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"INFLUX CONTROL

AS SEEN BY AN ADMINISTRATOR OF NON-EUROPEAN AFFAIRS".

Paper delivered by

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"INFLUX CONTROL AS SEEN BY AN ADMINISTRATOR OF NON-EUROPEAN
AFFAIRS".

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I have been asked to speak to you on what is probably the most unpopular aspect of urban Native Administration - Influx Control. Unpopular from the point of view of the African because it interferes with his desire to move freely from town to town so that he may make a living in the environment which he judges to offer the most attractive opportunities; often unpopular with many an employer because it interferes with his desire to have an unlimited supply of labour available - and because it is unlimited it is cheap; unpopular with all shades of "progressive" opinion because it is in theory indefensible ethically and morally, and unpopular overseas where our critics point out that it is a violation of a citizen's right to enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement and domicile within the confines of his own country. Now in the face of all this I am to make out a case in defence of this system and to an audience that will be united in its condemnation - not a very enviable task!

Let me say at once that if the normal sort of economic and social conditions operated here as they did for example in the United Kingdom - before the influx of West Indians! - then I could attempt no defence, but my case will be that economic and social conditions are not normal in the day to day circumstances surrounding the employment of Native labour in the larger industrial and commercial centres of the Union.

Consider the position: The 9-million Bantu inhabitants of the Union are divided into 3-million living and working in European towns and cities, 3-million employed on European-owned farms in rural areas, and the remaining 3-million have their being in the Native reserves.

All will agree that economically the first group is better off than the other two. There will also be general agreement that the amenities of civilised life which are available in the towns and cities are superior to those on the farms and in the reserves. The educational, medical, cultural, social and recreational opportunities offering in Johannesburg (and I hope in Cape Town) outstrip by far any similar opportunities available to the second and third groups. Are these "normal" conditions? Granted that most, if not all, other countries show some discrepancies between the conditions of rural and urban life; the essential difference here is that the whole of the employment opportunity available in the cities is in the

gift of one racial group, the Europeans, while the whole of the unskilled labour force is found in the ranks of another one racial group, the Africans.

If there were large African entrepreneurs with jobs for thousands, or even hundreds of workers in the cities the position would be materially different, but so long as the only employment open to Bantu workers in European towns is that created by Europeans, and such employment carries with it the obligation to house the worker and his family, and the further obligation to provide for the social needs of the worker and his dependants, then there is an implied right to control the influx of such would-be entrants.

Opponents of Influx Control argue that entry of persons into a particular area should be unrestricted and that the ordinary operation of economic laws will in the long run tend to limit the number of people to the number of jobs available and that in any case an expanding economy can absorb most of the newcomers. An acquaintance of mine says that just as the rural workers who flocked to the towns and cities of 18th Century Britain were absorbed as part of the urbanisation process of the Industrial Revolution, so our economy will successfully cope with an uncontrolled flood of tribesmen from the rural areas and the reserves if all restrictive laws were repealed. Will this really be so? I would like to examine some facts which have a bearing on the issues involved.

The first general restriction on male Natives to enter European towns was provided in the 1937 amendments to the Urban Areas Act of 1923 (Section 5 bis Act 46 of 1937). Subsequently in Act 25 of 1945 and later in Act 54 of 1952, restrictions were placed on the right of Natives to remain in certain areas.

These enactments were considerably tightened up in the 1957 amendments.

So we find legislative restrictions on the free entry of Natives have been a feature of our law for the past 23 years, but notwithstanding these severe brakes on the influx of Bantu into the towns, the urban population of every large industrial centre has continued to grow, although obviously not to the extent that would have resulted were no legislative limits imposed.

I have taken out a few figures to show the progressive increase in the Bantu population of Johannesburg over the years 1910 - 1960 and also the numbers actually housed by the Johannesburg City Council in our Municipal townships and then contrasted these figures with the theoretical population which would have been in the city if natural increase only had applied. I realise of course that this last figure is a completely fictitious one and that no population group grows only as a result of the natural increase rate but I include the figure solely to show the phenomenal increase which has in fact taken place due to the influx of newcomers.

Year	Estimated Total Population	Accommodation Available	Number actually housed by Council	% Increase in Population	What Pop. would have been at natural 2% increase
1910	95,522	2,195 sites	10,000	-	-
1927	136,695	3,780 houses & sites 2 hostels	13,910 2,363 males	43%	98,922
1930	145,000	4,952 houses & sites 2 hostels	24,760	6%	99,726
1935	200,000	7,925 houses & sites 4 hostels	42,000 5,000 males	38%	101,146
1940	300,000	11,025 houses & sites 4 hostels	55,125	-	-
1946	400,847	16,641 houses & sites 5 hostels	114,700 9,187 males	100% *	104,583
1950	470,700	33,658 houses, sites & squatters 5 hostels	225,000 13,000 males	17%	106,108
1960	593,997**	57,548 houses & sites 8 hostels	351,811 22,231 males	26%	110,225

* In the eleven years from 1935 to 1946 the population increased by 100% instead of 22% if only the normal progression had applied. This was the period prior to the enforcement of influx control.

