

Eab9



SUIKERBOSRAND PARK

A REGIONAL plan for the Southern Transvaal, which will become Africa's greatest metropolitan complex, is now being drawn. I have long cherished the idea of keeping intact the links of this great constellation of cities and towns of the future with its historic natural environment of hills, veld and crystal streams — the beauty that gave to it the name, Witwatersrand. And I am pleased to say that far-sighted planners have agreed with me that in the Suikerbosrand we have the ideal setting for a regional park and outdoor recreational area for what will soon be a crowded corner of our country.

To give more precise form to my ideas I asked a small committee of experts to indicate how such a Suikerbosrand Park could be developed for the enjoyment of all the citizens of the Southern Transvaal, the Republic of South Africa and even tourists from other countries. The members of this committee were: —

Mr. W. G. Sheat (Chairman), General Manager, Parks and Recreation Department, City of Johannesburg.

Mr. T. C. Robertson, Chairman of the South African Nature Union and Director of the National Veld Trust.

Mr. T. J. Steyn, Director of Nature Conservation, Transvaal Provincial Administration.

Mr. R. W. J. Opperman, an expert on outdoor recreation of the Department of Education, Arts and Science.

Mr. E. M. Dall, Chief Planning Engineer, of the Johannesburg City Engineer's Department.

Any plan for the future of the Witwatersrand must include many if not all of the ideas put forward in this report of the committee. It is not a detailed plan, but only an indication of potential. It does, however, show how we can prevent the metropolis of the future severing all its links with its natural environment and thus becoming a city without a soul. This project is not an expensive luxury, but a development which is an inevitable part of our future growth. As such I commend it to all who share the power of giving reality to this great, national concept.

J. F. OBERHOLZER, M.P.C.

Mayor of Johannesburg.

The Suikerbosrand Park

A Preliminary Estimate of its Recreational Potential

I. Objective of the Survey:

The members of the committee all have personal knowledge of the Suikerbosrand and recently visited the natural sub-divisions of the area which are dealt with in this report.

The survey was not intended to form the basis of a detailed plan for the full exploitation of the Suikerbosrand as an outdoor recreational area and a scientifically managed game park. Future research will undoubtedly reveal many additional natural resources capable of development.

The objective of the survey was twofold:—

- (i) To make a preliminary geographical survey to determine potential recreational attractions.
- (ii) To suggest certain development projects within the limits of a capital programme of R3,000,000, including the purchase of the land.

II. Definition of the Area:

The "rand" itself begins at the 5,000 ft. contour and rises to a maximum height of 6,500 ft.

The proposed area of purchase is approximately 18,000 morgen in extent. The southern boundary will be along the Heidelberg-Meyerton-Vereeniging Road; the Heidelberg Kloof will form the eastern boundary and the western boundary will be some six miles to the east of Henley on Klip. The northern boundary will be situated on the flat land below the northern slopes of the Suikerbosrand in order that the total area encompassed by the proposed scheme is about 18,000 morgen, and which will measure some 11 miles in length and 6 miles in width.

III. Agriculture Value of Land:

Arable land is mainly to the north and the productivity varies from moderate to good. Grazing on the coarse, sandy soils formed from the quartzites is very poor and heavily invaded by *Stoebe vulgaris*. Whatever the future of the Suikerbosrand may be, thousands of morgen of grazing will have to be put out of production in order to protect the catchment area from very serious erosion. Small areas of "sweet veld", where the soils have been formed from the Ventersdorp lavas that overlie the quartzites, are fertile and potentially highly productive.

A detailed soil map was not at the disposal of the committee. Such a map would assist in estimating land values, which agricultural officers estimate to vary from R5 to R100 per morgen.

An average price of R50 per morgen for the whole area of purchase is considered reasonable — possibly even on the high side.

Experts are of the opinion that maximum and highly scientific agricultural development of the area could only yield a product which is but a fraction of the potential income from recreation. A rise in land values could, therefore, only come from private enterprise developing the recreational potential of the Suikerbosrand. This has already begun at Keyter's Kloof.

IV. Water Resources of the Area:

There are no perennial streams in any of the kloofs. But most of them are fed by fountains, and where the catchments have not been badly eroded these "trickle" all the year round and at present supply potable water to three private dams. In most of the kloofs there are suitable sites for dams that are intended to provide landscaping effect, and if good use is made of these opportunities many attractive settings could be created. None of them will be large enough for any form of water sport.

If the surface area is not so large as to constitute an "evaporation pan", the Department of Water Affairs has no objection to dams being built for non-consumptive use of the water.

Underground water resources have not been explored, but the supply from dams would be adequate for the developments described in this report.

The Blesbokspruit flows from two to three miles to the south of the Suikerbosrand, but it is one of the most heavily polluted streams in South Africa and has little recreational potential.

To create an illusion of water in the landscape, skilful use will have to be made of dams, artificial fountains and minimum-flow mountain streams on the contour. Many small swimming pools in a natural rock setting could also be supplied from these dams.

V. Fauna and Flora:

No detailed survey of small mammals, reptiles, etc. was available, but the committee doubts whether these include features that could be considered an "attraction" to non-specialist visitors. But their interest

Development of Facilities to Meet Existing Recreational Patterns

IX. Rate of Population Growth:

An indication of the rate of population growth in the main population centres from which the Suikerbosrand Park will draw its visitors, can be obtained from the following table:—

Town	Total Population		Total	% Increase 1951—1960	
	1951	1960		White	Bantu
Johannesburg	884,007	1,096,541	24	8	34
Pretoria	258,379	415,989	46	34	62
Germiston	152,767	204,605	34	28	37
Benoni	109,481	135,467	24	12	28
Springs	119,382	135,231	13	15	12
Brakpan	85,102	78,778	7	2	11
Vereeniging	59,878	74,574	25	41	17
Boksburg	64,316	70,933	10	13	9
Vanderbijl	23,064	41,318	79	84	73
Nigel	32,126	33,896	6	4	5

Mere increase in population will not, however, create a proportional increase in demand for the type of attraction which will be provided by the Suikerbosrand Park. It has to be accompanied by an increased standard of living, more leisuretime and education which stresses the importance of recreation in a natural environment.

