

SUMMARY - THE FUTURE JOHANNESBURG

by

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ADDRESS:

SUMMARY - THE FUTURE JOHANNESBURG

- by Prof. E.W.N. Mallows.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have a very short time left to try to sum up some of the main lines of thought made by the very distinguished speakers we have had the privilege of listening to over the last two days and so from these thoughts draw some practical conclusions as regards the kind of city we should be preparing ourselves for during the rest of this Century.

To use this short time to its best advantage I therefore propose with your permission to divide this talk into two halves. In the first half my colleague Mr. Muller will highlight some of the detailed points made during the symposium and discuss their planning implications; and in the second half I will attempt to carry these implications into a wider field and place the problems facing Johannesburg in this wider setting.

I would like therefore Mr. Chairman now to call on Mr. Muller to discuss some of the main points made by previous speakers.

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(Mr. J.G. Muller gave his address at this stage)

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I want now, in order to set the wider framework and draw longer-term conclusions, to make some very broad comparisons and the first two comparisons I wish to make concern on the one hand the wider sub-continental scale of Africa and on the other the smaller but much more intense and difficult metropolitan scale. I feel strongly that one cannot consider the future of Johannesburg or its setting in the Southern Transvaal without considering the Southern Africa sub-continent of which it is an integral part and with which its life and work are so intimately connected. The comparisons I wish to make are on the larger scale, the North American sub-continent with the Southern African sub-continent, and on the smaller scale Metropolitan New York with Metropolitan Johannesburg.

The similarities are, I think, fairly obvious at both scales. On the larger scale both sub-continent were largely undeveloped and in some areas very thinly populated when the visitor or colonist from Europe first appeared; in both cases this European made coastal settlements and slowly penetrated inland. In both cases this penetration was laborious till the industrial revolution occurred and railways and mechanisation of agriculture and industry began to take effect. In both cases the early cities both coastal and inland were the spring-board for development and so became

the magnets for immigrants and the storage points for skills and know-how. The coastal cities in particular were both the entry points to the new and the links to the old world; in them became concentrated the experience and the wisdom of the community, thus ensuring the snowballing of their growth and their permanence as a base camp or reference point for the pioneers that went further and further afield. Finally in both cases the sub-continents held great untapped reserves of natural resources that gave the base for a comprehensive and balanced economy firmly based on its own internal productivity.

But here this easy comparison begins to wear thin, and as with all overseas experience it must be translated to fit Southern African conditions.

To take the sub-continent first.

The whole African Continent has been cursed by nature with one great physical disability which has governed and is continuing to govern all its development : it has no waterways at its ports or inland to provide from the start cheap and constant transport for heavy goods. It has no Hudson River leading to easy valley routes into the heartland, where coal and iron ore lay; it has no easily connected series of Great Lakes; it has no Mississippi to unite central wheatlands and grazing areas, to the sea.

Nor does the African sub-continent possess the climatic advantages or the great agricultural potential of the Middle West, where the natural resources made possible not only the feeding of a vast flux of immigrants but provided a great export trade of wheat to the rest of the world. This ensured the continual growth and development of all the cities on the main lines of communications and in particular of the original coastal ports. Of these ports of course New York soon became pre-eminent because it was both the greatest natural harbour on the eastern seaboard and controlled the main lines of communication with the interior heartland. From this two faced characteristic, eastward to the old; westward to the new, all the development of New York is due.

The difference of Johannesburg with New York becomes at once apparent against this sub-continental background. Johannesburg is set in the middle of a continent, not on a great natural deepwaterharbour. It has been born with no silver spoon in its mouth given by nature, but was dependent on hard work and human ingenuity from the start. Nor did it inherit any established position, supported by the status of history; nor any accumulated store of wisdom or institutions or services. It was an urban orphan and had to make everything for itself in the shortest possible time, while gold production forged ahead impatient of the normal processes of urban growth. Moreover it is clear Johannesburg's case will be duplicated as the sub-continent develops. Nowhere are there good natural ports leading to easy routes to the interior; on the contrary, all development is starting in the interior, on a long sub-continental spine, with most difficult and expensive routes to the Coast, where harbours almost as artificial as Johannesburg itself have to be dredged and built and maintained. Instead of an Eastern seaboard we have in fact a continental highveld. So we in this interior are utterly dependent, like a deep sea diver, upon our life-lines to the ports, on the whole artificial transportation network we have constructed and are continuing to construct. Without it we could not exist for a moment, for all our connections with the rest of the world would stop.

