

DR. A. B. XUMA.

Province a franchise which brought to race relations goodwill and co-operation. That has been done away with and we have been given a system that certainly does race relations no good because we have found that it has totally failed in its application, and the motive that we thought was behind it - that is, to cut us off from direct influence on Parliament and the legislative body - has been proved by the fact that at repeated sittings of the Council recommendations have been made by the Native Representative Council, but very few have been given effect to; and that has led to the impasse that we are now under in that the Native Representative Council for two sessions has decided to adjourn as a protest, not only against the discriminatory legislation, but also against the fact that the views of the African people have been disregarded by the Native Affairs Department; because it is the recommendation of the Native Affairs Department that would introduce the views of the natives to Parliament. And then before there were no laws like the Urban Areas Act and the Liquor Act which are now sending tens of thousands of Africans into gaol, because of the discrimination. I have a list here, Sir, of the results, and that is reported in the Union Year Book for 1940, under "Predominant Offences" and against Africans - that was of course the 1939 figures - the offences for illegal possession of native liquor was 77,682 natives; drunkenness 39,473; Masters and Servants Act, 18,000; Native labour regulations 26,000. Now most of those Acts apply only to Africans, except the Masters and Servants Act which in principle applies to whites, but in practice of late years it has applied largely to the Africans. The native labour regulations do not apply to whites. And for the native pass laws there were 101,000 convictions in that year; and the native taxation Act 48,000. Now, Sir, that cannot be suggested as a mode of

DR. A. B. XUMA.

of integrating the African people into the political and economic life of the country. Such legislation should be done away with, because it is destroying the people. We feel then, Sir, that with the lack of technical training provided for Africans and with the fact that their wages are made low, they are not able to be efficient, they are not able to be productive, and we feel that the colour bar should be done away with in South Africa, in the interests of industry, good race relations and efficiency, and also in raising the economic income of the country. That is about all I want to say Sir, and I do feel that anyway whatever this statement is worth, it should be known by your Commission. I know that you have certain limitations. I know that you have terms of reference that consider it is only practicable to nibble at the policy; but that has been done for years, and we feel we are losing valuable time that could be made use of in bringing about that environment which would raise the standard of South Africa; and I have mentioned a few persons who were the first generations to get an opportunity and have shown what they have done in contributing, not only to their races, but also to civilisation. Through this policy we are handicapping South Africa. Actually instead of protecting the skilled European workers we are limiting their opportunities because we are watching the native; and yet it would so enlarge the productivity of the country that the opportunity in secondary industries and others would make it possible for enterprising whites to really find it productive to go into secondary industries, because there would be a home market if native labour is rewarded as it should be - not on the basis of colour or race - but on the basis of efficiency and productivity.

MR. VON MALTITZ : I was really impressed by the

DR. A. B. XUMA.

way the Doctor was speaking about the negroes in America. Now you spoke yesterday about the Transkei, and the denuding of the country - that it is going into the sea. Now, do you not think that as a medical doctor you could go to the Transkei and help the people there to work up the country again. Do you not think it would save us and also humanity in South Africa. You have seen what has happened in America and you can help us here too to try and get the Transkei back to its normal productivity? --- In the first place I think that we have to recognise one point and that is that at the present time there are limitations. I think, Sir, you will remember that in the discussion that I made I pointed out the fact that there are tens of thousands of African young men in the Transkei and the Ciskei who are to-day squatting in commonages in the Transkei because of lack of land that they themselves can acquire and make use of, even for their minimum needs of their own families. Secondly, the sizes of the plots that are given are not enough under the agricultural conditions of South Africa particularly, to support a family and meet the growing needs of Africans - because Africans are no longer what they were when the white man first met them. Their outlook has changed, their needs have changed and their requirements have increased, so that to-day it is not a question of feeding their stomachs; there are many other needs such as the education of their children and many other amenities that are necessary. And also the ownership of that land is not individual ownership. It is a precarious ownership, in that, if one defaults in his payments he is likely to be evicted. I discussed this question with Chief Mpoto (?) at one time and Mr. Bam. Chief Mpoto is well known to Mr. Barrett, and I said "Why do not

