

PARKS DEPARTMENT AND THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

ADDRESS BY

COUNCILLOR PATRICK R. B. LEWIS

C.A. (S.A.)

TO THE

INSTITUTE OF PARK AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION (SOUTHERN
AFRICA) CONFERENCE

CRANBROOKE HOTEL, 14TH TO 18TH OCTOBER, 1968

PARKS DEPARTMENT AND THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

ADDRESS BY

COUNCILLOR PATRICK R. B. LEWIS

C.A. (S.A.)

TO THE

INSTITUTE OF PARK AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION (SOUTHERN
AFRICA) CONFERENCE

CRANBROOKE HOTEL, 14TH TO 18TH OCTOBER, 1968

POPULATION
EXPLOSION

Between the years 350 A.D. and 1850 A.D., a period of 1500 years, the population of the world doubled. The next doubling took only 100 years, that is, from 1850 to 1950, and it is now estimated that its present rate of growth will see the world's population doubled between 1950 and 1990.

A century ago five cities in the world had populations of over one million, but today there are 100 such cities. In the year 1960, 285 million persons lived in metropolitan areas of one million, but by the year 2000 it is estimated that 1285 million people will live in enormous metropolitan areas, and where the population is from 300,000 to one million in certain areas, it will increase from 154 million to 820 million in the next forty years.

MOVEMENT OF
PEOPLE

In addition to the population explosion, the great phenomenon of our era is the movement of persons from the rural areas to the cities, and the growth in the size of the cities. Let us take America as an example. In 1850, 15.3% of the American population lived in urban areas, and in 1900 this figure had increased to 39.7%. 1960 showed an increase to 69.9% and in the year 2000 it is estimated that 82% will live in urban areas.

What of the local scene ? The following projections are made of the South African population :

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROJECTIONS

Area & Year	Whites	Coloureds	Asiatics	Bantu	Total
<u>REPUBLIC</u>					
1960	3,088,492	1,509,258	477,125	10,927,922	15,002,797
1965	3,398,000	1,751,000	533,000	12,186,000	17,868,000
1985	5,203,000	3,383,000	849,000	19,583,000	29,018,000
2000	7,033,000	5,831,000	1,159,000	27,949,000	41,972,000
<u>TRANSVAAL</u>					
1960	1,468,305	108,007	63,787	4,633,378	6,273,477
1965	1,617,000	125,000	71,000	5,167,000	6,980,000
1985	2,476,000	242,000	113,000	8,097,000	10,928,000
2000	3,343,000	417,000	156,000	11,556,000	15,472,000
<u>WITWATERSRAND</u>					
1960	766,379	78,134	39,915	1,296,486	2,180,914
1965	845,000	91,000	44,000	1,446,000	2,426,000
1985	1,294,000	176,000	71,000	2,266,000	3,807,000
2000	1,750,000	304,000	97,000	3,233,000	5,384,000
<u>JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN</u>					
1960	413,153	59,467	28,993	650,912	1,152,525
1965	456,000	69,000	32,000	726,000	1,283,000
1985	698,000	133,000	52,000	1,137,000	2,020,000
2000	943,000	230,000	71,000	1,623,000	2,867,000

As in America, we have a movement of people from the farms and dorps to the urban areas. Think back forty years when there was the so-called "poor white" problem. Today where are the bywoners of the 1920's and 1930's - they came to the towns and cities and were absorbed in the industrial life.

Think of it - double the population in forty years ! Do you realise that we shall have to build as much accommodation in the next forty years as we have built since Van Riebeeck landed at the Cape. Where are the people going to live ? For one thing we are going to have more and more urban sprawl, and better transport systems will have to be developed so that people can commute longer distances in reasonable times. Then I visualise large urban renewal schemes being undertaken, when the older suburbs will be redesigned with increased density, enabling large numbers of people to be housed near the city. I can foresee that in the future a far greater percentage of our population will live in high rise buildings, and individual home ownership will become increasingly difficult.

LEISURE
TIME

Another factor to be taken into consideration is the prediction that in the years to come working hours will be less and less, and people will thus have more leisure time. With the increase in leisure time, and the standardisation and mechanisation of work processes, the average worker is obliged to look outside his job for his main interests. The salient fact about leisure is that it is growing much faster than is our capacity to use it wisely. Another arresting factor is that the more monotonous a worker's job, the more monotonous the recreation he seeks in his free time, and many modern jobs tend to breed a passive, non-inventive attitude to leisure activities. It is therefore highly important that people be educated, especially young people, in the healthy and constructive use of leisure time.

