

**TOPIC : COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN RHODESIA**

**SUBTOPIC : RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT**

### **OBJECTIVES**

**BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC, LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:**

- ✓ Outline the reasons for the formation of the Responsible Government.
- ✓ Explain the policies of the Responsible Government.
- ✓ Assess the impact of the Responsible Government on indigenous people.

### **Introduction**

#### **What is a responsible government?**

- It is a government that is closer to getting full independence and in which the mother country or metropolitan power has little political control.



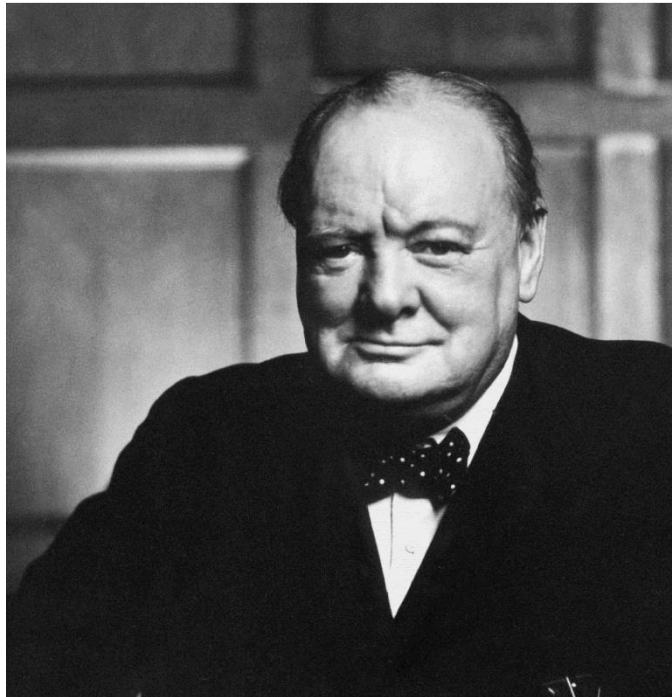
The British South African Company Flag

- The (BSAC) British South African Company was given the authority to rule or to be the administrator of Southern Rhodesia for 25 years which expired in 1914.

- The BSAC was given another 10 years to be the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia due to the First World War.
- Thus in 1923 when this tenure expired, the Europeans were given three options that is :
  - (i) The Europeans were to remain under the company rule.
  - (ii) To join the union of South Africa and become one of its province.
  - (iii) To be given a responsible government status.
- It must be noted that the settlers in southern Rhodesia were against the company rule and neither did they want to join the union of South Africa.
- The conflict between the BSAC and the Settlers was caused by the unequal representation within the legislative council.
- The Settlers demanded a greater say in government and started to question the Company's right to sell land.
- As a result of these disagreements a commission of inquiry was set up by the British Government in 1921 to find out the general opinion of the people in Southern Rhodesia.

### **The Buxton Commission of 1921**

- It was set up to inquire into the problems of the future government of the Company's territories North and South of the Zambezi.
- It recommended that Southern Rhodesia should have a Responsible government subject to approval through a referendum.



Winston Churchill

- Winston Churchill, the then secretary of the state for colonies insisted that the three alternatives for the governance of Southern Rhodesia be offered to the electorate.
- The referendum was held in October 1922.
- The electorate chose a responsible government after the outcome of the votes below.

Choice	Votes	%
Responsible government	8,774	59.43
Union with South Africa	5,989	40.57
Invalid/blank votes		—
Total	14,763	100
Registered voters/turnout	18,810	78.50

- In September 1923 power was formally transferred from the BSAC to the British Government which became a formal British colony.
- Southern Rhodesia won Responsible Government that is it became self-governing and Charles Coghlan became the first prime minister of Southern Rhodesia.



Charles Coghlan

## **Policies of the Responsible Government**

### **A. The 1923 Constitution**

- It provided for a governor representing the British Queen, a legislative assembly of 30 members all elected in parliament.
- The Southern Rhodesia Government was given control of internal affairs.
- Laws discriminating Africans were reserved for the approval of the British Government.
- External affairs were controlled by the British Government.
- The Company retained its commercial assets including 3.7 million acres of land.
- It also kept its mineral rights and its control of the railways.
- Colonial rule was meant to safeguard the European interests at the expense of Africans.