The committee is satisfied that all the factors which create a greatly increased demand for the facilities that can be supplied by a regional park are already beginning to operate.

X. Changing "Fashions" in Leisuretime Use:

Much more difficult to assess are the changes in recreational patterns which will take place in future as a result of economic and cultural growth, technological advances and facilities for easy travel. In determining possible activities for the Suikerbosrand Park, the committee has kept in mind the following existing preferences, which it considers apply at present and which are likely to persist during the first phase of the plan:—

- Motoring "for the outing".
 - Picnicking for the afternoon or the day.
 - Swimming.
 - Enjoying the view or watching game with the aid of novel transport facilities.
 - Spending a week-end or vacation at a resort.
 - Camping for a week-end or longer.
 - Attending cultural musical, film, theatrical or dancing performances.
 - Following nature trails "for exercise".
 - Walking mainly with the pursuit of a scientific hobby like "bird watching" in view.
 - Attending a nature-exploration educational course.
- The preferences are not regarded as "innate", and are likely to vary considerably in terms of the facilities provided.
- (The double-page diagram which accompanies this report gives the main areas which have been included in the first phase, and indicates the major activities.)

XI Heidelberg Kloof:

This is already a well-known and established recreational area, although it has been allowed to become "shabby" and much of its natural beauty is threatened by an invasion of alien vegetation.

In June the municipality decided to restore and develop the Kloof to increase the revenue earned by the town from this resource. A loan of R52,000 is being raised to embark on the following projects:—

- A bowling green which fell into disuse is to be repaired.
- Facilities at the swimming bath will be improved.
- A restaurant will be built near the entrance to the Kloof.
- Self-contained bungalows are to be built.
- The existing dam is to be lined so that it will retain the run-off for longer periods. It is to be stocked with fish for angling.
- On the slope above this dam a garden is to be laid out with proteas, aloes, heath and other indigenous plants.
- The top half of the kloof is to be fenced off and stocked with game — presumably kudu, giraffe, zebra, eland, and other species that become semi-domesticated. Some carnivora will be kept in cages below the natural caves.
- The alien vegetation, mainly wattles, is to be eradicated and camping sites will be laid out among the indigenous trees and shrubs.





to the zoologist and ecologist is great and protection will have to be rigidly enforced. Further study and the publication of descriptive brochures will increase the interest.

A check list of birds seen in the Heidelberg Kloof shows the presence of 72 species. The total for the area, including the plateau grasslands, is very much greater, although the population has been sadly reduced. With protection the bird life will undoubtedly become sufficiently abundant to attract amateur ornithologists, who to-day constitute one of the biggest classes of nature lovers.

There are a number of troops of baboons along the Suikerbosrand, and when they can be seen scampering along the slopes they are a great attraction for visitors. But farmers, and even residents on the outskirts of Heidelberg, regard them as a menace. Their future "management" will have to be decided on by experts.

A few Steenbok and Vaal Rhebuck have survived the hunter and the poacher. They could become numerous.

Many species of antelopes are indigenous to these Highveld grasslands, and most of them — particularly the Blesbok, Eland and Black Wildebeest — could be re-introduced under the "managed" conditions which will be required in the Park. Introduction would not be simultaneous in the whole area, but can be planned from camp to camp. At the outset it would, therefore, not be necessary to have a game-proof fence for the Park as a whole, but only for selected view sites. As the herds increase, they will undoubtedly constitute one of the major visitor-attractions.

The committee was fortunate to have before it the list of indigenous trees, shrubs and some herbs of the Suikerbosrand, which has been compiled by Dr. A. O. D. Mogg. This totals 205 species. For the botanist it is already a significant area which needs to be protected as a witness section. Once illustrated guide-books have been published the beauty and variety of this flora will be one of the finest natural features and attractions of the park. In the Heidelberg Kloof there is a fine stand of *Celtis africana* (White Stinkwood) and the vegetation of the sweet soils on the farm "Wetter" is such that the area must be planned from the very outset as a botanical reserve.

VI *Micro-Climates of the Kloofs:*

The climate of the area as a whole is typical of the Transvaal Highveld, and the assumption therefore is that July and August are "off months" that would affect the total visitor capacity for the

year. But it is claimed that many of the kloofs, although they face south, are so sheltered from the wind that they are warm even on the coldest winter days. In future planning, after more meteorological data has been obtained, advantage could be taken of this micro-climatic feature in order to create "sunny corners" for the colder days. Access to all the kloofs is such that it would not be affected by the heaviest rains of the summer months.

VII. *Geographical Situation:*

The geographical situation of the Suikerbosrand in relation to the areas of population concentration in the Southern Transvaal is shown in the diagram on the back page.

All the existing road approaches are good. There are two kloofs allowing for north-south links in any internal system of roads that will be necessitated by the development plan. Cableways will undoubtedly be a novel (and also economic) method of enabling visitors to get very close to the game. (It is not known how the proposed carriageway from Alberton to Heidelberg will affect the approach from the north.)

