

F. A. W. LUGAS

NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION.
NATURELLE EKONOMIESE KOMMISSIE.

Sitting at

Capetown

April 28th 1931.

City Council

van Louisen

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Pages 7150-7171 (84))

F. X. Ribbink (PP. all

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Official
Shorthand-Writers,

I N D E X.

Messrs. W. Brinton (Chairman Native Affairs Committee)	
G. P. Cook (Superintendent of Natives)	pages.
Dr. T. Shadick Higgins (Medical Officer of Health.)	7150 --7171 (81)(79)
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IN ORDER TO AVOID OVERLAPPING WITH THE VOLUME OF EVIDENCE COVERING 94th sitting (April 29th), which was erroneously numbered as starting on p. 7172, all pages in this volume from p.7171 onwards have been numbered 7171 (1) etc.

NATIVE ECONOMIC COMMISSION

CAPE TOWN 23th APRIL 9.30 A.M.

NINETYTHIRD PUBLIC SITTING

PRESENT:

Dr. J. E. Holloway, (Chairman)

Major H. W. Anderson,	Mr. A. M. Mostert,
Dr. H. C. M. Fourie,	Dr. A. W. Roberts,
Mr. F. A. W. Lucas, K.C.	Senator P.W. le Roux Van Niekerk

Mr. C. Faye, (Secretary)

Messrs. WILFRED BRINTON, Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee of the Corporation of the City of Cape Town,
GEORGE FANTON COOK, Superintendent of Natives, and
DR. TOM SHADICK HIGGINS, Medical Officer of Health,

called and examined:

CHAIRMAN: Will you please put your statement before us? - (Mr. Brinton): I shall read the historical statement first. N'dabeni location was erected by the Cape

Government in 1902, as a prevention against the spread of plague. Natives who were living under insanitary conditions in the slums of Cape Town, were offered accommodation at a low rental in N'dabeni. The Government and not the Municipality assumed responsibility for the housing of Natives and for the control of the location, which was administered under Act No.40 of 1902 (amended by Act No.8 of 1905). In 1918, the influenza epidemic directed attention to the inadequate housing facilities for urban Natives at the location and resulted in negotiations taking place between the Council and the Government for the taking over of N'dabeni on a site to be agreed upon.

In the course of these negotiations, the Government foreshadowed legislation, placing responsibility for the housing of Natives working within the municipal area upon the local authority. Eventually, ⁱⁿ 1922, the Government agreed to give the Council an area approximately 400 morgen in extent

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on the site known as Vijge Kraal, subject to certain conditions which are enumerated under the portion of this memorandum dealing with Langa.

N'dabeni continued as a Government Reserve, and it was agreed that, upon transfer of the population to the new location, the site would be handed over to the Council (less a certain area required by the Railway Administration), on condition that the ground would be used for industrial development other than noxious trades, any profit arising from the sale of lots, after deducting all expenses, to be shared equally between the Government and the Council.

The next development regarding N'dabeni, took place in 1923, when the Council assisted the Government by providing, at an expenditure of over £8,000, additional accommodation at the location for 2,000 single Natives.

On the 1st January 1924, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act No. 21 of 1923 came into operation and, under it, local authorities are required to make adequate provision for the needs of Natives ordinarily employed within the urban area for normal requirements.

In 1925, the Council took over the control of N'dabeni location from the Government and, pending the necessary legal formalities, the Superintendent of Natives was seconded from Municipal service, in order to act as Superintendent of N'dabeni from 1st December 1923 to 30th April 1925.

A proclamation transferring N'dabeni was published in the Union Gazette of the 1st May 1925, and vested in the Council the control, administration and maintenance of the location, with all buildings, stores and equipment on the site, which were handed over free of charge, except certain office furniture.

