

DIE ROL VAN DIE PROVINSIE OM TE VOORSIEN
AAN OPENBARE ONTSPANNING.

THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCE IN PROVIDING
FOR PUBLIC RECREATION.

(Paper to be read to the Conference of the South African Nature Union, on the 25th April, 1968, at Pretoria).

Voor ons die rol van die provinsies in die voorsiening van openbare ontspanning kan bespreek, moet ons 'n antwoord soek op die vraag, „wat is hulle wetlike verantwoordelikheid in hierdie verband?”

In Suid-Afrika word die verantwoordelikhede van die provinsies onder andere deur die Wet op Finansiële Verhoudings (Wet Nr. 38 van 1945) neergelê. Die Tweede Bylae van die wet bevat 'n lys aangeleenthede waaroor die provinsies geregtig is om wette te maak, en dus ook geregtig is om self op te tree. Die Bylae bevat al geruime tyd die volgende paragrawe:

- „2. Die behoud van plante en diere;
- „4. Die instelling van, beheer oor en bestuur van biblioteekdienste, museums, kunsgalerye, herbariums, botaniese tuine en soortgelyke instellings en diere-tuine, akwariums, aseanariums, slangparke en soortgelyke instellings waar lewende diere gehou word vir vertoning, met uitsondering van enige inrigting wat onder die bepalings van die Wet op Staatsondersteunde Inrigtings, 1931 (Wet No. 23 van 1931), val;
- „5. Die beheer oor en die bestuur van sodanige plekke op kroongrond as wat die Goewerneur-generaal mag uithou as plekke van openbare vermaak of ontspanning, of van geskiedkundige of wetenskaplike belang;
- „12. Die beperking en reëling van en beheer oor perdewedrenne, die verbied, beperking en reëling van en beheer oor ander wedrenne
- „13. Die lisensiëring en reëling van, en die beheer oor vermaaklikheids- en ontspanningsplekke binne die provinsie, en die oplegging van 'n belasting aan die lisensiehouer ten opsigte van die ontvangstes aldaar of 'n heffing gegrond op die toelatingsprys;
- „14. Die aanleg van dorpe, met inbegrip van -
.....

(d)/.....

- (d) die uithou van grond vir plaaslike bestuur of ander openbare doeleindes in 'n goedgekeurde of gewysigde skema van dorpsaanleg;"

Hieruit kan gesien word dat die provinsies al jare lank belange gehad het by verskeie aspekte van openbare ontspanning.

Gedurende die laaste parlamentsitting is 'n nuwe paragraaf, paragraaf 24, by die tweede bylae ingevoeg, was soos volg lui:

- „24. Die instelling van en beheer oor openbare oorde, rusoorde, vakansieplekke, vakansiekampe, woonwaparke, tentkampe en piekniekplekke: Met dien verstaande dat sodanige instelling en beheer deur 'n liggaam of instelling beoog in artikel 84 (1) (f) van die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 1961 (Wet No. 32 van 1961), of deur 'n ander persoon as 'n statutêre liggaam, nie op 'n ander wyse gereël word nie as by regulasies wat kragtens 'n ordonnansie van die provinsiale raad uitgevaardig is in oorleg met die Departement van Toerisme en die Departement van Sport en Ontspanning".

Die laaste gedeelte van die paragraaf beteken dat beheer oor munisipaliteite en private persone wat ontspannings-geriewe aanskaaf, alleen kan geskied deur middel van regulasies wat in raadpleging met die twee genoemde departement gemaak is. Die provinsies mag egter hulle werksaamhede en dié van statutêre liggame sonder enige raadpleging beheer.

Die wetlike posisie is dus duidelik gestel. Die provinsies is benoem om verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar vir die voorsiening van openbare ontspanningsgeriewe, en ook om beheer daarvoor uit te oefen, hetsy of dit deur die provinsie self, deur openbare instansies of deur private instansies aangeskaaf word.