VIII. *Suitability of the Natural Environment:*

The committee is of the opinion that the natural environment and geographical location of the Suikerbosrand is such that, in a comprehensive regional plan for the Southern Transvaal, it should be developed as an outdoor recreational area and regional game park. No other system of land-use for the Suikerbosrand, which would be more economic or socially beneficial, has been suggested.





Ultimately, the plan provides for a cableway, with a load capacity of 70 passengers, to a second restaurant on top of the rand.

This kloof can be made very attractive. It is strategically situated close to the main Johannesburg-Durban road and has in the past attracted large numbers of visitors during holiday periods. Its main limitation is lack of parking space inside the kloof itself or within easy walking distance. The committee estimates its maximum carrying capacity as 2,500 visitors.

At first it was hoped that the Heidelberg Kloof would be included in the overall plan for the Suikerbosrand and administered as part of the project. Obviously, Heidelberg will benefit from the bigger development and its council has decided to "cash in" on the prospect. The question now arises as to the form which co-operation with the Board of the Suikerbosrand Park will take. Heidelberg could simply be regarded as a small competitor and the area of municipal land on top of the rand would then have to be fenced off from the rest of the park. If there are entrance charges, visitors to the Park would not be allowed to come up by way of the cableway. The game areas of the Park could then not join up with the Heidelberg municipal land. Secondly, the siting of the main entrance to the Suikerbosrand Park is affected by the arrangement made with Heidelberg. If it is a purely competitive venture, then the main entrances to the Park would be sited on both sides of the Old Voortrekker Road, thus by-passing Heidelberg and feeding the Park from this road. In the event of an agreement, the Kloof could be linked with the other units by way of a road which would site the main entrance of the Park just outside the east-west boundary of the town lands. The cableway would then also be used as a starting point in the hilltop system of communications inside the Park. The plan of your committee, therefore, has to allow for either alternative to be adopted.

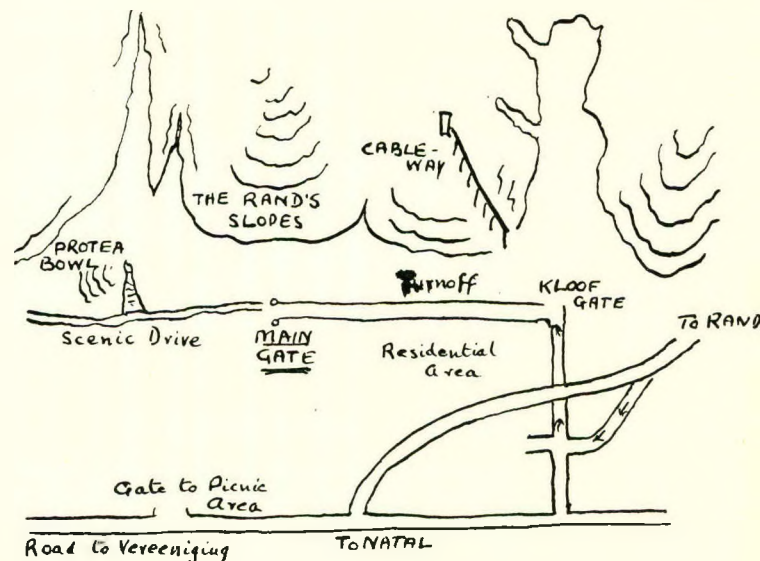
XII. Design and Siting of Main Entrance:

A symbol for the Suikerbosrand Park as a whole is suggested by the committee and their design appears on the title page of this report. It contains the *Protea caffra*, to which the rand owes its name, and the Blesbok, which was the most numerous antelope of the area and gave a name to the Blesbokspruit, which flows to the south-east of the lower slopes. The main geological feature of the hills is the stratified outcrops of Ellsburg quartzites of the Witwatersrand System. These are mainly composed of silicon, which crystallises in attractive octahedrons. A quartz crystal is, therefore, the third element in the design of the symbol.

The design of the main gateway could embody all three of these elements of the symbol. But the quartz crystals, in clusters of various sizes, could be used as the centrepiece of an illuminated fountain at the main entrance. Here the visitor will first feel the "mood" and make contact with the basic ideas of the Park. Much thought should be devoted to the design of the gateway and the best artistic talent should be used in its execution.

The siting of this gateway depends on the existing access roads and the system of internal communications within the Park.

The following diagram shows the gateway situated on a scenic drive, which turns off from the main entrance to the Heidelberg Kloof:—



There are two advantages to this siting: it links Heidelberg Kloof to the bigger Park system; it also gives easy access to the Protea Bowl (see detailed description below) to the 2,000 students that there will be from 1964 at the Teachers' College.

The great disadvantage is that all visitors using the Rand-Natal highway approach to the Suikerbosrand Park will have to be routed through the narrow streets of Heidelberg Village.

An alternative gateway is indicated in the diagram which shows the proposed system of internal communications for the Park.

XIII. The "Protea Leaf" Complex of Kloofs:

Adjoining the Heidelberg town lands there is a series of five closely-spaced kloofs, eroded into the rand in a form that suggests the lance-shaped leaves of the suikerbos. Together they constitute the Protea Leaf Complex, which is treated as a unit for semi-intensive recreational development. All have distinctive botanical and geological features. In the first two the sides slope steeply and are ribbed with the outcrops of quartzite strata. These slopes are rather bare, but provide ideal natural terraces for a colourful display of aloes. The next kloof is more open, but here there is a magnificent stand of the indigenous *Protea caffra* of the Suikerbosrand. The last kloof of the series cuts deep into the hills. It is fed by a strong fountain, and an existing dam forms a crystal-clear "mirror pool" which reflects the hillsides. The run-off from the kloofs is sufficient to keep three existing dams fully supplied. Between these kloofs and the main road to Vereeniging, there is a large area of flat land. The soil is coarse sand, acid and shallow. It is heavily infested with *Stoebe vulgaris* and its agricultural value is negligible.

