

1928

The Pathfinder Movement



FORWARD.

WHAT IT IS
&
WHAT IT IS DOING.

Johannesburg :
Pathfinder Headquarters P.O. Box 631, Johannesburg.

IMPRINTED AT THE C.R. PRESS
ROSETTENVILLE, JOHANNESBURG

PATHFINDER MOVEMENT.

PATRONS

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In the High Commission Territories.

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S. Rhodesia : G. Stark (Acting).

HON. SECRETARY PATHFINDER HEAD-QUARTERS COUNCIL.

K. N. Fleischer,

P O Box 631,

Johannesburg.

THE PATHFINDER MOVEMENT.

A short account of what it is and what it is doing.

What it is.

For many years the Non-European races of South Africa have been asking for a share in the Boy Scout Movement so that they, too, may receive the benefits of Scout training and fellowship such as are available for boys of all races in other parts of the world. To meet this need the Transvaal Boy Scout Association fourteen years ago founded the "Pathfinder Movement" for Non-European boys, based on Scout lines; and, in September 1922, the first Pathfinder Troop was registered at the Diocesan Training College, Grace Dieu, Pietersburg. Since that time the Movement has gradually grown in size and strength so that today it is to be found stretching from the Cape to the Great Lakes in Northern Rhodesia, and within its ranks are to be found African boys of many tribes and languages, as well as Cape coloured boys. It is as popular in the country districts as it is in the industrial areas of the Witwatersrand and some of the keenest boys are to be found in districts many miles from the towns. That this is so is a tribute to the knowledge of the boy mind and the foresight of the founder of the Boy Scout Association—Lord Baden Powell—who has evolved a system of training which has been found to supply the needs of the average boy, no matter what his colour, race, creed or standard of development.

Organisation.

The Movement in the Union of South Africa, South West Africa and the High Commission Territories is under the leadership of the Chief Pathfinder, Mr. J. D. Rheinallt Jones, who is assisted in his work by a Headquarters Council made up of representatives of the several Divisions into which the whole area is divided. Each Division has its Divisional Pathfinder Commissioner and Divisional Council representative of the Districts into which each Division is subdivided. Each district is under the control of a District Pathfinder Commissioner who is responsible for the proper conduct of the working of the Troops, Packs and Crews and their officers. While European officers exercise a good deal of general supervision more and more responsibility is being accepted by the African and Coloured officers themselves—men who have proved their worth and who are showing themselves capable of doing the work faithfully and well. For instance, in one Division the chief executive officer is an African priest, well-known and respected by Non-Europeans and Europeans alike. There are many African and Coloured Officers serving as District Pathfinder Commissioners and their work conforms with Scout standards.

Method of Working.

Pathfinder training is based upon that of the Boy Scout Association. There are the three sections for junior, normal and senior Pathfinders, known as the Trackers, Pathfinders and Roamers. The Laws and Promises are the same as those of the Wolf Club, the Boy Scout, and the Rover Scout. Certain adjustments have been made to bring the training and badge tests more into line with those of life in Africa and with the needs of the boys, but these in no way deviate from the standard set up by the Boy Scout Association. Great emphasis is laid upon the importance of Service to the community and, as is only to be expected, such forms of service vary greatly according to local conditions and needs.

Scout Spirit at Work.

From one country district comes the report of an outbreak of fire in a Native village. The Pathfindermaster's whistle quickly brings the members of his troop to the spot and they immediately take steps to remove the furniture from the house and to prevent the spreading of the fire to the neighbouring houses. This is the work of a Troop which, owing to difficulties of accessibility has never been visited by a senior officer.

From another quarter comes the report of visits of Roamer Pathfinders to the local hospital on Sundays; cigarettes, papers, sweets and other small gifts, bought as a result of their own efforts, are distributed to the delighted patients.

In another district concerts are organised for the benefit of hospital nurses and patients.