Die wet erken egter dat openbare ontspanning ook die belange van twee ander owerheidsweë, naamlik die Departement van Toerisme en van Sport en Ontspanning, raak. Om te verseker dat behoorlike koördinerings tussens die provinsies en hierdie twee staatsdepartemente plaasvind, en ook om te verseker dat die gespesialiseerde belange van hierdie departemente nie per abuis oor die hoof gesien word nie, bepaal die wet dat die betrokke departemente geraadpleeg moet word voor sekere beheerregulasies geproklameer word.

Ek wil die punt egter beklemtoon - die provinsies is die primêre owerhede wanneer van openbare ontspanningsgeriewe gepraat word.

I think it would be wise, right at the outset, to try and get a clear picture of where the provinces stand in relation to the Department of Sport and Recreation and the local authorities, both of whom are involved in public recreation.

Relations between the provinces and local authorities are easily clarified. Within their areas, municipalities are responsible for providing land and facilities for recreation on a scale and of a variety to meet the day-to-day needs of their burgesses. If they aspire to be tourist centres, they must obviously provide facilities, as a business investment, for tourists too.

The South African constitution makes the provinces responsible for legislation covering local authority affairs: therefore the provinces are responsible for keeping an eye on municipalities in the discharge of all their functions, including provision of recreation. In this way the provinces are charged with the duty of advising and assisting local authorities, for example by setting standards, suggesting suitable controls, ensuring that town planning schemes reserve the right amount of land for recreation, and so on.

Functional relations between the Department of Sport and Recreation and the provinces are not quite so obvious. Basically, I think it can be said that, whereas the provinces are interested primarily in providing and maintaining facilities for recreation, the Department is concerned with recreation as such. It is interested in facilities only to the extent of ensuring that there are enough of them and that they are suitable for the kind of recreation for which they are intended. The Department, as it were, represents consumer interests whereas the provinces represent the suppliers.

Let us illustrate this with the example of an up-and-coming recreation - horse riding.

The provinces must determine the demand for facilities, and the standards to be aimed at. They must ensure that there are places where riding horses can be stabled, which may require special town planning provisions in appropriate areas. They must persuade local authorities to provide bridle paths, jumping arenas, pony club grounds, polo fields, etc. They must ensure that these facilities are healthy and safe.

/The.....

The Department is responsible for improving riding standards, for encouraging clubs to meet regularly, for smoothing travel arrangements for a polo tour of the Argentine or for acting as midwife in the birth of a South African Rodeo Association. It is there to advise provinces and local authorities on the minimum size of a stable or a standard polo field (if they do not know already) but its interest in facilities as such ends when it is satisfied that there are enough of them and their standard is adequate.

Responsibility for providing a physical setting for public recreation thus rests four-square on the shoulders of the provinces. The interest and participation of all other authorities, with the exception of the municipalities and certain statutory bodies like the National Parks Board, is either incidental (as in the case of Water Affairs and Forestry) or peripheral (as in the case of Tourism), or co-ordinating and advisory (as in the case of Sport and Recreation).

Let me hasten to add that no province would be so foolish as to resent the help of these other authorities or to try and edge them out of the field. The provision of recreational facilities for our ever-growing urban population is a mammoth job. It can only be accomplished if every authority and individual with a suitable piece of land or water under his control encourages people to enjoy its recreational potential. Nor do the provinces believe that they are the divine repositories of all wisdom, knowledge and inventiveness. Ideas and initiative must flow from all sides.

But there is an unfortunate human weakness to which we are all prone - back seat driving, or, to use an expression more appropriate to this gathering, arm chair rugby. It takes a very great man to delegate responsibility to somebody else and then leave him to get on with the job. Lord Holford put it well in pleading with the Australian government to delegate real authority to the Canberra development authority. He said, "you don't plant an acorn, then dig it up every few days to see whether it is growing into an oak tree". In tending the recreational acorn, I am afraid the provinces fear that some authorities suffer less from green fingers than itchy ones !

Let us be optimists, and assume that the provinces are allowed to get on with their job without really crippling interference. What exactly does that job entail?

/Of course.....

Of course, they will themselves provide, and manage, recreational facilities of various kinds. Their Nature Conservation Divisions, or in the case of Natal, the Parks Board, have already built up enviable international reputations in the sphere of wild life conservation and the entertainment of visitors to provincial game parks and other natural resorts. They stock inland waters with trout and other sporting fish, help farmers to stock their farms with game, and even encourage the creation of private game reserves. They are quietly building up experience and expertise in the design and management of mass recreational resorts, like those at Loskop and Allemanskraal. Undoubtedly this lusty new baby will eventually grow up to be bigger than its conservationist parent, and like its counterparts in America, will become big business.

