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SERIES OF REPORTS AND STUDIES

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# SOCIAL SURVEY OF CAPE TOWN

Growth of Population

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

REPORTS AND STUDIES

ISSUED BY

THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF CAPE TOWN

EDITED BY

EDWARD BATSON

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN MAY 1941:

- SS 1 THE GROWTH OF THE POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE TOWN [9D]
- SS 2 THE ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE  
TOWN [1S]
- SS 3 THE SURVEY POVERTY DATUM LINE [1S]
- SS 4 THE DISTRIBUTION OF POVERTY AMONG COLOURED HOUSEHOLDS IN  
CAPE TOWN [9D]
- SS 5 THE DISTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN HOUSEHOLDS IN CAPE TOWN [1S]
- SS 6 THE OCCUPATIONAL CLASS OF EUROPEAN MALE VOTERS IN CAPE  
TOWN [9D]

EACH REPORT WILL CONSIST OF FROM TEN TO THIRTY CYCLOSTYLED FOOLSCAP PAGES  
OF TABLES AND EXPLANATORY TEXT. ALL REPORTS IN THE SERIES ARE OF A  
PRELIMINARY NATURE AND SUBJECT TO FINAL AUDIT.

1941

THIS SERIES OF REPORTS  
OF THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF CAPE TOWN

IS DEDICATED TO

DR. AND MRS. E. BARNARD FULLER

WHO ENCOURAGED THE SURVEYORS

THE INCREASE IN THE TOTAL POPULATION<sup>1</sup> OF  
GREATER CAPE TOWN  
1841 - 1941

THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF CAPE TOWN

REPORT No. SS 1

The year 1941 is the centenary of the municipalisation of Cape Town. During the years 1841-1941 the population of the Municipality has increased fourteen-fold, at an average rate of 2.7 per cent. per annum. But, as appears in the following calculations, the rate of increase has not been steady.

TABLE I. I  
INCREASE OF THE POPULATION  
OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CAPE TOWN

| SOURCE | DATE | INTER-CENSAL PERIOD IN YEARS | POPULATION             | PERCENTAGE INTER-CENSAL INCREASE | AVERAGE INTER-CENSAL RATE OF INCREASE * |
|--------|------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| CBB    | 1841 |                              | 21,000                 |                                  |   |
|        |      | 13                           |                        | 20                               | 1.4                                     |
| DL     | 1854 | 11                           | 25,189                 | 13                               | 1.1                                     |
| 1st C  | 1865 | 10                           | 28,457                 | 17                               | 1.6                                     |
| 2nd C  | 1875 | 16                           | 33,239                 | 54                               | 2.7                                     |
| 3rd C  | 1891 | 13                           | 51,251                 | 52                               | 3.3                                     |
| 4th C  | 1904 | 7                            | 77,668                 | -11                              | -1.7                                    |
| 1st U  | 1911 |                              | 68,738                 |                                  |   |
| 2nd U  | 1918 | } 10                         | enumeration incomplete | } 167                            | } 10.3                                  |
| 3rd U  | 1921 |                              | 183,357                |                                  |   |
| 4th U  | 1926 | 5                            | 214,363                | 17                               | 3.2                                     |
| 5th U  | 1931 | } 10                         | enumeration incomplete | } 38                             | } 3.3                                   |
| 6th U  | 1936 |                              | 295,789                |                                  |   |

\* PER CENT. PER ANNUM. SOURCES: CBB = CAPE BLUE BOOK, DL = DE LIMA'S DIRECTORY, C = COLONIAL CENSUS, U = UNION CENSUS.

<sup>1</sup> Footnote on following page.

Part of the irregularity in the rate of increase is attributable to troop movements, part to fluctuations in prosperity; but much of its significance is little more than conventional.

The City of Cape Town has at times existed side by side with other municipalities. Thus in 1891, wholly within the boundaries of the present Municipality and forming one continuous urban area, lay the municipalities of Cape Town, Green Point and Sea Point, Woodstock, Mowbray, Rondebosch, Claremont, and Wynberg. To take note only of the population inhabiting the local government area that has happened to be called Cape Town at any particular time, and to leave out of account the population of the contiguous urbanised area, while accurate for some electoral and fiscal purposes, would be unrealistic for most others. Three times in its history the City of Cape Town has expanded appreciably by absorbing its neighbours. In September 1913 the nominal population of Cape Town was increased from some 70 thousand to 150 thousand by the unification of the above-named municipalities, save Wynberg, and the addition of other urban and semi-urban areas. In January 1925 the N'dabeni Native Location with a population of five thousand was brought within the boundaries. And in September 1927 Wynberg added a further 25 thousand to the nominal population by surrendering a splendid isolation which had bisected Cape Town for fourteen years. For most purposes it is more useful to regard these increases rather as book transfers than as a record of instantaneous growth.

In fact, when we speak of Cape Town in any broad social context we seldom mean to refer solely to the Municipality. In a practical sense, Cape Town is larger than its legal boundaries; or, rather, there are many Cape Towns, of which the Municipality is but one. Parliamentary Cape Town, postal Cape Town, commercial Cape Town, residential Cape Town, social Cape Town, are each as real as municipal Cape Town. We may think of them as contributing to a Greater Cape Town, of which the Municipality is the nucleus but not the whole.

