

S O W E T O

by

Councillor P.R.B.Lewis, C.A.(S.A.)INTRODUCTION:

Members of the Johannesburg City Council are immensely pleased that the Junior Chamber of Commerce has arranged this series of talks. From time to time the Council has sponsored Junior Chamber delegates to conferences overseas, and it is pleasing that members have responded in this way.

I attended the two introductory lectures in this series, and was impressed by the questions from the audience, and hope that when it comes to question time tonight the same good-natured questions will come my way.

Many of you know Soweto. You have probably visited the area on a bus tour arranged by the City Council, and some of you, I have no doubt, have been engaged in welfare work in the townships.

Our memories are very short, so before discussing the Soweto of today, I felt it would serve a good purpose if we cast our minds back to see what happened in years gone by.

Last year Johannesburg celebrated its eightieth birthday, and our thoughts turned to the early days, and honour was paid to the pioneers of this city. I know how

very interesting we all found Miss Anna Smith's talk on our early history, and I now propose to review the Johannesburg City Council's administration of Bantu Affairs from those times.

When I first commenced the preparation of this address I was apprehensive at the task I had undertaken, but once started I became excited at the story there was to tell, and grateful that I had been given the opportunity of telling it. Excited because, on review, I suddenly realised that I had been so close to the picture that my vision had become blurred by the endless everyday problems, and that I had not focused on the large canvas portraying the gigantic achievements since the grim period at the end of World War II.

~~achievements since the grim period at the end of World War II.~~ There is no room for complacency or smugness, for much more has to be done, and it will ever be so, but it gives one courage to go on, even though one is ever conscious that an incident, in itself insignificant, could incite reactions which would destroy years of patient endeavour.

I chose as my title - A 'City' within a City - The Creation of Soweto. Johannesburg, the Mother City, is 94 square miles in area, and Soweto, the daughter, with its nearest border ten miles from the City, and the home of half a million Bantu people, is 26 square miles in extent, and derived its name from an abbreviation of what until 4th April, 1963, was referred to as the South Western Bantu Townships.

It is a long story and this evening I shall merely sketch some of the more important events. In my printed paper which will be available in the foyer after the meeting fuller information is given of items to which I will refer in general terms.

THE SIX PHASES:

The review can conveniently be divided into six phases, not of equal duration, which reflect changes of attitude, changes from inaction to action, changes at first hesitant and tardy, leading at last to the dramatic breakthrough.

PHASE I - 1886 to 1917:

I have drawn extensively from John Maud's book CITY GOVERNMENT - THE JOHANNESBURG EXPERIMENT for incidents and events which give a glimpse of the living conditions of the Native people in the early days. When the Diggers' Committee was elected on the 8th November, 1886, and the Sanitary Board was formed in 1887 their powers were limited, as were the funds at their disposal, the provision of most of the profitable services having been granted to concessionaires by the Republican Government.

An early map of Johannesburg, dated 1897, shows a "Kafir Location" and a "Coolie Location" south and south-west of the present Braamfontein Station, at that time called Johannesburg Station, and a Native Location where the present Vrededorp and Pageview now stand. Of Johannesburg's population in 1896 of 102,000 approximately half were European and half Non-European, mostly Bantu. The mines housed their Native employees, but generally the others had to find their own quarters. During the war the operation of the mines was virtually at a standstill, and most of the Native labour force returned home. After the war the Natives were reluctant to return to the mines, and by July 1903 the Natives employed on the mines were only half of those employed in 1899, being only 55,507. It was because of this difficulty in obtaining sufficient labour to operate the mines that the indenture of Chinese labour was authorised in 1904, and by December 1904 20,918 Chinese were on the mines. By 1907 the number of Chinese had increased to 57,828. The use of Chinese labour had serious repercussions in British politics

and in 1907 the ordinance enabling the use of Chinese labour was repealed, and by December 1909 all the Chinese were repatriated, and the number of Natives employed by the mines on the Rand had increased to 154,071.