However, this "direct action" function, spectacular though it may be, covers only the ten percent of the recreation iceberg which shows above the sea. Responsibility for public recreation entails much more than that. Provincial participation in below-the-surface activity can be divided conveniently into another six functions, which may be summarised as:

- (a) to define needs,
- (b) to make an inventory of available resources,
- (c) to make a recreation plan and programme,
- (d) to implement the plan,
- (e) to exercise control, and
- (f) to educate young people in the constructive use of leisure time.

A brief comment about each of these functions might help to explain what they entail.

(a) Definition of Needs:

This involves deciding what constitutes a full range of recreational facilities, in the special circumstances prevailing in each province and region, to meet the varied needs and desires of the public. Quantitative as well as qualitative definitions must be attempted, and it is not enough to be content with "felt" or expressed needs. There will be many "unfelt" needs, for things of which the public has no knowledge or experience but which, when provided, they will take to like the proverbial duck to water. It needs imagination and sensitivity to decide what these things are.

/Two points....

Two points call for further comment:

- (i) I spoke of a "full range" of facilities. This means the whole gamut from spectacular game, mountain or water parks down to a place for a man to take a dog for a walk in the evening, or for children to fool around in after school.
- (ii) It is not good enough to guess. We are dealing with man's most valuable resource in this age of the population explosion - land. We must not under-provide for recreation, but we dare not over-provide, because we depend on land for our food, and in cities it is the platform for all our crowded activities. We cannot waste it. We must base our land demands on scientific surveys of need.

Here I hope you will forgive me if I appear to strut a little on behalf of my home province, Natal. Of course, the song says that Pretoria rules the Waves, but in Natal we live much nearer to the sea and so we have learned that;

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures."

So, in order to go out to meet the challenge of the coming "recreation explosion", which could swamp our ship if we are not ready for it, we have launched a provincial recreation survey in what, to round off the metaphor, we find are virtually uncharted seas. Very little scientific research appears to have been done anywhere on what people need in the way of recreational facilities, which are normally provided on an empirical basis as far as one can judge.

The field work for a Pietermaritzburg survey was done last year. The information has now been coded, and is on the point of being processed by computer. Later this year we hope to know how Pietermaritzburg people of various ages, races, social groups and so on spend their spare time, how they would like to spend it, what, if anything, prevents them from

/doing what.....

doing what they would prefer, and a host of other pieces of information. With more experience it may be possible to take short cuts, but we felt that this pioneering study should be as thorough as it was possible to make it, using strict sampling techniques whose mathematics and logic are a mystery to me. Having sorted the mass of survey information into the comprehensible form of tables and maps, the next step will be to analyse it and try to read the messages it contains. From these we hope to be able to interpret real needs, and to convert these needs into a quantitative statement of land requirements, especially in urban areas where land reservation for recreational purposes has been based largely on intuitive judgements in the past.

A similar, but of course bigger, survey is being made for us in Durban by the Natal University Institute for Social Research. On the basis of the experience gained in these two surveys, it is hoped that surveys will be made in other centres so as to build up a National recreation survey.

A gathering of enthusiasts like this congress tends to become a bit starry-eyed after the first few papers. I do not want to douse any stars, but it might be worth considering what the Great South African Public really wants in the way of recreation. An as yet uncompleted questionnaire survey on Durban beach turned up the following answers, among others, to the question: "Could you suggest any improvements that could be made to the beach?"

"Music over public address system".

"Entertainment like Cineland in Durban".

"Amusement centre needed".

"No night life for young people".

"Couldn't something be done about blue bottles".

"Remove stones in water".

"Too many chemicals burn eyes".

"Should have tea room right on sand."

"Level the beach out".

"Grass to lie on".

"Licenced bars on beach".

