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ADDRESS TO THE  
SUID AFRIKAANSE BURO VIR RASSE AANGELEENTHEDE  
AT PRETORIA  
ON 25th SEPTEMBER, 1962  
BY  
IAN G. FLEMING

As the Tomlinson Commission in its monumental work, and numbers of well qualified writers and speakers have dealt with virtually every angle and facet of social political and economic development of the Bantu areas, of which the Transkei is "the largest continuous block" in the Republic, this paper has been prepared with the thought that, with the passage of time, there have emerged certain matters which require emphasis, and certain urgencies which call insistently for appropriately vigorous action.

It is therefore set out in the following form :-

The First Part is devoted to a discussion of the analogy between the "Decentralisation of Industries" theme in the Republic and the pre-requisites for the successful establishment of industries and ancillary economic activity in the Transkei.

The Second Part deals with some of the sociological problems associated with the programme of systematically transforming the character of Transkeian Bantu, who would still be nomads were it not for the historically recent limitations of movement imposed on them by being brought into close association with a more settled social system. It deals also with the limiting factors which surround the application of what would be regarded as standard procedures in the extension of industrial and other economic activity in the more advanced white areas in the Republic.

The Third Part calls attention to the vital factor of TIME and to some of the Economic, Political, Social and Legal problems which will be created by the Industrialisation of the Transkei.

PART 1

For something more than 30 years, ever since the first phase of the South African Industrial Revolution, which followed upon the impetus given by the first world war and the stimulation

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provided by the economic and social legislation of the 1920's, the problem of the consequences of the development of concentrated activity around the Gold Mines and around the sea-ports, has attracted the attention of sociologists, economists and objective planners.

The lack of prospects for few, other than those able to establish themselves as farmers, the consequent comparative restriction in the future of the Platteland owing to its inability to absorb the natural increase in population, led inevitably in the end to deep-felt concern in political and social circles to which expression was given in Parliament, and ultimately led to the appointment of the Rural Industries' Commission in 1935. This Commission was charged, inter alia, with examining the factors which created those disturbing conditions and with making recommendations to check the population flow. The Report of this Commission was explicit and left the country in no doubt as to the causes and also made it equally clear what the remedies were. It also indicated what the price to the country would be of distributing industry to such an extent that markets, amenities, facilities and a high standard of urban living would be available to all and not only to the more favoured city dwellers.

From then onwards every political party of any consequence has proclaimed that the Decentralisation of Industry is one of the main planks of its programme, and since that time, nearly 30 years ago, the subject has never been allowed to fade out of the minds of the public nor out of the consciousness of the politicians. Spokesmen for the Platteland with their roots in Agriculture or in Trade, have kept the country's attention fixed upon the matter! Debates, discussions and authoritative reviews have all had their day, but after 30 years the nett result of all this effort has been comparatively insignificant, when measured against the development in and around the established and entrenched cities. Though it is unquestionable from an economic and sociological point of view that S.A. is building up great problems for itself by allowing the snowballing of development to take place around the centres of mining and sea trade, the fact of the matter is that :-

Firstly in the pre-occupation of the war and the aftermath from 1939 to 1950,

Secondly, in the great surge forward of the phase of economic expansion from 1945 to 1957,



Thirdly, in the remarkable expansion into the North Western Free State and Eastern Transvaal of the Gold Mining Industry, and

Finally in the high standard of living which the privileged classes in South Africa have come to accept as normal, the country as a whole has been so absorbed that it has lost sight of the significance of the neglect of the Platteland, and the few voices crying in the wilderness are regarded by a new generation of entrepreneurs as being anachronistic in character.

The politicians have naturally been cautious in respect of a subject on which they are not in a position to speak with any degree of assurance and though the main political parties and successive administrations continue to reaffirm their conviction that the establishment of industries in the rural areas is important, the subject lacks the elements of either urgency or challenge which characterised the Poor White Problem in the 1920's and the truth is that the prosperous conditions of the phase of expanding economy in the last 20 years have taken up all the social and economic slack, and most people have been either too comfortable or too pre-occupied to dwell over-long on a subject which in any case is both controversial and complicated and which would have involved someone making radical changes and would perhaps be accompanied by some cost or sacrifice. The question has been deferred, as it were, from year to year, in the hope, perhaps, that natural expansion or new discoveries would create new centres of mining and industrial development in new areas in the country.