- The settler had three major aims:
  - To increase the power of the assembly and government.
  - To reduce the British Governor's power.
  - To pass racist laws aimed at increasing the wealth and power of the settlers.
- The aims of the responsible government were achieved because the Governor was surrounded by settlers and had little contact with Africans.

### B. The Carter commission of 1925

- It was appointed by Britain to hear the opinions of both the Africans and Europeans on land distribution.
- The Europeans wanted all the unassigned land because they believed that Africans will remain subsistence farmers hence no need for large scale commercial farms.
- The commission recommended a complete separation of races and the areas allocated to each race, the interests of that race were very important.
- As a result other races could not buy land that does not belong to them.
- However, they were allowed to live and work there only if they serve the interests of that people of that area.
- Land distribution system was meant to create poverty among Africans as they were not allowed access to profitable and productive land.

### Settler Agriculture

- European Agriculture was promoted at the expense of African Agriculture.
- Europeans used scientific farming methods, the government also sponsored much of the work to improve European agriculture.
- Experimental stations were set up in Mashonaland and Matabeleland in order to test for high yield crops.

- The government also established organisations such as the Maize marketing board which assisted farmers to sell their crops.
- European farmers received loans from the bank for inputs and dams were constructed to promote irrigation schemes.
- Africans were expected to supply labour on European farms.
- Labour was also imported from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.



European farm in Southern Rhodesia

### **African Agriculture**

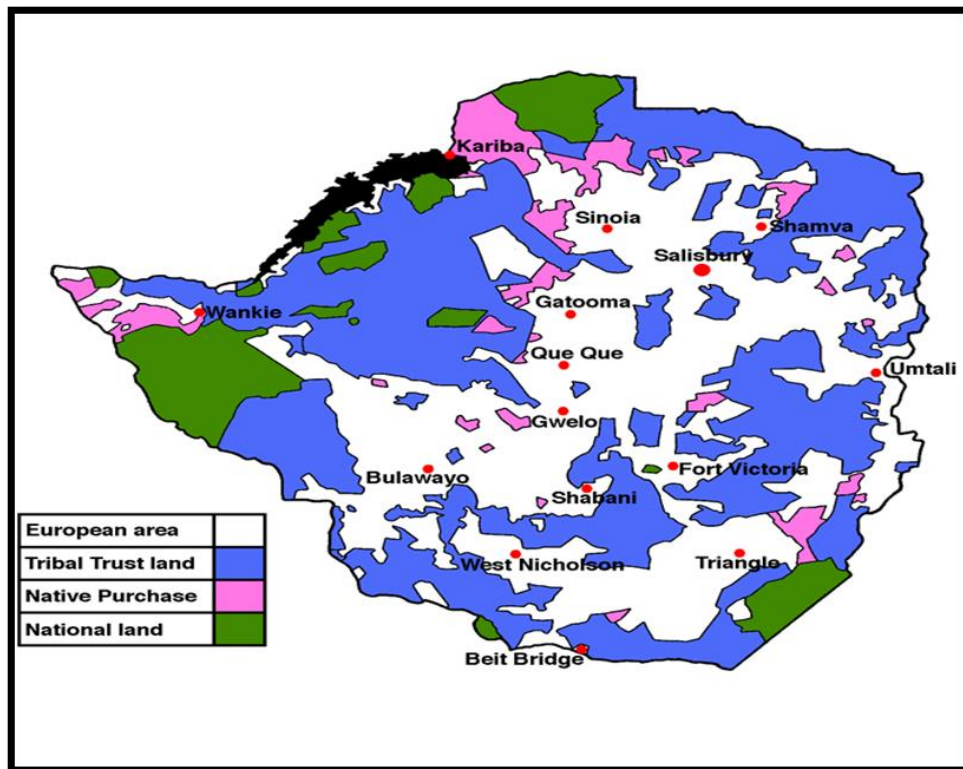
- Africans were settled in reserves which were characterised by overpopulation, overgrazing, poor soil fertility and soil erosion.
- Africans were not able to produce enough food to feed their families.



An African farmer

- The Responsible government carried out the de-stocking exercise where by each Africans were allowed only five herds of cattle and the rest will be killed or sold to whites.
- The destocking exercise denied Africans of their right to own wealth.
- The 2 shillings and 6 pence tax was implemented in 1931 on each slaughtered.
- There was also the beef levy of 1931 and Africans were slowly impoverished.
- By 1930 good agricultural and grazing land had been allocated to white settlers.