Of course, I have selected these replies and one cannot say at this stage what percentage of opinion they represent. All the same, they occur frequently enough to reflect a category of person who has a purely passive, unimaginative attitude to leisure. I think you should realise that the ideals your organisation stands for are not necessarily shared by everybody - perhaps they are even a minority view !

/No doubt.....

No doubt you will reply "what people want is not necessarily what they need." True enough, but the provinces, as surveyors of recreation, dare not ignore the wishes of their public. They can, and should, exercise a subtle influence, but they cannot set themselves up as open air evangelists. That is the task of organisations like yours.

(b) Inventory of Resources:

Once we have decided what the public's recreational needs are, and what land will be wanted to satisfy those needs in the foreseeable future, the next step is to make an inventory of existing and potential resources.

There is no point in making the inventory before we have estimated the need. We wouldn't know what to look for. For example, what value would a survey be which showed that the Drakensberg could accommodate ten million Sunday afternoon picnic parties?

It reminds me of a song the Beatles sing on the subject of "the news today" - the words go like this:

"I read the news today - Oh Boy !

Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire.

And though the holes were rather small,

They had to count them all.

Now they know how many holes it takes

To fill the Albert Hall."

(c) Recreation Plan and Programme:

All the surveys and inventories in the world will serve no purpose unless they culminate in the drawing up of a comprehensive recreation plan for the province concerned. Such a plan should define policy. It should designate the authorities or categories of individuals who will be expected to provide different kinds of facilities. It will indicate the scale of land reservations which are needed for recreation in local authority areas. It will indicate specific areas of land which should be reserved for regional and national recreation needs, and the kind of recreational facility which should be provided in each. It will include a programme and financial estimates.

Such a plan will need to be re-examined and revised regularly, because unforeseeable changes in public needs and in external factors like national economy will certainly make it out-of-date after a longer or shorter time.

There are two controversial questions which will have to be decided at the outset, viz.,

- (i) the field of activity of private developers as against public authorities, and
- (ii) Whether any privileges are to be given to exclusive groups, like clubs, in public resorts.

/Both of these....

Both of these questions are contentious, and there will be a temptation to avoid answering them directly. Painful though it may be, the nettle must be grasped firmly because if it is not, we will drift into a situation in which there will no longer be any choice.

I think both problems must be approached via the maxim:
"The public interest is always paramount in a public resort."

Professor Miller will be able to confirm the danger of allowing private enterprise to become too deeply committed, via heavy capital investment, in a public park. The point can be reached where policy is determined, not by public welfare, but by private profit, and where the administering authority dare not correct mistakes such as overcrowding for fear of hurting massive financial interests. I would suggest, therefore, that whatever role private enterprise plays in providing services, capital investment in a public park or resort must be met from public funds. At the same time, there must be scope for private enterprise to participate in recreation, in places where it will itself be responsible for the maintenance of recreational facilities. Where a person or a company is prepared, for example, to maintain a lion park or build a dam for water sports, it is entitled to reap whatever profits it can. Where a game reserve or a dam is built and maintained from public funds, I think the position is different, as it is in the case of places of special scenic or scientific interest.

Fishing clubs, boating clubs, mountain clubs, etc. are the backbone of active recreation and they must be encouraged and helped whenever necessary. Apart from their role in maintaining enthusiasm, they are important controlling and disciplinary authorities over their members, and valuable spokesmen for the activity they represent. A place must be found for them in any recreational programme, but their sectional interests should not be given preference so as to exclude individualists and dabblers who choose not to join a group.

(d) Implementation of the Plan:

Having drawn up a plan, it is necessary to make sure it is carried out. This will be done by encouraging, and where appropriate helping, authorities and individuals to play their part in it and by discouraging or preventing the establishment of facilities in the wrong place - for example where they would disfigure a beauty spot or bring crowds of trippers to a wilderness area.

/(c) Control....

(e) Control:

At first sight the idea of control may appear out of place in the realm of public recreation, where one of the objects is to escape from the restraints of every-day life. I am afraid that we cannot escape controls entirely. The public itself must be controlled to a limited extent, even when relaxing - as gently and unobtrusively as possible, but firmly - for the sake of public health, for the public's own safety and enjoyment, and for the protection of property and the rights of others.