The report of the Johannesburg Insanitary Area Improvement Scheme Commission, published in 1903, gives a vivid picture of the conditions in the area now called Newtown. The City Gas Works were at the corner of West and President Streets, and to the north were old brick-fields on which a veritable shantytown had been built. Portion of this area was called Coolie Town, part Kaffir Town, and in this complex of filth and squalor lived over 5,000 people of all races. The streets were twisted and narrow, the water was drawn from polluted wells, and lavatories were just holes dug in the ground. Mr. Brian Porter's father was the newly appointed Medical Officer of Health at the time, and gave very competent evidence to the commission. As a result of the Commission's recommendations, the area was expropriated so that it could be replanned. But there was no place to which the wretched inhabitants could move. Then, as now, the opposition of the whites adjacent to the areas to which it was proposed to move the Natives was so strong that plans had to be shelved. In 1904 there occurred in this area something even stronger than the opposition of the whites - an outbreak of bubonic plague. The officials of the Council acted that very night. All the inhabitants were cleared, and the whole slum was burnt to the ground. The Council agreed that accommodation must be found for the refugees,

even if only temporarily. For the Natives and Indians this was provided on municipal land adjoining the sewage disposal works at Klipspruit, which is the area now called Pimville, twelve miles from the centre of town.

Corrugated iron huts were provided by the Council as temporary shelters, and these were to be occupied for some thirty years. Neither the remoteness from Johannesburg, nor the closeness of the sewage farm, endeared the location to its inhabitants. One commission after another drew attention to the bad conditions under which the Natives lived in Johannesburg. The Native Affairs Commission of 1903/5 strongly criticised the existing state of affairs, and the Municipal Commission of 1909 urged provision of proper sites for Natives and other Non-Europeans. Beyond hiring the old Salisbury Jubilee compound as a hostel for Native men, few steps appear to have been taken by the City Council

to provide for the Bantu people. End of Phase I - Capital Expenditure R105,527:

PHASE II - 1918 to 1927:

The high mortality rates of Natives in the 1918 'flu epidemic stimulated the Council to establish Western Native Township. Between 1918 and 1921 two hundred and twenty-seven houses were built there. Meanwhile, Natives were living under most unsatisfactory conditions in places such as Newclare, Sophiatown, Prospect Township, the Malay location and other parts of the town.

It was in 1923 that the Natives (Urban Areas) Act was passed by Parliament. One of the clauses, which had far reaching effects, fairly and squarely placed the responsibility on local authorities to provide housing for Natives living and employed within their area.

Between 1926 and 1928 Wemmer Barracks was built to house 2,000 Native men. Western Native Township was extended between 1924 and 1927 by building a further thousand houses and a new location, Eastern Native Township, was established with four hundred houses. .

<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	895,096
	<u>105,527</u>
	R789,569

PHASE III - 1927 to 1939:

In 1927 Mr. Graham Ballenden was appointed the first Manager of Native Affairs, and in 1928 the Council appointed a Committee on Native Affairs. Large extensions to Western Native Township and Eastern Native Township were put in hand, and by 1930 a total of 2,633 houses had been built. The Council then acquired 1,300 morgen of land on the farm Klipspruit No: 8, some ten miles from Johannesburg, and a competition was held for the layout of a township to accommodate 80,000 Natives. Provision was to be made for administrative offices, a public hall, a cottage hospital with dispensary and clinic, a central police station, a central post office and three district offices, a fire station, ten sites for schools, ten sites for religious purposes, shopping centre, a market and a community store. The township was to be called Orlando after the then serving Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee, Councillor Edwin Orlando Leake.

This step marked a new outlook and a new approach to the City's responsibilities. While it took many years to provide the facilities planned, it is noteworthy that this planning took place during the period of depression in the early 1930's. By the outbreak of war in 1939 a total of 8,700 houses had been erected of which 5,800 were at Orlando.

In John Maud's book he states that unfortunately in the ten years after 1927 the work of the Public Health Department did not develop as rapidly or effectively as

that of the new Native Affairs Department. The Murray Thornton Commission of 1935, which enquired into the Health and Native Affairs Departments, criticised the Health Department for its failure to prevent or cure the fearful squalor which prevailed in such areas as Prospect Township, the Malay Location, Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare. There was no municipal water in Newclare until 1933, people being dependent on suspect water from wells. In 1935 the Council had installed 27 taps in Sophiatown where people queued for water and bought it by the bucket. These areas were not connected to the sewage system, and were dependent on collection of sanitary pails three times per week.