Africa is essentially, I often feel, hostile to man : and only industrial man, fully developed sophisticated industrial man will be able to conquer her. We have, in short, a much tougher job on our hands here than the 19th Century had in North America : but then of course we have available much more powerful tools : atomic power, petro-chemical industries, supersonic aircraft and instant communication.

The continual duplication further north of Johannesburg's land-locked position in a way of course strengthens Johannesburg's position for it means it is acting as a pilot study for the urbanisation of the sub-continent. All the future Metropolises that are now being born on this great Continental highveld spine that continues at 3,000 feet or above sea level right up through Eastern Africa to Abyssinia, will have to face the same problems as Johannesburg : a position hundreds of miles from the sea with an artificially assisted birth and a present and future completely dependent upon long-distance transportation. There are other reasons why we will act as a pilot -study. Unlike North America Africa is polyglot, polyracial, with a higher population density, with many layers of ancient Cultures embedded in her society, very ill-adapted to take the shock, the full blast of an industrialised economy. Johannesburg in many ways reflects these problems in miniature : she is in fact the future Africa, an urban Africa on a very tiny but intense and very concentrated scale. For all these reasons what we do with Johannesburg may well have an example and repercussions far outside our borders. We stand in the front line, the firing line, of an acculturation process, between the industrial and the pre-industrial worlds.

Well, so much for the larger scale of the sub-continent and the setting of Johannesburg within it. What of the smaller scale, the metropolitan area itself?

Here I feel the comparison with New York and other North American cities such as Toronto or Montreal is much stronger and some useful major points can I think be selected for thinking about.

First and foremost, Johannesburg is the nerve centre of the sub-continent, the central node of personal communication. Here are made the top decisions that allocate the destiny of money and men: here are the meeting places, the counting houses, the Board Rooms. It is the great managerial centre: the Manhattan of Africa.

Secondly, it is also the workplace where the basic creed is practicality. What counts in Johannesburg is what works: actual realisation is the only acid test. But realisation means experiment and experiment means permanent innovation and a high rate of change, and an ability to live with and exploit constant change.

It is the great industrial workshop of the Republic, where new ideas must always be tried out and technology be kept up to date. This has clearly very drastic planning, development and investment implications.

Thirdly, for people though not for goods it is the great entry and exit point from the outside in an air age. It is the first and last place most visitors see and they are always in transit: they may not stay long but it gives them first and last impressions. What is true for visitors is also true for

immigrants - from the country districts, from other parts of Africa or from overseas - Johannesburg is the first port of call for most immigrants and unlike visitors they tend to stay put - just as in New York. Here they can find on arrival their own cultural and language groups, here they can find both the diversity and the specialisation necessary for their employment.

Fourthly, in this way, thanks to the immigrant, the city has become multi-dimensional. It has developed a polynuclear, polycentric structure and so gains a richness and diversity in skills, in business, in art and culture generally. It becomes the melting pot of opportunity; it is forced to become a school of tolerance and objectivity; no one viewpoint can gain the upper hand and it knows there are always more than two sides to every question. I think you will probably admit these four characteristics can be paralleled with many of the other great metropolitan centres of the world, New York among them. Johannesburg is in fact becoming metropolitan in character as well as size and I think we can say it is beginning to qualify for international status.

So finally we can come to the crunch : what are the outstanding needs for action that we should bear in mind when planning for the city of tomorrow?

Broadly I think we should capitalize and extend the basic characteristics I have tried to outline.

We should firstly develop and exploit our diversity of skills and specialisation in occupations. We should plan for variety of opportunity and attract the widest possible range of skills, so that the whole range of the modern industrial potential is available in Johannesburg or on the Reef. Educate local skills, bring in foreign skills. Human as well as natural resources must be exploited to the maximum and their full potential realised. To deal with Africa I think we will need everything we have got, and more.