TOURISM

At a recent symposium figures were given of the anticipated tourist traffic that we can expect in South Africa, which, by the year 1990 should number 470,000.

When these visitors come to see our cities, what recreation facilities will we be able to show? In Johannesburg will we have a mock-up Gold Mine, a replica of Ferreira's Camp, a Native Village, an Early Street Scene, and in all our main cities will we have striking restaurants and cafe style tea gardens in our parks? I hope we shall have some of these things for they are of immense recreational value, and most could come under the control of the various Parks Departments.

We here today are concerned with matters relating to parks and recreation. How does all this population explosion, movement of people from one area to another, and tourism, affect us? What is our task, and how can we plan to cater for all these people? What are we trying to cater for?

What types of parks do we need? What are the types of recreation that people need and want? What land do we require to cater for such needs, and how far from people's homes must it be? Do the needs vary for people of different income groups, and do people living in flats require more recreational facilities than people living in homes? With increased density of population, will the mass of people have to become spectators or can they still be participants in sport? Are we going to change people's natures? Will our country folk who come to town, who are farmers at heart with great attachment to the land, feel lost and out of tune amongst the fumes, noise and rush of city life? How can they keep contact with the soil? Will their children know what farmyard animals are like?

This afternoon I do not propose to try and answer all these questions. I want to put our minds on enquiry, so that in our various spheres of activity we can anticipate what is required of us. Let us therefore examine two or three points in greater detail.

Leisure
Time

What do we mean by recreation? In general terms recreation means the refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil, diversion, play pastime, entertainment and amusement. It does not need to be confined to sporting activities. Recreation should, therefore,

include such activities as pleasure journeys, viewing and studying scenic sites, picnicking, camping, walking, mountaineering, horse-riding, swimming, boating, angling, hunting, sports activities, i.e. organised games, as well as gardening. Open air recreation embraces all these activities, where man's spiritual and physical powers are renewed and refreshed, in other words, anything where man's spirit is re-created.

The degree of recreation which these activities provide depends upon certain prerequisites such as personal taste and preference, as well as the daily routine activities of the person. It is, however, important that all factors work in concert so that the activities can be enjoyed in comfort, conveniently and without irritation. The necessity of recreation for the working man is generally realised, and is an important aspect of social welfare and health. To obtain recreation outside the dwelling area, and, for the townsman, outside the polluted city area, is an asset of great value, and the urge for recreation in the open air is noticed more and more among the ever increasing urban population.

A recent survey of recreation in America, Sweden and Britain showed the greatest increase in outdoor recreation to be in the form of caravan parks, pleasure rides, holiday houses, motor boats, picnicking and camping. A conclusion which derived from these studies was that the future development of outdoor recreation was primarily dependent upon two variables : first, the location of outdoor recreation resources in relation to the location of the potential users, mainly the urban population, and, second, the ease of access from one to the other.

Resources

Now, with regard to parks, there are various types, for example :

1. Children's playgrounds
2. Local Parks
3. Local recreation facilities
4. Regional Parks
5. Regional recreation grounds
6. Local Game Parks, and
7. National Parks.

1. Children's Playgrounds: These should be within reasonable access of homes, and may be located within local parks, and may I say here that it is definitely more advantageous to have a playground well used than one which is immaculately orderly and tidy.
2. Local Parks : These usually have a formal layout with such features as provide enjoyment for adults who live within half a mile of them, but if the parks are to be anything more than "lungs", and if the ordinary citizens are to be encouraged into the smaller parks (which in many cases are nearly always empty), then greater action must be taken by the city to make them attractive. This is not a reflection on the horticultural standard of the parks, it signifies that a high horticultural standard is not enough, and that local parks

must be made into activity places. It is essential that appropriate features appear in local parks to suit the particular preferences and needs of social groups in different parts of the city.

3. Local Recreation Facilities : These usually take the form of tennis courts, bowling greens, football, cricket and hockey fields, and, sometimes, small swimming pools.
4. Regional Parks : cater for special amenities such as picnicking, walking, etc., and should be of an area of not less than 100 acres in extent, where there are open stretches of country where casual ball games can be played. A regional park should provide sufficient space and facilities for a day's outing, where the whole family can be variously entertained with a choice of pursuits. Land-scaping of such parks should maximise the natural features of flora and water surfaces, in order to simulate something of the character of the natural and rural environment. At the same time, the influence of man-made order should be present, ensuring that the aspect and scenery of such parks has an obvious sense of harmony and beauty. They should provide opportunities for physical exertion as well as contemplative pleasure.
5. Regional Recreation Facilities are confined to the provision of facilities for organised "playing field" games, as well as large swimming pools and swimming baths, on a regional basis. In examining Greater Johannesburg for instance, it is obvious that due to short-sighted policies in the past, the populations to the north and the south will look to Johannesburg for a great deal of their regional recreational facilities. In other words, Johannesburg will have to provide facilities on a semi-metropolitan basis.
6. Local Game Parks: In suitable areas within, or near, Municipal boundaries, which will foster an interest in wild animal life.
7. National Parks : Those areas under the control of the Provincial or State authorities which have been set aside for the preservation of game, of flora and fauna, and places of historical interest.

