

1949 NATIVE EDUCATION COMMISSION.SUBSIDIARY ANSWERS FROM BLOEMFONTEIN JOINT COUNCIL
OF EUROPEANS, AFRICANS AND COLOURED.

Q. 2. The aim of education, as defined in your memorandum, is to make the Native a full and complete citizen in an integrated nation.
What minimum educational requirements for granting full and complete citizenship do you suggest?

ANS. The Junior Certificate examination or its equivalent. There is considerable support for this view. For example, L.M. Thompson in his pamphlet "Democracy in Multi-Racial Societies" (Pub. S.A. Inst. of Race Relations), says "it seems the most practicable measure which is proof against corruption."

Q. 3 & 4. In your opinion the characteristics of a people are the product of environment and circumstances and are not determined to any appreciable extent by inherent aptitudes.
(a) Does that mean that the Bantu will not be able to develop a progressive culture of their own? Do you envisage an ultimate adoption by the Natives of Western civilisation to the exclusion of such good as there may be in the social system of the Bantu people?
(b) Do you think that the Western culture pattern will be changed in the envisaged process of integration?

ANS. (a) We do ~~not~~ envisage the adoption by Natives of Western civilisation, but not to the exclusion of such good as there may be in the social system of the Bantu people. One of the salient and most pleasing features of Western Civilisation is its capacity for local modification. Such modification is a source of enrichment and colour, and may be observed not only amongst different political units but within the very boundaries of any particular state. Thus there are great and valuable differences between Londoners and Highland Scotsmen, between the miners of the Rand and the farmers of the Karroo. But the "sweetness and light" of Western civilisation is available to all these groups.
There are elements in the culture patterns of the Bantu tribes which are pernicious and inimical to progress, (e.g. tribal organization -- already breaking up and past resuscitation --, witch doctor medicine, the lobola system), just as there are other elements which are valuable and worthy of preservation, (e.g. family loyalty, courtesy, socialability love of music.) But the central core of his future culture must be that which is common to the developed nations of Western Europe, America and Australia. To quote Victor Murray ("School in the Bush"):

"For they as for us, the treasures of the world's
past/

past have been heaped up. We received the treasures of Greece and Rome and Judea and have added to them. And if for us barbarians and gentiles, Plato thought and Virgil sang, and Jeremiah agonised and Christ died, these things happened for the Africans ~~happened to them~~ too. For him also in later days Beethoven played, Leonardo painted, Shakespeare wrote, Pascal disputed, and James Watt invented."

See also Neil Macvicar's pamphlet "Western Civilisation and the Bantu", where the same point is made.

(b) The Western culture pattern is not a rigid formula which is to be accepted or rejected in its entirety. It is extremely doubtful whether any two individuals have the same attitude in religion or politics. It is certain that no two nations exhibit an identical pattern of Western culture. Therefore it is inevitable that the Western Culture pattern -- surely, after all, an abstraction -- should be modified, though not essentially changed, in its adoption by the Bantu. Europeans in South Africa have already been able to make unique modifications of which they are proud.

- Q. 9. (a) You state that education should be free and compulsory up to Standard IV. Assuming the possibility of adequate building and teacher training facilities to meet all requirements in a few years time, could you furnish an estimate of the additional funds that would be required in (1) capital cost of new buildings and furniture, and (2) increase in the annual salary bill?
- (b) Witnesses state that Nursery School facilities should be aimed at. Approximately what proportion of the pre-school population is specially in need of ~~provision~~ such provision and what approximately would this amount to in round numbers? What would unit costs be, and what would the total costs be for the O.F.S. alone?

ANS. (a) The Chief Inspector for Native Education O.F.S. estimates that there are in the province 50,000 children of schoolgoing age at present out of school. Virtually all of these are below Std. IV. The figures he gives as a rough estimate therefore are :-

No. of additional children	50,000
No. " " classrooms	
(present basis 50 per classroom) ...	1,000
Cost of classrooms	£300,000
Cost of furniture	
(£50. per classroom)	£50,000
Total cost	£350,000
No. of additional teaching units	
(50 children per teacher)	1,000
Salaries of 1,000 teachers	£150,000

The answers are therefore (1) capital cost of new buildings and furniture: £350,000; (2) increase in annual salary bill: £150,000.

The figures/

The figures should, however, be considered in the light of our remarks that classes are at present far too large.

(b) We have no means of giving an estimate here, but no doubt bodies more intimately concerned with Nursery School education could do so.

Q. 9 a It is stated in your memorandum that instruction through the medium of the two official languages comes too late. Would the appalling retardation in Native Schools not be further aggravated if official-language medium were introduced at an earlier stage?

ANS. We do not subscribe to the view that official-language instruction is a significant casual factor in retardation. We consider that retardation is primarily caused by

- (i) over-large classes and shortage of teachers;
- (ii) poorly qualified teachers;
- (iii) malnutrition of pupils, and consequent irregular attendance.

Q. 9 b a. Why should secondary schools be controlled by the Union Education Department? (Cf. 9.b.)
b. Is the above recommendation consistent with your latter statement (15) that Native Education should be controlled by the Union Government but administered by the Provinces?

ANS. a and b. We are not advocating any new departure in administration. By the term "control" we understand control of finance, which is after all the limiting factor. Thus when we recommend that Native Education should be controlled by the Union Government but administered by the Provinces, we mean simply that the present system, introduced in 1945, should be continued; i.e. the Union Secretary for Education acts as accounting officer under whose supervision funds for Native Education are disbursed; whereas the provincial councils are the legislative authorities.

Our recommendations are therefore quite consistent.

Q. 16 (11) The Native should be encouraged, you say, to use and study his own language.
Will this not retard the process of integration unnecessarily?

ANS. If it were possible and desirable to prevent the use by the Native of his own language, it would no doubt retard the process of integration to do otherwise. But we believe it is neither possible nor desirable. Here we would refer to our answer to subsidiary questions 3 and 4 (supra) and emphasize that the Bantu languages and literature must be a source of enrichment/

enrichment to South African culture. In Scotland today the Highlanders, and in Wales the Welsh, continue to use and study their own languages, but it cannot seriously be contended that these groups are not fully-integrated citizens.

Q. GENERAL. 1.

If integration is accepted as the ideal development, should this not be accelerated by introducing co-education of Natives and Europeans as soon as the former have become proficient in one of the official languages?

ANSWER.

We are not from first principles opposed to co-education of the kind suggested, but we believe that public feeling would be so strong against such a measure, and consequent opposition to Native Education so bitter, that more harm than good would result from its introduction at the present time.

Q. GENERAL 2.

What measures in general would you suggest to make the transition from tribal life to urbanised life less difficult?

ANSWER

The most important measures must be taken ultimately in fields other than education, e.g. the provision of economic opportunities, better housing, representation on local government, etc. But these outward and visible signs of adjustment would have to be backed up by commensurate education. Again, the failure of educational authorities to provide for all children of school age must lead to the spread of delinquency and increased suffering for all sections of the community.

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