<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	2,994,960
	<u>895,096</u>
	R2,099,864
	<u> </u>

PHASE IV - 1939 to 1947:

Then in 1939 came World War II when South Africa's manpower and materials were concentrated on the war effort. The five years of the war changed almost every aspect of Bantu life in Johannesburg. There was a tremendous growth in the number of factories and industries directly associated with the war effort, resulting in an insatiable demand for Bantu labour. The estimated Bantu population increased from 244,000 in 1939 to 395,231 in 1946, of whom 211,322 were men, 100,000 women and 83,909 children. It is important to remember that there was no influx control of Bantu into the City at this stage. This abnormal increase

in the population meant that all available resources provided by the local authority were swamped out. Many tenants shared their limited accommodation with other families, but, even so, there was insufficient housing, and over a period of time eleven illegal and uncontrolled squatter camps sprang up. It was in this way that one of the most unsavoury episodes in Johannesburg's history began, and a situation developed where the health and safety of the whole City was threatened. Apart from the health hazards which these squatter camps created, the rule of law was openly flouted. Men rose overnight to assume leadership and prey on the ignorance of the Bantu who lived in these camps, and set up illegal courts where savage punishments were inflicted. Municipal and public land in Orlando, Pinville, Dube, Newclare and Alexandra was forcibly possessed and the most wretched shanties erected almost on top of one another. Fees were levied and kept by the organisers who became well-to-do in the process.

As a matter of urgency in 1944, 4,042 breeze block shelters were erected by the Council on an area of land near Orlando, and this became known as Shantytown. In 1946 the Moroka emergency camp was laid out with 11,000 sites of 20' x 20' which were allocated to families, and elementary services were provided. Before their final settlement the so-called leaders did all they could to hinder the authorities, because they had now lost their illegal revenue, and therefore continued to make trouble. The authorities were seriously embarrassed as there was no effective law to combat these movements. It was not until 1951 that

the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act brought relief, and this dangerous and disturbing phase was finally brought to an end.

<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	6,561,807
	<u>2,994,960</u>
	R3,566,847
	<u> </u>

PHASE V - 1947 to 1953:

In 1948 it was estimated that approximately 50,000 Bantu families in and around Johannesburg were living under appalling conditions and required housing. This seemed an impossible task, requiring much capital and overcoming the difficulty of building homes and providing services cheaply enough so that the tenants could afford to pay a rental based on the capital cost.

Nevertheless, during the period 1945 to 1953, 8,292 houses were built at Orlando East and West, and at Jabavu. The crushing financial burden was, however, bringing the housing schemes to a standstill. In 1951 the deficit on the Native Revenue Account was already R655,513: for the year, and each new scheme involved a further loss. By the end of 1953 the total number of houses built was 17,765, and hostel accommodation had been provided for 10,537 men.

On the 1st May, 1953, the present Manager, Mr.W.J.P. Carr, succeeded Mr. Venables as Manager of what has now

become the Department of Non-European Affairs, since it administered the affairs of all three Non-European sections of the population of the City.

In the early 1950's there was hesitancy on the part of certain elements at the City Hall to incur expenditure which would result in burdens on the ratepayers to meet losses on housing schemes now that the Government was not prepared to share losses as heretofore. They thought it was not necessary to provide housing for people who might leave the City before the repayment of the thirty-year loans. Pressure groups were formed - bodies such as the churches and Chamber of Commerce and the Institute of Race Relations urged the Government and the Council to face up to the plight of the throngs of people living under appalling conditions.