Fundamental
Issues

The fundamental issues we have to face are the following :

- (a) The increase in population is not something that is going to happen, it is happening, and there is a very steady movement from rural to urban areas.
- (b) Working hours are decreasing, resulting in greater leisure time.
- (c) South Africa is actually promoting a wider tourist traffic, and with jumbo jets we will have tourists by the thousand every day.

Action to be taken:

What steps must we take to deal with the implications of these facts ?

The period up to World War II was an era during which nobody thought that land for leisure was a resource to be set aside, conserved and planned to meet the demands of an essential community activity, outdoor recreation. Before the advent of the country's large-scale industrial development and the resultant growth of the cities, almost every South African family had its favourite picnic spot, and an exclusive corner in the abundant wealth of the natural environment was part of every South African's national heritage.

I would say at the outset that because of the population explosion it is not just a good idea, but it is vital to convince the political leadership that conservation of the outdoors, and stimulation of the "return to the outdoors" is the most essential element in the South African way of life. A total of seven acres per 1000 population is accepted as being the overall minimum requirement for parks and recreation grounds within the municipal area, and this figure does not include land required for metropolitan and provincial parks which provide facilities for picnicking, camping and similar activities, and from this figure are excluded private sports clubs, municipal and private golf clubs and waste ground designated as parks. Therefore, in an age of rapid economic development the regional park may otherwise fight a losing battle against the new industrial complex unless we co-operate and work in close harmony with the State and the Province to have land set aside, or retained, for future recreational purposes, so that urbanisation and industry do not encroach upon our heritage, and the ever increasing urban population can keep in touch with nature, and our flora and beauty spots can be preserved for posterity. We must define our needs, make an inventory of available resources, draw up a recreation plan and programme, implement them and educate people in the constructive use of leisure time.

We must adjust ourselves to the fact that parks must cater for recreation, and must not just be places of green lawns and beautiful flowers. Men do need nature in their cities, not only to provide visual and physical relaxation from the tensions of their lives, but also to provide them with opportunities to play, to express themselves in the revitalising pursuits of leisure time recreation. In addition, we must recognise that recreation has a far wider meaning than sports fields, bowling clubs, tennis courts and swimming baths. We must also recognise that the demand of the dwellers in high rise buildings for recreational facilities differs from that of the home dweller who can potter around in a garden, or have his own workshop, and that the requirements of the various income groups varies, and participation in open air recreation is directly related to economic status and living standards. Generally a correlation may be observed between high income and low density, and the pattern is somewhat similar to that on the income distribution map.

Motor cars play a dominant role in recreation, for motoring is by far the most popular mode of travel, and it is thereby closely linked with recreational activity, but it is a pastime which, for its proper enjoyment, needs an objective which, in most cases, is an open space where the family can picnic and relax and enjoy the outdoors.

Education
for leisure:

Recreational facilities must be extended to cater for leisure time activities to enable people to enjoy the time at their disposal, and this is where recreation centres and recreation clubs come into their own, for it is with professional guidance and facilities at such centres that the individual may develop his talents, co-ordinate hand and mind in pursuits which provide tangible rewards for the effort devoted to them, and he will thereby experience the sense of identity and fulfilment which his work fails to provide. Recreation centres provide a service more valuable than is generally realised, and their high cost is outweighed by their obvious social and psychological benefits. Is it not possible that in future some of these may be located in parks and open spaces, enabling citizens, concrete-bound in the cities, an opportunity of gardening and learning about plant life, thus keeping in touch with the soil, and, at the same time perhaps, providing a service to the community by assisting in the preservation and beautification of our open spaces ?