By contrast the population increase for the 10 years 1950 - 1960 when influx control was seriously applied is 26%, which is no great excess over the normal rate of progression for 10 years equal to 20%.

** This figure includes 71,044 persons accommodated by the Natives Resettlement Board at Meadowlands and Diepkloof.

Employment.

I would now like to consider the employment position as reflected in figures extracted by the Registration and Employment Branch of my Department for the period 20th October to 30th November, 1960.

It was found that notwithstanding the presence in Johannesburg of 215,000 male workers in November, 1960, 1,073 new would-be entrants applied for permission to work and live in the city during this period of six weeks -- a daily average of 36.

If all these people were allowed in, it would mean an annual increment of approximately 10,000 - 12,000 male workers and they would, after a period of years be entitled, if qualified to do so, to bring in their families as well. In that case the Local Authority would be obliged to provide houses for all these people.

The Council's present commitments in regard to housing for people legitimately in its area still remain substantial notwithstanding the spectacular achievements of the past few years and consequently it cannot lightly face a large and increasing demand every year for additional accommodation from people who want to be allowed to enter Johannesburg. The housing needs at the moment are :-

7,125 houses for families on the waiting list as at 30th November, 1960,

7,004 houses for people presently living in Pimville and who must be rehoused,

2,278 houses for families being moved from Western Native Township,

107 houses for families from Newclare; and an estimated

1,750 houses for families being resettled from Alexandra Township but who are the responsibility of the Council.

Total : 18,264 houses.

In addition it has been established that the normal natural increase in the population amounts to approximately 2,000 houses per annum and on the basis of this calculation the total housing requirements over the next 10 years therefore amount to 38,264 houses. //

The Council, through its Housing Division, built 11,000 houses during the financial year 1957/58 and that marked the absolute peak of its efforts and represents an achievement which is impossible to maintain year after year. For the current year the programme is to build 5,000 houses and this will

/ probably be the ...

probably be the normal programme for the coming years.

Now in the face of this tremendous commitment for families already entitled to live and work in Johannesburg you will understand, I hope, why I am not keen to accept new entrants, carrying with it the obligation to provide accommodation for them.

But to revert to the effects on employment, it was found that during this same period of six weeks, 531 male workers who were qualified in terms of the strict provisions of the Urban Areas Act to be in Johannesburg were looking for work, but there were only 340 jobs available.

This was the actual number of vacancies registered by employers for this period and it must be remembered that employers are obliged by law to notify my office of all vacancies they have for Native labour. By the same token no labourer is allowed to be registered in employment if he has not been authorised to do so.

These are no idle provisos because employment is not registered if these formalities have not been complied with.

The nett result for November, therefore, was that there were 191 local men for whom jobs could not be found, while at the same time 1,073 new arrivals also wanted to come in and compete for these non-existent jobs.

Perhaps I should explain at this stage that in certain circumstances a Local Authority may be granted permission by the Government to authorise the entry of specified labour under what is known as "conditional" permit; for example, permission may be granted for workers to enter an urban area if no local labour is available for a particular job at the moment. This usually results from a special requisition made by an employer. Persons so permitted to enter are nearly always for categories of labour which local men either refuse to accept or are extremely reluctant to undertake, e.g. domestic service, heavy manual labour and certain occupations classed as "dirty work". If the Local Authority can satisfy the Regional Employment Commissioner either that no local labour is available for a particular job or that local labourers are not prepared to accept employment which is available then permission may be granted for a specified number of workers to enter the area on condition that they work for a specified employer only and in a specified class of labour. On expiration of this particular employment the worker is obliged to leave the area concerned.

Of the 1,073 applicants previously referred to, the Council was

/ granted permission ...

granted permission by the Regional Employment Commissioner to authorise the "conditional" entry of 302 of these applicants, so that 770 were rejected.

During the same period under review, namely, 20th October to 30th November 1960, 486 Native labourers who had been granted permission in previous months to enter and work under "conditional" permit, were required to leave the town; the majority - 275 - because the jobs for which they had been introduced came to an end, and the remainder for reasons varying from jail sentences to having illegally changed their employment in contravention of the "conditional" permit originally granted them.

