

Report on matters of particular interest to S A Institute of Race Relations

The opening address at the Public Opening was given by Mr C J H Vorster, Secretary for Social Welfare and Pensions. This was followed by a Symposium on "Violence in Present-Day Society"; the speakers were Dr C D Roode (Sociologist), Dr A Lamont (Psychiatrist), and the National Chairman of the Association, Mr Justice J H Steyn (Judge).

Reference was made to the motiveless and often senseless use of violence, especially among our under-privileged people. This was often under the influence of drink or dagga, particularly among the Cape Coloured people. It had been estimated that 15% of dagga users go on to the use of hard drugs, and this is largely due to bad economic and living conditions. The Department of Social Welfare has been asked to consider a publicity drive on the danger of dagga and drugs. The suggestion has also been made that the mere possession of drugs should be made an offence, as is the case with dagga.

Over 200,000 each year are sentenced to less than 1 month's imprisonment.

As with other voluntary welfare organisations, the Government now requires separate committees for the work of Social Services for Indian, Coloured and African work. Most of the nine branches in the country either have established, or are about to establish, at least one non-European committee, and reports showed that these were working with various degrees of efficiency.

In Cape Town the Coloured committee, which has been established for more than a year, is still finding its feet. Each member is responsible for some special service - corresponding with long-term ~~vol~~ prisoners who have no relatives, visiting prisoners on discharge, finding work for ex-prisoners, etc. The African committee has been going for over two years. They have done much fund-raising, and have 60 subscribing members. They do prison visiting, and work as voluntary case-aids. They recently arranged a symposium on prostitution, being concerned about the large numbers of men either unmarried or living away from their wives and families. A retired African teacher has been appointed a Prisoner's Friend, to assist people appearing in court. He is employed by Social Services at a salary of R45 per month, and this has proved a very successful and useful appointment. Much of his work consists of contacting relatives and employers when a fine has been imposed as an alternative to a prison sentence, and in this way 720 people have been saved from going to prison in six months.

The need of professional services for testing the aptitude of Indian and Coloured applicants for employment has been brought to the notice of the Government. The Department of Labour has aptitude tests for Europeans, and will collaborate with the other Departments concerned in the preparation of tests for non-Europeans.

Representations have been made to the Government on maintenance grants for African families.

The attention of the various Departments has been drawn to the shortage of non-European Social Workers. Replies received from the Departments of Social Welfare, Coloured Affairs and Indian Affairs indicate their concern. So far no reply has been received from the Department of Bantu Affairs and Development.

A report on the adjustment of the salary scales for Social Workers of all races indicated a slight reduction in the disparity between ~~scales~~ scales for white and non-white workers.

The reports on the different racial committees indicated that, though in some ways this separation is to be regretted, yet it does mean that the people of each racial group are becoming more involved and showing more interest in helping prisoners and their ~~families~~ families, and indeed are becoming aware of some of their problems. It means also that it is possible to assist many more.

Attached are memoranda (a) from the Durban Branch on social assistance (poor relief) for Indians;  
(b) on the difficulties of discharged Bantu prisoners.

Also enclosed are cuttings from the Diamond Fields Advertiser.

Bloemfontein  
16.10.68.

*D. Bailey*

**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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