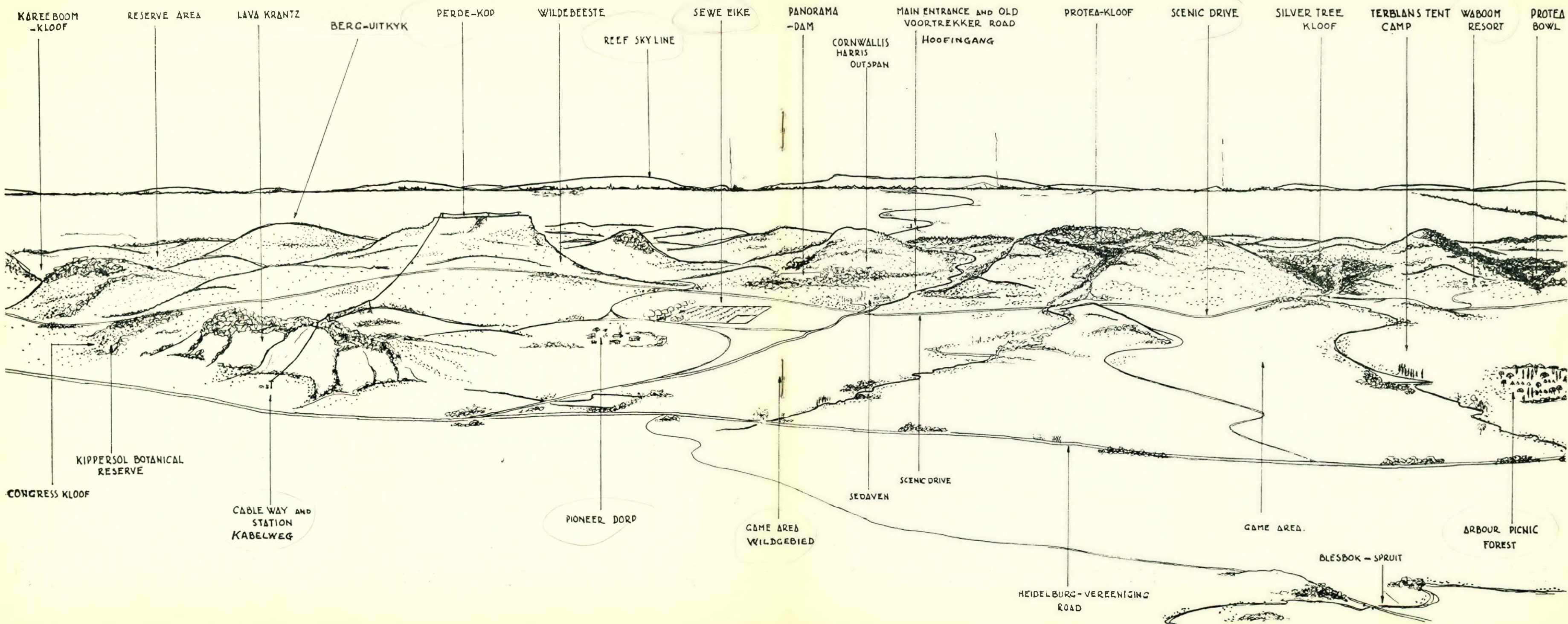
While detailed plans cannot be given at this stage, the general lay of the land suggests the following possible developments:—

- (i) **THE PROTEA BOWL:** At the entrance to the first of these kloofs there is already a natural amphitheatre, which could at little cost be developed into a "Hollywood Bowl" type of auditorium. By building a dam the water would push back far enough to enable the stage to be partly surrounded by water or built over the water. An aloe garden would form a natural backdrop. The Protea Bowl would be suitable for Volkspele, ballet performances, symphony concerts, etc. Heidelberg is developing rapidly as an educational centre. Within the next three years there will be more than 2,000 students at the Teachers' College alone. The Protea Bowl (Protea Kelk in Afrikaans) could be an important cultural amenity. Behind the

auditorium there is suitable land for a tea room and restaurant and for bungalows to house performers at the Bowl. It is no exaggeration to say that this setting seems to have been created by nature for such a purpose and that it is only waiting for the creative imagination of man to grasp the opportunity.

- (ii) **WABOOM RESORT:** The choice of this name needs some explanation. It will be seen that in this report the committee has not used all the existing place names, since many of them are of recent origin and have no bearing on the history of natural features of the environment. While this tall species of the genus *Protea*, the Waboom (*Protea arborea*), is not indigenous to the area, it could very easily be introduced in large numbers. It got its name from the fact that the felloes of wagon wheels were made from its wood. But it has an association with the Suikerbosrand, since the Trichardt Trek passed through the area, and Louis Trichardt is said to have used ink made from the leaves of this protea, when he wrote his famous diary. Waboom Camp would include bungalows of the "motel" type along the slopes between the second and third kloofs. It could cater for travellers using the main road from Vereeniging to the East Rand and also for visitors wanting to make a longer stay. While it could begin with twenty bungalows, the site is adequate for more than ten times that number and they could be placed as not to detract from the natural setting. In this area, as in most of the other kloofs in the Park there are very suitable sites for caravan parks. These could be developed as the demand grows. This report, therefore, does not give details as to their siting, although it is stressed that these camps will undoubtedly become an important amenity.