An analysis of the workseekers who applied for permission to enter Johannesburg for the period under review discloses that the jobs most sought after by these people were, in order of popularity :-

1. Factory Workers
2. Building Labourers
3. Drivers
4. Flat Cleaners
5. General Delivery Boys
6. Light Engineering Labourers
7. Office Boys

but as these jobs can easily be filled from Natives who are already lawfully in the area there would be little point in allowing them to enter the local labour market because they would merely accentuate competition for the limited number of jobs which are available in these categories. The only exception to this general statement is that difficulty is experienced from time to time in filling vacancies for flat cleaners from local sources, in which case the need is met by granting "conditional" entry permits.

Conversely, it is found that the most unpopular jobs are :-

1. Coalbag Carriers
2. House/Garden Boys
3. Sanitary and Refuse Removal Labourers
4. Office Cleaners
5. Meat Carriers
6. Petrol Attendants) because of long and irregular
7. Domestic Drivers) hours.

and that vacancies in these categories are sometimes hard to fill, not only from Natives who are entitled to work in the area but also from the ranks of the new applicants. It is usually only in these unpopular categories that the door is opened slightly and new entrants allowed in under the "conditional" permit system already described.

The picture that emerges from all this is that there is a measure

/ of unemployment among ...

of unemployment among urbanised Africans and as the majority of these men are married, responsible for the support of their dependants, the payment of their house rents and in many cases the repayment of the bond on the house which they have purchased through the Municipality, a measure of protection for them is not out of place. In fact, the Registering Officer informs me that on any one day there are about 200 more workseekers than jobs available in Johannesburg, and this refers to men who are qualified to be in the area and does not take into account those from outside who want to come in. If the doors were to be opened wide then it is reasonable to assume that the measure of protection which the permanently urbanised worker enjoys at the moment would largely disappear and that he would find it much more difficult to obtain suitable employment.

A feature which cannot be ignored is that some employers still prefer unskilled and unschooled rural adult workers to the children of our urbanised families because the former are more amenable. This is of course a 'carry-over' from the old concept of migratory labour with all its unsatisfactory features and if freely permitted would make it virtually impossible to find employment for the young men growing up in the towns. It is difficult enough at the moment to place these boys and girls in decent jobs and proof of the difficulties surrounding this aspect of Native employment is the fact that my Department has found it necessary to create a special section dealing exclusively with this class and whose main task is to persuade employers to create opportunities for the boys and girls of our townships.

Wages.

An attempt has also been made to extract comparable figures to show the variation in wage rates for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled Native labour over the period 1927 - 1960.

The figures which are used are extracted from Union Year Books and those for the years 1950, 1954 and 1958 from data published by the Institute of Race Relations, while the figures quoted for 1960 have been obtained by means of surveys carried out by my Department.

The earliest records available show that unskilled labourers were being paid 19/- per week by the S.A.R. & H.; in 1930 this figure had dropped to 17/- and this marked the beginning of the depression years. In 1935 the S.A.R. & H. rate had dropped still further to 15/9d. per week for unskilled labour while the general average in industry was 18/4d. In 1937 the average rate for unskilled labour in Johannesburg had gone up to £1.4.0d. per week

and in respect of semi-skilled and skilled labour the respective figures were £1.12.0d. and £3.0.0d. per week, being minima in both cases. This is the first year for which rates in these categories are available.

In 1940 the Railway rate was 17/7d.; the City Council paid 16/- and the general average was 19/1d. These rates appeared to continue without any material change until the end of 1945 and it is interesting to observe that during the period 1935 to 1945 the rates for unskilled labour in Johannesburg were almost at the lowest level in the 18 years from 1927 to 1945, and as these years coincide with the highest population increases there appears to be some substance in my claim that uncontrolled influx was responsible in part for depressingly low rates of pay.

Compulsory payment of Cost of Living allowances was introduced in 1940 and the first effective figures showing the result of these increases are to be found in the rates for 1946 when Railway rates had gone up to 29/- including cost of living allowances, while in the steel industry corresponding figures were 39/- including cost of living. In that year the minimum rates for semi-skilled labour stood at between 45/- and 50/- per week plus cost of living and these went up to 71/6d. plus cost of living for skilled labour.

Further increase is reflected in the 1950 rates when it is found that the S.A.R. & H. wage was 35/3d. including cost of living allowance. The 1954 rates averaged out at £2.12.6d. inclusive for unskilled labour and in 1958 this figure had increased to an average weekly wage of £2.15.0d. inclusive, while the corresponding rates for semi-skilled and skilled labour now stood at £4.10.0d. and £6. respectively. The latest figures which are available for 1960 disclose that the general wage for labourers in the heavy industries is £2.16.7d. inclusive; £3.5.9d. - £8.2.0d. for semi-skilled and £7.+ for skilled labour.