<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	12,637,416
	<u>6,561,807</u>
	R6,075,509

PHASE VI - 1953 onwards, the breakthrough:

Then followed legislation which had the effect of resolving the stalemate. 1951 had seen the passing of the Bantu Building Workers Act. This made possible the training of Bantu workers in the building trades, to build houses for their own people in proclaimed Bantu townships. It was not only the cost of building houses that presented a problem, but also the cost of providing services such as

roads, sanitation and water. Urgent representations had been made by local authorities to the State for financial assistance, and in 1953 the Bantu Services Levy Fund was established. Its revenue was derived from a monthly contribution which had to be paid by employers who did not house their employees. The proceeds of the Fund were to be paid to those local authorities in whose areas the funds were collected, to enable them to finance the major services such as sewage disposal works, reservoirs, major roads and electric reticulation. Thus the employers, who had attracted the Bantu to the cities, were to bear portion of the costs of housing. At the same time another fund was established, the Bantu Transport Services Levy, to subsidise transport for workers. The Bantu Services Levy Fund has now been existence for 14 years, and up to June 1966 Johannesburg had collected R19.4 million, which financed all the major service developments.

Site and Service Scheme: In 1953 what was called the Site and Service Scheme became State policy. The concept of the Site and Service method of dealing urgently with the mass of Bantu slum dwellers needing rehousing was that of the then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, who laid down within fairly narrow limits the principles which had to be followed by local authorities in order to qualify for housing loans for Site and Service Schemes.

Basically the scheme provided for the removal of people who were living cheek by jowl in the emergency camps on to sites 40' x 70'. On these sites essential services

such as sanitation would be provided, stand water pipes made available every 500 yards, access roads built and refuse removal services provided. On such a site tenants were to erect a temporary shack at the back, leaving the front of the site available for the permanent home. When the permanent home was built the shack was to be demolished. This scheme met with scepticism, in some quarters with strong opposition, many people fearing that the shack would be a permanent feature.

In Johannesburg 35,000 such sites were surveyed and the necessary services provided. The shacks followed. It was a period of great activity, when neighbours and friends helped each other during off work periods and over weekends, and it was incredible to see houses emerging from all sorts of secondhand materials. This creative activity had a beneficial social effect. It is pleasing to report that now only sixty-one shacks remain, the tenants of which intend erecting houses of their own design rather than accepting the standard municipal home.

In 1954 Johannesburg created a separate Housing Division in the Council to undertake the building of houses for Bantu. Mr. A. J. Archibald, the previous Town Engineer of Springs, was appointed the First Director of Housing. The Council had some years previously established the Vocational Training Centre, and its trained carpenters, plumbers and bricklayers formed the nucleus of the staff for the new Housing Division.

In 1954, the first year, 1,421 houses were built, to be followed by 3,020 houses in 1955.

The Council was dependent on Government housing loans to finance housing schemes. The Government had naturally to apportion the funds available amongst all the local authorities applying for loans, consequently the amount allocated to Johannesburg was insufficient to deal with the backlog. The Moroka emergency camp and Shantytown remained festering sores, and places of crime. In 1956 Sir Ernest Oppenheimer was invited to visit Moroka by the then Chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee, and was so aghast at what he saw that he arranged with his colleagues in the mining industry to loan the City R6: million. Mr. Chairman, that was only ten years ago. This was the injection that was needed, and with the proceeds of this loan 14,000 homes were built enabling the final removal of the families from Moroka and all of those from Shantytown. In the year ended June 1958, 11,074 houses were built.

From 1954 to 1966 the Housing Division built 46,846 houses, and, in addition, 77 schools, 3 hostels accommodating 14,428, 7 administrative blocks, 7 communal halls, a public library, 9 T.B. centres, 6 clinics, 3 beer halls, 7 beer gardens, a bank and many other minor works, at a total expenditure of R23,537,820:

In assessing the recent achievements in housing consideration must not only be given to the number of houses that have been erected, but also to the cost at which they have been built, and the transformation in the lives of the labourers who have become trained artisans in the process. While all this work by the Housing Division was proceeding,

the City Engineer was engaged on the civil engineering aspects of development.

Civil Engineering Aspects: With the green light for a crash programme of development in Soweto given by the State, the task of planning a new city of some half million people on an area of 26 square miles had to be urgently undertaken. Townships had to be planned, surveyed, recorded on plans, pegs placed, and in order to save on land surveyors even then in short supply teams of Bantu technicians were trained with a large measure of success to place the intermediate stand pegs and thus speed up the layout of the townships.