The next generation of white people in South Africa will find themselves in much more straitened circumstances in respect of the problems associated with co-existence with the Bantu, if they apply themselves as leisurely to the industrialisation of the Bantu and Border areas as we have applied ourselves to the stimulation of economic activity in the Rural areas. We, in this generation, show a tendency to talk complacently in retrospect of our pre-occupation with other matters and to feel relatively unperturbed, despite our omission to spread development into the rural areas. They, in their generation, will look back to this decade as having been perhaps the last moment for any effort to be effective in a belated time-table for initiating a Bantu industrial revolution, which, by reason of the standards of living it would provide, could be a major factor in sustaining good relations between white and black.

I have dwelt at some length upon the subject of Decentralisation of Industry because the subject matter entrusted to me at this Congress, namely,

"SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRANSKEI", is indistinguishable in character and, to a certain extent, in consequences, from some diversion or distribution of industrial activity into rural areas, about which we have been talking for so long and in regard to which we have done so little.

In respect of the decentralisation in the White areas in which we have lived, we have had the benefit of having available for our guidance, the accumulated knowledge of a century of geophysical survey, all the considerable contemporary resources of science and management and also reservoirs of skills and trained labour, complete with statutory relationships and safeguards. We have had, in addition, access to Rail, Road and Communication services, to Research facilities, to banking, health and distribution services, and there has been capital in abundance from time to time. Finally, there has been the vital factor of profit - which has never been denied any entrepreneur, provided he could manage to make it, at the distance from the big markets of the country generally associated with decentralised industry.

The recognition that a wider distribution of Industry in the Republic has made so little progress, despite there being so many factors available to stimulate it, if put into use, brings us to the point of being compelled to analyse, for the purposes of our study, the reason why there has been so little use made of these resources and facilities, and in doing so, we shall work our way to a closer picture of what remains to be done and in what degree of urgency, in order to "decentralise" industrial activity, "into" the Transkei. What we discover will, with adaptation to local conditions, apply to those other portions of South Africa which will become self governing in due course and will also bear in considerable degree upon the associated, if distinct, operation of developing Border areas.

The first point that comes out in that analysis is that the reason why there has been so little use made of all the resources and facilities for the purpose of establishing industries in the Platteland, is no more and no less than the stark plain fact that Industry, like anything else that lives and grows, cannot stay alive if the climate is not favourable to growth.

We have now come to a key word - CLIMATE - that is to say, economic climate, and we can with advantage, examine



it in detail, with the object of determining its significance in the context of what we are discussing today.

CLIMATE in respect of the existence of economic activity could be defined as the complex or sum of conditions present in any particular period in any particular area. The factors affecting this type of climate are :-

1. The cost of transportation
2. The availability of raw materials at economic prices
3. The competence, skill, efficiency and availability of labour
4. The cost of that labour
5. The assurance that fiscal policy will not strike at the stability of established enterprise.

All these, in greater or less degree, depending upon circumstances, combine to create CLIMATE.

An economically favourable climate may be natural! It may be induced! It may be controlled!

The reasons for the failure of industry to establish itself in the so-called rural areas are that, in general, the climate has not been naturally favourable and that no serious major effort has been made to induce a climate that would be favourable! Incidentally, there is no experience in controlling such a climate and we are led to the conclusion then, that the experience necessary to decentralise Industry into the Transkei and into the contiguous Border areas - as a complementary plan - has yet to be gained, and that the knowledge of what is required to control that climate has also still to be acquired.

Turning to the question of transportation, it has been common knowledge for many years that the greatest single factor in determining the location of an industry in such a wide-spread country as South Africa has been that of railage - Railage in on raw materials, and railage out on that finished article.

All the central administrations, right back to that point in timewhen this fact was first acknowledged, have left it to the Railways themselves to determine how materials are to be transported from one point to another at a cost that will not militate against their being processed in some rural area.

This burden is incompatible with that section of the Railways' Act which makes it incumbent upon the South African Railways to run itself on business principles, and while many of us have seen numbers of instances in the last fifty years when the Railways have been used for other purposes, there has been 6/....



in this instance, no pressure of sufficient weight to make them shift from their traditionally independent attitude, and they have very naturally declined to "hold the baby" and to become the country's subsidiser of uneconomic industries in uneconomic places.

