

OUTLINE OF EVIDENCE
FOR SUBMISSION
TO
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE
ON
INVALIDITY GRANTS

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SENATOR THE HONOURABLE J. D. RHEINALLT JONES

I have no personal experience of the operation of the Invalidity Scheme among Europeans as my social welfare activities in recent years have been concerned with the Non-European sections of the population and as the Government's Invalidity Scheme has not hitherto been applied to Non-Europeans it is not possible to express any opinion upon the working of the Scheme among Non-Europeans. This memorandum must therefore be concerned with placing before the Committee the needs of the Non-European communities in respect of the care of the physically unfit, both totally and partially unfit, on the assumption that the Committee is concerned to find means whereby those who are unable to maintain themselves shall be protected from falling into destitution without imposing an undue burden upon the resources of those who, by reason of family relationship, should accept responsibility for their care.

The importance of the last part of the previous sentence needs to be emphasised because it is too often assumed that the poor can and should assume such responsibility without any proper examination of their resources. This is to be found in the ease with which administrative officers and the public take it for granted that Natives in the rural areas are quite able to accept responsibility for the welfare of the unfit of their race, not only as found in those areas but also in urban areas. It is not generally realised that in most Native Reserves the majority of the male population between eighteen and fifty-five are away from there in employment under Europeans to enable the family to live in the Reserves.

In a recent circular (S.W.C. 1/39) the Department of Social Welfare holds that the kraal head in rural areas must be made to carry out his obligation under Native law to maintain members of his kraal, and that destitute children in urban areas, should be sent to relatives in rural areas. As indicated above, in many cases the kraal head is for long periods away from the Reserves seeking the means to maintain his own immediate family. He may now suddenly learn that children of whom he knows nothing have been quartered upon him by the Government and that he must provide for them too. There are tens of thousands of Natives technically "domiciled" for taxation purposes in a Native Reserve who have not been near their original home for twenty or thirty years. Indeed Natives born in urban areas are technically domiciled in places they have never seen.

It is important for these several reasons to examine carefully every individual case of destitute children or unfit persons before placing the responsibility for their care upon supposed relatives.

On the European farms, the aged and others who cannot give labour are now, in increasing numbers, being turned away to find refuge in the rural towns where they are becoming a problem to the municipalities.

In the urban areas the municipalities are called upon under the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937, to render returns of "Redundant Natives" with a view to their removal to Native areas. The Native Affairs Department is not yet in a position to arrange for their reception in these areas. Few Native homes in urban areas can subsist without the income brought in by the mother and/or by the juvenile members of the family. Therefore an unemployable member of the family is a relatively heavy burden.

While I do not wish to relieve any Native of the natural duty of bearing his due share of the burden of caring for any helpless member of his family, I urge that legislative and administrative provision should be made for the State to prevent destitution where the responsibility cannot be carried without imposing an undue burden upon the resources of those, who by reason of family relationship, should accept the responsibility.

In the circular mentioned above it is argued that children's maintenance grants should not be paid in rural areas because the Government is spending large sums in improving the economic conditions in rural areas and "it is considered that sufficient is being done in this way to enable the Natives to provide for their children". Whilst I have no wish to disparage the recent efforts - and they are only of very recent origin - by the Native Affairs Department to take full advantage of such funds as are made available for the purchase and development of land for Native occupation, it must be realised that in comparison with the economic pressure on the Reserves the relief so far given is infinitesimal, and, when the natural increase of the Native population is taken into account, the new areas - if and when they are secured for Native occupation - will do little more than ease the economic pressure for a generation or so. Always and to an ever increasing extent the population of the areas will have to rely upon employment outside to maintain itself.

It is now becoming the practice to place the burden of social services for Natives upon funds derived from Native taxation or rentals from lands occupied by Natives. This practice is based upon no equitable principle.

If the Native kraal head is to be called upon to do his "natural duty" in respect of the welfare of members of his family, may not the Native population equally expect their supreme chief - the Governor-General in Council - to recognise the claims of the destitute and the unfit for the same kind of help. Is the use of the "Supreme Chief" idea to be restricted to the privileges and powers of the Government and not to include the responsibilities as well?

But the most important argument is that the Native population is a partner in the vast majority of the productive activities of the Union and is therefore entitled to a share in the national dividend. This share has been in the past, and still is, denied the Native population as can be seen from the enormous disparity between the share of the Native population and the share of the European population in such forms as wages, professional fees and public utility services provided

by the State. To begin now to segregate the Natives from the general state services and to make them bear the greater part - if not the whole - of the cost of the services to be made available to them, is to aggravate an injustice which one had hoped to see minimised as time went on. This new policy is having a very disturbing effect upon the Native people who are being urged to prepare themselves for the day when they can withhold their labour long enough to hold up the country to ransom and so to demand what is being denied them today - that is, their share of the national dividend.