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which was taken over at an agreed valuation. The N'dabeni site would not be transferred to the Council, until the terms of agreement arrived at with the Government in 1922 are fulfilled

N'dabeni is approximately 69 morgen in extent and the following table indicates the numbers and sizes of the various types of huts as at 25th April 1931:-

<u>Type of Hut</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Married quarters</u>
A	166	17½' x 11½' x 9½'
B	168	21' x 13' x 10'
C	16	(4-roomed huts 10x10x10', diningroom and kitchen included)
D.C.	42	20 x 12' x 10'
B.	42	19' x 12' x 10'
Flats	13	25' x 12' x 10'
Dormy.	24	30' x 12' x 10' & 24' x 12' x 10'
		<u>Single quarters</u>
Dormy	55	18½' x 25' x 10'
B.dormy	2	32' x 25' x 10'
Wissen huts	150	
Dormy. 5	17	12' x 24' x 10'
Flats	1	25' x 12' x 10'
do.	4	12' x 12' x 10'
do.	6	11½' x 12' x 10'
Single dormy)	1	12' x 12' x 9'
amongst married)		
quarters)	2	18' x 12' x 9'

There are 18 huts for spinsters as follow:-

A huts	16
B "	1
B "	1

The above are included in the A, B and C huts in the married quarters.

Since the location was taken over by the Council in

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1925, thirtyfour A type huts for married Natives and forty-nine Nissen huts for single Natives have been demolished.

The present population is as follows:-

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Children</u>
Dormitories	739		
Nissen huts	501		
Married quarters	439	478	1153
	1679	478	1153

TOTAL 3310

(Note: The foregoing figures are supplied by the Superintendent of Natives.)

The following are the charges for accommodation:-

Single men:

Four shillings (4/-) per month

Three shillings (3/-) for three weeks,

Two shillings (2/-) for two weeks.

One shilling (1/-) for one week.

or any portion of a week being not less than three days.

Married men:

A. Type Ten shillings (10/-) for each family p.m.

B. " do. do.

C. " One pound (£1) for each family per month

D/C " Ten shillings (10/-) do.

E. " Twelve shillings & sixpence (12/6) for each family per month.

Dormitories. Ten shillings (10/-) for each family p.m.

Kitchen do. do.

Single men or single women living in married quarters:

Five shillings (5/-) per month.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGA: In accordance with the agreement arrived at in 1922 with the Government, and pursuant to the

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provisions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act No.21 of 1923, the Council proceeded, in 1923, with the development of the new location on the Vijge Kraal Estate, now known as Langa Township.

As previously stated, the ground was granted by the Government and the transfer was made subject to the exchange of land referred to in Act No.30 of 1922, for the construction of a branch railway line off the Cape Flats line, near Raapenberg Station, viz:- (1) The land required for the right of way for the Raapenberg Station to the new Native location, together with such additional land as may be re-slopes required for ~~klappax~~ and drainage and the terminal station. (2) Certain Municipal land within the Table Bay Dock area, in front of the New Somerset Hospital, at present in occupation by the Railways and Harbours Administration. (3) A strip of land, 10 feet in width, adjoining the Cape Flats Railway, where such railway abuts on the land occupied by the Ndabeni Native location.

On the 2nd February 1923, a poll of enrolled voters was held for the purpose of securing authority to the raising of a loan of [£]250,000 for the provision and equipment of the township. The proposal was adopted by a majority of 3,198 and, on the 27th July 1923, following a tour of up-country locations by the then Mayor, (Councillor R.J.Verster) and the Chairman of the Native Township Committee (Councillor W. Caldicott Gardener, The authority of the Administrator was received to the loan.

As a result of the tour, the representatives of the Council recommended the barrack system, on the lines of the compound at the City Deep Mine, Johannesburg, for single men, and the Bloemfontein system for married Natives.

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In due course, the layout of the township was proceeded with and Mr. A. J. Thomson was engaged as consulting architect. A commencement was made with the construction of roads, laying of water main, drainage, etc., and on the 20th December 1923, the Council approved of the plans submitted for erection of the main buildings.