The political parties, for all their support of decentralisation, have never come to grips with realities and have never come forward with practical purposeful proposals designed to lift this particular responsibility from the shoulders of the Railways and to place it squarely where it belongs - namely, on the shoulders of the general tax-payer - through the agency of the Central Government.

As I said earlier, the subject of decentralisation of Industry, and of "Secondary and Tertiary Industrial Development of the Transkei" are fundamentally similar, the problems posed vary only in detail and degree, the factors obstructing the one, are the factors obstructing the other, and the means of creating the correct CLIMATE for bringing about decentralisation of industry are also, basically, the factors which will influence the establishment of Industry in the Transkei.

Broadly, the cost of transportation has been found to be fundamental to both. It follows therefore, that in effecting the industrialisation of the Transkei, national policy will have to override the railways' obligation to operate on normal business lines, and in this vital matter a subsidising formula will have to be arranged in such a fashion that the markets for goods produced in the Transkei and Border areas are brought within reach of the factories in those areas, rather than that the reverse procedure, whereby industries tend to congregate round the large markets, should be perpetuated.

In the terms of reference of the recently appointed Schumann Commission on Railway Rates, there is recognition of the necessity for something specific to be done in regard to special rail tariffs for the Bantu and Border areas, but the socio-economic problems in connection with the Bantu areas development will build up at a rate that cannot await such a Commission's findings and the later evaluation thereof.

Rather should the question of the degree of subsidisation of the rail costs in and out of Bantu areas be determined by an ad hoc investigation which would have regard to the socio-political ends in view. The matter of reconciliation between the findings

of the Railway Rating Commission and the recommendations of the ad hoc investigators must be left for settlement at the higher level of the Central Government.

I have dwelt at some length on this vital factor, namely the cost of transportation, because only by measuring what we want to do in the future by what we have been able to do in the past, can we gauge our prospects of success in this Transkei segment of the great socio-economic programme on which we are, as a nation, embarked.

The success or failure of the nation's intention to develop a separate but integrated economy in the Transkei will depend in a major degree upon the extent to which the White people of South Africa are prepared to pay, in the present, for the stability of the future. Some concrete evidence of that willingness to pay will be manifested when legislation subsidising the higher cost of railage in instances of what would otherwise be temporarily uneconomic decentralisation into the Transkei and other Bantu areas, finds its way to the Statute Book.

It is as well that we should recognise that the politicians are not the best judges of either the prospects or the progress. They are committed either for or against this form of separate development, and are bound, by the conventions of the sphere in which they operate, to be dogmatic. One notes that on aspects of both the planning and the consequences, upon which some of the best and most earnest minds in the country find room for honest difference, politicians of both obscure and prominent position, but opposite convictions, know all the answers!

## PART II

The problem of the retarded economic development of the Platteland rural areas is small and simple by comparison with this question of Bantu and Border areas. Moreover, in the Rural Areas problem there is an escape hatch in the homogeneity of those involved! It is primarily a White man's problem and by resort to expediency and compromise, the country will come through.

Not necessarily so in the Bantu and Border areas. There, questions raised by heterogeneity of race exist in pronounced form and in the present phase of race relationships in the world they will remain in the foreground.

The White man's challenge in this matter starts with the recognition that once contact with the European has shown the



Bantu the way, nothing can interrupt their march to the same goals as those to which the White man aspires and the ultimate points of attainment will be those previously reached by the European forerunner. In a multi-racial society, regardless of the emphasis in dominant policy, the stimulating contact with the more advanced European will continue to be made in an ever more intense degree and scale, and once on the move, all the phases through which the European peasant counterpart passed in the centuries now left behind, will be experienced by the Bantu and, in the same way as the entrepreneur class in the Western World channelled the productivity of the proletariat into gainful flow, so will the responsible governing European class in South Africa have to channel the changing aspirations of the Bantu agrarian class into more productive pursuits while striving to avoid in the process those social evils which characterised the Industrial Revolution under the Laissez Faire policies of the day.

The white man's dilemma is that, to whatever extent he applies himself to the industrialisation of the agrarian Bantu, there will always be co-incidentally created a greater appetite for yet better living conditions that only yet more economic activity will be able to satisfy.