This is a development statesmanship should endeavour to avoid, and I hope the Committee will press upon the attention of the Government the view that the provision of social services for Non-Europeans out of the general resources of the country is not only sociologically sound but is also a form of insurance against grave political and economic upheavals in the future.

The same principles in regard to the provision of social services should be applied to all the racial sections of the population with such variations in methods as may be required by any differences that may exist in their social relationships and economic condition.

NOTES ON
THE NEEDS OF THE NON-EUROPEAN PEOPLES IN REGARD
TO THE CARE OF THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY UNFIT

OLD AGE PENSIONS:

(a) Coloured:

The old age pension for the Coloured has no real relation to the cost of maintaining the aged. Coloured men and women often experience difficulty in producing birth certificates because their births were not registered.

Some are also arbitrarily held to be Native and therefore ineligible for old age pensions.

The Commission on the Cape Coloured Commission recommended that the pensionable age for Coloured women be reduced to sixty.

(b) Native:

Aged Natives do not receive old age pensions, but are given rations through magistrates offices. In the Transvaal, at least, the funds made available by the Provincial Administration are inadequate and many deserving cases are not helped at all.

As indicated earlier, aged Natives are now being turned off farms where they have no able-bodied children working, and the municipalities are now unwilling to allow them into the urban areas. In most cases such people have no association with Native reserves.

I have received many letters from Natives in the last year or so appealing for old age pensions.

(c) Indian:

Indian men of sixty-five and women of sixty receive pensions of ten shillings a month (10/-), but in most cases their relatives are so impoverished that they have to be helped out by benevolent associations and Indian merchants who are charitably minded.

GRANTS FOR THE BLIND:

(a) Coloured:

The Coloured blind are provided for in the Blind Persons Act, but the amount is considered by many to be quite inadequate - especially where rural towns are concerned (£6. 0. 0. to £9. 0. 0. per annum).

(b) Native:

The Native Affairs Department has made provision for a grant of £6. 0. 0. per annum. This is gratefully received but the amount does not of course cover food (N.B. the Wage Board estimates that Natives in compounds can be fed on 16/8 a month. This of course presumes purchases at wholesale prices).

(c) Indian:

The pension of 10/- a month is appreciated, but as in the case of the Indian aged, they usually belong to families which are themselves indescribably poor.

GRANTS FOR OTHER FORMS OF UNFITNESS:

There seems to be no sound reason for not accepting the principle of State responsibility for some share of the burden of maintaining the unfit other than the old and the blind, when it is accepted for these two latter forms of unfitness. Differentiation between causes of unfitness should not play any part in assessing the individual's ability to maintain himself.

EXTENSION OF STATE AID TO THE PARTIALLY UNFIT:

When State aid is restricted to the totally unfit, it is possible for the totally unfit to be better cared for than the partially unfit. The test should be the degree of the individual's inability to maintain himself upon the minimum standard of living recognised as necessary for decent living within the individuals racial group.

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING:

Emphasis should be placed upon the importance of training from the earliest possible years as a means of reducing the eventual cost to the State. In every case the possibility, through special training, of the afflicted person making some contribution towards his own maintenance should be considered. In addition to the economic and financial value of this, the psychological and moral effects of inactivity or passivity should be considered.

As regards Natives considerable help could be secured by enlisting the co-operation of missionary institutions already engaged in vocational training. I shall be glad to assist in securing this co-operation. The effects of "colour bars" will have to be considered in this connection.

CHRONICALLY SICK:

The chronically sick should, wherever possible, be provided for in institutions, where it is clear that the sick person's presence in the home will seriously interfere with the health or well-being of the family. There is a great lack of such accommodation for the Non-European chronic sick.

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- (i) A grant, towards subsistence, of £1. 10. 0 per mensem;
- (ii) A rent allowance; maximum in larger towns £2. 0. 0 per month, other towns £1. 5. 0; rural areas 15/-.

For Coloured and Asiatics the scale recommended is $\frac{3}{5}$ ths of the above (Paras. 366 et seq.)

The Committee recommended that the Invalidity Grants should cover (Paras. 188 et seq.):

- (a) Medical Treatment.
- (b) Vocational Training.
- (c) Employment (as far as possible).

The Committee also (par. 212) recommended:

- (i) The encouragement to the full of local societies to care for the mentally and physically unfit.
- (ii) Draw attention to the fact that there is a large group of physical ill for whom no special agency exists and suggested that these be referred to general charitable organisations.

Grants for Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

The Social Welfare Department proposed in 1938 to help Europeans (subject to certain conditions) whose income does not exceed £66 p.a., (Coloured £33,) by maximum grants - Europeans £42; Coloured £21.

The Committee (par. 417) recommended that the Coloured rate be $\frac{2}{3}$ ths the Europeans.

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