Secondly, we need, as a natural follow-up to diversity and specialisation, a high priority given to R and D, to Research and Development. This means the encouragement of Research Institutes, Universities and all the apparatus of learning and education at higher levels. Technological obsolescence is fast today and the rate of growth can only be maintained by continuous intellectual investment.

Thirdly, invest heavily in transportation of all sorts - busways and freeways, subways and parking garages. The great metropolitan centres of today are cities of continual movement and their life, their productivity, depends on quick and cheap movement. We must remember that the bulk of national productivity takes place in urban areas, much of it in metropolitan areas : in this way it is clear investment in urban and metropolitan transportation is in fact a vital form of national investment, a truth often not realised. We cannot afford as a nation to let our cities die of coronary thrombosis, for if they do, our industrial and commercial productivity dies with them.

Fourthly, capitalise the fact the city is a communication and a transportation centre. It is already a great office centre : let us make it a pleasant as well as a convenient meeting place for the sub-continent and encourage the hotels and the

bright lights of the city to give the visitor some night life as a contrast after the lions and elephants of the game reserves.

Finally, there is one very important and pressing problem, a problem presently not yet solved in any of the great metropolitan centres. This is the problem of the correct administrative framework for metropolitan and regional planning. This is a highly controversial subject and this is not the occasion to discuss the alternative solutions. But what is important to realise is that this is but one aspect of the problem of governmental co-ordination at all levels - local metropolitan regional provincial, central or federal - for physical planning anywhere in the world; and this problem is basically one of balance of two opposing forces : the force of overall direction from the top and the force of innovation as well as of consent from the bottom. This is essentially a two-way traffic lane and unless these lanes are kept open continuously the end product of planning is impossible - namely the construction of a balance or equilibrium. At the moment there is in South Africa a partial vacuum between these two forces at the metropolitan and regional scales; and the degree of metropolitan development in South Africa - and not in Johannesburg only - demands now this vacuum be closed as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I hope this very rough and inadequate summary, given by Mr. Muller and myself, helps to clarify some of the very valuable ideas that the various speakers have contributed to this Symposium. May I thank you on behalf of Mr. Muller and myself for the privilege of having been asked to speak at this Symposium. Perhaps I might end with one suggestion; that perhaps in view of the very great interest that the previous speakers have aroused, that some kind of follow-up meeting be possibly considered by your Association?

THE FUTURE JOHANNESBURG

THE RAW MATERIAL FOR PLANNING

- by John G. Muller

Suffice it for me to say at the outset that the planning implications of the very authoritative series of papers which have been delivered over the last two days are, of course, as diverse as were the papers themselves. My task now is to attempt to co-ordinate the content of the addresses in order to give some assessment of the basic material required for the future planned development of Johannesburg. And, co-ordination is necessary, since the inherent inter-relationship of the various fields of human activity within the city has been clearly exposed by the papers and by discussion following the presentation of the papers.

It was, I think, both logical and fortuitous that Professor Kleu's address was the first delivered, in that he assessed in a singularly competent way, the place of Johannesburg within the wider spectrum of national and regional activity at the present - at this point in time. I stress the time factor here because regional development strategy must perforce be related to the stage of growth of the national space economy.

By accepted standards, the Republic is now firmly entrenched in the category of an industrial society - one standard, or criteria, being that industrial output should represent a 25 to 50% share of the gross national product. In this respect we share a rung on the ladder with countries such as Japan, Australia, W. Germany, France and the United Kingdom. One should not under-estimate the maturity of our economy. South Africa has passed well beyond the pre-industrial transitional stage - a stage involving spatial (geographic) shifts associated with the movement from an agrarian to an industrial economy. But, and this fundamental, for each major period of economic development of a country, there is a corresponding structure of the space economy. In other words - regional policy is a function of physical/spatial changes precipitated by economic growth.