Because so many city children, and for that matter, adults, are losing touch with the animal world, I think it is important that people living in cities, and particularly those in flats where it is difficult, if not impossible, to keep pets, should have an opportunity of seeing wild animals at close quarters without having to travel hundreds of miles to do so. The success of the Krugersdorp local Game Park, and the keen public interest shown a week or two ago in the birth of a baby rhino, is proof of this. As many of you know, a private Lion Park was recently opened near Johannesburg, and very many people are going there on Sundays and weekdays who could not get away to the Kruger Park. There seems room for more of such game parks, suitably located in typical country and developed by Municipal Councils for the benefit and enjoyment of their local populations.

Tourism:

I touched upon this lightly early in my talk, and here I would say that it is imperative that we commence, as soon as possible, the positive promotion of the aesthetic content of our cities to provide a visual impact upon those who come to see but not to stay. Our Parks Departments can do a great deal in this respect by creating spectacular points of beauty in the city, in addition to spectacular parks with, perhaps, items of historical interest, and dreary streets can be transformed by hanging baskets of brilliant flowers from lamp standards. Durban has given a lead in this respect, and many are the compliments I have heard about the bowls of flowers around the City Hall, and the floral arrangements down West Street. Their Rose Garden is a delightful place, as is the beautiful Japanese Garden which has transformed a once marshy piece of wasteland.

An open air theatre in a magnificent landscaped garden - if it can be done in wet, sooty London, why not in Johannesburg ? It will cost a lot of money, but would our Mining Houses not assist ? They give generously to many projects, the most recent being to heart research, so would it not be a good idea if they gave generously to gladden hearts when alive ? I think I am correct in saying that Cape Town has taken advantage of some of her parkland to give her citizens just such a theatre at Maynardville, and, of course, as we all know, the Mother City is the home of the world-famed Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, a National Park, while not so very far away, and a pleasant drive from the city, one can visit the interesting Karoo Garden at Worcester.

Port Elizabeth, too, has shown what can be done by the reclamation of swampland, for her Happy Valley is a joy to her citizens and visitors alike. Springs, on the East Rand, has done a splendid job in converting an ugly old mine dump into a beautiful place, while Pretoria is well-known for its gardens at Brummeria Park and its recreational area at Fountains.

We have an abundance of these potential recreation resources in the Republic, and it is for each and every one of us to play a part in the conservation of the outdoors, particularly those of us who live inland, and to develop with foresight and imagination the resources at hand for the benefit of our citizens.

I was very encouraged to hear of a Conference recently convened by the South African Nature Union in Pretoria, where consideration was given to the planning on a provincial and national scale for recreational facilities, so that areas could be set aside for open air activities. Papers were given to this conference on a wide range of subjects by various Government Departments, and I must say that unless suitable areas are set aside timeously, ground will be used for other purposes, and lost to posterity. All the speakers emphasised the need for more open spaces for the population of the future, for the conservation of our water, veld, flora and fauna, and told what each department had done in the way of assisting to provide recreational facilities on a regional basis. It was felt that by the end of the century the demand for outdoor recreation in South Africa would quadruple, and that without sufficient planning and control this may result in the country becoming, and here I quote, "pockmarked with slumland 'resorts' like those which America had encountered". However, the speaker said that with foresight and determination to meet the challenge, South Africa could become, in this sphere of activity and use of the natural environment, a prototype for the rest of Africa to copy.

So far we have concerned ourselves only with the needs of the European population, but there is equal, if not greater, need for all forms of recreation for the different non-White groups who, it must be remembered, outnumber us many times, and whose lives are far more drab and monotonous than ours. What should be done by the authorities for these people ?

For the large Bantu population practically every form of recreational amenity needs to be provided. Not only football fields, with a few tennis courts thrown in. Suitable water features where boating, as well as aquatic sports, can be indulged would make an enormous improvement in all non-white areas. Dams can be artificially constructed and the resulting pleasure derived by the people would make the effort and expenditure well worth while.

Then, too, there is great need for open air amphitheatres where, in addition to traditional theatrical productions, musical concerts, jazz festivals, beauty competitions, mannequin parades, fashion shows, as well as more robust entertainment such as boxing, weightlifting competitions, etc., can be staged both by Councils and by private enterprise.

The value of recreational amenities for the Bantu population is so important that we in Johannesburg regard it as an absolute essential, and although our recreational programme costs a great deal of money (approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million rand per annum), we believe it has been a major factor in preserving racial peace here in Johannesburg.

All forms of children's parks and playgrounds are another essential, and these can sometimes be provided in conjunction with school playing fields.

Finally, the more sophisticated amenities such as cycle race tracks, athletic tracks, bowling greens, hard-surfaced tennis courts, grassed football fields where professional football can be played at night under flood lights, swimming baths, and a golf course have all been provided by our City Council in the Bantu and Coloured areas with great resulting contentment and happiness to the population.

