

THE BANTU LABOUR FORCE OF THE JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL.

1. COMPOSITION OF LABOUR FORCE:-

Very nearly 20,000 Bantu men and women find employment with the Council. Just under 19,000 are employed in a wide variety of daily paid occupations, ranging from completely unskilled labouring jobs through various gradations to semi-skilled and foreman posts. Slightly over 1100 are employed in Graded (Salaried) Staff positions which again cover a wide range of clerical, semi-professional and professional activities.

2. TOTAL ANNUAL EMOLUMENTS:-

The emoluments paid to the above Bantu labour force exceeds R8,300,000 per annum. Of this more than R7½ million are paid to the daily paid groups and the balance to the Graded Staff groups. This does not take into account improvements to Graded Staff salaries approved by Council at its meeting on 14th November 1961.

3. WAGES PAID TO DAILY PAID BANTU EMPLOYEES:-

3.1. The minimum wage rates payable to most of the unskilled Bantu daily paid employee groups are, and have been for many years, prescribed by law after determination by bodies such as the Wage Board.

3.2. Using the "minimum wage" as a basis of comparison the history of Bantu daily paid unskilled wages, as far as this Council is concerned, is very briefly as follows for the period 1.5.57 to date:-

- (a) Prior to 1.5.57 the Council paid the legally prescribed minimum wage of £2.2.9. per week to its lowest paid category of unskilled daily paid Bantu employees.
- (b) With effect from 1.5.57, although the legal minimum remained at £2.2.9. the Council voluntarily increased its minimum wage to £2.8.9. per week i.e. an increase of 6/- per week. A similar increase was granted to the various higher paid categories of daily paid Bantu workers. This voluntary increase granted by the Council accounted for an additional cost of £285,683 per annum.
- (c) With effect from 1.7.58 i.e. one year later, the Council again voluntarily increased the wages by a further 4/- per week to £2.12.9. per week at the minimum with corresponding increases throughout the relevant higher daily paid wage scales. The legally prescribed wage remained at £2.2.9. so that the Council was now paying 10/- per week more than the prescribed wage in the lowest category and very much more in the higher categories. The additional cost of this increase amounted to £195,000 per year.
- (d) With effect from 17.8.59 the Wage Board prescribed a new minimum wage for unskilled labour on the Witwatersrand and adjacent areas. As the Council was then already paying in excess of the relevant minimum of £2.11.9. per week, a figure in excess of that paid by any other local authority in the area, it was not affected by the new minimum wage.

- (e) With effect from 17.8.60 the prescribed minimum wage became £2.15.9. per week. The Council increased its minimum wage by 3/2 per week to £2.15.11 per week, again with corresponding increases in the higher paid groups for which a wage of £2.15.9 was prescribed. This increase involved an additional cost of £184,700 per annum.
- (f) With effect from 17.8.61 the minimum prescribed wage became £2.18.3. per week. The Council granted an increase of 4/7 per week bringing the minimum paid by it to £3.0.6. (R6.05) per week i.e. 2/3 per week in excess of the legally prescribed wage. Higher paid categories gained correspondingly. The additional cost of this increase amounts to £175,366 (R350,732) per annum.
- (g) In a period of five years therefore the Council has increased the minimum wage paid by it to its unskilled Bantu daily paid employees by 17/9 (R1.77½) per week, with corresponding increases higher up the scale, and at an additional cost of approximately £841,000 (R1,682,000).
- (h) The current position is very briefly summarised in the following table in respect of employees affected by Wage Determination No. 186:-

Employee Category.	Number of Employees in Category.	Weekly Wage Paid by Council.	Weekly Wage Prescribed by Law.	Weekly Excess paid by Council.
Labourer Scale 6	10,436	R6.05	R5.82½	R0.22½
" " 5	4,966	R6.38	do	R0.55½
" " 4	237	R6.82	do	R0.99½
" " 3	1,674	R7.26	do	R1.43.
" " 2	439	R7.70	do	R1.87½
" " 1	116	R8.14	do	R2.31½
Nightwatchmen	278	R7.39	R5.57½	R0.81½
Nightsoil workers:-				
Class A	147	R7.28	R5.82½	R1.45½
" B	9	R7.75	do	R1.92½
" C	2	R8.15.	do	R2.32½

NOTE : The balance of the daily paid employees (both unskilled and semi-skilled) numbering approximately 800 are paid wages ranging from R7.00 to R20.30 per week, depending on the nature of the work performed.

4. SALARIES PAID TO BANTU GRADED STAFF EMPLOYEES:-

Should we bring this in?

Cf Also - Pension and Gratuities - 12 Public Holidays - Free Hospitalisation etc.

