SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

Constitution and Government.

The South African Republic, also known as the Transvaal, was originally formed by part of the Boers, who left the Cape Colony in 1835 for Natal, but quitted that colony on its annexation to the British Crown. In 1852 the independence of the Transvaal was recognised by the British Government, and the constitution of the State is based on the ‘Thirty-Three Articles,’ passed 23, 1849, and the ‘Grondwet,’ or Fundamental law of February 13, 1858.

On April 12, 1877, the Transvaal was annexed by the British Government, against which in December 1880 the Boers took up arms, and a treaty of peace was signed March 21, 1881. According to the convention ratified by the Volksraad, October 26, 1881, self-government was restored to the Transvaal so far as regards internal affairs, the control and management of external affairs being reserved to Her Majesty as suzerain. A British resident was appointed, with functions analogous to those of a Consul-General and Chargé d’Affaires. Another convention with the Government of Great Britain was signed in London February 27, 1881, ratified by the Volksraad, August 8, by which the State is to be known as the South African Republic, and the British suzerainty restricted to control of foreign relations. Instead of a Resident the British Government is represented by a Diplomatic Agent.

The Constitution has been frequently amended down to January 1897. The supreme legislative authority is vested in a Parliament of two Chambers, each of 27 members, chosen by the districts. Bills passed by the
second Chamber do not become law until accepted by the first. Members of both Chambers must be 30 years of age, possess fixed property, profess the Protestant religion, and never have been convicted of any criminal offence. The members of the first Chamber are elected from and by the first-class burghers, those of the second Chamber from and by the first and second-class burghers conjointly, each for 4 years. First-class burghers comprise all male whites resident in the Republic before May 29, 1876, or who took an active part in the war of independence in 1881, the Malaboch war in 1894, the Jameson Raid in 1895-6, the expedition to Swaziland in 1894, and all the other tribal wars of the Republic, and the children of such persons from the age of 16. Second class burghers comprise the naturalized male alien population and their children from the age of 16. Naturalization may be obtained after two years' residence, and registration on the books of the Fieldcornet, oath of allegiance, and payment of 2l. The Executive Council has also the right, in special instances, to invite persons to become naturalized on payment of 2l. Naturalized burghers may by special resolution of the first Chamber, become first-class burghers 12 years after naturalization. Sons of aliens, though born in the Republic, have no political rights, but, by registration at the age of 16, may, at the age of 18, become naturalized burghers, and may, by special resolution of the first Chamber, be made first-class burghers 10 years after they are eligible for the second Chamber, or at the age of 40. The President and Commandant-General are elected by the first-class burghers only; District-Commandants and Fieldcornets by the two classes of burghers conjointly. The Executive is vested in a President, elected for five years, assisted by a council consisting of four official members (the State Secretary, the Commandant-General, Sup. of Natives, and the Minute-keeper), and two non-official members. The State Secretary, Sup. of Natives, the Minute-keeper and Secretary, and the two non-official members, are elected by the first Volksraad.

State President.—S. J. Paulus Krüger, elected for the fourth time February, 1898.
Vice-President.—General P. J. Joubert, elected May 13, 1896.
Executive Council.—Official members: P. J. Joubert, Com.-Gen. (Vice-President); Dr. W. J. Leyds, State Sec., re-elected for the third time May 26, 1897; Com. P. A. Cronje, Sup. of Natives; J. H. M. Kock, Minute Keeper. Non-official: J. M. A. Wolmarans, S. W. Burger.

Area and Population.

The area of the Republic is 119,139 square miles, divided into 20 districts, and its white population, according to a very incomplete census of 1896, is 215,397, of whom 137,947 are men and 107,450 women; the native population in April, 1896, was estimated at 622,500. The boundaries of the State are defined in the convention of February 27, 1884—since altered by a supplementary convention, by which the former New Republic (Zululand) was annexed to the South African Republic as a new district, named Vrijheid, and by the terms of the Convention regarding Swaziland, ratified by the Volksraad, August 20, 1890, by which Swaziland comes under the administration of the Transvaal. The seat of government is Pretoria, with a white population of 10,000. The largest town is Johannesburg, the mining centre of Witwatersrand goldfields, with a population within a radius of 3 miles, according to census of July 15, 1896, of 102,078 (79,510 males and 22,563 females). The population consisted of 59,007 whites, 952 Malays, 4,897 coolies and Chinese, 42,533 Kaffirs, and 2,879 of mixed race. One third of the population of the Republic are engaged in agriculture.