloured" bodies have little chance for dynamic and effective functioning, since they have little to offer their own members and are prone to be hampered by sectional conflicts.

b) The real need for such a body lies in its potential to help individual farmers in overcoming bureaucratic and other obstacles. Only if a body is known to be able to achieve this, does it become attractive for members (of any race).
c) According to a majority recommendation of the Commission, professional and trade associations should be free to enlist Coloured members (Recommendations 9 and 19). The same should apply to co-operatives (Rec. 65), which can be regarded as powerful interest groups in the sphere of agriculture.

d) In the long-run the "white" organisations (changed into "open" bodies) are most certainly the best instruments for the advancement of Coloured interests within an "open" agriculture. In the interim there may, however, still be major obstacles in obtaining membership of such bodies. Thus, as an interim solution, mainly to achieve such membership and strengthen the bargaining position, it may be sensible for those Coloured persons interested in investment and management in agriculture to initiate some Association for the advancement in agriculture. Membership should not be limited to actual farmers but should place special emphasis on those interested in investment in agriculture. The reason is that amongst these there may be some dynamic personalities, which could play a crucial role in advancing such a body. As a further step it may be opportune to allow white (associate) membership, as is done in (e.g.) the case of the National African Chamber of Commerce.

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4. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This paper should be seen as an invitation to a debate rather than an answer to pressing problems. To many persons concerned with the plight of underpaid and untrained farm workers — many of them threatened with underemployment and discouraged by the not so "bright" lights along the urban horizons — the theme of this paper may appear to be slightly irrelevant, besides having the undertone of strong capitalistic bias. None of this is the expressed intention of the writer who is only too much aware of the extent to which poverty still rules amongst Coloured farm labourers.

While most of the emphasis at the SALDRU conference will quite obviously fall upon the worker group it seems only natural to supplement the other papers by focusing on this other dimension. Besides, it is an area in which this writer has a special interest, and it appears that Coloured farm entrepreneurship constitutes a particularly complex and interesting variation of the general theme.

There is a further dimension to this topic. While the focus has been on "Coloured" agriculture, the message for Black participation in agriculture is only too obvious, although details have to be worked out. It is the firm belief of this writer that upward mobility of Black farm workers and investment opportunities in the agricultural sector (inside and outside the homelands) also constitute important elements of a strategy of more dynamic (Black) agricultural development.

Cape Town,
September 5, 1976
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THERON COMMISSION CONCERNING THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLOURED AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

1. Issues specifically related to Farm Workers
1.1 Encourage the expansion of (a) pension scheme(s) for farm workers (no 54).
1.2 Provision of sufficient (public and private) funds for Coloured housing on farms, including the provision of basic facilities such as water, electricity, bathrooms and toilet facilities (no 55).
1.3 Institution and enforcement of proper building standards with respect to houses for farm workers (no 56).
1.4 Institution of a standing committee in conjunction with the Cape Agricultural Union and/or the S.A. Agricultural Union, to review on a regular basis conditions of service of farm workers (no 57).
1.5 Discourage the provision of liquor, at least before and during working hours (no 58).
1.6 Encourage farmers to allow workers of old age or in need of special care to stay on at the farms and to assist them in their housing needs (no 59).
1.7 Continue with and speed up the abolition of the system of prison labour on farms (no 70).

2. Issues related to Coloured Rural Areas
2.1 In the light of the problems with respect to land, communal ownership, township lay-out, public services and facilities of the respective rural areas it was recommended that:

"a) the bodies concerned proceed with the planning of townships in the rural Coloured areas, the surveying of erven, and the issuing of deeds of grant for such erven to registered occupiers; b) where possible, ownership of surveyed economic units for agricultural and irrigation lots be granted to registered occupiers by issuing deeds of grant or deeds of transfer; c) the outer commonage, where size and viability warrant this, be divided into economic farming units in accordance with the formula
already laid down by the body concerned or such other formula as may be decided upon, and that such economic farming units be leased and/or sold to persons who in the opinion of the boards of management, if necessary assisted by experts in the field concerned, are capable of making a living out of farming on such units;

d) if any reform in the system of joint ownership and use of land as recommended in (a), (b) and (c) results for some of the occupiers in a loss or curtailment of rights, the persons concerned be compensated for such loss;

e) simultaneously with the reform of the land-use system by switching to private ownership and/or division into and leasing of economic farming units, a further addition of agricultural land to the rural Coloured areas be considered on condition that a success is made of farming on such added land." (no 60)

2.2 To overcome the extremely limited employment base of the rural areas steps were to be undertaken to create further employment opportunities by establishing industries nearby with decentralisation advantages. (no 61)

2.3 To assist farmers in these areas technically to the same extent as other farmers, the agricultural extension services in all rural Coloured areas were to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agricultural Technical Services (no 62).

2.4 In the rural areas which have diamond mining activities the net income from such activities were to be made available for
a) developments inside those particular areas;
b) developments in other rural Coloured areas; and (the remainder)
c) to be placed at the disposal of the CDC for the promotion of the economic activities of the Coloured community (no 64).

3. Issues Related to Coloured Farmers

3.1 Coloured persons are to be permitted to purchase or hire agricultural land without permits in any part of the Republic for farming purposes
and the existing legislation is to be amended accordingly (no 66, majority Recommendation).

3.2 In areas where obstacles still exist in the way of full land tenure by Coloured communities the matters be investigated and the necessary statutory or legal steps be taken (or, in the case of land situated in Homelands, by exchange) to establish full tenure and inheritance rights (nos 68/69).

3.3 As far as training needs are concerned the present situation and needs were to be investigated further and it was recommended that:

"a) the training of farm workers, foremen, team leaders and superintendents at Kromme Rhee be continued;
b) an intensive campaign be launched to make farmers realize the urgent necessity of making fuller use of Kromme Rhee for the training of farm workers;
c) Kromme Rhee be expanded further to make provision for the training of agricultural extension workers and other agricultural scientists;
d) regular short courses for the ordinary needs of Coloured farmers be introduced at Kromme Rhee and/or appropriate measures be taken for utilising the existing training facilities of existing White colleges of agriculture for the training of Coloured farmers, agricultural extension workers and agricultural scientists." (no 67).

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ANNEXURE B

TABLE 1: Coloured Employment in Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male Total</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female Total</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>90 000</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>5 400</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>105 000</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>105 000</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>105 000</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratios express the percentage of the economically active labour force.

Source: Theron Commission Report, p. 85

TABLE 2: Educational Background of White Farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Western Cape (Region 1) %</th>
<th>Distanced Cape (Region 4) %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Std. 5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 6 - 7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 8 - 9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 10</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Sample of 294 Farmers.

Source: BMR, see Table 3
TABLE 3: Educational Background of Regular Farm Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Western Cape (Region 1) %</th>
<th>Distanced Cape (Region 4) %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub A + B</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 1 - 4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 5 - 8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. 7 - 8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above 23 areas there are another 150 small patches of land scattered all over the Cape Province and along the Natal coast where small numbers of Coloured people stay on old mission stations or on land owned by private persons or companies. With a few exceptions, viz. about 150 farmers in the other 3 provinces and about 215 farmers in various parts of the Cape Province, these areas are insignificant for agriculture as a whole.