5. CONCEPT OF A "MINIMUM LIVING WAGE".

5.1. Numerous surveys have been undertaken in an endeavour to determine what is a "Minimum Living Wage" for Bantu workers in Johannesburg. The resultant figures arrived at vary - the latest figure suggested to the Council being R35 per month.

5.2. It is not the intention to dispute any of these "Minimum Living Wage" figures nor to deny that they exceed the actual amount of minimum wages paid by the Council at present.

5.3. It must, however, be stressed that several of the main factors which have been taken into account in determining such living wage figures (for instance in arriving at the latest suggestion of R35 per month) either do not apply or apply only to a limited extent in the case of approximately 80% of the relevant Bantu employees of the Council. This immediately throws into doubt the validity of the living wage figures so far suggested as far as the Council's Bantu labour force is concerned.

5.4. The point is not taken to serve as an excuse for not further increasing Bantu wages. On the contrary, the past history outlined above, the current position and the measures already taken by the Council and other measures still being developed very clearly demonstrate not only that the Council is alive to the necessity to increase Bantu wages but also that it is actively implementing a sympathetic policy in this direction. The only difference is that it recognises its responsibilities towards all sections of the Johannesburg community, and therefore prefers to implement its policy vis-a-vis Bantu wages in a responsible and rational way.

POINTS.

The Johannesburg City Council is bound by a Wage Determination which applies to its unskilled labour. This Determination No. 186 covers local authorities only and a specially high wage exceeding that of other Reef Municipalities is laid down for Johannesburg.

The Wage Board in making its recommendations to the Minister took into consideration the Council's ability to carry on its business successfully, the cost of living in the Johannesburg Municipal area and the value of the lodging and other benefits supplied to the employees concerned. The Board held public sittings at which all concerned were given - and most took - the opportunity to set out their views. The Draft Determination was published for objections before it became law. Thus the question was considered by a statutory body with great experience of these matters; it is ridiculous to suggest, as has been widely done, that the wages recommended to and accepted by the Minister of Labour in these circumstances are completely wide of the mark. This minimum wage is applicable to the bulk of the Council's native labour who are in fact genuine unskilled labourers. Many perform pick and shovel and other menial duties of the kind not normally found in commerce and industry as practised in the City. The higher wages paid in commerce and industry are usually in respect of a higher grade of work, such as in industry an operative type of post and in commerce of a storeman's or lower clerical nature. In the Council's service there are thousands of natives employed in the graded staff, on the higher grade daily paid staff, as building workers and the like, as well as on the top labourers scales - there are five in excess of the minimum - who draw remuneration confidently claimed to exceed anything paid in commerce or industry for like services.

The 10 or 12,000 natives employed at R26-20 per month which exceeds the determination minimum, are largely housed in compounds and are not subject to the excessive high cost of living quoted by various authorities as applying to urban native householders. They pay 8/- a month as rent, have no transportation expenses to get to work and their families who reside in rural areas are able to live for much less than it costs an urban family.

In addition it must be remembered that the Council's employees paid as labourers enjoy twelve paid public holidays per annum (the determination provides for four) which compares very favourably with the position in industry. In addition they become entitled to receive a gratuity after 15 years service, reduced to 10 years if unable to work owing to ill health or abolition of their jobs.

It is accepted that the general level of wages could and should be improved and the Council is determined to introduce efficiency and productivity and to give its native employees the benefit of savings. This does not mean that the labourer must himself plan and decide how to produce more. This is done for him by the O. & M. Division and the Staff Board's Native Labour Section in consultation with the Head of the Department concerned and the reorganisation is planned in such a way as to promote the more efficient use of labour. This unfortunately connotes fewer employees doing the same amount of work.

The Council treats its employees as citizens as well as workers. It tempers the wind to those who are too old or infirm to work more efficiently by providing a gratuity for retirement, as already detailed. Other redundant workers are where possible absorbed elsewhere in the service which slows down the process of reorganisation but in the course of a year or two a smaller and more efficient but better paid service will be provided.

At the recent N.D.F. Conference on Bantu Wages and Productivity the number of speakers who were prepared to advocate increased native wages without strings was few. The opening address of the Minister, Dr. Diedrichs, expressed doubt as to which came first, productivity or increased wages, but in nearly every case greater productivity was regarded as essential. Unfortunately some of the press summaries and Mr. Walton's concluding address came down heavily in favour of the 'minority attitude' - "to go ahead and raise wages: to press on and damn the cost" which was neither borne out by the fact finding papers submitted to the conference nor by the deliberations of the syndicate session.

A F R I C A N P A Y.

