

27 Nov. 1887
134/19
Imbumba Biliso Bomzi Ontsundu,

(NATIVE VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION),

King William's Town, Cape Colony.

28 Nov., 1887.

My dear Mr. Blesson,

I am in receipt of yours of the 27 ult., bearing upon the intelligence that Sir Henry Holland had declined to advise the disallowance of the Registration Act, and saying that you feared that this declaration puts an end to all chance of any good being done by our proposed visit to England. Our Committee has received a despatch which the Governor has received from the Secretary of State confirming this news. I give you today a copy of it. It is impossible for me to state just now what course we shall pursue in the present state of facts. We are still watching the course of the registration. The Law officers have said

into account in the calculation of the franchise qualification. You are doubtless aware that it is the tribal and communal holders of land who are not allowed to value their lands. Our contention is that the natives of this country do not answer to this description therefore they are among those who must take their lands to letters with their houses. If the Supreme Court rejects this contention we must go on with our agitation till the gross anomaly of depriving a whole race of the franchise by virtue of their land tenure, and ~~binding~~ ^{casting} them ^{their lands} bound hand foot into the fiery furnace of Boer politics which do not recognize native rights to land - we must agitate, say, till this is changed. I may tell you frankly that I never was sanguine that our interview

with the Sec. of State would by itself
secure the disallowance of the Act.
Our Deputation was coming to England
to lay the case of the natives before
the English people and the House
of Commons, & thus ~~to~~ enlist
the sympathy of the people of
England in the struggle in which
we must ^{be} engaged till justice is done
to the native people. I think this re-
mains to be done. Sir H. Holland
has lowered the name of the Queen to
in the eyes of the natives of this
country by his ~~flagrant~~ vacillation
in this matter. In his reply to
Sir G. Campbell's question he promised
to hear us, ^{but} let the House of Commons
understand that no decision ~~will~~
be arrived at until our case
has been heard. He even invited
us to state our case, but in the
face of all this, on the bare
report of Sir Tho^s Spurgeon he
submits a garbled and one-sided
statement of the question at

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said that the new Act have not altered the Governor's Ordinance & that it is not at variance with the explanations and illustrations of the late Mr. Porter. We have thankfully accepted this decision, and all we wish to see is how it is to be put in practice. There we mean to bring on test cases in the Supreme Court to find out whether the "tribal and communal" tenure is applicable to the vast majority of our people whose chiefs have been disgraced & hauled as men policemen, & who have been robbed of whatever tribal existence they possessed. These people, moreover, are subject to all the laws of the Cape Parliament. We take up the ground that they are not tribes; & the tribal tenure cannot refer to them. C'esto Communitate that is a myth as applied to our people. Such being the case they must have their lands taken into

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issue to the Crown lawyers
and decide without having heard
us. As I said in a former letter,
the decision is, in our opinion,
not unfavourable to us, for
it throws upon us the onus
of showing that we have been
really disfranchised although
the Act is allowed because it
does not alter the Constⁿ
Ordinance. The decision of the
Supreme Court is bound to
throw much light on this. We
are securing Mr Leonard, D.C.,
to argue the matter on our
side, & lawyers as eminent as
Mr. Innes & Mr. Solomon think
that we have a good case on
our side. If we gain in the Supreme
Court then there is an end to our
labours

