

EVIDENCE FOR COMMISSION ON NATIVE EDUCATION.

We endorse in toto the evidence submitted by our parent body, the S.A. Institute of Race Relations, but we desire to add the following riders:-

(1) The circumstances of the Bantu living in districts of the Cape Western Province, in which there are no separate Native Villages or Locations, are peculiar. Thus (in reply to question 6) the changes brought about in the social conditions of the Bantu living in close association with, and surrounded by, a majority population of Cape Coloureds, are profound. Not only is miscegenation prevalent, but the Native naturally resents the discrimination to his disadvantage in such matters as standards of wages and pensions, facilities for training for semi-skilled employment, the liquor laws, the control of movement and residence, and taxation. There are occasions when even pure Natives will attempt to pass themselves off as Coloured, and the general tendency is for the Bantu to become more and more integrated into the Coloured community, and in the process to abandon to an even greater extent than the urbanised Natives in other areas, their own languages, moral standards and tribal customs and beliefs.

(2) In the matter of education (in reply to question 9) the disadvantages under which Natives of this class labour, are particularly marked. In theory they are not allowed to send their children to any school but a Native (Mission) School. In many of the districts in question there are no such schools, so they cannot get their children educated at all. Even where there is a Native School, the numbers attending it are usually so small that, under the regulations of the Cape Education Department, only one, or at most two teachers can be provided, which means that instruction can only be given as far as Standard III or IV. The teachers in such schools are also handicapped by the fact that the children, by the time they come to school, are virtually Afrikaans speaking, and have to be taught Xhosa (or whatever the Bantu language of the majority of the parents may be) more or less as a foreign language, though the medium of instruction is supposed to be that language. We are therefore of opinion that, even if discrimination in other respects cannot be avoided, the children of such Natives should, if the parents so desire, be allowed to attend Coloured schools. If this arrangement also is judged to be impossible, then we endorse the Institute's recommendation THAT THE FIRST European language to be taught should be "that which is predominantly used in the area in which the school is situated," viz. Afrikaans.

(3) In other respects (still in reply to question 9) primary schools in such areas suffer from the defects common to all Non-European Primary Schools. We are of opinion that responsibility for the provision of suitable buildings should be transferred as soon as possible to some governmental authority, Union, Provincial or Local. As regards the common complaint of the high percentage of wastage, we as a partial remedy suggest that the Administrative authority concerned should encourage by liberal subsidies the opening of creches and nursery schools for Africans.

(4) In answer to question 10., we support the Institute's evidence in emphasizing the importance of the religious background to all the subjects taught in Native Schools, provided the religion taught is Christianity - as it affects conduct, or, in the words of the Institute's memorandum p.13, "as a way of life," and p.23, "as it influences the formation of character, and inculcates standards of behaviour." We are of opinion that the syllabus in the pamphlet issued by the Cape Education Department, "Religious Instruction in Undenominational Public Schools" should be simplified for use in Bantu schools, stress being laid on the life and teaching of Our Lord, with especial emphasis upon their ethical aspects.

(5) Finally, in the interests of better race relations (though this is rather outside the terms of reference) we desire to advocate strongly a more prominent place in the syllabuses of European schools of all grades, the study of Bantu languages & sociology, and elementary anthropology.

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