To speed up construction the existing maintenance section of the City Engineer's Department was re-organised into a virtually self-contained major branch under the control of a senior civil engineer. This branch, in meeting the demand at the peak of its activities, laid more water mains and sewers than their counterparts in the metropolitan area, and also constructed more roads per annum. At an early stage in the re-organisation of the branch of the City Engineer's Department operating in Soweto, it was realised that due to the shortage of skilled white artisans, it would be impossible to carry out the task in the time available. Training units were established and within a short time Bantu were trained in the various building trades, with particular emphasis on the skills required for civil engineering projects. Great credit is due to the Bantu for their part in the civil engineering programme achievements. To meet the demand for an increased water supply

of 25,000,000 gallons a day, two additional 10 million gallon service reservoirs and two water towers of 500,000 gallons were constructed, and 565 miles of water mains laid. In anticipation of the eventual installation of waterborne sewerage, a new modern disposal works has been built on the farm Oliphantsvlei some six miles from Soweto. It has at present a capacity of 25 million gallons. 478 miles of sewer have been laid, and here again Bantu technicians have played a large part.

Of the 600 miles of streets in the complex, 207 miles have been macadamised. 36 miles of stormwater drains have been built and cleansing services are provided to the 70,500 sites in Soweto. Total capital expenditure R18: million.

<u>Total Capital Expenditure</u>	
<u>all sources</u>	56,329,417
(at 30th June, 1966)	<u>12,637,416</u>
	R43,692,001

Government Control: In South Africa where there are three tiers of Government, Central, Provincial and Municipal, it is inevitable that there should be clashes from time to time, especially when different political parties are in control of the various tiers. There could be no more difficult sphere of activity than that of creating an acceptable Native policy, interpreting that policy and, lastly, administering that policy. It is not surprising, therefore, that from time to time there were marked

differences of opinion between the Department of Native Affairs and the City Council as to what should and should not be done and how it should be done.

One such difference arose from the dispute regarding the removal of the slum dwellers of the Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare (the so-called Western Areas) where some Bantu owned properties with freehold title. The Council was opposed to depriving the Natives of freehold rights: the Government was adamant that it was not prepared to grant freehold rights. To overcome this impasse legislation was enacted creating the Resettlement Board whose primary function was to rehouse the dwellers of the Western Areas, the intention being that on completion the cost of such scheme would be recovered from the Council, and the administration handed over to it. The functions of the Resettlement Board have been extended from time to time. Not only has it undertaken the removal of the bulk of the Natives resident in Western Areas, but it has also built houses for Natives working in Johannesburg, and for tenants at Alexandra. To 30th June, 1966, 23,695 houses have been built by the Board. The Council has assisted by undertaking all the civil engineering functions, and has also made available to the Board a large area of ground in the Diepkloof area. This ground the Council needed for its own schemes, but felt constrained to relinquish it to assist in the easing of the overcrowded and unsatisfactory conditions in Alexandra.

The last remaining major slum in which Bantu are living is the area first established as a location - Klipspruit - now housing some 7000 families. In 1934 this

area was named Pinville after Mr. Howard Pim. For years there was uncertainty as to the fate of Pinville as a determination was made in 1953 that this was to be a white group area. The Council's protests at this decision were heeded, and in 1960 permission was granted to proceed with the rehousing of the inhabitants in the adjacent areas. 1000 houses have so far been built and it is only the limitation of housing funds that is holding up the elimination of this slum.

It is pleasing to report that the Mining Houses have again come to the assistance of the Council, and to mark the celebration of Johannesburg's 80th birthday loaned the Council R750,000: at $6\frac{1}{2}$ %, so that the rehousing of the people of Pinville could continue.

I would now like to deal with some other aspects of life in Soweto.

Kaffir Beer: The consumption of liquor by the elders of the clan has been part of the tradition of most Bantu tribes. In the cities the traditional brews were not obtainable, nor were the traditional restraints in force. The law prohibited the consumption of the white man's liquor. Illicit brews, concocted from a variety of ingredients, many harmful and excessively potent, and sold in hole in the corner shebeens, thrived nevertheless, and fines were regarded as part of the running expenses. In terms of the Urban Areas Act of 1923, local authorities were granted a monopoly to brew and sell beer within their area of jurisdiction. It was not until 1937 that Johannesburg decided to exercise its right.