- (iii) **SILVER TREE KLOOF:** The existing natural charm of the last of the series of kloofs could be enhanced by the introduction of another member of the Protea family, the Silver Tree (*Leucadendron argenteum*). During the first phase of development this kloof would not be used for building purposes. It would be a natural area (to be distinguished from a "significant" area) to serve visitors to other units in the Protea Leaf complex. A number of attractive nature trails could be laid out. A smaller dam can be built below the existing "mirror pool" to feed a minimum-flow channel laid out on the contour to resemble a natural mountain stream . . . It would flow through the existing large grove of *Protea caffra* and terminate at a waterfall sur-



KAREEBOOM
-KLOOF

RESERVE AREA

LAVA KRANTZ

BERG-UITKYK

PERDE-KOP

WILDEBEESTE

SEWE EIKE

PANORAMA
-DAM

MAIN ENTRANCE AND OLD
VOORTREKKER ROAD

PROTEA-KLOOF

SCENIC DRIVE

SILVER TREE
KLOOF

TERBLANS TENT
CAMP

WABOOM
RESORT

PROTEA
BOWL

REEF SKYLINE

CORNWALLIS
HARRIS
OUTSPAN

HOOFINGANG

KIPPERSOL BOTANICAL
RESERVE

CONGRESS KLOOF

CABLE WAY AND
STATION
KABELWEG

PIONEER DORP

GAME AREA
WILDGEBIED

SEDAVEN

SCENIC DRIVE

GAME AREA

ARBOUR PICNIC
FOREST

HEIDELBURG-VEREENIGING
ROAD

BLESBOK - SPRUIT

rounded by a garden of silver trees, heaths, aloes, succulents and other suitable indigenous trees and plants. The water would be returned to the dam by pumping. With unpolluted water from the fountain available, an aquarium of indigenous river fish, similar to that at Lydenburg, could be as great an attraction. Experts have described the Yellowfish as "the king of aquarium fishes". These proposals are in accordance with the policy of enhancing the "water illusion" in the Park as a whole. To-day, even without these artifices, the kloof is one of the most attractive settings in the Suikerbosrand.

- (iv) *ABOR PICNIC FOREST*: Long-term development of the open ground between the Rand and the Vereeniging main road is possible if fast-growing species of exotic trees are planted in suitable clusters to form picnic sites. Although the soil is shallow, new techniques of blasting the holes will allow the trees to take. They can be interspersed with different varieties of oaks, which will, of course, take much longer to mature.
- (v) *TERBLANS TENT CAMP*: This name is also taken from the Protea family. It is the very tallest species — a beautiful, straight, evergreen tree growing up to 60 feet in height. To-day camping under canvas is a most important youth activity and one which is being encouraged. Suitable sites are in big demand. There is a very good site, with a view over a fairly large existing dam, in the Protea Leaf complex. With tree planting, especially willows in the vlei ground above the dam, it can be greatly improved. Silver Leaf Kloof is less than a mile from this site. There is enough water to enable a swimming pool to be built. Expert planning could develop the Terblans Youth Camp as one of the most important amenities for the schools of the Southern Transvaal. There is level ground to allow it to be extended progressively in a number of units, each of which will accommodate from 200 to 300 campers. Almost the whole gamut of outdoor recreation activities for the youth can be catered for here.
- (vi) *SCENIC DRIVE*: A scenic drive, along the slopes to Sewe Eike farm could begin at the Protea Leaf Complex.

XIV. *The Old Voortrekker Road:*

On their way from Natal to Potchefstroom, the wagons of the Voortrekkers are said to have used this road through the Suikerbosrand. The kloof which it follows is attractive and there is much in

favour of the main entrance to the Park being situated on its northern exit from the Rand. Not only is it scenically more attractive than the approach through Heidelberg village, but there may also be a certain sentiment and romance attached to using the route followed by the Voortrekkers. This road would take the visitor past herds of game to the view site described in the next section. It would be a more dramatic introduction — a swifter transition from the city to the natural environment.

XV. *Cornwallis Harris Outspan:*

Beside the old Voortrekker Road, before it cuts through the waves of ridges formed by the dip of the quartzite strata, there is a dam which is as clear as the mirror pool in the kloof. It is in the foreground of a panorama of grasslands, rising up to Perdekop. These slopes are like panels on which the naturalist is invited to paint, using as his pigments the living herds of blesbok, springbok, zebra, eland, black wildebeest and even a few rhino and giraffe. Here he can attempt to recapture in the Atomic Age something of the wild life of veld and berg as it was when Cornwallis Harris, the friend of the Voortrekkers, first described it. Here was once an outspan and sweet grazing for the Trekkers and their long teams of oxen. It can again become the first outspan for city dwellers visiting Suikerbosrand Park. This modern outspan will be a building of weathered quartzite and thatch, with beams and arches of our indigenous wood, murals that are reproductions of Harris's famous wildlife paintings — a place in which to serve the food and wines of the country. Below the wide stoep there will be a terraced protea garden down to the edge of the dam. Some of the game will come down to drink on the opposite shore. But with binoculars or a small telescope the tourist will be able to see all the herds on the sweep of grasslands that slope up from here to the top of Perdekop. The ox wagon will soon be forgotten. It can be brought back to take the young people of the Space Age on a half-hour trek, away from the tarred road and through another kloof to Voortrekker Farm.