### **The land Apportionment Act 1930**



Map of Land Apportionment Act

- This law governed the distribution of land between blacks and whites.
- 50 000 families were moved off the so called European land in 1930.
- Under the terms of the land apportionment act out of 96 000 000 acres of land in the country 49 149 174 were given to whites and 21 127 040 were given to blacks.
- The land left was reserved for un-born babies of the white people.

CATEGORY	ACRES	% OF COUNTRY
European Areas	49,149, 174	51
Native Reserves	21,127,040	22
Unassigned Areas	17,793,300	18.5
Native Purchase Area	7, 464, 566	7.8
Forest Area	590,500	0.6
Undetermined Area	88,540	0.1



<b>Total</b>	96,213,120	100
--------------	------------	-----

- The land apportionment act became a symbol of white dominion aimed at reducing the areas of contact between the whites and the blacks.

#### Effects of the land Apportionment Act

- The land Apportionment Act led to serious shortages of land on the side of the Africans.
- There was competition for land between people and their livestock.
- The policy made people to be labourers and people migrated from rural areas to urban areas in search for employment.
- The act also reduced competition between Africans and Europeans.
- The land apportionment act fuelled the hatred between the two groups that existed in Rhodesia.
- The location of African land denied Africans access to markets.
- Africans became poorer after losing their productive land.
- The act also fuelled the introduction of draconian laws that made Africans labourers.
- The act divided the country into different farming areas.

#### **The Maize Control Act 1931**



## Maize

- The maize control act was designed to destroy African agriculture and to reduce competition between the two groups.
- The Rhodesian white farmers did not want African agriculture to prosper for it would lead to creation of a native state and competition with white farmers.
- African farmers maize was graded separately, given lower grade, lower price and sold last.
- As a result Africans were forced to grow crops they needed for their food.
- Agriculture was protected like any other business venture.
- It resulted in creation of many control boards e.g. tobacco control board, dairy control board, Tobacco marketing board and grain marketing board.
- Through these control boards European agriculture prospered this meant that African poverty directly contributed to the success of European Agriculture.

## **The Land Husbandry Act 1951**

- The land husbandry act was passed in 1951 after the Europeans discovered that the land apportionment act of 1930 could not suppress the desire of Africans to own land.
- Africans were blamed on wasting resources there the act was enacted so as to enforce good land management.
- To enforce land management Africans were forced to destock, construct contour ridges and dig storm drains.
- The act introduced new farming methods such crop rotation that maintained the fertility of the soil.
- Families were allocated with 8 acres of land that could not be subdivided among their children.

- Through the land husbandry act the power of chiefs to distribute the land was passed to district commissioners and Africans were forced to work in public projects such as constructing roads, dams and bridges.



Africans constructing the railway line

- Failure to adopt these conservative measures led to imprisonment or punishment.
- The act was opposed by the Africans which led to the creation of political parties such the African National Congress.
- The unpopularity of the Land Husbandry Act led to its abandonment in 1961 fuelling the creation of the land Tenure Act in 1969.

#### Why was the Land Husbandry Act unpopular?

- The act deprived Africans the right to own land.
- Chiefs lost their power to distribute the land.
- Cattle were regarded as a source of wealth in Africa destocking meant lessening of African wealth.
- The act also destroyed African agriculture.

## **Impacts of the Responsible Government on Africans**

- The Responsible Government implied that the settlers were now a step closer to total independence from Britain.
- This was an independence which would exclude African participation.
- The 1923 constitution gave Southern Rhodesian Government control over internal affairs.
- Africans were discriminated by the Rhodesian Government since it had all the powers over internal affairs.
- The Carter Commission promoted racialism in the sense that Africans and Whites were allocated land in separate areas.
- The land laws such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 discriminated Africans
- They denied Africans access to take control of areas with access to the means of production such as fertile lands, mines and so on.
- The idea was to make sure that Africans remain poor.
- The de-stocking exercises denied Africans of the right to own wealth.
- The exercise made sure that Africans will remain impoverished and hence seek jobs from whites thereby providing cheap labour.
- Africans were disadvantaged as their farm produce did not have a board to market them.
- The reserves were not fertile hence Africans could barely feed their families.
- They could not access loans from the Government to assist them on a business adventure.