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Federation of African Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia

ITS HISTORY AND WORK

together with

**THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st MARCH, 1956**

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14, 6, 11

ITS HISTORY AND WORK



FOREWORD

by

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Chairman of the Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs

Upon entering its twenty-first year of work the Federation of African Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia has changed its title to "Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs". The change in designation had been a matter close to the heart of the Organising Secretary, the late Rev. Percy Ibbotson, O.B.E. It is, therefore, with a feeling of deep sadness I record that his death almost coincided with the initial decision for the change.

For some years it had been realised that the title "Federation of African Welfare Societies" did not fully embrace the scope of the work being undertaken. A perusal of the following pages will, I feel, convince readers that the title now adopted is more in keeping with our activities.

To mark the end of an epoch in the Organisation's existence, it has been deemed fitting to publish in brief its history and achievements. This is accompanied by what will be the last Annual Report of the Federation of African Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia as such.

Now, and in the years immediately ahead, there is, and will be, much to be done in our sphere of work. I am confident that the Institute will carry out its task with energy and to the utmost of its resources.

ITS HISTORY AND WORK

The Federation of African Welfare Societies came into being on 6th July, 1936. Among those present at the inaugural meeting in Bulawayo were the late Sir Herbert Stanley, G.C.M.G., and Mr. R. C. Tredgold (now Sir Robert Tredgold, K.C.M.G., Q.C.). The time had arrived when the work of the individual Societies should be co-ordinated. There were many problems existing and, also, looming in the field of race relations which would require the fullest co-operation to solve.

The first meeting of the Council of the Federation was held in Gwelo on 17th October, 1936. At that time the constituent African Welfare Societies forming the Federation were Bulawayo, Gwelo, Que Que, Salisbury, Selukwe and Umtali.

Among the items discussed at the first Council meeting were the suitability and amplitude of land set aside for Africans, the marketing of African produce, urban housing and village settlement. This indicates that even in the early years of African Welfare work, activities were not confined solely to the provision of recreational and sporting amenities.

Within a few years it became evident that the scope of the work demanded the services of a full-time official. With financial assistance from the Government, who recognised the value of the work being undertaken by the Federation, the late Rev. P. Ibbotson, O.B.E., was appointed Organising Secretary in 1942.

It now was possible to carry out investigations and surveys relating to African conditions and to give direct assistance in the establishment of new Societies.

Some of the subjects surveyed and investigated were:—

Urban African Conditions, Juvenile Delinquency among Africans, Identification Certificates and Pass Laws, Implementation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, Training, Wages, etc., of African Artisans in Southern Rhodesia, Partnership in Southern Rhodesia, the Working of Native Courts, Native Councils, Skokiaan Brewing and Hooliganism, Security of Tenure for Africans.

The establishment of African Welfare Societies was and still is a difficult task; however, by 1950 ten were functioning. Europeans generally, were apathetic if not unsympathetic, but undoubtedly, there is now being displayed by them a much greater interest in the well-being of the African community. Thinking people are realising that good relations between European and African is the key to the happy future of the Country. There are now seventeen constituent Societies of the Federation of African Welfare Societies.

Over the years the Federation has made representations to the appropriate authorities on an abundance of subjects affecting Africans. The appended schedule indicates the scope of these representations. Although it is not claimed that the satisfactory results in all cases have been directly due to the Federation's efforts, the schedule shows that the Federation has been fully aware of the conditions obtaining regarding the various subjects and has taken action about them which, in some instances, has continued for several years.

To illustrate further the work of the Federation, additional items which have been the subject of action in one form or other are:—

Native Beer Halls, Venereal Disease, Training of African Nurses, Legal Aid for Poor Persons, Native Taxation, Training of Teachers, Capital Punishment, African Trading, Thrift, Insurance, Water and Soil Conservation, Employer/Employee Relationships, Tuberculosis, Care of the Physically Handicapped and Eye Care.

It will, no doubt, be freely conceded that in the past much useful work has been carried out. The task of the Federation, however, is to keep abreast of trends and these are not static.

Development in all spheres throughout the Country has been great during the last decade. The indications are that, in the next,

it will be relatively phenomenal. There are complex problems even now emerging. The Federation is fully alive to them, and will, unstintingly, play its part in solving them.