Now, inherent in our stage of national growth is an uneven pattern of spatial and economic development :-

1. On the one side of the coin we find areas of investment concentration, of economic activity, of people - Johannesburg.
2. On the reverse side are found less developed, on occasion stagnant or (using American terminology) lagging, regions.

There is therefore an imbalance in the national picture :- nodes of concentration and underdeveloped, under-utilized areas.

A lasting or sustained state of spatial disequilibrium is detrimental to any country. An objective of a more balanced settlement and hence economic activity pattern in South Africa has now been set by the Central Government.... and their participation in the play of economic forces is indicative of their involvement in planning.

Where public policy aims at the encouragement of new growth points (decentralisation) to bolster less developed areas, the planning strategy must be related to :-

1. The strength and character of the National economic framework at the time and the economic phase to which the country is moving, and
2. The dynamic pattern and functional base of existing urban centres and the capacity of such centres for growth, decline or control.

By locating new areas of investment, the capacity for growth of the economy, the efficiency of productive activity, and the extent of spatial integration of the economy, may be affected. Proposals relating to the future development of Johannesburg, which is an inseparable part of the country's economic framework, should be assessed in this light.

This brings up another major point arising from Professor Kleu's address: the means of retaining a balance between local interests and aspirations, and national policy. By implication, co-ordination between the various levels of government. This is a very real problem to the Johannesburg City Council.

The heart of the problem lies in the spiralling rate of growth of Johannesburg - a rate which has, by all accounts outstripped the existing legislative framework. The deficiency in co-ordination serves to illuminate the inadequacy of the existing order to cope with contemporary demands. Has not the time arrived to review for purposes of planning, the seemingly obsolete pattern of political administrative boundaries? Provincial boundaries based not on areas affiliated and fused by physical, human, or productive factors, but on historical event.

Could not, under the guidance and control of the central government - the Department of Planning - a series of logically delimited regions based on accepted concepts of regional division be formulated and instituted to replace the outdated system of Provincial control in planning matters? Regions comprising areas related in space, in function, in productive pattern and in human activity :- under-developed regions, natural resource regions, conservation regions, metropolitan regions and the like.

Now, reducing our scale, but not perhaps our horizons, we come to Johannesburg and its activities in general and in particular, to the sphere of sport - of recreation.

Since we are looking to the future, it is not without relevance to mention that by the year 2,000, the work week will comprise not more than four days per week; each day consisting of less than eight working hours. With public holidays, annual vacations and the like, the working year could be of 180 days - with 185 days off. Associated with this, quite obviously, are the problems involved in increased leisure time. Mr. Fortune has stressed as the primary objective in sport, the production of young men of outstanding sporting capabilities - indeed, the prowess of our sportsmen is known to determine the extent of public spectator support.

The future spiral in population figures, coupled with increased leisure time, will inevitably precipitate an increase in spectator attendance at sporting events. If international status symbol stadia are unnecessary and impractical - the need for a greater number of venues accommodating less spectators, will be felt in the years to come.

Accessibility to work, to places of employment, is accepted as a fundamental factor in daily urban life. With the pendulum swinging away from business activity (in terms of time) to leisure pursuits, accessibility to areas catering for the latter constitutes a factor of not inconsiderable consequence in future planning programmes. Connections to rail transportation, to rapid transit systems and to expressways - the increase in car ownership is relevant here - are essential if a "vanishing act" of 40,000 persons per hour is to be achieved.

The location of future venues of sporting activity must, I think, be determined in this light. We have Kyalami and the Wanderers to the north, Ellis Park and Rand Stadium in central situations - perhaps we should now look south to the dormant mining land peripheral to the new motorway system.

An extension of this reliance on transportation facilities introduces the broader horizons of international air traffic and tourism.

If the consistent escalation in the extent of air traffic flow to Johannesburg is maintained - and there is little to provoke the conclusion that a reduction in air traffic will be experienced - the prospect of Mr. Agnew's Jumbo-Jets, Mock-up Mines, Mini-cities and Wave Baths cannot be too far removed in time.