If that is so, and I believe it to be so, then there is no room for procrastination, no room for muddled thinking, for ineffective measures or for inadequate services.

Subordinate to the main factors which govern economic climate, there must be subsidiary influences which will determine whether an economy will remain agrarian in character or move onwards at increasing tempo into the sphere of secondary and tertiary activity. In regard to the Transkei, various elements, beyond those ordinarily operative, affect the availability, competence, skill and efficiency of labour, as well as its cost.

One of these is incentive.

The dominantly peasant Bantu themselves, while malleable and readily led, lack an earnest desire for improved conditions or pronounced change, a lack which is characteristic of essentially conservative rural populations everywhere, and which is only changed into a conscious striving for higher standards of living and economic progress under the stimulation of an Industrial Revolution and its resulting urbanisation, such as took place in Europe in the 19th century.



The problem in the Transkei is that the country, white, brown and black, cannot wait for the emergence of a dynamic urge for economic progress among that section of the Bantu people in areas remote from the urban centres. Industrialisation will have to be imposed upon a people for their own and the country's good at a rate in excess of what would be normal, because only in industrialisation can enough jobs be found, fast enough to cope with the surplus population which will result from the highly increased population growth rate being brought about by current health measures.

Moreover, to a considerable extent the success of industrialisation of the Transkei as a factor in raising the standard of living, will be dependent on the degree to which it can be associated with a voluntary limitation of the birth rate among the evolving Bantu. This is difficult to achieve in a backward rural population but if they follow historical precedent in tripling, if not quadrupling, their numbers, while making the demographic transition from a high birth-and-death rate-low-standard-of-living economy, to a low-birth-and-death-rate-high-standard-of-living economy, they will substantially impair their own prospects of advancement, and the experience of countries such as India, Egypt and Pakistan, where the per capita income has remained more or less stationary or actually DECLINED, despite increased national income, will be repeated. The social and health measures which our national code of ethics demands that we should impose, as far as is practical, reduces the incidence of positive population checks such as starvation and disease and will, if no scientific preventive checks are applied, in any case bring about a population explosion. The projected industrialisation will undoubtedly hasten this process, unless a positive educational effort in this direction is undertaken at the same time.

If this is not done, unemployment and resulting frustration might become an important factor. For the reasons mentioned, there will be more and more workers surplus to a food producing economy and because educational standards will, at the same time, be rising continually, the demand for more jobs with higher rewards will keep on growing so that increased industrialisation inside the Transkei, in the Border areas and in the Republic will provide the only means whereby those jobs can be found in numbers sufficient to forestall frustration among a population that



may be about to increase at an explosive rate.

Are there social considerations as well? It would seem so! Tribalism might be a deterring factor in that, being inhibitive of individual responsibility and enterprise, it might clash with modern industrial development which requires the exercise of these attributes.

A factor which has a bearing on this problem is that the tribal Bantu tends to produce only in response to an immediate need for money. The Tomlinson Commission quite correctly concluded that indications are that a lack of appreciation of the need of continuous or regular work is an integral part of the Bantu philosophy in the Reserves. On the other hand, one may deduce from other observations in the Report, that there is reason to hope that such disadvantages may be offset to some extent by the creation, inside the Transkei, of a labour force not subject to migratory habits, and therefore more permanent, and, it is to be hoped, correspondingly more efficient in the long run. Another aspect of the migratory system, the fact that in the course of his frequently broken industrial service, a Bantu tends at present to receive elementary training in half a dozen different industries in the course of his working life, as he takes employment now here, now there, might also be eliminated. If the establishment of industry near his home makes longer continuous service or more consistent re-application for employment in the same undertaking, probable, this may also stabilise the labour force and result in less dissipation of training effort.

I also believe it to be a fact that, as the same Report says, it is easier to train the Bantu to be efficient industrial workers than to train them to be efficient farmers. Tribal custom which allocates agricultural operations to the womenfolk are the obvious limiting factors in the latter case, whereas an aptitude for, and a superior tolerance of, repetitive industrial operations, render them particularly suited to many types of industrial labour.