XVI. *Sewe Eike — The Voortrekker Farm:*

When the Voortrekkers settled along the Suikerbosrand, their farm plans followed a similar pattern. After building a Hartbeeshuis and a wagon shed, they built a dam in the kloof and turned the water out to two lands, which were protected with stone walls from the smaller antelope, like duiker and steenbok. In the first they planted wheat and the second land was an orchard. Along the furrow they

also planted acorns that they had brought from the Cape. The oaks grew to enormous size and on this Voortrekker farm there are still seven of them. They have given the farm its name, Sewe Eike.

This is indeed an historical site in the story of the Transvaal; and in overseas countries the restoration of such places is not merely a patriotic duty — these "living museums", where all the activities that occupied our ancestors six generations ago are again going on, are also great tourist and visitor attractions. Even if the Suikerbosrand project is not proceeded with, the farm, Sewe Eike, should be used for this purpose. Much research and planning will have to go into the project and the co-operation of organisations like the Simon Van der Stel Stigting will have to be obtained.

In addition to the wagon road, access to this site will be from the main Vereeniging road, which is about two miles away.

XVII. *A Pioneer Dorp:*

To the east of Sewe Eike there is a suitable area for what is another popular feature in other countries — a pioneer village, which has been restored in its original form. This may be regarded as a costly venture, but the stores will actually trade and the old "pub" will do business with the modern visitors. As the Park itself begins to attract more visitors, Pioneer Dorp can possibly show a bigger profit than its ancestor ever did. This, at any rate, has been the experience with similar ventures in the United States.

XVIII. *Lava Kranz:*

The next natural recreational unit is on the farm Kaffirskraal, which fits into an amphitheatre where Ventersdorp lavas have given a completely new aspect to the geology and geography of the Suikerbosrand. There are three kloofs which end at precipitous kranzes formed by the lavas. This would be an ideal place for a cableway. This cableway can extend north as far as Cornwallis Harris Outspan and command a fine view, which would include the herds of game in the grasslands. To the south-west it could be linked with the proposed mass recreational resort in Kareeboom Kloof.

The Lava Kranz area offers even better opportunities for development than the Protea Leaf Complex. There are immediate facilities for elementary mountaineering. The kloofs are well wooded with soetdoring and the water supplies are good. A second youth camp could be established here to cater for young people who have already left school. As in all the other kloofs, swimming pools can be built in natural settings and most attractive nature trails can be laid out.

A diagonal kloof makes it possible to connect Lava Krantz by road with Kareeboom Kloof, where the attractions will be more of a "crowd pleasing" nature.

XIX. *Kiepersol Botanical Reserve:*

On the farm, *Wetter*, the soils, formed from the Ventersdorp lavas, are deep and sweet with the result that the vegetation is altogether different from that of the areas with acid soils. Botanists regard it as a "significant" area which should be protected as a witness section. The committee is in complete agreement with this view and has accordingly decided to recommend that the reserve be used to a limited extent for the following purposes:—

- (i) *Kiepersol Training Camp:* A great need, which is already being felt, is for more youth leaders and leaders in outdoor recreation. There is a good site for a training centre, to house up to 200 participants in a course, at the entrance to Kiepersol Kloof, before the wooded area, which would constitute the reserve proper, is reached. Dormitory type bungalows, a dining room, kitchen and lounge, lecture rooms, different handicraft workshops and studios can be designed to "fit into the environment". This kloof is warm in winter and a small solar-heated swimming pool would ensure that it can be used all the year round.
- (ii) *The Congress Kloof:* The kloof on the farm *Wetter* is bisected by a "fossil donga" which has become stabilised by a growth of indigenous trees. On the flats opposite the training camp there is the homestead of the farm *Wetter*, with very fertile arable lands below it. Many organisations to-day are holding their conferences at nature resorts away from the distractions of a city environment. Delegates feel that it adds to the "group solidarity" required by occasions such as this. It is suggested that suitable accommodation — including a restaurant and conference hall with motel-type accommodation — be provided at this site. There is no doubt that many organisations will use it. A large existing farmhouse is white-washed and has Cape Dutch gables. Consideration should be given to the question of introducing this type of architecture at Congress Kloof. It would be a cultural link with the past and origins of many of the people who would use it.

A project like Suikerbosrand Park would require a nursery, and the existing arable lands on the farm *Wetter* could be used for this purpose. Between this nursery and Kiepersol Training Camp there is

suitable land for the establishing of an arboretum of indigenous trees that are fairly frost-resistant.

XX. *Kareboom Kloof Mass Recreation Resort:*

This kloof is at present known as "Keyter's Kloof", having been so named after the present owner, who has begun to develop it as a recreational area. There is a large flat area at the entrance to the kloof, well wooded with *Acacia karoo*, and this provides adequate parking facilities for several hundred motor vehicles. The kloof is geographically isolated from the other systems of kloofs described in this report, and it could therefore be developed as a mass resort as follows:—

In general principle it seems desirable that the Kloof should provide a wide variety of recreational amenities so that all age groups can be catered for and, particularly, the family as a unit. For instance the father is more likely to take his wife and children to a place not only where they can find activity and amusement but where his own particular needs are also catered for. This emphasis on providing the sort of amenities which will have a family appeal is essential if balanced attendance is to be achieved.

Perhaps the greatest summer attraction at any such resort is the swimming pool and it is considered there should be three of these placed about 50 yards apart with the change-rooms and convenience facilities equidistant. The smallest pool would be for toddlers and would preferably be round with a diameter of approximately 45 ft. and a depth varying from 6" to 12". The second pool would be of a dimension of approximately 80 ft. x 30 ft. and the depth would vary from 18" to 42". The third pool should be large, with a length of approximately 110 ft. x 75 ft. and varying in depth from 3 ft. to 6 ft. No diving facilities would be established as the use of diving boards in popular places has been found to constitute a real hazard on safety grounds.