Beer Halls in the Urban Area: When the City Council accepted monopoly rights for the manufacture and sale of Kaffir Beer in 1937, a start was made in the brewing of beer on a small portion of ground owned by the Department at the corner of Von Wielligh Street Extension and Village Road. For the first couple of months beer was brewed by hand after the ingredients had been cooked over open fires in 44 gallon drums, and two Bantu women were engaged to ensure the authenticity of the product. Since those days sales have increased by leaps and bounds necessitating the construction of a modern brewery at a cost of R3,500,000: with a production capacity of 150,000 gallons a day. Since the beer halls were established in 1937 the revenue has amounted to R45,870,264: and the profits to R21,016,987: the sales and profits for the year 1965/66 being R5,514,483: and R2,298,665: respectively. It is difficult to visualise how the development of housing and other services could have been provided without these profits. Many people, while realising the evil effects of illicit liquors, are still uneasy about the extent to which the financing of the Bantu Revenue Account is dependent on sales of Kaffir beer, and the extent to which the Bantu are using their earnings on liquor. The profits can only be used for stated purposes for the benefit of the Bantu people.

Financing of the development in Soweto: The overall capital expenditure on the Native Revenue Account to the end of June 1966 on the developments in Soweto amounted to R56,329,417: The money to finance this expenditure came

from the following sources :

Government Housing Loans
Loans from Bantu Services Levy Fund
Loans from Mining Houses and Soldiers
Housing Organisations
Amounts advanced by the Council's Consol-
idated Loans Fund and the Capital Develop-
ment Fund, and from
Grants from the Bantu Services Levy Fund.

Deficits on Bantu Revenue Account: While for many years the deficits were moderate, the contribution from Rates Fund is now substantial. During the last 12 years the deficits have varied from a quarter of a million rands to as much as R913,481: in 1963, and have totalled R7,603,621: in the last fourteen years. The deficits on the Bantu Revenue Account have been a cause of constant debate in the Council Chamber, and in the last two Budget Debates the rejection of the budget has been moved unless the estimates were framed so as to make the Bantu Revenue Account self-balancing, on the principle that the services provided should be limited to those for which the Bantu can pay.

Medical Services: No more dramatic change has taken place than that of the health of the population of Soweto owing to the improvement in living conditions and the medical services provided. The provision of curative medical services is the responsibility of the province. The only facilities provided for many years was at the hopelessly overcrowded Non-European section of the hospital attached to the General Hospital in Hospital Hill. Owing to the distance of Pimville from the city the Council took the initiative in 1927 by establishing a clinic and later followed with clinics at Eastern and Western Native Townships. In 1933 a clinic and a small cottage hospital were built at Orlando. In 1935 child welfare clinics were established. In 1947 a clinic which operated under incredibly difficult conditions was established in a marquee tent in the Moroka emergency camp. Today there are six clinics which are linked with the Baragwanath

Hospital which was purchased from the British government by the province in 1947. Grants are received both from the Province and the Central Government and the nett cost to the Council of medical services is R750,000 per year.

In the field of immunisation there is a completely different picture from the immediate post-war era when approximately 1,000 immunisations were performed a year. Today considerable emphasis is placed on this aspect of public health. In 1963 large scale campaigns were conducted for immunisation against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, smallpox and tuberculosis. In 14 days over 105,000 immunisations were administered and a further 162,000 over 18 days later in that year. Present annual immunisations number well over half a million procedures. It is expected that B.C.G. immunisation against tuberculosis will prove invaluable in the control of tuberculosis.

In the maternal health service the number of deliveries has quadrupled and ante-natal clinics are now conducted daily at almost all of the six clinics. Where, in the post-war period, 311 of every 1,000 Bantu babies born died within the first year of life, this figure was considered to be the acme of achievement in that it was the lowest in the history of Johannesburg. It is now calculated that some 40 new born per 1,000 die within the first year of life. This dramatic improvement can be ascribed not only to the improvement in living conditions, but also to the intensity of home visiting by health visitors and the efficacy and availability of the child health advisory services.

