

This Conference of Chiefs and representatives of all classes and interests of African peoples in the Provinces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, convened by the Government to consider the proposed Native policy under the Native Bills, places on record the following observations and conclusions as its views on the Representation of Natives Bill :-

THAT, the main and foremost question for this Conference to consider is not the proposed abolition of the Cape Native franchise, but the contemplated exclusion of the entire Native population of the Union from the body politic of the Union of South Africa, which is the sole purpose and object of this Bill.

THAT the most dispassionate consideration of the Bill leads this Conference to the conclusion that the European races of the Union have, by arriving at the principles embodied in the Bill, surrendered to race prejudice. No evidence in proof of the African race being unworthy of parliamentary franchise has been adduced, nor has any reasonable cause or justification warranting the proposal to abolish the Cape Native franchise been advanced. The fact that there are only 12,000 Native voters in the Cape Province, and that the rest of the Natives in the Union have no voice in the Union legislative councils does not, in the opinion of this Conference, justify the Union Parliament to deny our coming generations the right to be represented in Parliament, nor is it indeed any justification for Parliament to deprive the Cape Natives of their prospective political rights, and to disenfranchise the Native people who are in the Provinces other than that of the Cape of Good Hope. It is not shown either in what way will the possession or the exercise of parliamentary franchise by the Natives endanger European civilisation.

THAT the mode of election prescribed under the Bill is a humiliation of a provocative nature. The Bill groups together educated and enlightened Natives, as well as illiterate and unenlightened ones as one whole, and throws them back into tribal conditions, forcing them to exercise their franchise by voting through illiterate or unenlightened Chiefs. This proposal is viewed as an expression, on the part of the Europeans, of their dislike of the progress and advancement made by the Natives, and that the Bill seeks to arrest or discourage the individual efforts made by the Natives towards advancement and self-upliftment.

~~THAT~~ The Conference expresses the view that the Native people are the citizens of the Union, and form an integral part of the "South African Nation", and as such they do not, and never will, accept any policy under which they are shut out from the body politic of the Union of South Africa which country is their native and only home land. The Conference points out that the desire of the various African peoples in the Union is that, in the development and advancement of their race, they should have, and ask to have, adequate and effective representation in the Union Supreme Legislature, that is to say, in both Houses of the Union Parliament.

The Conference, therefore, places before the Government, Parliament, and the country the following:

- (i) That the Native peoples throughout the Union of

South Africa want individual franchise exercisable only by and through the individual to whom it is granted, and not through the Chiefs, local councils, or advisory boards as prescribed in the Bill.

- (ii) The qualification for such a franchise should include
- (a) an educational qualification; and
 - (b) one of either a property, or income, or salary or wages qualification.

Furthermore, the Conference wishes to point out that as regards the representation of Natives prescribed in Part I of the Bill that such form of representation has been in vogue and that it has become a failure in so far as the Natives are concerned. The nominated Senators appointed to look after the interests of the Natives have always regarded themselves as advisers of the Government on all affairs or legislative matters affecting Natives brought before the Senate for consideration. Moreover, they have always regarded themselves as being bound ~~and~~ and pledged to uphold the policy and legislative proposals introduced by the Government which nominated them, as against the true interests of the Natives.

The Conference draws attention to the ^{that} ~~following facts~~ fact in the original Native Bills placed before the country by the Prime Minister, General Hertzog,

- (i) it was proposed to alter and not to abolish the Cape Native franchise;
- (ii) it was proposed to extend it in its altered form to the Natives in the other three Provinces of the Union;
- (iii) above all, it was proposed to give the entire Native population of the Union representation in the House of Assembly by seven Europeans who would represent Native interests only;
- (iv) the Union Native Council Bill of the original Native Bills was not, as in the case of the Natives Representative Council in the new Bill, put forward as a substitute for the Cape Native franchise or representation of Natives in the House of Assembly. Moreover the Union Council Bill proposed to establish a Union Council consisting of fifty Native members, and was to be convened regularly every year.

The Conference wishes to register its appreciation of the fact that these principles were by far more liberal than the spirit and principles of the Bill under ~~consideration~~ consideration. The Conference is of opinion that there is much in these proposals which would and can lead to a reasonable compromise if only both sides -- Black and White -- could approach the matter in a spirit of good-will and on a principle of "give and take".

In the opinion of this Conference there is no need or desirability for legislation which makes provision for the declaration of Natives as Non-Natives, as proposed in the Bill. It is, moreover, the established ~~of~~ policy of the Union that a Native will unalterably be regarded as, and will unalterably remain a Native for all purposes and at all times.

The Conference considers that what is highly desirable and essentially needed is a liberal spirit - a spirit of tolerance in all legislative and administrative matters affecting the Native people; a liberal policy under which the Natives will be able to work for their economic upliftment and advancement without the ~~such~~ harassing and humiliating conditions and legal disabilities under which our people at present labour.

This Conference desires to register a strong protest against the proposals of the Bill which single out our race from all other races resident in the Union, ~~and~~ shut it out from the body politic of the Union, and deny it true and satisfactory representation in Parliament solely on the ground of race.

In the circumstances the Conference has no alternative but to reject the Bill entirely, and respectfully requests the Government to readjust the matter of the representation of Natives in Parliament, more or less, on the lines indicated herein.

Collection Number: AD843

XUMA, A.B., Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers Research Archive**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

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