**TNA FO 2/491/30**

**Casement to Lansdowne**

**5 April 1901**

Boma

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My Lord,

In connection with statements that have been made from time to time to the effect that many Boers would probably “trek” from British territory, on the conclusion of the present war in South Africa, it may be of interest to state that not long since I received a letter from Cape Colony making enquiry on behalf of the writer's friend, whose name was withheld, as to the possibility of acquiring land, and settling in the Congo Independent State.

My correspondent enquired the price per morgen of land in the Congo State, and sought particularly to be informed of the capabilities of the region around Nyangwe for supporting an agricultural settlement, to be presided over by the writer's friend, who was “a British subject” but was at the time unable himself to write.

I assured this enquirer that the Sovereign of the Congo State did not dispose of any land by sale, but only upon lease; and I added that it was my duty to point out to British subjects seeking my advice, the perils of an attempted settlement in so deadly and backward a country as the Congo State today is.

Reports have reached me of a possible Boer “trek” through German territory to the Boer colony already established on the Mossamedes tableland at Humpata in the south of Angola.

Personally I think little reliance is to be placed on any of these reports. I am of opinion that only a quite inappreciable number of Boers will, on the final establishment of British rule in the conquered territories of South Africa, seek to exchange their own country, even under altered rule, for a distant territory of which they know nothing, under a government far more foreign to their own ideas than any form of Imperial authority could be.

If I may be pardoned a digression from the limits my actual post assigns for my attention, I should like to remark that, from personal observation in South Africa, it seems to me that however much the late Government of the Transvaal and the independent Boers collectively disliked the British Government and the theory of an imperial supremacy over South Africa, there never existed, either with individuals or with the race, any deep hostility to the individual Englishman.

Antipathies no doubt there were, as much on one side as on the other, but these were outweighed by countervailing sympathies, and the Boer as a man, I would unhesitatingly aver preferred the Englishman as a man to any other foreigner he came in contact with. The German, the Frenchman, the Italian served his purposes as so many sticks wherewith to beat the life out of a weakly maintained Imperial supremacy. As implements they were useful; but their texture was always more foreign to the Boer mind than that rough fibre of his British neighbour. The Boer had learned, in amity and strife, to appreciate as akin to his own.

Even the Hollander I venture to think was less genially viewed at heart by the Boer than the Englishman. He was, no doubt, the most useful of those foreign instruments to the revenues of the gold mines % permitted to be employed against the Englishman's foreign government with its distasteful claim to paramountcy.

That claim once abandoned, and in its place the supremacy of the Dutch prior occupancy of South Africa admitted with, of course, its resulting administrative changes, the Englishman would have resumed his prior place in the Boer regard to the exclusion of later Continental temporary allies.

I have no doubt that while I may not be able to put my perception of this fact in the justest terms it is a fact - today, I hope, the supreme fact of the South African situation, and one that will, when a supremacy of theory has given place to an equality of fact, enable both Englishman and Boers to unite in a friendship older than their present enmity.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

Roger Casement

The Right Honourable

His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs etc etc Foreign Office