CITY COUNCIL'S NON-EUROPEAN EMPLOYEES.

MALTZ REPLIES.

As leader of the United Party in the City Council of Johannesburg I cannot allow Councillor Harold MacCarthy's attack on the party in regard to the wages of its Non-European employees to pass without correcting some erroneous statements made by him.

At the outset may I summarise a few important points:-

- (1) The United Party Group in the City Council has made several efforts to increase the wages of its Bantu employees by improving the quality of its supervision which will in turn result in increased productivity and will eliminate waste and inefficiency.
- (2) Very nearly 20,000 Bantu men and women find employment with the City Council. Just under 19,000 are employed in a wide variety of daily paid occupations, ranging from completely unskilled labouring jobs through various gradations to semi-skilled and foreman posts. Slightly over 1,100 are employed in graded (salaried) staff positions which again cover a wide range of clerical, semi-professional and professional activities.
- (3) In a period of less than five years the Council has increased the minimum wage paid by it to its unskilled Bantu daily paid employees by 17/9 (R1.77½ per week), with corresponding increases higher up the scale and at an additional cost of approximately £841,000 (R1,682,000).
- (4) The surveys undertaken in dealing with the poverty datum line take into account a family of five, viz. a man, his wife and three children living under urban conditions paying normal rent and transport costs. This does not apply to over 80% of our unskilled labour force who live in Compounds and therefore a distorted picture has been presented to the public. I am not a supporter of our Bantu living in Compounds but these unskilled and semi-skilled labourers who are mostly migrant labourers, pay 2/- per week rent, pay no transport charge and have no family living in the Urban Area under Urban conditions.
- (5) The Council used to provide these employees with a balanced diet and free meals in addition to their salaries but they insisted on the free meals being converted into cash, which was done.
- (6) Since 1941 the Council has operated a scheme to grant gratuities to non-graded African employees who had been in the service for at least fifteen years and had reach the age of 60 years or had been certified as unfit for further service. This scheme was considerably improved during this month. This is a non-contributory gratuity scheme applicable to about 19,000 unskilled and semi-skilled employees.
- (7) In January 1961 the Council introduced a contributory pension fund for non-European graded staff. These schemes are costing the Council large sums of money.

- (8) The Council in a paternal way endeavours to absorb redundant Africans in other departments.
- (9) The minimum wage rates payable to most of the unskilled Bantu daily paid employee groups are and have been for many years prescribed by law after determination by bodies such as the Wage Board. A wage determination fixing minimum rates for the Witwatersrand covers the City Council's conditions of employment but notwithstanding this determination the Council pays all its employees who are on lowest rates, wages which are in excess of this minimum. This Determination was considered by a statutory body with great experience of these matters; it is wrong to suggest, as has been widely done, that the wages recommended to and accepted by the Minister of Labour in these circumstances are completely wide of the mark. This minimum wage is applicable to the bulk of the Council's native labour who are in fact genuine unskilled labourers. Many perform simple pick and shovel and other menial duties. The higher wages paid in commerce and industry are usually in respect of a higher grade of work, such as in industry in an operative type of post and in commerce a storeman's or lower clerical job. In the Council's service there are large numbers of Africans employed in the graded staff, on the higher grade daily paid staff, as building workers and the like, as well as on the top labourers scales - there are five in excess of the minimum - who draw remuneration comparable with anything paid in commerce or industry for like services.

In addition it must be remembered that the Council's labourers enjoy twelve paid public holidays per annum (The Determination provides for four) which compares very favourably with the position in industry.

It is accepted that the general level of wages could and should be improved and the Council is determined to introduce efficiency and increased productivity and to share with its African employees the benefit of savings arising therefrom. This does not mean that the labourer must himself plan and decide how to produce more. This is done for him by the Council and the reorganisation is planned in such a way as to promote the more efficient use of labour. This connotes fewer employees doing the same amount of work, but the Council treats its employees as citizens as well as workers; it tempers the wind to those who are too old or infirm to work more efficiently by providing a gratuity for retirement, as already mentioned. Other redundant workers are where possible absorbed elsewhere in the service which slows down the process of reorganisation but in the course of a year or two a smaller, more efficient but better paid service will be provided.

In conclusion may I say that the Council is extremely sympathetic and well disposed to its Bantu workers. The Council and its officials have devoted a tremendous amount of time over the last five years to endeavour to improve their lot. At present a team of officials is going through the Council's service to rationalise its Bantu labour force and increase productivity. The Council intends to pay an incentive bonus of R1.00 per week for increased productivity without any additional skill being required. For example a street cleaner who does the work more expeditiously gets the bonus, although he requires no extra skill for the job. This will result in a lesser number of employees being able to do the same job at an increased rate of pay and will enable the Council to increase wages generally in due course.

