

# Declaration of the Uitlander Council.

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The Uitlander Council, having carefully considered the Present Political Situation, resolved, at their Meeting on Saturday Evening, 1st July, to publish the following Declaration, and to communicate a copy thereof to Her Majesty's Agent at Pretoria for transmission to His Excellency the High Commissioner and the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

The proposals submitted at the Bloemfontein Conference by His Excellency the High Commissioner were briefly:—

1. That Uitlanders possessing a certain property or wages qualification, on proving that they had resided five years in the country and on taking an oath of allegiance, be given full burgher rights.
2. That there should be such a distribution of seats as would give to the new-comers a substantial representation in the First Volksraad, but not such as would enable them to swamp the old burghers.

All must admit that this scheme is most conservative, because—

- (a) It does not restore to the Uitlanders all the rights of which they have been unjustly deprived since the retrocession.
- (b) Nearly the whole revenue of the country is derived from the taxation of the Uitlanders.
- (c) The Uitlanders form at least two-thirds of the total white population. (This was practically admitted by President Kruger at the Conference).
- (d) In most new countries one or two years residence ensures full voting power. There is no reason why there should be more stringent conditions in operation in this State than in Natal or Cape Colony, or than those which existed until quite recently in the Orange Free State, and which were only changed from one to three years on account of the unhealthy political conditions in the South African Republic.

Notwithstanding, however, the conservative character of the scheme, the Uitlander Council consider that the proposals of His Excellency the High Commissioner are calculated in no small degree to bring about a practical and permanent settlement.

But, in the opinion of the Uitlander Council, it is essential at the outset to definitely fix the conditions under which:—

1. All duly qualified persons can get the franchise without any unnecessary expense, trouble or delay, and without being subjected to any kind of intimidation.
2. Those who have got the franchise shall be able to use it effectively.
3. Redistribution of seats shall take place periodically by automatic arrangement, and representation shall bear some definite relation to the number of electors.

Having regard to the recent history of the Government, of this country and the facility with which even fundamental laws are and may be changed the Uitlander Council are convinced that no settlement will be of any value unless its permanency is guaranteed by an understanding between the Imperial Government and the Government of the South African Republic.

Further, knowing by past experience that every effort will be made by means of the existing Government machinery to obstruct and pervert even the smallest measure of reform, and bearing in mind the immense discretionary power accorded by the laws to all Government officials, the Uitlander Council are strongly of opinion that the understanding between the two Governments should provide for such

immediate changes in the present laws of the country as would make it possible to carry out Sir A. Milner's scheme, not only in the letter, but also in the spirit.

The outcome of the understanding between the two Governments should be the inclusion amongst the permanent and fundamental laws of the South African Republic of a Reform Act embracing, in addition to the clauses providing for naturalisation and redistribution on the lines already indicated, the following, amongst other provisions:—

1. No burgher or alien shall be granted privileges or immunities which upon the same terms shall not be granted to all burghers.

2. No person shall, on account of creed or religious belief, be under any disability whatever.

3. The majority of the inhabitants being English speaking, English shall be recognised equally with Dutch as an official language of the State.

4. The independence of the High Court shall be established and duly safeguarded.

5. Legislation by simple resolution (*besluit*) of the Volksraad shall be abolished.

6. The free right of public meeting and of forming electoral committees shall be recognised and established.

7. The freedom of speech and of the Press shall be assured.

8. All persons shall be secured in their houses, persons, papers and effects against violation or illegal seizure.

9. The existence of forts and the adoption of other measures intended for the intimidation of the white inhabitants of the country, being a menace to the exercise of the undoubted rights of a free people, shall be declared unconstitutional.

10. Existing monopolies shall be cancelled or expropriated on equitable conditions.

11. Raad members must be fully enfranchised burghers and over 21 years of age. Any candidate for the Presidency must be a fully enfranchised burgher over 30 years of age and have been resident in the country for 10 years.

12. All elections shall be by ballot and shall be adequately safeguarded by stringent provisions against bribery and intimidation.

13. All towns with a population of 1,000 persons and upwards shall have the right to manage their own local affairs under a general Municipal Act. The registration of voters and the conduct of all elections shall be regulated by local bodies.

14. A full and comprehensive system of State Education shall be established under the control of Local Boards.

15. The Civil Service shall be completely reorganised, and all corrupt officials shall be dismissed from office, and be ineligible for office in the future.

16. Payments from the public treasury shall only be made in accordance with the Budget proposals approved by the Raad, with full and open publication of the accounts periodically.

17. No person shall become a burgher, and no fresh constituency shall be created except in accordance with the lines herein laid down, and officials shall have no discretionary power in this or any other matter affecting the civil rights of the inhabitants of the country.

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