The administration of the Federation is carried out by a Council of European and African representatives from each constituent Society. The Council meets at least once a year and an Executive Committee elected annually conducts the Federation's affairs for the ensuing year.

The Federation Headquarters are situated in Mimosa House, Bulawayo, and are recognised as a bureau of information on all aspects of African welfare and development. A valuable library has been built up and is made use of by local authorities, various organisations and members of the public.

SCHEDULE OF IMPORTANT ITEMS WHICH HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF REPRESENTATION TO GOVERNMENT AND RAILWAYS

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Year Submitted</i>	<i>Result</i>
The appointment of African Welfare Workers in Urban Areas.	1936	In 1937 Government agreed to meet half of the salaries of these workers at Salisbury and Bulawayo.
The establishment of Advisory Boards in Locations.	1937	These Boards were provided for under the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act — Promulgated in 1946.
The provision of Urban Educational Facilities.	1937	Government has now undertaken responsibility for all Urban African Education.
Legislation regulating Hire Purchase Agreements.	1939	This legislation was promulgated under the Hire Purchase Act, 1945, and brought into operation in 1946.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Year Submitted</i>	<i>Result</i>
Improvement of housing and living conditions.	1940	Provided for under the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act.
The institution of wireless broadcasts in Native languages.	1940	The radio station of Lusaka now caters for Africans of the Federation.
The provision of land in Urban Areas on which Africans could erect their own houses.	1941	Africans may now purchase or build houses on a 99 years lease.
The improvement of train accommodation and railway waiting rooms.	1941	Considerable improvements have been and are still being made.
The creation of a National Health Service.	1942	Government appointed a Commission in 1945 to investigate the provision of this service. As a result, all medical services are now provided free for Africans.
The enlargement of the field of employment in Government Departments.	1942	The Medical, Posts and Telegraphs, Social Welfare, and Education Departments are now employing Africans in responsible positions.
Legislation for the establishment of African Co-operative Societies.	1942	Legislation is now being provided.
The establishment of a Board for the marketing of Native produce.	1943	The Native Development Fund Act of 1948 provides for the marketing of Native produce.
The establishment of a Native Wages Board.	1944	Regulations issued under terms of the Native Labour Boards Act, 1947, now regulate wages, except for domestics.

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| Pensions or Gratuities. | 1944 | Regulations are now in force governing Gratuities for long service. |
| Legislation for regulating conditions in factories. | 1944 | The Factories and Works Act was promulgated in 1948. |
| The establishment of Employment Bureaux. | 1944 | Provision for these has been made under the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act. |
| The employment of African Artisans on new housing in urban locations. | 1944 | This promulgated in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act, 1946. |
| The institution of scales of rations. | 1944 | These are also provided for in terms of the Native Labour Boards Act. |
| Bursaries for training African Doctors. | 1946 | In 1947 Government agreed to award one bursary each year. Eight students are now under training. |
| Conditions of service for African employees. | 1946 | These have now been laid down in terms of the Native Labour Boards Act, 1947. |
| Assistance to African Railway passengers. | 1946 | The Railways have now provided African guides for this purpose. |
| Censorship of films for Africans. | 1947 | Africans were appointed to the Board of Censors in 1949. |
| The establishment of a Social Welfare Department. | 1947 | Probation and Welfare Work were consolidated into a sub-department of the Government—1950. |

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Year Submitted</i>	<i>Result</i>
Juvenile Delinquency.	1948	A reformatory was established in 1950 and a Reformatory Board in 1951. A remand home in Salisbury was opened in 1954, and one in Bulawayo during the latter part of 1955.
The appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into African Education.	1950	A Commission was appointed in 1951.
Government Teacher-training facilities for Africans.	1950	A teacher - training course was provided at Umtali in January, 1956.
Security of Tenure in Urban and adjoining areas.	1950	Africans may now purchase or build houses on a 99 years lease.
Higher Education for Africans on a university basis.	1951	Africans will be accepted at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
Training of African Social Welfare Workers.	1954	A limited number of Africans are now undergoing a course of probation work.