Secondly, those who provide amenities and in so doing hope to make an honest penny - or a big buck, as the case may be - must be firmly controlled to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained in the facilities and service they offer. Control therefore involves the drawing up of standards of behaviour, or of facilities, and their enforcement by promulgation of regulations and appropriate policing.

(f) Education:

The final major function of the provinces, as recreation authority, is to educate people, especially young people, in healthy and constructive use of leisure time and in an appreciation of our national heritage. This is a long-term investment, but without it much less value will flow from all other recreational endeavours.

Each of these seven functions is a major task in itself, and you will understand why I said that a province would be foolish to resent constructive help from anybody who is able to give it. In fact, public recreation impinges on the activities of a great many authorities, voluntary bodies and individuals.

In the same way, exercise of these functions within a province calls for the co-ordinated efforts of a number of different departments and agencies. Let me briefly outline the set-up in Natal, with which I am familiar. The other provinces all have a corresponding set-up - perhaps more centralised and, we in Natal like to think, less dynamic and effective for that reason, but that is a matter of opinion and I won't argue with my trans-Drakensberg colleagues if they have other views.

The corner stone of the recreation programme in Natal is the Parks Board, a semi-autonomous body whose board is appointed by the Administrator-in-Executive Committee, and which controls its own budget and team of dedicated officers. The Board controls flora and fauna conservation, runs the provincial game parks, nature reserves, etc. and plays host to some 128,000 visitors per year. Recently the Parks Board has set up new Division of Public Resorts, with a senior conservator in charge, to run specifically "recreational" resorts as distinct from game parks, where the principal aim is nature conservation. The Parks Board also has a division for the maintenance of historical sites, of which there are many in the province, especially in Northern Natal. The first big job of the Resorts Division will be the development of Midmar Dam, near Pietermaritzburg and within easy reach of Durban, as a resort for the large urban population of the region.

/The local authorities....

The local authorities division of the provincial secretariat plays an important part in drafting and promulgating regulations, and in watching over local authorities in their implementation of the provincial recreation policy through their own action and the application of municipal by-laws.

The Local Health Committee is a special appointed body which assumes local authority control, heavily subsidised from provincial revenues, over any area outside formal local authorities, where control becomes necessary due to sporadic or incipient development. It plays an important part in the implementation of a recreation programme because key areas, where there is strong pressure from private individuals to develop land for pleasure or profit, but where such development would not be in the public interest, can be placed under its control.

Such an area covers the rolling hills which form the backdrop to the Midmar Dam. Especially during the morning and late afternoon, mistiness in the atmosphere exaggerates the scale of the hills and endows them with a romantic and picturesque quality which is half the charm and attraction of the place. Ill-placed development could completely destroy the scale, and with it the illusion of romance and mystery; the suspicion that somewhere up there, depending on one's imagination, are trolls, or unicorns, or nymphs and satyrs, or perhaps merely contented farming folk, living their idyllic lives far from the madding crowd.... or perhaps primeval wilderness peopled with beasts our ancestors found there.

I make no apology for these poetic flights of fancy. In the hustle of our materialistic modern world we get all too few chances to let our imaginations roam free: everything is explained or explicable. A complete recreation programme will provide for recreation of the spirit and imagination as well as the body and the mind. The preservation of subtleties of mood and atmosphere in a park or resort is perhaps even more important than the provision of facilities or the preservation of the wild creatures living there - certainly, the creatures acquire a fuller significance in the right setting. This is why a visit to a game reserve is infinitely more satisfying than a visit to a zoo, even though the actual animals which are the ostensible reason for the visit can be seen less well.

The Provinces are also responsible for roads, and therefore for access to places of recreation. Here, too, an imaginative approach produces what may at first sight appear an anomalous, not to say heretical, theory. Roads engineers are dedicated to improved ease and comfort of travel. Places reserved for mass recreation must, of course, have easy and comfortable access. But there are other places to which roads should be kept bad deliberately, and still other places which should have no roads at all. I think half the enjoyment some of my fishing friends get from a holiday on the Zululand coast is in the effort to get there over sandy, overgrown tracks, and the feeling of isolation once they have arrived. A

/trip to

trip to parts of the Drakensberg should always be a mild adventure, with the danger of hold-up and delay on muddy roads, or of having to change a wheel in a downpour. In time to come veteran roads may be as popular as veteran cars !