-you-

DR. A. B. XUMA.

you have the people now to build solid houses on these plots?" The argument was, if I get ill, or the ordinary man gets ill, and he has one of these plots and he or his wife is unable to pay, then it will be possible, in spite of the house that has been built there, that a man or his family might be evicted; and the same if he dies. So that the fact of this perpetual tenancy of the Africans on trust farms in the Glen Grey district and elsewhere makes it impossible for the people to feel that they can put on permanent improvements. I am coming to this point, that there have been all sorts of suggestions of putting certain individuals in the Native Affairs Department, because of their attitude. We actually have, most of us, nothing against the Minister of Native Affairs as a man and as a person. We have nothing against the Europeans, but we have everything against the policy that is restrictive and does not give opportunity for development. So it is not going to be the question of changing the personnel who control this policy, because you would be entrenching a policy that is economically, industrially, educationally, politically, and even on Christian principles, condemned. That is not the important thing; the thing is to give equality of opportunity to human beings, so that they can show what endowment the good God has placed within them. So my going to the Transkei will be no use. I might have been there, but of course there are more people here that I have to attend than I could have attended within a certain radius in the Transkei. There are more people here within a certain radius and most of them are really in need of such attendance, notwithstanding the number of doctors that are here in town. So that what we would like to impress is that it is not a question of personnel. The Native Affairs to-day is manned by many children of missionaries; they are trying to cushion the harshness of

DR. A. B. XUMA.

the policy, but that does not change the policy. In fact we feel that that personnel, those men, most of them are wasted. Some of us are wasted in that to-day we have to come before such commissions when we should be used as part and parcel of South Africa, to develop it, and to apply whatever little abilities some of us might have, to the common good of the country; so it is not a question of personnel; it is a question of the policy, which is just a dense wall against the natural progress of the people.

MR. VON MALTITZ : But do not you think that by going back to the Transkei and getting some of your friends, and going to the Minister of Native Affairs and telling him about your difficulties, like we have told the Minister about the price of our wheat, the price of mealies, the price of butter and the price of eggs and so on - every time we have come to the Minister we have said "Look here, this does not include anyone else; we are just here as farmers - whether a man is black or white" and the price of what to-day to me is exactly the price of what to you, if you are a South African. That is because we help the people; we help the farmers. Now, my argument is this; if you had been in the Transkei and had gone to the Minister and spoken to him nicely and said "Look here, we want to do this and that. Cannot you help us." Do not you think he would have? --- In the first place I may say that I was fifteen years in Johannesburg before I could get a plot, under the circumstances that I have just pointed out - before I could get a plot of my own. It would have been difficult for me to have spent with other young men my fifteen years there waiting to get a plot, because I would have nowhere to carry on; that is the first thing. The second point

DR. A. B. XUMA.

is that the Minister of Native Affairs - I really think that is a wrong designation, in that he is a member of a political party. He is not responsible to the native people, he is responsible to his party. He is bound by limitations of party politics and that again makes, under the circumstances, the position of the Minister of Native Affairs a very invidious one. Some of the Ministers, I know, have had very progressive ideas, but they had to consider the policy of their party, and the security of their party in remaining in power. I am saying that with full authority, because that was the expression of the late Colonel Reitz when we were discussing on the 4th March, 1942, the question of the abolition of the pass laws. He stated that he felt that there was nothing that brought friction in race relations in South Africa more than the question of the pass laws, and he went further and said the fact that there were no pass laws in the Cape and in Natal should indicate that conditions would not be worse if the pass laws were abolished in the Transvaal and the Free State. "But", he said, "what about my party? What will be the political reaction of the country?" He went further and said "If I could do it without disturbing the political mind of South Africa, I would recommend it tomorrow to the Prime Minister", so that you can see, Sir, in the first place we want to be part and parcel of the policy making of the country as it should be, on the basis of democracy, on the basis of Christianity and human decency. Secondly, at the present time the native has no way of influencing Parliament since the 1936 Act. They are actually excluded from any direct influence of Parliament; and the fact of the colour bar in the South Africa Act, excluding Africans from direct representation in Parliament, also makes