PART III

Despite the fact that some Transkeian industry will, initially at least, have to be "protected" to the extent that a CLIMATE suitable for its survival will have to be created, it will in the long run have to become profitable in order to survive. Profit will have to result from a favourable cost structure for the reason that the Transkeian economy will not be able to pay anything but competitive prices when it comes to buying its requirements, and internal profitability can therefore not be achieved by permanently safeguarding such industry against competition from outside. A corollary is that, as indications are that the tempo of activity and standards of proficiency will, for some time, be at a lower point than in the Republic, lower efficiency will necessarily have to be paid for in lower wages. The problem of a split level of rewards for equal hours of endeavour is likely to bring in its train somewhat complex social problems for the Governments of both the Republic and the Transkei.

It can be expected that the more advanced Transkeians, stimulated by the influence of several generations of association with European mining, industrial and commercial activity, will be impatient to apply themselves to Transkeian economic development. However, though Rail services, Escom power and the Republic's communications and banking systems are available, though law and order and trading practices are established and respected, and though most of the elements for the successful mounting of enterprise can be created, the problem of the protection of infant industries, dominated by the sociological concept that they must not fail, in competition with industries in the Republic, governed by the harsher discipline imposed by competitive trading, will have to be sorted out.

In this connection it has to be recognised that initially, industries established in the Transkei, will not necessarily, like those elsewhere, be governed either in their location or in their operation, entirely by the usual profit motive. Additionally they may not be able to apply the normal business practices of ruthlessly winnowing out the inefficient or of closing down an unprofitable undertaking. The approach of those who will direct policy will have to be conditioned by the long term imperative that the undertaking must, if possible, be made to succeed, because it is part of a sociological, no less than an industrial



development program.

It is for this reason, if no other, that conventional Private Enterprise industry pursuing the profit motive might have been likely to introduce a Philosophy, perhaps incompatible with assuring success to this momentous project. Not being in a position to give consideration to anything but the dictates of normal business practice and convention, European enterprise, operating in this enclave, would soon find itself in head on collision with politically oriented Government policy, intent upon holding the balance between the maturer aggressive economy of the Republic and the adolescent economy of the Transkei.

The principle of Private Enterprise is woven into the fabric of the country's economic structure and must remain so but, in insulated compartments, such as the Transkei where this risk of interim unprofitability is too great to be borne individually by the average investor in industrial equities, there seems to be little option except for the State to step in, as it did in the instances of Iscor and Sasol.

The question arises, of course, that, if the profit motive for Whites is to be eliminated in regard to industry in the Transkei, and if, on the other hand, it is recognised that, in the interim at least, Industry and Commerce in the Transkei cannot do without White guidance, how is this guidance to be supplied, and on what basis?

A further question arises in regard to the relationship between Whites in positions of executive responsibility and their Bantu workers in industries established for the benefit of the Bantu. It will have to be determined whether measures which safeguard the relationships between employer and employee in the Republic, that is, Industrial Councils, Wage Boards, Arbitration Commissions and the like, should be extended to the Transkei, with all their implications, including recourse to the Courts?

This latter is of considerable importance, since the absence of Bantu capital, and to a large extent, of the trained entrepreneurial ability which would make greater utilisation by Bantu of the facilities offered by the Bantu Development Corporation possible, will mean that White management will predominate in, though not monopolise, Bantu industries for a very considerable period, and will have to be safeguarded as long as it is there.



Pre-requisites such as the provision of power and of rail or road facilities should not present insuperable obstacles, particularly when it is remembered that the Transkei is only approximately 200 miles long with an average width of about 80 miles, so that it should be relatively easy to give access to these facilities to industries situated on either side of central power and transport lines bisecting the Territory.

As far as water is concerned, the Transkei is fortunate in the possession of several rivers of significant size, e.g., the Bashee, the Tsitsa and the Umzimvubu and limited hydro-electric potential may exist at the Tsitsa Falls and other places, though probably the provision of electricity by Escom will be found to be more economical.

It is not my intention to discuss these features and the associated question of the nature of industry best suited to various areas of the Transkei in any detail, since the Tomlinson Report has already indicated the types of industry likely to prove most immediately suitable, and further development would have to be based on more thorough scientific investigation and analysis of the potentialities. My more immediate concern in this paper has been with certain problems concerned with over-all development, and with the factor of Time.