An essential feature of the layout would be the development of at least three village greens which would be created by clearing, levelling and grassing the grounds, leaving them fringed with trees, back of which again would be situated braaivleis points and separate ablution blocks and conveniences for each unit. These three village greens would be sited separately and at strategic points in relation to the rest of the recreational amenities and would be used for a variety of purposes, e.g. organised and unorganised field games (soccer, hockey, rugby, cricket, softball, baseball, basket ball). They would be popular

units for the staging of school, or Sunday-school, picnics, where races and various other sporting activities are a feature of such outings.

At an appropriate point, and preferably in a natural setting, an amphitheatre having all the facilities necessary for staging cultural activities should be established, i.e., for plays, folk dancing, community singing, perhaps even variety concerts.

Again at appropriate points jukskei bane, tennis courts and bowling greens should be developed. A very essential form of recreation is riding; this latter facility should preferably take the form of a riding school where instruction can be given and horses can be hired.

With particular reference to the requirements of teenagers a covered, but open, dance floor should be included in the general scheme and this facility should be highly organised, as are similar undertakings at the coast, where talent contests, "Beauty Girl of the Weekend", and similar other activities can be staged, as well as dancing.

Refreshment facilities should include one well-conducted restaurant where food and refreshments of good quality are served under pleasant conditions, as well as a "self help" service restaurant where snacks, light refreshments, ice cream, soft drinks, etc., can be efficiently dispensed.

With all these developments, every effort should be made in their establishment to retain as much of the natural vegetation as possible and to infuse these facilities without undue impact on the aesthetic appearance of the area. There is sufficient ground available for this ideal to be achieved so that an enormous number of people can be catered for in various ways, without the area appearing to be unduly crowded.

XXI. *Internal Communication:*

Our attention has been drawn to the fact that a South African company is now producing cableways and that it has imported an Austrian expert on their location, design and erection. It is claimed that cableways may possibly be cheaper than roads in the Suikerbosrand Park. They are silent, and could take visitors close to the herds of game without disturbing the animals.

XXII. *Town and Country:*

South Africa is also a country which is rapidly becoming urbanised. Within two generations less than one-third of the people may be producing food from the land. Sociologists, psychologists and educa-



tionists believe that this progressive urbanisation will bring with it many changes in the "national character" of our people. They are, however, agreed that the links between town and country, the contact with the out-of-doors, should be retained, and a number of organisations have been formed to promote this idea. To them the northern slopes of the Suikerbosrand present an ideal opportunity for the extension of their good work. Here, within twenty miles from the heart of the metropolis of the future, there is an environment for the retention of the way of life, the work and the atmosphere of "the farm". The "holiday job on the farm", if it is organised for large groups, is also a recreational experience for young people. If these northern slopes are planned with this ideal in mind, their agricultural production could actually be increased and at the same time they would become a great educational asset for the nation as a whole.

XXIII. *Parent-and-Child Farm:*

To bring nature-learning facilities to pre-school children, one of these farms could provide accommodation for 100 parents and their small children to participate as a group in a programme of activities. Many such programmes are already in action in overseas countries and there is therefore no need to go into this matter in any great detail in the present report. Mention need only be made of Switzerland's "Wipkingen", where farm animals can be experienced by the small city dweller, not from behind a fence, but by actual feel, touch and caring for them. Specialists are available in South Africa to plan this aspect of the larger project.

XXIV. *Two Land Service Farms:*

Where the soil is good, existing farming operations need not be discontinued. They can actually be intensified and improved. But camping and other living facilities need to be introduced in order to enable each of two selected farms to cope with about 500 youths who can be attracted by a "land service holiday". Not only will there be work to be done and fresh farm products to eat, there can also be all the other nature exploration excitements that go with a holiday on the farm — swimming, riding, hiking, etc. The Land Service Movement is already one of the largest youth organisations in the country and its experts will be able to advise on the detailed planning of these two farms.

XXV. *The Western Slopes:*

From the second of the two Land Service Farms, which the committee has in mind, the slopes turn towards the Klip River and the sweep of the semicircle ends again at Kareeboom Kloof, described in section XX of this report. The committee is of the opinion that this land should also be purchased but held in reserve to cater for other needs that may develop very rapidly in this particular area. It includes about 6,000 morgen of the total area and could be developed to cater for a considerable visitor capacity.

XXVI. *The Two Highest Points: Perdekop and Berg Uitkyk:*

The highest point on the whole of the Witwatersrand is actually the crest of Perdekop, a steep grass-covered ridge which overlooks the lava krantz kloofs. To the north it slopes more gently and forms one of the "panels" which can be seen from Cornwallis Harris outspan. The whole of this kop can be stocked with game. If cableways are an economic proposition, they could give better access to this area than a road and the game would also be much less disturbed by the slow-moving cableway cables, thus enabling the visitor to get close to the herds.

The second highest point, Berg Uitkyk, also commands a fine view of the Witwatersrand and over Vaaldam as far as Heilbron kopje in the O.F.S. A rough road already gives access to this point. It can be improved at fairly low cost and would begin on the second of the two Land Service Farms. Building material can already be taken to the highest point by lorry.