The tender of Messrs. C. A. Abbot & Son was accepted by the Council on the 26th February 1925, for the erection of the following buildings at a cost of approximately £57,155. Main barracks; single and double rooms; market; administration quarters; superintendent's residence, etc.; post office; kitchen and compound.

The contract was entered into on the 31st March 1925.

On the 4th April 1927, the Council accepted the tender of Messrs. Brice Bros. for the second development scheme, at an approximate cost of £80,000, as follows:-

- Hospital, including drainage,
- Three hundred two-roomed houses,
- Fifty double rooms for married women,
- Seven blocks of five rooms for 840 single men,
- Police station, storeyard and stables,
- Six general dealer shops,
- Four butcher shops,
- Four baker shops and
- Ten cafes.

The police station is leased to the Government for a period of five years, as from the 8th October 1928, with the option of renewal for a further period of five years, at a monthly rental of £30, which includes charges for water consumed for domestic purposes, and sanitary fees, but excludes

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charges
for electric light.

The eating house attached to the main barracks is let to Natives at a monthly rental of £2.10.-. The hospital has been designed to accommodate 18 beds, together with out-patients department and isolation ward. Nurses quarters are also provided.

Langa was opened in September 1927 and is intended for a population of 5,000 Natives, including women and children. The present population, according to figures supplied by the Superintendent of Natives, is 1,938 (Men, 1236; women 339; children 363).

Regarding rentals: Section 9 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act provides that the approval of the Minister of Native Affairs must be obtained to the rental to be charged in any location or Native village established thereunder, and the Council obtained approval of the principle that the township should be administered on economic lines and not subsidized from rates. The Government accordingly approved of a scale of rentals based upon an economic charge of 12%, representing 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ % interest and sinking fund and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ % for services rendered. The proposed scale was as follows:-

<u>Accomm.</u>		<u>Per wk.</u>	<u>(Monthly Equivalent)</u>
2,856	Single Natives in barracks	3/-	13/-
200	" " " quarters	4/-	17/4d
300	Married Natives' House of two rooms	7/-	30/4d
50	Double rooms for married women	7/-	30/4d

To meet the agitation for a reduction in rentals, the Council, towards the end of 1928, resolved to afford relief by granting concessions as shown in the following amended scale:-

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Acc	Per wk.	(Monthly Equivalent)
Single Natives in barracks	2/8d	11/7d
" " quarters	3/8d	15/11d
Married Natives' house of two rooms	6/-	26/-
Double rooms for married women	6/-	26/-

In December 1929, the Council resolved to relieve the township of the interest and sinking fund charges on the capital expended on roads, drains and sewers, and the following revised scale of rentals, payable monthly, was promulgated on the 21st March 1930.

Single Natives in barracks	10/- a month,
" " quarters	15/- "
Married Natives' house of two rooms	24/- "
Double rooms for women,	24/- "

On the 21st November 1930, a further reduced scale of rentals was promulgated, viz:-

Barracks for single Natives,	7/- per month
Quarters for single Natives,	10/- "
Two-roomed house for married Natives	15/- "
Double rooms.	15/- "

The approximate nett capital expenditure upon the township to the 24th April 1931, is £238,528.

This is our historical statement, and I now have a further statement dealing with the financial position, which I should also like to place before the Commission. In this financial statement, I deal with a number of aspects of the position of Langa and Ndabeni and, at the end, we give the revenue and expenditure accounts for both Ndabeni and Langa.

Then there are a number of further points in the statement, shewing the difficulties of the Council in the administration of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, which I also think will be of interest to the Commission.

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At the end of the statement, I give certain reasons for the migration of Natives to the urban areas, the first of which is the glamour of city life and the desire for travel. There are certain points in the financial statement to which I should like to refer later on, and perhaps the Commission would care to ask me some questions on that.