DR. A. B. XUMA.

it impossible for the views of the people to be known by the country. Of course, I know that in the circumstances the country hardly wants them, especially if they are not in favour of the policy that is being carried out. And it is that really that we would like to impress upon the country; and we are certain of one thing - that future generations, no matter what the political set up of the country is to-day - will not accept the present policy of differentiation and discrimination as a policy that will make for peaceful race and colour relations in South Africa. We are convinced of that, and we would like to have South Africa hasten in that direction, which is the only right and proper way of dealing with the situation dictated by principles of democracy, Christianity and human decency.

MR. WELSH : Where did you qualify, Dr. Xuma? --- I trained at Clarkebury in the Transkei, and had a teacher's training course there. In those days the training in the Cape Province for whites and Africans was the same; we were qualifying for the same certificate as teachers and were taking the same examinations; and as you know, Lovedale trained in the early days some of the most eminent sons of South Africa among the whites. ~~Then~~ Then from there I did some work in Tuskugee and I did my university work at the State University at Minnesota; I did my medical work partly in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and completed it in Chicago, and did my internship - that is my housemanship - in the hospital at St. Louis; I did post graduate work in surgery, midwifery and gynaecology at Budapest; and I took my British qualification at Edinburgh, and went back again in 1938 and did my D. Ph. at London University for public health.

-When-

DR. A. B. XUMA.

When did you take your degree at Edinburgh? --- That was in 1927.

At that time you could not take a medical degree in South Africa? --- No.

To-day, natives can? --- Yes.

That is a change within the last twenty years? --- Yes.

It is an indication of a movement forward? --- I think most of our movements are more like the frog trying to get out of the pool - two feet up and one foot back. There have been gains in certain directions. I have in public meetings before African gatherings expressed our gratitude for the scholarships that are given to the African people. But if opportunity were given to our people, and that is what we want, they would be able to develop, to be able to earn; they would be able to pay their way in South Africa, and not always have to depend on charity as a racial group. We appreciate that, and we acknowledge it as progress in that aspect.

Sometimes, as one who was myself at a native school, I have been disappointed not to hear just an appreciation of what has not only been attempted, but what has been done in South Africa. Just looking at the whole picture and allowing everything you have said, I have wondered sometimes why it is we do not hear the note of appreciation of what has been attempted and what has been achieved? --- We appreciate those things. I will go further and say, as I have said here and I have said abroad, that the missionaries have been the basis and foundation of native education. And but for them I fear that in fact we would have been in a worse condition. But

DR. A. B. XUMA.

now we are arguing that, because of changing circumstances and times, that appreciative though we are of what the missionary has done and is still doing, the needs and ~~re-~~quirements of native education are so great that they are beyond their means and that the State should take the responsibility of education of the native child as it is the duty of the State to educate the child of any other race.

There is just one other thing. You referred to a passage that I had read, and I see a bit higher it does say "It is true that there are few territories containing both European and native populations in which some discriminatory legislation has not been found necessary, but South Africa has perhaps made the greatest use of this type of ~~IX~~ law." Then there is a comparison between India and South Africa - one occupying a position at one end and the other at the other end. Just one other thing. You are aware of the reclamation schemes that were put to the Transkei and the Ciskei? --- Yes.

What actually was the reaction in the Ciskei to a reclamation scheme that was pictured over a term of years? --- There had to be - I do not know if it is correct to call it pressure - of the Secretary of Native Affairs before the scheme was accepted. It was not embraced with both arms, but just because the Secretary of Native Affairs went and pleaded with the people some of them felt that they had to accept the scheme. But what we say about that scheme is that it is next to useless under present conditions because one thing it is going to do; it is going to actually disguise the real conditions of landlessness. It would be a good scheme if it were done concomitantly with the extension of the reserves. I have had some training in agriculture so I should have a little knowledge of the subject. I always had a love for

DR. A. B. XUMA.