XXVII. *Berg Chalet and Iron Age Village:*

A chalet at Berg Uitkyk could undoubtedly be made an international tourist attraction if it is combined with a reconstructed early Iron Age village. The remains of these villages are found all along the Suikerbosrand and were investigated in some detail at Uitkomst by Dr. Revil Mason, hence their scientific name, Uitkomst Culture. These people built stone walls to protect grass huts set in a circle with a cattle kraal in the centre. Remains of their property, hoes and spears, and the furnaces in which the iron ore was smelted, have been found. Like the Hopi Indians of the Grand Canyon, Bantu could be trained to re-enact, for the benefit of the tourist, the daily lives of their Iron

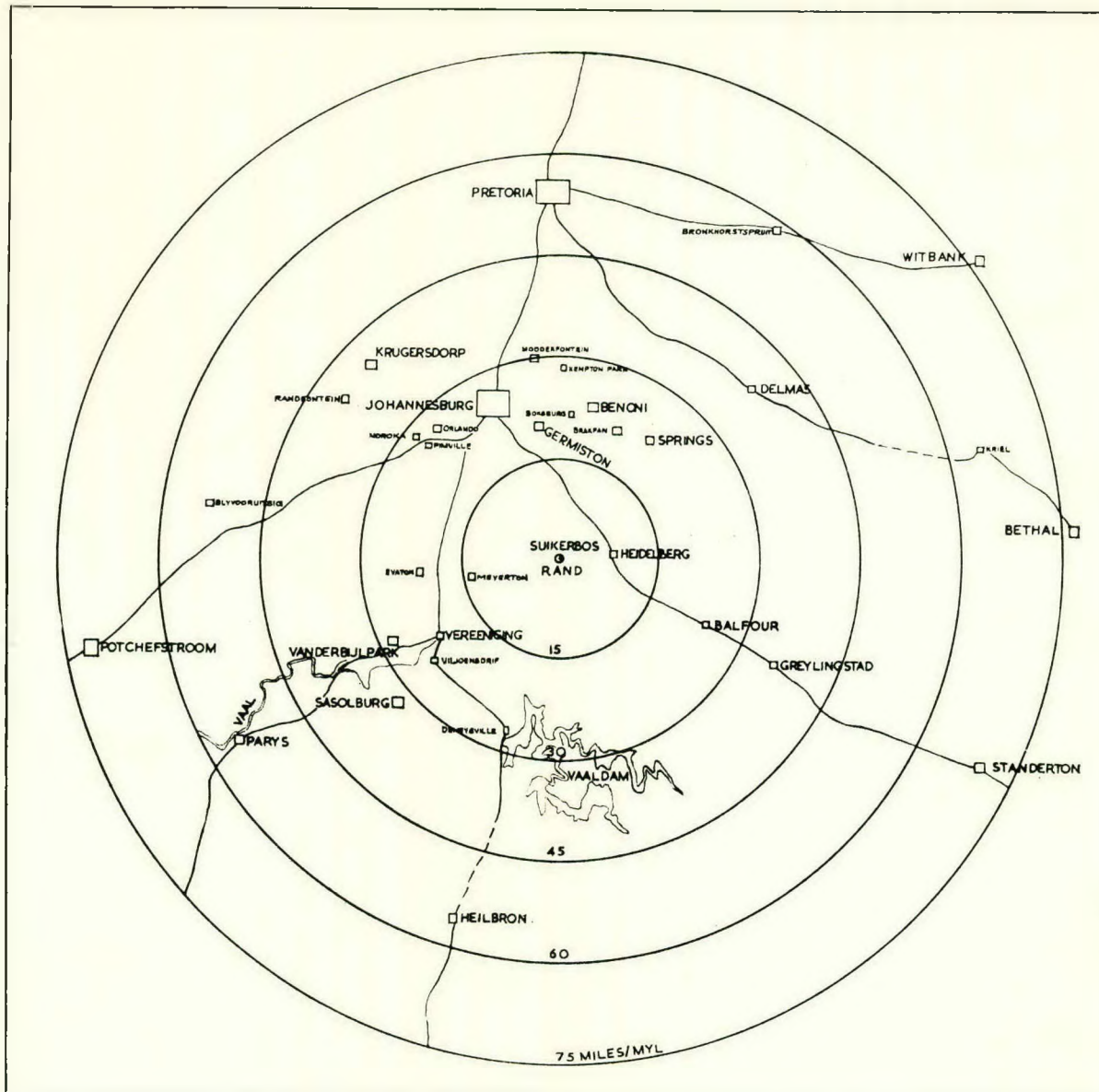
Age ancestors. A small museum containing articles of archaeological and anthropological interest could be housed in the chalet. From this point there is a magnificent view over the central and eastern Witwatersrand, and the cool mountain air would make it a healthy and attractive resort in summer months.

XVIII. Leasing of Hut Sites to Private Individuals:

The United States Forest Service operates a very successful system whereby week-end and holiday dwelling sites are leased to private individuals at a certain annual charge. Huts are erected by lessees themselves and must meet architectural and construction standards set by the Service. The proposed Suikerbosrand Park lends itself to this type of development and the introduction of such a scheme will not only ensure a steady source of income, but may also allow of the implementation of a membership system available to the conservation-minded.

XXIX. Management of the Proposed Park:

As this project should be viewed from the point of view of an amenity intended for the benefit of the whole Witwatersrand and Vereeniging complex and, more particularly, as this venture will represent only the beginning of the acquisition and development of suitable areas in this region, it is proposed that a Metropolitan Council for Public Recreation be called into being. It is envisaged that all local authorities in the area concerned will be represented on the Council.



SUIKERBOSRAND

DISTANCE FROM MAIN TOWNS AND CITIES.

AFSTAND VANAF HOOF DORPE EN STEDE.



Collection Number: A1132

Collection Name: Patrick LEWIS Papers, 1949-1987

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

This collection forms part of a collection, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.