

John MacKenzie

Aug. 27. 1884



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
CAPE TOWN

C14/199

August 27 1884

My dear Mr Cherson

I sent home some documents last week which will explain the corner into which I have been driven personally, & the corner into which my opponents would like believe the Imperial Govt in South Africa.

Unable to reply to what was brought forward against them in the columns of the English press President

Kruger waits till he reaches
the Transvaal & he has as-
cended the Presidential Chair
& from that high & official
position declares ~~him~~
His Majesty's Representative
& High Commissioner in
this Country to be "a liar".

You are aware that
however cordial members
of H. M. Govt were to me
personally, the Commis-
sionership itself was "tenta-
tive" & my tenure of it such
as could be dropped at any
time. There is therefore nothing

standing in the way of dropping
me at once in deference to the
unreasonable demand of the
Transvaal & its sympathizers
here.

Speaking Confidentially
I found many of the elements
of a quarrel here as between
the Governor & his present
Ministers - "Strained relations"
is I believe the proper word.
I have been doing my best
in a small way to get the
ministers to co-operate at once.
Of course I am pocketing
all personal slight & insult
which they have gratuitously
thrown on me personally,
& seek only the public well-being.

I am not sure but that there may be some result - after all - which would be queer - the discarded Commissioner - helping with the very men who have tripped him up. In fact there is real work to be done in Cape Town from my point of view. I feel I could do something towards it; but I see no way at present open to me.

Mission Work is as dear to me as ever it was. But one gets interested in a subject like that which has recently occupied my attention; & if I went up to Kuruman or other Mission Station I should be as if were dead to the South African political world.



C 16/1972



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I don't trust Merriman a bit.

If some of the South African papers are not "in laud" in Bechuanaland their conduct lately has been very like it. One editor told me that Donovan had offered him two fowms "for his services". But it is not every recipient of such a gift who would be so communicative.

Public opinion could be reached & led here, no doubt; & it seems the thing to attempt, if one is not fighting the rougher battle in Bechuanaland. But how to get at this - from what position - & in what capacity - are questions which

as yet - I find no reply.

There is no doubt that my presence here has prevented a very great mess in Bechuanaland. I mean a greater disgrace than now clings to us.

"From all we hear Niekunk has the majority - Rhodes will visit Niekunk & get him to co-operate". When Bower was afterwards appointed at Rhodes request - it was the first intention that he sh^d go straight to Niekunk & with Niekunk attend an armed meeting called by Niekunk

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within the Protectorate. I
spoke & then wrote against
this course. I said Niekerk
has not the majority: & if he
had we are clearly bound
to support those who have
been true to us - the Cape
Colonists the Free State
people & the English who
are in Stellaland. Rhodes
should leave Niekerk alone
& go at once to Rooifront
& see whether his bodily pre-
sence can do anything
there. Representations or
negotiations have been
already tried by your Exce-
llency & have failed.
Bower should allvertyp

his own meeting now by
telegram & express: to
take place at Vnshung
& to take place before
Kieker's armed meeting.
The people will be naturally
disconcerted at my removal
& the change of men. Such
a meeting will go towards
giving confidence. Bowen
refused to call the meeting
but his Ex^{ty} agreed to in-
struct him to go Vnshung
first & consult with those
were there. A telegram has
just come in from him
dated from Vnshung in
which he declares that
the supporters of Mackenzie

C14/1996

are more numerous
than he  expected

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to find them! What-
Mr Bowen's expectations
were & on what based
I don't know. He
then goes on to say - that
their numbers will increase
his difficulty! You can
have no idea of how low
we have got in this affair.

"Maekunje - we must
just join the strongest
side up there - if it is
Diekirk - we must join
him! we are not going
to fight, & so have no choice."


"But please to notice
this. Kiekuk is not really
for us. He has been twice
tried & has failed. He is
for the Gausvagal. He was
in a minority. He himself
has no right to open his
mouth - having no longer
any land in Stettland.
You throw away the trust-
worthy people - go over
to the other side & hope they
will do your work for
you. They will give you
nothing. This talk had
its effect - & Bower was
instructed that the people
who had come cheerfully

would
meet
by the
Bower
people
would
Kiekuk
faith
said
they
would
say
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of B
fell
oath
to be

under Imperial govern-
ment must not be molested
by the other (Transvaal) side.
Bower says he asked these
people at Vryburg if they
would not come under the
Keek - the discredited openly
faithless man that he is. They
said no - to a man. W^d
they fight rather? Yes they
would fight. This Bower
says is his great difficulty.

Bower has disbanded
a detachment of police
the sons & younger brothers
of Boers in Stellaland young
fellows who had taken the
oath, & who were beginning
to be enthusiastic as to our

Service. Before coming
away I addressed them & said
it would be a good thing if
in the intervals of drill &
patrol duty, they learned
to read better & to write. Their
drill-sergeant-promised
to teach them - in fact he said
~~that~~ he had begun to do so. These
young fellows have been
disbanded - "of no use
without guns & horses". Of
course these latter could
not be procured in a day
but there had been no
unnecessary delay. This
has gone to my heart
badly - especially as His
Ex^{ty} has sanctioned their
disbandment. I believe
on the score of expense,

One or two were under ^(14/1/1970)
17, but the  were all
smart & it was said
could all ride & shoot.
While those who oppose
us are well armed & ap-
pointed we disbanded
our men. I had 30 of
Lower police at Vryburg
& their presence gave great
satisfaction to the inhabi-
tants. They have been
removed to the neighbour-
hood of Tzaming - in fact
those who have been faith-
ful to us are to-day com-
pletely at the mercy of
Mr Niekerk, except in so
far as they can defend themselves.

You will understand why I tell you these things. Sir Hercules is as friendly & kind as ever and declares he is more disappointed at what has happened than I am. But he has great difficulties with his present ministers. They are under Dutch influence: but the Dutch wire-pullers are outside the former's influence. It is a mimicry of Responsible Government: your present distresses would not have occurred under Scoble's premiership.

You have no idea how much

the word of England is dis-
trusted here. I could not
have believed it. Sprigg
is especially bitter. We
are in a hurry here at-
present - to know what
comes out of the efforts
of my successors Rhodes
& Bower.

Mr Hercules kindly
asked me to come to Gov's House
as by that means he has
more time at odd minutes
to go over on matters. I have
often wished I could have
written oftener to you:
but the thing will come
out pretty clearly when
the Blue-books are printed.

I could not have expected the brutal treatment which I have received personally at the hands of my fellow-countrymen. The Dutch know why they oppose me; why Englishmen do so except to "Conciliate" the Dutch - is a mystery.

I shall be glad to hear from you - & the Post Office people here are sure to know where I am.

You will understand that this letter is strictly Confidential. Kindest regards
Ever yours sincerely
John Mackenzie