In regard to the cost of living, which is dealt with there, I thought that about 35/- per month was a fair average for bed rock cost of living. £2.10.- for a married man and a family is more or less right. I am just making these remarks to elucidate my statement.

I wish to deny most emphatically that the City Council are unsympathetic in their treatment of the Natives in the Municipal locations. As evidence thereof, I would point to the fact that the original expenditure upon Langa totalled the sum of £238,328, of which the sum of £95,891 representing expenditure on roads, drains and sewers, was written off, thus reducing the capital expenditure to £142,437, on which the annual redemption charges amounted to £8,469, in place of the previous charge of £14,151. Considerable divergence of opinion exists in regard to the actual cost of living in respect of the Natives in this area.

In the case of Rex vs. Ball in the Magistrate's Court Wynberg, towards the end of 1930, one witness claimed that, for food, it costs a single man £3.7.6 a month and a married man £6.12.6. Another witness, submitted that it costs a single man 11/8¹₂ per week, or approximately £2.10.- per month, and a married man £4.9.- per month. The Magistrate, after hearing the evidence, came to the conclusion that these statements, to use his own words, were ridiculous, and that a Native with his wife can live on £2 per month for food.

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As an instance of the absurdity of the figures produced, it may be mentioned that some of the calculations were made on the following basis:- Single man 3d per day each for coffee, tea, sugar and matches; and that, in the case of a married man, the cost of these commodities was doubled, and 3d per day for candles and 3d for soap was added.

I do not claim to have any expert knowledge of what a correct budget for a Native would be, but I think that, for the ordinary Native workman, i.e. the type resident in the Native barracks, 7/6d per week would be a fair estimate, and in the case of married men, £2 to £2.10.- per month.

Allowing for an average wage of 4/- per diem, a Native's monthly income would be from £4.16.- to £5.8.- per month. It will be seen that a charge of 1/7d per for rental, or less than 3d per diem, cannot be regarded as an excessive charge especially when it is taken into consideration the other privileges which he receives in the nature of water, light medical services and hospital accommodation in the event of sickness, all of which are provided free.

In regard to the married men, approximately 3/5d per week, or 6d per diem cannot be regarded as unreasonable for rental, more especially as the free services referred to would apply to his wife and children as well.

It has been suggested that no charge should be made for redemption of the cost of buildings at Langa, on the ground that the Native is there for the benefit of Cape Town. The fact, however, is overlooked that the Council is responsible to the ratepayers for all expenditure, and to suggest that an amount of £42,496 should be written off in order that the Native may receive special treatment in distinction to the

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Coloured workman, with whom he largely competes for employment and whose home is and always has been in the Cape Peninsula hardly bears any reason at all.

In face of the foregoing facts, it seems to me out of place and deliberately untrue to charge the City Council with being unsympathetic in its treatment of the urban Native community.

At the end of 1930, the Council had accumulated a loss of £42,496 on the Native Revenue Account and, at the present rate of income from rentals, it is likely that this deficit will be enlarged by about £11,800 during the present year. Moreover, approximately £4,200, representing arrear rentals due by Langa Natives up to 30th September 1930 has been written off.

To all intents and purposes there is little likelihood of the Council being able, for many years to come, to acquire an income by way of rent, sufficient to meet any portion of the redemption charges on the cost of buildings at Langa, even if the accumulated loss is spread over a long period of years. It will be seen from these figures that any suggestion of a decrease in the existing tariff of rentals so far as Langa is concerned is out of the question, and it is submitted that the Council has gone to the utmost limit in this connection.

I further draw attention to the tariff obtaining in regard to municipal buildings in other locations, particulars of which I hand in in the form of a report and tabulated statement, drawn up as the result of a personal visit to the five locations mentioned therein. Information relative to Cape Town is submitted for comparison.