This point can perhaps be underlined by figures which indicate that some 189,000 tourists visited South Africa in 1960 - in 1966 this spiralled to 257,000 - and of this figure, some 75% - i.e. about 193,000, spent some time in Johannesburg during their stay in the Republic. Doing an elementary projection of these figures, Johannesburg will have something in the neighbourhood of 470,000 visitors in 1990 - this out of a total of 600,000 persons visiting South Africa.

Against this must be balanced the sustained increase in the number of tourists arriving by air - that is at Jan Smuts - and the fall-off of tourists arriving via the sea-routes. Table Bay, the traditional gateway to South Africa, has for a while now been falling foul of modern technology. The major entry point, the gateway of the country in the future will be Johannesburg.

Therefore, and this common cause now, Johannesburg must be planned as a tourist centre - a personal service centre - fully geared to the constant processes of change relating to tourism. It will be in effect a poly-national absorption centre offering those services prerequisite to international tourism.

From the physical viewpoint this gives rise to three basic factors :

1. The planned creation of new points of local attraction, and/or greater exploitation of the existing.
2. The location, and considerations of accessibility to such areas of tourist interest.
3. The positive promotion of the aesthetic content of the city to provide a visual impact upon those who have come to see but not to stay. Also implicit in the concept of Johannesburg as a service centre for international tourism, is the necessity for diversification in theatrical promotion and production, in modes of entertainment. Diversification generating in full range of personal choice in social activity.

There is at the moment a bi-focal physical arrangement of business and retail activity in the central area of Johannesburg : The C.B.D. to the south, and the Braamfontein commercial zone to the north of the rail-line gap. The extension of central city functions, particularly professional services, into Braamfontein has followed the classic evolutionary pattern of invasion and succession - and will be reinforced by the central area proposals of the Forward Planning Branch of the city council. (I should like to digress here for a brief moment and pay tribute to the Forward Planning Branch. This branch which is one of the younger divisions of the City Engineer's Department, and is unique in local governmental organisation in South Africa, has since its establishment made tremendous strides in laying a planned foundation for the future Johannesburg and in ironing out some of the incipient problems of the city. I feel sure that under the guidance of Mr. Marsh, it will continue to produce sound, imaginative and dynamic proposals such as those contained in the new Central Area Study). But, it is evident that Braamfontein has experienced difficulty in establishing a second entertainment node - an independent "Bright Lights" zone.

In fact, the "Broadway" of Johannesburg, essentially a cinema core, will be consolidated further by the introduction of international status hotel complexes in the downtown area. The proximity of the established zone of entertainment to new tourist-orientated hotels, to restaurant facilities and to the movement pattern of window shopping - the implications here are fundamental - indicates the entrenchment of this social component in its present location.

Established venues of live entertainment lack this cohesion in spatial location - they are almost without exception scattered along the periphery of the hard core of the central city area. We have however, the embryo of a linear pattern of theatrical establishments extending from this building to the Civic Theatre - a cultural overflow from the C.B.D. entertainment zone into Braamfontein; and it would seem reasonable to reduce that a second entertainment zone will take form in Braamfontein in the future. An entertainment node based on live theatre.

Further, I should like to submit that the consolidation of the cultural heart of the city - the Civic Centre - will be facilitated by the inclusion of the somewhat controversial Art Gallery within the immediate environs of the civic complex. Accepting that space on the civic site is lacking for the Gallery, a peripheral location incorporating both the essential character of the civic function and the stimulus of active public participation, would appear to fit the bill.

Taking as read the associated governmental and historic monumental problems, does not the suitability of the Fort site, linked as it is in space to the civic centre and to the human movement pattern along the cosmopolitan Kotze Street, warrant further expenditure of time and effort?

While Professor Viljoen discussed in his very fine paper a number of the problems stemming from megalopolitan growth, he dealt rather with basically human issues such as communications media, than with the physical planning implications of such growth.

He did, however, lay emphasis on the desirability of the active promotion of processes of co-ordination between organisations related spatially and in function. Further, he stressed the necessity of effective and continual co-ordination between the two Universities of this city. Indeed, we have here in our Universities a logical base for intellectual interplay, cross-fertilisation of ideas and the rational use of mental resources.