Throughout this paper I have had in mind the emphasis which must be placed on this factor of Time. It is, to all our minds, the crux of the entire problem and is likely to prove the determining element in deciding the success or failure of this very considerable socio-economic experiment. Regard being had then to this acknowledged overwhelming importance of TIME, we would be deluding ourselves if we believe that the resources that are immediately available to be harnessed are equal to the task of carrying out the policies that have been enunciated. The main burden of the development of the Transkei in respect of its Agricultural economy and of the stimulation of Bantu Industries, in the absence of adequate instruments of development, can fall only upon the already extended Public Service and I am convinced that the extra load of what will have to be superimposed is far too great for that already over-strained body.

Though it is supported in this instance by the appointment of special liaison committees and other high ranking ad hoc bodies and though the importance of all that has to be done is



reflected in the objects and in the establishment of the potentially highly significant Bantu Development Corporation, what is really required is an entirely new sense of urgency and a fuller and more realistic recognition that what is called for is the immediate and substantial enlargement of this latter body. In this connection, I go to the length of saying that if the country could call on some organisation of the size, experience and record of the Industrial Development Corporation to carry out the industrialisation of the Transkei and other Bantu areas, it would still have no cause to feel itself more than adequately equipped. Willingly to accept anything short of such a dynamic agency of development is to lack an awareness of the magnitude of the social forces that are on the move and of the real significance of the shortage of TIME.

There is, of course, room for more than one opinion on the point, but I would say that the fundamental question as to whether or not the distribution of development into the Bantu Rural areas and the creation thereby of higher standards of living for the Bantu in those areas will have to be undertaken has already been decided by circumstances and will have to be carried through, regardless of whether the national policy had been based on a philosophy of absolute segregation, partial segregation or integration.

In this realistic thinking there must be the recognition that all organised sections of the community have a contribution to make and will, without doubt, do their share towards making available the additional personnel, without which planning and implementation must lag dangerously. I have in mind here something akin to the American system where major Corporations have seconded highly qualified executives to important national projects on a basis of "a dollar a year" while retaining them on their own pay rolls. A "Rand per maand" would be the South African equivalent phrase.

This concept worked well in this country during the war and the post-war period and has been revived recently and put into operation again in instances of certain special assignments at high levels. What is needed, however, is a more general acknowledgement by Private Enterprise of willingness to take part in this way in the implementation of the planning and policies relating to the Transkei and other Bantu areas.

Though the problem of concentration of industry is particularly acute in South Africa, where the dominant part played by the Gold Mining industry in the national economy



since 1886 has tended to concentrate industrial activity in an unbalanced manner to an even greater degree than is the case in most countries, a diversion such as is envisaged into Bantu and other Rural areas in South Africa is not unprecedented. We have seen the systematic rehabilitation of distressed areas in Great Britain and the drastic manner in which the Russians carried out a much more dramatic program when, under pressure of imminent German occupation, they dismantled and moved over 2,500 factories to safety beyond the Ural mountains and, significantly, left the greater majority there after the war, as the beginning of a vast new industrial complex which would be less accessible to future invaders.

We must also bear in mind that the shortage of technical assistance can be supplemented from elsewhere. Australia for instance, has hired enterprises from no fewer than 21 countries under contract, in the creation of the giant Snowy Mountain irrigation and hydro-electric project and we ourselves are throwing open the opportunity of assisting in the development of the Orange River to technicians from anywhere in the Western World.

#### CONCLUSION

Within the limits of this paper, it would not have been practical to analyse steps to be taken to deal with the questions that have been raised therein. Rather have I referred to the factors of Time, Effort and Determination in respect of what we have achieved in the past in order to evaluate them again in respect of what we must achieve in the future.

SABRA is to be congratulated on providing a forum at this Conference for the consideration of the subject of the Transkei, because this is the time for all who have a positive contribution to make, to assert themselves. An ounce of realistic thinking now will be of more value than a pound of advice in ten years time or a ton of reflection delivered in twenty years.

All the years which the country had to spend sorting out its delicate race relations situation among its European components while the generically more complex race relations position affected by colour became yearly more involved have to be made up for as soon as is practical and possible.

There is no one in the land who is not involved in the matters we have been discussing! There is no one who will be



protected from the consequences of lack of success in the planning of the future of the races and it is fitting that SABRA , with its great and obvious sense of responsibility , should bring the realities of the situation to the consciousness of the people .

IAN G. FLEMING.



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