In any community, but I think more particularly so in a Bantu community, meeting places to discuss local and national affairs are essential. To meet this need the Council has erected many halls in Soweto, and these are used by the men for their discussions, the women for their classes and various activities, and the children for physical training and cultural activities. The Council's Recreation and Community services branch also looks after families suffering from tuberculosis, the rehabilitation of youth, sheltered employment workshops, recreational and cultural services and horticultural work. Fifty creches have been established for the care of children of working mothers, and the Department was responsible for introducing all types of sporting facilities.

Education comes under the control of the Department of Bantu Education, but the Council is responsible for the provision of buildings for lower primary schools, and 72 such schools have been built. The majority of parents in Soweto make a direct contribution to the capital cost of the schools, as an amount of 18 cents is included in the monthly house rental, and of the sum of R651,964: collected to 30th June, 1966, R569,974: has been spent.

Management of the Non-European Affairs Department:

The Non-European Affairs Department has acted as the co-ordinating agency responsible for the over-all direction policy and the framing of the financial estimates for the administration of Soweto. In addition, it has to deal with complicated legislation and a multitude of regulations which affect every Bantu in the urban area. His right to

work there. His right to live there. His right to have his wife with him and raise a family there. His right to move from one urban area to another, and a host of other matters affecting his day to day life in the city.

The people of Soweto: My review has so far dealt with the living conditions, with housing, with medical services, with administration and many other aspects of Soweto. I would now like to say something about the people who live in Soweto, for the purpose of all this development was to make a home for them, for those who had left the rural areas to work in the city.

They were a pastoral people whose agricultural methods were primitive, who now found themselves restricted in the land available to them, and especially in times of drought found it difficult to provide for their families. So they came to the cities to work, to earn the cash which would provide them with the food they needed.

At first it was the men who came and worked for short spells, returning home to join their families and only coming back to the city when funds had given out. It was indeed a very different way of life from that in their homelands, and they were not equipped, with their tribal beliefs and training, for the new life in the towns and cities. Instead of the sun being their timepiece, they had to work to the inelastic and unsympathetic clock of the white man, and instead of working within the circle of the clan, where everyone knew everyone else, they were among strangers who did not care or worry about them.

Everything about life in the city was different. There were no kinsmen with whom they could consult, they had to make decisions on their own, their food was different, their dress, their medicine, and instead of a barter economy ready cash was necessary. In the clan initiative was not encouraged, but in the city the opposite was the case; they were judged on their merits and were expected to develop individuality. At home there was respect for the elders, but the daily battle of life in the city gradually obscured this, and self came first. What an adjustment to make! The migratory worker, away from his womenfolk could not be expected to observe tribal sanctions and restraints, and so began the process which has caused a most heart-rending upheaval in the structure of Bantu society, particularly in family life.

In days gone by, while customs varied from tribe to tribe, pre-marital pregnancies would have had serious consequences for both parties, but in the city no such sanctions existed and illegitimate children became accepted without the lift of an eyebrow.

In rural communities women tilled the fields and harvested the crop, but in the city there was no such work, so they joined the throngs seeking work for cash. As a result many children grew up without discipline or the desire for regular employment, and lived by their wits. The role of the women of the tribe was well defined and very different from that of women in western societies, but what a change was brought about on coming to an urban area.

Over the years greater skills were acquired and the men tended to return home at less frequent intervals; instead the women now started to come to the city, and by 1927 the ratio of men to women in Johannesburg was six to one. By 1939 the ratio of men to women was three to one, and today the Bantu population is approximately one-third men, one-third women and one-third children, and if we take the people living under family conditions in Council controlled Soweto we find that 54.76 are aged 19 and under.

Today the women of Soweto play an ever-increasingly important role in the structure of a stable society, they are the stimulating force in educating children and in many households they skimp and scrape to find the funds to enable the children to acquire the knowledge they were unable to obtain.