Might I at this stage give a first and elementary example of the type of co-ordination which is in the process of welding the two Universities together : the active assistance of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand is now - at this early stage in time - being made available to the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit in connection with planning problems associated with the establishment of their University precinct. This service is available for such time as they are without a planning department of their own, or for such period of time as the R.A.U. might require the assistance of Wits. University.

Reference was made in Mr. Price's paper on future retailing patterns to the regulations and rezoning restrictions which could stultify commercial effort and advance. In this regard a number of basic points are perhaps worth mention :

1. South Africa and Johannesburg expect a population increase in future years of some considerable magnitude;
2. Population increase precipitates increases in human facilities, particularly in residential accommodation and the like;
3. Accommodation within the city's precincts will in the future in all probability be on the basis of higher residential density rates - increased numbers of persons per acre.
4. The establishment and location of shopping centres other than in the downtown area will depend upon this last factor, since it is this density of population which creates the threshold of public support prerequisite for retail store establishment.

Future zoning and rezoning for business land usage must, amongst other relevant factors be based to a considerable degree on this approach.

The problem of parking in the downtown zone; this will be solved only by utilising all the techniques we have at our disposal - which would include considerations of longer term parking on the C.B.D. fringe; short term, more expensive parking facilities closer to the hard core; and by making use of early and late daylight hours for service vehicles in those critical areas where the pedestrian should have priority during peak shopping times. Perhaps, in addition, thought should be given to the amendment of the "Shops Act" to permit shopping to take place outside normal working hours and thereby take advantage of a greater leisure in shopping - using a shopping expedition as a form of recreation.

These, then, represent rather inadequately some of the planning implications of the future development of Johannesburg, but before passing the microphone to Professor Mallows, I would like to take the liberty of quoting a comment of his when discussing the infancy of Johannesburg at a Conference some years ago. Professor Mallows stated that Johannesburg was expected to become a Ghost Town and no one bothered to plan for a potential ghost. Time has laid the ghost to rest and in its stead we have the very solid specimen which is contemporary Johannesburg. Time also has shown that many are concerned with the planning of the future Johannesburg - your presence here is proof of this.

Thank you.

DISCUSSION ON SUMMARY

THE FUTURE JOHANNESBURG

- by Prof. E.W.N. Mallows

and

Mr. J.G. Muller

QUESTION:

I represent the National Council of Women. I noticed that throughout the discussions nothing was ever mentioned about housing for immigrants.

Prof. Mallows:

Obviously, housing is of very high priority, but the fact that it is difficult only reflects the fact that we are developing at a very high rate.

QUESTION:

I too think that housing is important. We must open our eyes now that the past is finished. This was a town developed on the grounds that there was plenty of space. I think that efficient public transport is the only solution to the traffic problems of the town.

Prof. Mallows:

I cannot say much more than I have already said that housing is important and is part of comprehensive planning problems. But I do not think that one should go on talking about housing, period. There are many different types of housing and different types of people at various stages. The housing required for a man and woman just left school is not the housing required for a family person and is not the housing required for an old couple with grown-up children. The problem is much more complex than most people generally admit.

Comment:

Mr. Chairman, I can only repeat what has been said about the wonderful symposium we have had the pleasure and honour of attending, but I am a little worried about the tremendous canvass that we have tried to fill in during these two days and I am just wondering what will be done with the wealth of ideas that have come out of this symposium. I believe that the follow-up is what will count. Might I suggest that probably many of us would like the opportunity of discussing further our own subjects and airing further ideas. Could we, therefore, have in the foreseeable future a follow-up symposium and thrash out, specially in discussion, the thoughts which I am sure would flow.

Comment:

We have been talking in terms of facilities and what future facilities we should have, but I think we have perhaps not looked at the need to prepare the people themselves for the future. I am thinking in terms of what effect living in cities has on people. I think we must bear this too in mind.

Comment:

I am sure we are aware that outside this building there is a vast Non-European population on whose labour this city is utterly dependent and it permeates every facet of our public life. If there is to be a follow-up, could I plead for some thought to be given to the vast mass of Non-Europeans as they affect the life of this city.

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