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that his standard of living was thus  
raised considerably.

## Away from the Homeland

As the vast network of mines along the Witwatersrand reef burgeoned into a complex billion-dollar enterprise, the need to supply a steady flow of manpower was delegated to recruiting organizations. Today, through branch offices in the native areas and in the neighboring British and Portuguese colonies, these efficient bodies sign up workers under contracts covering periods ranging from six to 18 months in length. The Bantus who pass the preliminary medical examinations make the trek by railroad, river steamer and airplane to the great mining centers of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Dislodged from the primitive, rural life of the thatched hut for the first time, the young Bantu recruits — most of them between 17 and 25 years of age — march in contingents through the streets of such transshipment cities as Johannesburg, Lourenço Marques or Bulawayo, utterly awed by the glittering trappings of 20th century urban civilization. On their way back to the kraal many months later they march with more sure-footed step. They have gained weight, they joke and jostle one another, they boast of the new possessions slung over their shoulders — a bright blanket, a guitar, a pair of new shoes.

Converging from 55 different tribes and speaking 44 different languages, the South African Bantu mine force by the nature of its migratory character undergoes a 100 per cent labor turnover each year. With such a diverse medley of tribes — Barotse, Basuto, Bechuana, Shangaan, Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu, to name a few — it became necessary long ago to devise a common language so the people working in the mines could understand each other. The dialect that emerged was called Fanakalo (meaning "just like this"), a patois borrowing from English, Afrikaans and the tribal languages, with a preponderance of idioms pertinent to mining operations.

Instruction in Fanakalo is one phase of the pre-employment training of the Bantu workers. Utilizing replicas of underground conditions, the training centers also school the recruits in the use of tools, the wearing of protective clothing, accident prevention, first aid and hygiene. A battery of aptitude tests selects the 30 per cent to get the "mechanical" jobs (laying pipe or track, driving a winch or locomotive on the mine's bantam railway); the others are assigned to the heavy labor jobs.

During the training period a second medical examination is given, including chest X-rays. The X-rays are repeated every six months and at the end of the miner's contract period. Free medical

care is given to all Bantus working in the mines. Just prior to entering the mines a final medical "exam" assigns the Bantu to the task most suited to his physique. Respiratory diseases are responsible for the greatest loss of man-hours: pneumoconiosis, which comes from inhalation of mineral dust, and pulmonary tuberculosis, recognized as South Africa's most serious health problem. The second most common diseases among the miners are such childhood sicknesses as measles and chicken pox — unknown in the native reserves.

Every miner carries a work book recording vital information about him. Each time he leaves the mine at the end of a shift a voucher with his rate of base pay is removed from his book; it serves both as an accounting slip and as a check to verify that all have left the mine.

The ordinary Bantu workhand is the mainstay of the mine labor force. He gives a hand to the driller, shovels out the blasted ore, helps repair the railway rolling stock, assists in the machine shops, stands by at the water pumping stations, performs any of a dozen chores in the reduction plant. For an eight-hour shift he earns about 47 cents. An underground driller earns about \$2.50 a day, a "boss boy" in charge of a laborer crew about \$1. The average white mine overseer earns a salary 14 times larger than the "boss boy" and so maintains a standard of living approaching that of the middle class American worker. Though the Bantu earns little more than a Mexican peon or a Portuguese fisherman, he is provided with free working clothes and food and housing in a compound adjoining the mine.

## How It Is in the Compound

Life in the compound is a highly organized, stringent but cheerless existence for lonely men far from home. A typical compound sprawls over a huge area, accommodating from 4,000 to 10,000 men in long rows of barracks subdivided into hutchlike quarters, with an average of 16 men to a room. Like an army camp there is constant rotation of personnel (arrivals of raw striplings, departures of hard-boiled veterans). This workmen's community is laid out in a standard pattern, with administration office; massive kitchen and mess hall; post office; outdoor arena; combination latrines, shower rooms and laundries; row upon row of barracks.

Administration of the compound is directed by a manager and a group of assistants, all white men. Each Bantu tribe is represented by an *induna* who serves as its spokesman; he instructs newcomers in compound routine, listens to the problems of his tribesmen in his private quarters at one end of the barracks. Delegating authority through

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