medicine, but I had actually taken a course in agriculture. The late Dr. Charles T. Loram was a good friend of mine. We were in consultation. But after the ravages of the Land Act of 1913, and the fact that Africans now were being restricted from buying land except in the restricted areas which were not adequate, I changed my mind and took up medicine; so that I was driven by the policy; and now I feel that I am too old to change and go back and do agriculture; in fact it would not pay me, because there is drought all the time over which I have no control. But what I want to say is that that policy would have been good, but the circumstances surrounding the conditions of Africans in trust farms in the Glen Grey district are such that really it is impossible to apply successfully unless you extend the reserves. And as I pointed out yesterday, when you have five head of cattle, there may be only two oxen and some of the cows may not be ready for yoke; and anyway, it is not as easy as doing with a mule to harness an ox and make him plough. So that is really one of the fundamental failures of the limitations of the plots available to Africans and also limiting their stock has another bad effect, in that when the Africans had this community of ownership of land they had plenty of pastures. They could balance their cereal diet by the fact that they had enough stock to provide them with milk. You can argue, and argue reasonably, that they should get a better cow which would produce twice as much or three times as much as a scrub cow. That we shall concede, but we shall also emphasise the fact that the conditions just do not permit the production of African areas notwithstanding the establishment of rehabilitation schemes under the present condition of ownership and the size of those plots.

-Mr. Welsh-

DR. A. B. XUMA.

MR. WELSH : It has not been tried out. We have seen the betterment areas at Butterworth, and we have seen those places where an agricultural expert is showing the people. We saw one at Sibasa, and, looking on, it seemed to me that the potentialities where everything is done to get the best out of the earth are tremendous. If the native people come with one mind to get the best out of their country, I do not think any of us know the potentialities?---

¶ We can take a demonstration plot anywhere and everywhere almost, and you get all the equipment. You are able to get all the equipment and get the intelligence behind it of specially trained people. A demonstration plot like that is not a practical thing, because the factors that are surrounding the working of that are artificial, and not common to the people who are expected to copy that, because they will not have the means and the materials with which to work that plot as the demonstration people can show. That can be done; I know that. I have had to do it as a school teacher for children, and so forth. That is easy when you have all the materials and you have the training - that is, those people are specially trained - and the Government will naturally provide all the equipment that the natives will not have as individual families; that is an important aspect that must be considered in looking at that kind of a project.

MR. BARRETT : I wonder, seeing that Dr. Xuma has this interest in the reserves, whether we might discuss at all Mr. Norton's theory in connection with the increasing drift to industry. He was very much impressed with the impossibility of getting a man to be both a good industrialist and a good agriculturalist. If he went back to the reserve with the main idea in his mind that he had done a job of work and

DR. A. B. XUMA.

he wanted to go back and rest, he was not going to farm in the way that the reserves need to be farmed, and he would have liked to see a division of the population, into those who have really got the agricultural keenness and those who are ~~in~~ there simply to live there and go back and work again. Do you see any practicability in an ultimate sorting of the population into those who are really going to be peasant agriculturalists and the other type who are going to be mainly industrialists ? --- Well, if I did not state it pointedly yesterday, Sir, I think I implied the view that we must not restrict ^{townward} ~~toward~~ migration, because those people who leave the reserves and come into town by choice or by reason of circumstances are coming here because of their inclination. Many of them would not make good farmers no matter what the policy and the legislation of the country is. So that we have square pegs in round holes, when we want through legislation to say that natives must not come into towns but must remain in the reserves. As history indicates, economic factors will come into play and have come into play in South Africa, drawing natives and others from the rural areas into the cities; and the distribution should be allowed to be a natural one following, firstly, the personal inclinations of the people and, secondly, the impact of the industrialisation of the country, which will, definitely, no matter what we want to see, change the distribution of the population, and will cause South Africa to develop a permanent population. We would not suggest, as Mr. Norton does, that there should be (again an artificial interference, or forcing.

THE CHAIRMAN : I do not think he said it should be artificial. I do not think Mr. Norton made specific suggestions as to how this should be carried out. He rather pointed out that the department, with all its betterment schemes would

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

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.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.