In Natal we have a body known as the Town and Regional Planning Commission, of which I am a servant, whose members are appointed by the Administrator-in-Executive Committee in the same way as the Parks Board and the Local Health Commission. As its name implies, the Commission is responsible for keeping a watchful eye on local authorities in the exercise of their town planning functions, and for carrying out regional planning in Natal.

This may appear to have little to do with recreation, but the Commission and its staff are ideally placed to see recreation as one of the many facets of community life for which they have to make spatial provision in their plans. They are able to estimate future population growth and movement, and therefore to assess future recreational needs. The recreation survey mentioned earlier is being sponsored by the Commission. They are also able to integrate recreational facilities into the fabric of a city or region, and thus make them an inseparable part of the whole and not merely incidental to other more materially productive demands on land.

Such a planning authority obviously has a part to play in any co-ordinated recreation team.

There is clearly a danger that all these different authorities within the province could go their separate ways, with fatal results to co-ordinated effort - and it is not a danger inherent only in Natal's type of organisation. I could name apparently monolithic organisations where the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing precisely because lines of command and spheres of responsibility are too rigidly defined. The solution in either case lies in functional cross-contacts at all levels from the bottom up.

The Natal Executive Committee has wisely forestalled any tendency towards isolationism in the Administration by setting up a Provincial Recreation Committee, on which all branches of the Administration with a contribution to make are represented.

With that final cog in place, I think we have a machine which is capable of running smoothly and efficiently - if nobody puts a spanner in the works !

I have made no mention of another provincial branch which also has a vital part in the totality of public recreation - the Education Departments. Provincial education departments are virtually complete recreation authorities in themselves. They control most of the recreational activities of every citizen for twelve years of his life. They also establish attitudes, and frequently habits, which carry through into adult life. These are important responsibilities, but since they do not bear on the main theme of this paper, I do no more than draw attention to them.

Ek hoop ek het in hierdie referaat in twee dinge geslaag en dit is:

Eerstens, om dit duidelik te stel dat die provinsies die aangewese owerhede is om vir openbare ontspanning voorsiening te maak. Hulle is wetlik daartoe opgedra en ten volle bevoeg om hulle verantwoordelikhede na te kom.

Samewerking van 'n hele verskeidenheid van instansies buite asook binne die provinsiale raamwerk sal nodig wees voor die allerbeste ontspanningsprogram uit beskikbare hulpbronne, geld en energie in ons land saamgesmelt kan word. Die provinsies, in hulle sentrale posisie op die middel-vlak van regering, met hulle kennis van plaaslike behoeftes en plaaslike terrein, en met hulle reeds bestaande organisasies, is ideaal geleë om die werksaamhede van ander instansies in die provinsie te koördineer en om sodoende 'n provinsiale ontspanningsplan op te stel en uit te voer. Die ondersteuning van die Departement van Sport en Ontspanning is onontbeerlik om samewerking van owerheidsweë te bewerkstellig. Die provinsies moet natuurlik ten nouste saamwerk met die Departement aan die een kant en die munisipaliteite aan die ander kant.

Tweedens het ek geprobeer om aan te dui dat voorsiening vir ontspanning 'n hele reeks bedrywighede behels en aangeleenthede raak wat nie almal op eerste gesig vanselfsprekend is nie. Beleidsbesluite moet geneem word, en 'n verskeidenheid owerheidsweë, organisasies en persone moet saamgesnoer en met dieselfde mikpunte geïnspireer word. 'n Mens kan maklik afgeskrik word deur die ingewikkeldheid van die taak, of the onwaarskynlikheid dat soveel instansies sal saamwerk. Dit sou inderdaad jammer wees as samewerking nie verkry word nie, want daardeur sal ons veel moet prysgee.

Ontspanning is tog maar net een sy van die volle, ryk lewe waarop al ons burgers geregtig moet wees. Ontspanning moet dus nie iets seldsaam of apart wees nie, maar behoort in ons daaglike lewens ingevleg te word.

R.S. PISTORIUS.

PIETERMARITZBURG.

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