

19.11.)

PATHFINDER MOVEMENT.

P.O.Box 4767
Johannesburg Tvl.,
Nov. 20th, 1928.

DP/M S.P.Woodfield
Grace Dieu Training College
Pietersburg, Traal N.

Dear Woodfield:

I know now what it was that we had to get together on! It was the qualifications for commissions as Pathfinder Masters and Asst. Pathfinder Masters. Frankly, I see the same instance here that has been the case at the Social Centre. We have hesitated to rush in and pile up by-laws for the simple reason that it is rather hard-time and time again to meet these after they are framed, and on the other hand ever so easy to draught up things that look "sweet" on paper! Please don't misunderstand me. Qualifications are necessary, but you people upon whom the bulk of responsibility will fall, may find yourself up against it, and even the progress of the movement in some cases (for all sorts of conditions and instances are bound to arise) will be at stake. I hesitate to say anything final in the game only rather give indications of what is running through my mind after this year's experience on the Reef. Reasons for this:

I know that each school year means a shifting of teachers, and that means in some cases where there has been a very strong troop they are suddenly without any leader at all, or one to whom the movement is altogether new and the boys know more about it than the teacher. With this comes all degrees and variations of ~~all~~ willingness and character. (Teachers are not selected according to their ability as Pathfinder leaders) What happens to a troop in such a case?

Then again, some teachers are strong for one or simply a very few things, such as "show". He is useful, but not the all round man we like to see in scouting. Something should be present in the qualifications to make him "buck up" and not be too easily satisfied with himself.

Qualifications can "make" the movement or it can kill it!

I have in mind an incident which I hope is not prevalent, nor indicative. One of the ambitious missionary supervisors candidly told the teacher in his school, if he didn't take an interest in the Pathfinder troop someone would be found who would! Fatal! Then came a sulky reaction that "he was not getting paid for all this extra work". So it is for those who have the movement at heart to feel their way along and rather get a fine spirit of brotherhood, fellowship and all that, than to bolt things over at too early a stage in the game. There is a lot that can be done yet, without making the organization too "tight", and in that respect I cannot help but feel that it is well we are called "Pathfinders" for we have still a chance to achieve a good deal. In all this do not think for a moment that I would not welcome the name "Boy Scouts." I would, with open arms, and I hope it will come before too long, in the meantime though, the movement need not loose anytime, getting ready! I am anxious for the future of the Movement. It has been a glorious year with the Pathfinders. I hope that things will go on even better in the future. Goodness knows they appreciate all that can be done for them!

Well, here are my reflections! Take them for what they are worth, bearing in mind that it will be YOU and others like you who will have to cope with them!!

SUGGESTED QUALIFICATIONS FOR P/Ms & AP/Ms.

Good moral character and willingness to carry out the spirit of the Pathfinder Movement are essential.

PATHFINDER MASTERS:

1. The Pathfinder Masters Promise:-

"On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and the king, to help other people at all times, to obey the Pathfinder Law, and to do all I can to carry out the spirit of the Pathfinder Movement."

2. Age. At least 21 years of age.

3. Experience:

- (a) actual, as troop leader, first class or second class Pathfinder with ability in leadership. If possible, recommended by the Pathfinder Master of the Troop or Head of the school.
- (b) at training week or camp, credit announced at each place where training is held. Must pass the tenderfoot test and satisfy the examiner that he has a sound, comprehensive idea of the Pathfinder programme of activities, tests and opportunities for general character building. DP/Ms or those who are conducting training courses should be on the look out for "natural leaders", that is men to whom the Pathfinders will be attracted.

8th. December 1928.

D.F.M. A.G. Adams,
Bantu Social Centre,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Adams,

I apologise for the delay in answering your letter on qualifications etc. for Warrant officers in the Pathfinders' Movement - please put it down to end-of-term examinations and general rush.

I agree with you that it is easier to have "paper" qualifications than to get them carried out in practice, and it is quite obvious that the standard must be raised quite gradually as the supply begins to meet the demand, and further tests become possible. The fact that the majority of the officers are teachers in the schools is to be reckoned with, and is not always an advantage. Certainly it is responsible for the dropping of a good many promising troops. I have seen it so in this district. How would it be to refuse to register any troop that cannot provide at least two officers, so as to ensure continuity? It seems as if some such regulation is necessary.

Under your heading "3. Experience: (b)" I wonder whether "must pass the tenderfoot test" is sufficient? Should it not be "second class"? In the Girl Guides the officers must have qualified for several badges before they receive warrants - and it is going to be difficult for a man to instruct his troop if he knows no more, and probably less, than some of his boys. You see he may be called upon to take over an experienced troop, and his Tenderfoot is not going to help him much in such a case.

Then, should we not insist upon a definite recommendation and testimonial of good moral character from someone in authority, such as minister, superintendent, or government worker? Even if such a course would for a time, lessen the numbers, I believe that in the long run we should greatly improve the quality and general status of the movement; and I always feel that the danger of such movements is the too rapid growth with a consequent loss of ideal.

Apart from these comments I am in entire agreement with your scheme, and now that your time in South Africa is so quickly coming to pausend you will probably not have time to follow the subject up. If this is the case I will submit your proposals to the next H.Q. Council, together with these comments.

I should like, while I am writing, to thank you for the copy of the Report on the Pathfinder work on the Reef and to congratulate you upon the wonderful progress that has been made during your time in office. We shall all miss you much, and I only hope that your successor will be able to carry on the work that you have done so ably.

May you have every blessing and success in your work of the future.

With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally,

D.P.M., Northern Transvaal.

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