One is sometimes faced with the argument that recreational facilities, parks, etc., should not be provided for our non-White population unless they can themselves pay the full cost. This overlooks the fact that the majority of Bantu families, and many Coloured families as well, fall in the sub-economic group and just haven't the means to foot such bills.

As to the need for parks, libraries, playing fields of all kinds, and all the other improvements I have mentioned, it must be remembered that over 90% of our Bantu and Coloured families live in houses with a maximum of four rooms, so that there is usually just no place in the house where the people can indulge in hobbies, and thus most have to find their amusements elsewhere. Far better for this to be done under attractive conditions conducive to some spiritual and mental uplift rather than on street corners and in shebeens.

I have said that there is a necessity to provide parks that are spectacular, which are a feast for the eyes, and balm for a troubled spirit, and here let me tell you the story of one in particular.

At Tod Inlet, near Victoria on the Island of Vancouver in British Columbia, is a living monument to two people, husband and wife, who, in their lifetime, created a gem of such beauty and magnificence that it is a sheer delight and joy to all who see it - The Butchart Gardens - the showpiece of the Pacific Northwest.

You come suddenly to the edge of a cliff, and behold a breathtaking scene for there, fifty feet below, in a vast bowl hewn out of solid rock, lies the sunken garden: thousands of flowering plants, trees and shrubs create a magical world of colour, pale pinks and purples to brilliant reds and blues, emerald lawns and a lake banked in marigolds, and from the far rim of the bowl, hung with ivy, a crystal waterfall cascading into a silvery pool.

Robert Butchart was a pioneer in the manufacture of Portland cement in Canada, and with his wife, Jenny, moved west in 1904 to open a new limestone quarry, and he built a rambling mansion nearby. Five years later the quarry, its limestone exhausted, was a gaping, ugly mud-hole, the sight of which brought Jenny Butchart to tears many times. She felt that as they had made the place ugly in the first instance, it was now up to them to make it beautiful, and one afternoon when she had been more than usually upset by the prospect, for she was a person who loved beauty, the idea of incorporating the quarry in a garden landscaping scheme took root in her mind. At that time she had little knowledge of gardening or landscaping, but what she did have was unbounded enthusiasm and a natural artistic flair,

backed 100% by her husband who provided the finance. "You plant, I'll pay", he is reported to have said, and thus began the gardening experiment which was to have such far-reaching effects.

Over a period of five years, starting with sweetpeas and rambler roses given to her by a friend, Jenny Butchart transformed the quarry into a glorious sunken garden - brilliant green lawns, a lake, gay flowers cascading down the walls of the pit. News of the garden spread, and visitors started arriving to view the loveliness. Jenny said, "Flowers are fleeting, so people should enjoy them", and to date six million have done so.

Her efforts did not cease with the beautification of the pit, for she extended her gardening activities to include an exquisite English rose garden, a formal Italian garden surrounded by hedges as finely sculptured as Florentine statues, and a dainty Japanese garden nestling against a forest of Douglas pines, the whole covering some 25 acres of the estate.

All this cost vast sums of money which her husband supplied, and she had labourers to help her, but none worked harder than Jenny. In the winter seasons she and her husband travelled extensively abroad, and everywhere they went she gathered plants for her beloved garden, rare species, seeds, trees, adding to the millions of plants already blooming in the old lime pit.

In 1939 the Butcharts offered to sell the gardens to the City of Victoria or the Provincial Government for a sum of one dollar, but neither was prepared to pay for its upkeep, so the property was willed to a grandson, Mr. Ian Ross, who, on returning from the war, restored the gardens to their former glory with the aid of English, Dutch, Portuguese and Polish immigrant gardeners.

There is a permanent staff of forty, and twenty-five gardeners produce flowers for all seasons, but the cost is tremendous, and Mr. Ross was obliged to levy a small entrance charge in order to preserve the gardens, and Benvenuto - meaning Welcome - as the estate is known, is now out of the red.

In 1953, Ian Ross put in four miles of underground wiring for an illumination system that has made the gardens as popular by night as by day, a wonderland of colour framed in the soft glow of a hundred hidden lights. Visitors number 350,000 per year, and the 1000-car park is always jammed, and twenty to thirty coaches arrive every day bringing beauty-hungry people to enjoy the living, lovely remembrance of Jenny and Robert Butchart.

I was privileged to visit these gardens last year, and would now like to show you some slides to give you an impression of this area of re-creation -- the lifting of the senses to pleasurable heights.

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.