In conclusion may I say that the City Council believes in increasing the efficiency and productivity of its Bantu employees and is not waiting for this to happen fortuitously. At this very moment it is demonstrating to unskilled labourers how this can be done with better pay for them. In this

way its approach will result in a better deal for the ratepayers, so that the rate fund will not have to carry an additional burden.

I believe that the United Party Group is adopting the only possible practical line of approach in this matter - let us continue on the road which the United Party has been following for a number of years.

COUNCILLOR I. MALTZ.

LEADER UNITED PARTY : CITY COUNCIL
OF JOHANNESBURG.

EXTRACT FROM TOWN CLERK'S TALK TO NEW COUNCILLORS -21ST NOVEMBER, 1951.

Generally I would like to say that heads of departments are here to give such assistance to Councillors as is possible and they, and especially the Town Clerk, will appreciate it if new Councillors will look upon senior officials in this light. The Town Clerk will be only too pleased to discuss any general difficulties which new Councillors may experience with them, and in regard to specific matters either he or the relevant senior official in his department will always endeavour to be available. The work of the Council has expanded tremendously in the last decade or so, and it has consequently been difficult to maintain the intimate relationship which at one time existed between Councillors and the Town Clerk and his senior officials; with 42 Councillors this relationship is, on the face of it, impossible but I have been a little alarmed at the increasing tendency not to consult the Town Clerk over various difficulties when by doing so some complete misapprehension would have been removed. It has often happened that a recommendation from the Town Clerk or other head of department has been accepted by the committee concerned and then placed before the full Council and there a Councillor will get up and raise difficulties at the last moment when the Town Clerk is not in a position to deal with them, because officials do not as a general rule take part in any debate in the Council Chamber. I have then had to ask the particular Councillor to come and discuss the matter with me after the Council Meeting and have probably satisfied him within two minutes, but in the meantime a whole month has been wasted because the matter has been held over. I would therefore urge all Councillors who have difficulties over any report either to raise the matter at the standing committee where it is first discussed or, if they are not present at that standing committee to consult the Town Clerk or the head of the department responsible for the report. Many misunderstandings and delays could be avoided in this manner.

The officials of this department are in particular here to assist Councillors. This department is really the axle round which the Council machinery revolves and it will be a pleasure at any time to conduct those Councillors interested round any section of the department. A breakdown in this department would upset the whole Council process and I doubt if many Councillors realise how important the routine work of this department really is. In general each head of department puts up his own report to Committee. By that I mean he prepares such report, it is stencilled and renered in his own department and then sent to the Town Clerk who includes it with other relevant reports and his own report to the committee concerned. The Town Clerk, unlike other heads, is either personally or through his nominee present at all committee meetings and also reports to every standing committee, in addition to which he reports almost exclusively to the General Purposes Committee. The decisions of each standing committee are carefully minuted by the committee clerk concerned, who submits his draft minutes to the Town Clerk or his senior representative concerned. It should perhaps be stressed here that while at one time the Town Clerk attended practically all standing committees and was personally responsible for the details of his reports submitted to those committees, it has for some time been essential for the Town Clerk to delegate almost entirely to his various senior officials the work of most of the committees other than General Purposes, Finance and some special committees. Consequently, new Councillors should not be surprised if, on asking the Town Clerk for information in regard to various matters, the Town Clerk has to refer to them to other senior officials in his department.

In addition to what has been said, the Town Clerk and his department are responsible for the items and references for submission to the Finance Committee. This has been referred to in my letter to you after the elections.

As it is not infrequent for committees to hold their meetings only a few days before the Finance Committee, the rush of work involved and the difficulty of maintaining complete accuracy may well be imagined. I would say with confidence that it is only with a good team spirit in a department such as this that the frequent and inevitable rush periods can be satisfactorily met.

In addition, of course, this department must also prepare the complete reports from the various committees to the Council. When Councillors consider that for the first ten days of the month the ordinary committee meetings are held terminating with the Finance Committee in the third week, exactly a week before the Council meeting, they may appreciate the burden of the task of preparing these reports in time for the Council meeting so that they are translated into both official languages and duly included in an agenda which is delivered to Councillors only three or four days after the Finance Committee.

The Town Clerk has often been described as a jack of all trades, and while I do not propose to detail the duties of this department, I would point out that the Town Clerk is concerned not only with committee and Council troubles as well as departmental troubles of his own, but also with the troubles of every other department; in fact wherever there is trouble you are likely to find the Town Clerk in the middle of it although, it is hoped, not as the cause of it.

C.T. / I.G.
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