The question arises as to the reasons of Natives in

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Cape Town locations not paying or being unable to pay their rental. I consider Cape Town is in an entirely different position to any other municipality in the Union in regard to the housing of Natives, for the following reasons:-

1. There is the isolation which, to my mind, largely contributes to this distinction. Once here, a Native is practically cut off from all communication with his home. It probably takes at least a week for any communication to reach his relatives in the Territories.

2. In other locations nearer the Native Territories, he is in constant touch with his home through friends visiting the location in which he resides and also by the receipt of foodstuffs from home which assist him very materially in avoiding cash expenditure in living costs.

3. There is the glamour of city life and the temptation of expenditure in this direction must be tremendous.

4. The enormous temptation to take part in drink traffic instanced by the fines paid for illicit liquor dealing in 1930, in respect of N'dabeni location, viz:- £1539.10.--. Similar fines for Langa location, from 1st October 1930 to 31st March 1931, totalled approximately £300.

5. The agitator: here I would point the organized opposition which the Council has had to meet year after year. It is known that a large body of the respectable law-abiding Natives are influenced and even bullied into withholding payment of rental to the Council, by a minority of agitators, who are mainly concerned with illicit liquor traffic. This organized opposition is financed by collections amongst the Natives, usually made on Sundays, with which litigation is invoked in almost every action taken by the Council against Natives.

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6. The difficulty with which the Council is faced in the continued administration of N'dabeni, while Langa remains to a great extent unoccupied, although administrative expenses must continue practically on the same basis as if the accommodation were completely taken up. So long as this state of affairs exists, there is no possibility of the Council being able to reduce expenditure to be in any way commensurate with the revenue obtainable by way of rental, nor will there be any progress in Native policy while this anomaly exists. I attach a brief statement shewing the financial position for the present years-

The following figures of revenue and expenditure in connection with the Native Affairs of the City Council for 1931 are illustrative of the financial position:-

REVENUEN'DABENI

Revenue as per estimates		£7,490
Now anticipated	about	<u>5,990</u>
Difference		<u>£ 1,500</u>

LANGA

Revenue as per estimate		£ 15,805
Now anticipated		<u>6,805</u>
Difference		<u>£ 9,000</u>

The total revenue now anticipated for 1931

in respect of both N'dabeni and Langa is, therefore, £12,795

Plus fines for any contravention of local

Additional revenue from registration fees, etc.	regulations, say,	205
		<u>955</u>

Anticipated revenue	<u>£13,955</u>
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Expenditure -----

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EXPENDITUREN'DABENI

Working expenses as per estimates	£6,476
<u>LANGA</u> do. do.	8,248
Additional expenditure (registration of Natives, etc.)	1,950
Interest and Sinking Fund Charges	<u>8,469</u>
	<u>£25,143</u>

Expenditure	25,143
Anticipated Revenue	<u>13,955</u>
Anticipated deficit	£11,188
Contribution towards liquidation deficit on Native Revenue Suspense A/c: 1st of Five Instalments	8,694
Establishment charges	<u>618</u>
Total deficit now anticipated	£20,500
Deficit as per estimates	<u>10,000</u>
Total not provided for	<u>£10,500</u>

The following is a comparative table shewing the "working deficit" as now anticipated and as originally anticipated:-

	<u>Anticipated</u>	<u>Estimated</u>
From 1931 deficit viz.	£20,500	£10,000
Deduct first instance on deficit on the Native Revenue A/c	<u>8,694</u>	<u>8,694</u>
Working deficit	<u>£11,806</u>	<u>1,306</u>
Anticipated increase in deficit	... £10,500	

	<u>Estimate</u>	
Estimated revenue Langa, (assuming a fully occupied location)	£15,805	
Revenue now anticipated	<u>6,805</u>	
Shortfall	<u>£ 9,000</u>	£9,000
Estimated revenue Langa	7,490	
Revenue now anticipated	<u>5,990</u>	
	<u>£ 1,500</u>	1,500
Total shortfall anticipated in revenue		£ 10,500

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