An examination of these rates shows fairly clearly that reasonably substantial improvements in wages were being paid from 1946 onwards and this again coincides by and large with the date when influx control was being strictly applied in Johannesburg. Certainly the rates quoted from 1950 to date, particularly in the semi-skilled and skilled categories, are the highest on record and this is of course the period when the population was stabilised to the greatest extent over the 50 years covered by the population statistics quoted earlier on.

An unsatisfactory feature of wage rates is that basic wages have hardly changed from 1950 - 1957; the increases shown are in respect of

/ higher cost of living ...

higher cost of living allowances.

This pattern changed significantly in 1958 when basic wages were increased in many occupations. A number of new Wage Determinations became effective in 1959 and this has continued in 1960.

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Dealing with the effects of uncontrolled influx into the larger centres I speak from unhappy personal experience when I say that the most difficult years in Johannesburg were those immediately after the war when the population had increased enormously without a corresponding increase in housing and the other essential amenities such as transport services, clinics, recreational grounds and even churches, and before influx control was enforced. Those were the years characterised by repeated outbreaks of appalling squatter camps brought about by the overwhelming pressure of people in the limited number of houses which were available. All the public services were strained to breaking point and it is probably true to say that life in the squatter camps marked the lowest level of degradation to which the urban Native population in Johannesburg had ever sunk.

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Not only did the men find it impossible to obtain accommodation for themselves and their families but they often found it impossible to obtain employment. In many occupations there were ten applicants for every job; not only did this have a depressing effect on wages but it resulted in dismissal from work for the smallest reason and a man so dismissed had practically no hope of obtaining another job. The frustration and despair which flowed from these conditions led in my opinion, inevitably to the emergence of the crime waves which marked Johannesburg life during the following years.

I would like to quote from an address I delivered to the National Council of Women on the 21st November, 1951, which is interesting for the emphasis it places on the problem of delinquency and crime at that time.

" The problem of delinquency among the urbanised Native youth is not a new one and dates from the large scale settlement of the Native people in the industrial and urban centres of South Africa. Since the end of the war, however, the position has materially changed for the worse and everyone engaged in the field of Native administration, Native welfare or Native missionary work is agreed that conditions are worse today than they have ever been.

This is partly due to the increase in the mere numbers involved. For example the Native population in Johannesburg over the last ten years has more than doubled itself without a proportionate increase in the amount of housing and other

/ essential concomitants ...

" essential concomitants necessary. Apart, however, from the mere numbers involved, there is no doubt that post-war years have seen a positive worsening of black/white relations in most of the large urban centres in the Union. Some of you whose work brings you into the large locations may even have heard the extreme view expressed that Native parents are today afraid of their own children. While I do not agree with this alarmist view, there is no doubt that the situation is grave and merits close attention on the part of those in authority. "

The Johannesburg "Star" ran a series of articles in January 1957, on the serious crime wave which had shocked the City during the previous year when payroll robberies and crimes of violence had become a feature of city life. The "Star" urged concerted action to cope with the situation and urged an Enquiry into the circumstances which were making Johannesburg the most dangerous city in South Africa. The Enquiry should, it was reported -

" cover social conditions in the townships, the adequacy of education and the opportunities for employment as well as actual delinquency. It is from the idle neglected or frustrated youth that criminals are recruited. "

(6) The importance placed on opportunities for employment is significant because the years from 1951 to 1956 probably marked the culminating point in the cumulative effects of gross over-crowding and it is perhaps significant that the amendments to the Urban Areas Act which tightened up influx control considerably were introduced in 1957. No experienced administrator of Native Affairs who lived through that period would want to see a repetition of the conditions which prevailed at that time and the vastly improved conditions which now prevail in the Johannesburg Municipal Native townships are in my opinion due in part to the limitation on the size of the population which has made it possible for the authorities to cope with the housing needs of the people as well as the provision of the essential amenities of life.

I am aware that the whole position is an artificial one and that conditions in Johannesburg are probably more favourable for the ordinary Native family than anywhere else in South Africa at the moment, and that the people living and working in the city who manage to comply with the narrow and restrictive provisions of the law are a favoured class who enjoy a standard of living superior to that enjoyed by their compatriots outside the city. It is for this reason that Johannesburg is the Mecca of every workseeker in the country and this is doubtless too the reason why these men will resort

/ to literally any ...

to literally any means of gaining entry into the town, but until conditions elsewhere are at least as attractive as the minimum standards available in Johannesburg, Influx Control, with all its difficulties, does in my opinion benefit the population now resident in the cities and must continue if there is not to be a general depressing effect on wages and standards which will tend to place cities on a par with standards seen outside these areas.

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