One of the ever present problems is of making ends meet. Poverty in rural areas is one thing, because there people share, but in the city cash is required for everything - for rent - for food - for clothing - for medicine. Fortunately, however, in these days of full employment and more adequate wages, the hardship of a large portion of the Soweto population has been mitigated, but life is a struggle, especially if the men gamble, drink or spend their money on girl-friends.

This city of E-Goli is the melting pot into which people of varying tribal backgrounds, various stages of education and civilization have been thrown, and what are

the results? I can only marvel at the resilience, at the good humour, the philosophical attitude and extreme good sense of the people. Their homes are well kept, their gardens neat, they dress tidily and often well. Who could have thought thirty, twenty, even ten years ago, that so many skills would have been acquired by these country people. Today there are Bantu matrons at Baragwanath Hospital, and a thousand Bantu students trained there have qualified as nurses by passing the same examinations as set for European students by the South African Nursing Council. Municipal treasury officials, builders, bricklayers, drain layers, electrical wiremen, lorry drivers have acquired the skills required for industry, and carry them out well. There are actors, producers of plays and composers. They have done well for themselves, these Bantu people of ours, in a comparatively short time. I know, and you know, that all is not well, all is not as it should be. When there is a social upheaval people get hurt, and it will take time, patience and understanding to heal the wounds caused by the destruction of a social order before another has taken its place. The beliefs of the Bantu, the concepts of kinship, the belief in ancestral spirits, the belief in signs, in omens good and bad, the belief that one can be bewitched, that one can bewitch one's enemy, the belief in the witchdoctor's occult powers, in his medicines - these and many others are deep rooted and will be a part of Bantu thinking for generations to come.

In Soweto today a class structure is emerging based on education, occupation, wealth and way of life. Possession of material goods is a symbol of success and status. The

better-educated, professional persons, teachers, shopkeepers, nurses, senior officials in administration, tend to form the elite of society. There are church associations, choral societies, football clubs, school associations, chambers of commerce, advisory boards, cutting right across ethnic grouping, and these activities determine one's associates and place in the new society.

Unfortunately there are also, as in other large cities, the city slickers and spivs, the people who want to make money the easy way, not caring whom they rape or rob, or how they main. I often feel that today the greatest need in Soweto is to find some way of providing the law-abiding citizen with protection from the molestation of his fellow. The urban dweller of today has travelled a long way on the path of material progress, and his standard of living, his abilities, his outlook and those of his city-bred children are vastly different from those of yesteryear.

CONCLUSION:

Was I right in saying I had a story to tell? A story of indifference, degradation, of appalling slums, of high mortality rates, of neglect, and then a story of achievement on a massive scale in the relatively short time of twelve years, a story of the acceptance of responsibility by the Mother City for the well-being of the Bantu people of Soweto. A story of material development, but also a human story of people who have been forced within a short space of time to make adaptations, to change age-old concepts and customs, to change patterns of living and of working. Material pro-

gress has resulted, and will continue. Further adaptations will be necessary, and the granting of further responsibilities and participation in administration must follow. Means must be found to develop leadership amongst the urban Bantu, and outlets for their aspirations. In my opinion the Johannesburg City Council, operating as it must within the compass of present legislation, must develop the Advisory Boards and Urban Councils as the outlets for leadership and responsibility. The Urban Council must be given administrative authority within the capabilities of its members. It must be more than advisory.

What has been acceptable in housing standards to date will be rejected in years to come. As land within reasonable limits of the city is used up, buildings of the future will need to be multi storey. This will require further changes in living patterns. The younger generation will acquire skills not possessed by their parents, and new employment outlets will have to be found.

My colleagues on the Council and the City's officials have had a sense of purpose and mission without which the material provision alone would not have enabled so vast a congregation of country people of differing tribes and tongues to adapt themselves to urban conditions. While we are aware of what has been done, we are equally aware that complacency has no place in this age of change, and are aware, too, of the restless ambitions of the Bantu for a greater participation in what South Africa has to offer. It will be our endeavour to maintain a co-operative relationship between the Council and the people of Soweto, so that ever greater progress can be achieved.

13.6.1967.

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.