Representations and continued inquiries on several other items have been submitted without any tangible results to date. These include:—

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Year First Submitted</i>
African Taxation—Commission of Inquiry	1946
Pass System—Identification book to replace the many passes at present necessary.	1948
Liquor Act—Request for Government Inquiry	1949
Social Security—Advisory Commission	1951

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1956

The past year has presented numerous difficulties to the Federation of African Welfare Societies in maintaining the previous level of activities, and it is more than gratifying that the volume of work done and the activities maintained have continued at the level they have. This has been due in no small measure to the energy and enthusiasm of Mr. C. Vernon, the Assistant Secretary, who managed to visit nearly all the Societies during the year. The thanks of the Federation are due to him and I am glad of this opportunity of acknowledging the good work done.

The need for an adequate staff has always been recognised by the Federation and endeavours have been made in the past to keep abreast with requirements. The present time calls for further effort in this respect. The Committee appointed to select a Director took immediate action and a number of applications for the post were received. These were carefully examined but the Committee felt that no applicant fulfilled the desired requirements and no appointment has been made. Had the post been filled, however, it would probably have strained our finances to an embarrassing extent.

It is pleasing to be able to report that matters taken up by the Federation which were the subject of representations to Government have shown marked progress. In this connection reference is made to the Select Committee's report on the Native Industrial Workers' Unions Bill. The Southern Rhodesia Government has accepted this report which is a matter of great importance. The Select Committee's report recommends that the Bill be not proceeded with, but that the Industrial Conciliation Act be amended so that Africans are included in that Act. Other recommendations

are made which, if adopted, open the way to greater opportunities for Africans in industry. The draft legislation of the new Bill is awaited with a keen interest.

African Education

The Southern Rhodesia Government's recently announced plan in connection with African education for the next five years is extremely satisfactory. It proposes to increase facilities for primary education as well as to increase the number of secondary schools and classes, and in addition to establish Higher Teacher Training Courses. By 1958 courses in commercial and electrical work are envisaged.

Co-operative Societies

Legislation has at last been passed for the registration and management of Co-operative Societies. The Federation has been pressing for this for some time past as the African population has felt the need of co-operative efforts in trading.

Juvenile Delinquency

During the past year a Remand Home was opened in Bulawayo and a hostel for juvenile delinquents is under construction.

Legal Sub-Committee

The National Industrial Council of the Building Industry petitioned the Governor under terms of Section 60 of the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1945, that the terms of the Agreement of the industry be binding upon Natives within Municipalities. This matter was examined fully and both oral and written evidence were given to the Native Labour Board of the Building Industry which was appointed to consider the petition. In this connection the Federation has to acknowledge with thanks and appreciation the work and representations of Mr. Harry L. Phillips, of Umtali, on its behalf. The Federation is particularly concerned about the implementation of this Proclamation and it is watching the position carefully. The present agreement is due to terminate in April, 1957.

Dennis Allen Memorial Prize—Essay Competition

There was a record number of entries this year—65 from eleven schools and the essays maintained the usual high level. This is the tenth year that the competition has been held and it will be possible to continue it for another year or two with the funds remaining from the original sum donated for this purpose.

Constituent Societies

It is pleasing to record that a Society has been formed at Sinoia. Unfortunately due to the closing of the Rezende Mine at Penhalonga the Society there has become defunct. Societies now number sixteen. The Assistant Secretary visited thirteen of the Societies during the year.

Federation Office

Members of the public, students, and research workers continue to visit the office for information on African affairs. Much use is made of the Federation's library.

Every day Africans come to the office for advice and guidance. The fact that they do so indicates the value of our organisation.

Approximately 1,100 copies of the monthly publication "African Welfare Bulletin" are despatched. Apart from Rhodesia and Nyasaland the Bulletin is sent to addresses in the Union of South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Egypt, Tanganyika, Belgian Congo, Switzerland, Canada, United States of America and Great Britain.

Finance

Although the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet reflect a satisfactory position under present conditions, it must be pointed out that the appointment of a successor to our late Organising Secretary has not been made, partly due to our limited financial resources. The Federation is grateful for the continued financial support received both from individuals and various corporate bodies.

Sincere thanks are expressed to Mr. John H. Barham for his generous services over many years as Honorary Auditor to the Federation.

Staff

The present establishment consists of the Assistant Secretary and a lady clerk-typist.

E. M. B. WEST,

Chairman.

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