A group of Pathfinders are trekking across the veld and find a group of helpless Natives standing round an old man who has been run over by an ox-waggon and whose leg is broken. The Pathfinders take charge and render first-aid, setting the broken limb in improvised splints and sending a message to their Pathfinder master, telling him the exact place in which the man is to be found and asking him to make arrangements for his conveyance to the hospital some miles away. On examination at the hospital the leg is pronounced so well set and bandaged that there is no need to do anything further until the next day.

Some Pathfinders are bathing in a river when one of them is seized by a crocodile. Native custom forbids any help being given to such a victim for the crocodile is sacred and must not be interfered with. The Pathfinders ignore Native custom and fight for their friend's life. Eventually the crocodile is driven off and the lad rescued. His parents are afraid to tend the wounded boy, so his friends take him home and look after him until he recovers.

These are only a few instances of what Pathfinding has taught the African youth. Hitherto neglected and allowed to run wild he had now learned to use his initiative for the good of others. He has learned the happiness which comes from such service and the

Pathfinder spirit is a very real thing which means much to him, and through him, to his parents also. Magistrates, Native Commissioners, Chiefs, Location Superintendents, Education officials, Missionaries and members of the public alike testify to the good work which is being done by the Movement and to the change in the character of the lads who come under its influence.

The Future.

Today a new hope lies before the Non-European youth because in February 1936 the Council of the South Africa Branch of the Boy Scouts Association agreed to form parallel, self governing Non-European Scout organisations through which Non-European boys may be admitted into full membership of world-wide Boy Scout Movement. The Pathfinder Movement is thus to become the Pathfinder Scout Association, continuing its present organisation and method of administration but becoming a self-governing unit of the Boy Scout Movement in South Africa. This advance will make heavy demands upon the existing Movement for in addition to providing a stimulus for a greater enrolment of boys and troops the "higher status" calls for more strenuous effort than ever to service, greater efficiency in the matter of supervision and officer-training. This is where you, who read this, can help us.

Our Needs.

To meet this new order of things with confidence, we need two things :—money and men.

WE NEED MONEY. Neither the African nor the Coloured is a rich person, and by the time local Troop and District needs have been met there is little or nothing for the administrative and organising work of the Divisional and Headquarter Councils. This money is needed for.

- (a) *Transport.* District Officers often have to traverse many miles to visit troops and there are no funds available for helping them with their expenses. One African District Commissioner has a length of 150 miles in his district—how can he adequately visit the many troops which look to him for help and advice?
- (b) *Training of Officers.* The Chief Scout has rightly pointed out that under the new scheme Officers must have opportunities of attending Training centres. Here again, long distances and subsistence expenses prove a heavy burden on the normal Pathfindermaster who is not generally well paid, and is unable to spare money from his meagre earnings for these extra demands upon his purse.

WE NEED MAN-POWER. In many districts troops lapse or are not even begun owing to lack of Officers, while some districts go without supervision because of the difficulty of finding men of the right kind to help in this work. We have received much help from European Scouters in this direction, but we need many more

Europeans and non-Europeans to act as Officers, Examiners, Instructors. The work brings its own reward, as those who have already embarked upon it would be the first to acknowledge, for through it you come in contact with the non-European boy in his own environment ; you learn something of his wonderful enthusiasm and cheerfulness ; you find that he is as fully capable of appreciating and living up to ideal's set before him in the Scout Law and Promise as are the more fortunate boys of other races.

WILL YOU HELP? If you have read so far and feel that the work we are trying to do is worth while and that you would like to help, please fill in the form given below and either hand it to the attendant at the Pathfinder Stall in the British Empire Exhibition or send it direct to :—

The Honorary Secretary,
Pathfinder Movement,
P. O. Box 631,
Johannesburg.

from whom further particulars may be obtained.

To :—*The Honorary Secretary,*
Pathfinder Movement,
P. O. Box 631,
Johannesburg.

Dear Sir,

I am interested in the work which the Pathfinder Movement is doing in South Africa and would like to help it by :—

- (a) *enclosing a donation of £ : :*
- (b) *promising an annual subscription of £ : :*
- (c) *offering my services as Officer|Examiner|Instructor.*

(Cross out words which do not apply)

Yours faithfully,

Name and Address :

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SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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