Admittedly, it would be difficult to say where this Greater Cape Town begins and ends. The Cape Town suburban railway trains run to Bellville and to Simonstown; the Cape Town telephone system embraces Hout Bay; during the holiday season, Cape Town evening papers are sold at Hermanus on the day of issue; Cape Town social welfare societies operate in Kuils River. Possibly this Greater Cape Town has no geographical limits at all, but only sociological boundaries.

Nevertheless, at any particular time we can strike out a line on the map which will define Greater Cape Town for most ordinary purposes. Such a line will include the Municipality itself and those adjoining urban areas whose life is closely integrated with that of the Municipality. For the purpose of the present Survey, such a line has

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<sup>1</sup> The present Report deals only with certain general aspects of the increase of population in Cape Town. The practice of classifying the people into ethnic groups sometimes obscures the fact that the basic element in all comparisons of population increase is the number of persons in the population. In the period covered by this Report, five distinct schemes of ethnic classification have been used for census purposes. In the second Report in this series, an attempt is made to facilitate inter-group comparisons by bringing the earlier classifications into line with that now in use; but with no intention of suggesting that the present classification is more fundamental or will prove any more final than those which it has replaced.

been drawn round the following urban areas:

TABLE 1.2  
EXTENT OF GREATER CAPE TOWN

| CENSUS YEAR          | AREAS INCLUDED  |
|----------------------|---|
| 1865<br>1875         | Camps Bay, Sea Point, Green Point, Central Cape Town, Woodstock, Salt River, Observatory, Mowbray, Rondebosch, Claremont, Wynberg             |
| 1891                 | The same, with Maitland added   |
| 1904                 | The above, with N'dabeni added  |
| 1911<br>1921<br>1926 | The above, extended to Parow on the east and to Kalk Bay on the south   |
| 1936                 | The above, extended to Milnerton on the north-east, to Bellville on the east, to Grassy Park on the south-east, and to Fish Hoek on the south |

Table 1.2 describes Greater Cape Town in terms of the local names now in use. The following table lists the included census areas under their contemporary names:

TABLE 1.3  
CENSUS AREAS INCLUDED IN GREATER CAPE TOWN

|      |  |      |   |      |   |
|------|--|------|---|------|---|
| 1865 | CAPE TOWN<br>GREEN POINT<br>PAPENDORP<br>RONDEBOSCH<br>NEWLANDS<br>WYNBERG   | 1904 | CAPE TOWN<br>GREEN AND SEA POINT<br>WOODSTOCK<br>CAMPS BAY<br>RONDEBOSCH<br>MOWBRAY<br>CLAREMONT<br>WYNBERG<br>MAITLAND<br>N'DABENI   | 1921 | CAPE TOWN<br>WYNBERG<br>N'DABENI<br>GLEN LILY, FAIRFIELD AND PAROW  |
| 1875 | CAPE TOWN<br>GREEN POINT<br>PAPENDORP<br>RONDEBOSCH<br>NEWLANDS AND<br>CLAREMONT<br>WYNBERG                                      | 1911 | CAPE TOWN<br>GREEN AND SEA POINT<br>WOODSTOCK<br>CAMPS BAY<br>RONDEBOSCH<br>MOWBRAY<br>CLAREMONT<br>WYNBERG<br>MAITLAND<br>N'DABENI<br>KALK BAY AND<br>MUIZENBERG<br>GLEN LILY, FAIRFIELD AND PAROW | 1936 | CAPE TOWN<br>PAROW<br>BELLVILLE<br>GOODWOOD<br>PINELANDS GARDEN CITY<br>FISH HOEK<br>BELLVILLE SOUTH<br>GOODWOOD ESTATE<br>KENSINGTON ESTATE<br>ELSIE'S RIVER<br>TIERVLEI<br>MILNERTON<br>CONSTANTIA<br>GRASSY PARK |
| 1891 | CAPE TOWN<br>GREEN POINT AND<br>SEA POINT<br>WOODSTOCK<br>CAMPS BAY<br>RONDEBOSCH<br>MOWBRAY<br>CLAREMONT<br>WYNBERG<br>MAITLAND |      |   |      |   |

Throughout the present Report, whenever the term Greater Cape Town is used it refers to the areas described in Table 1.3.

From time to time, the Municipality has been representative of Greater Cape Town in a varying degree; and some of the fluctuations in the rate of increase of the population of the Municipality are merely an expression of this varying degree of representativeness. At the present time, the Municipality includes five-sixths of Greater Cape Town; a generation ago it included less than half; two generations ago it included almost as large a proportion as now.

TABLE 1.4  
POPULATION OF CAPE TOWN MUNICIPALITY  
AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE TOWN

| CENSUS YEAR | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------|------------|
| 1865        | 73.4       |
| 1875        | 74.4       |
| 1891        | 64.8       |
| 1904        | 44.5       |
| 1911        | 42.4       |
| 1921        | 86.7       |
| 1936        | 85.9       |

If the populations of the Municipality and Greater Cape Town continued after 1936 to increase at the same average rate as in the inter-censal period 1921-1936 (and there is no way of testing this hypothesis), the municipal population in 1941 would be 85.8 per cent. of that of Greater Cape Town. The actual percentage is probably somewhat lower than this.

There is no official record of the level of the population of Greater Cape Town for any year before the first colonial census, of 1865. During the period 1865-1936 the population of Greater Cape Town increased nearly nine-fold, at an average rate of 3.1 per cent. per annum. (In the same period, the population of the Municipality increased more than ten-fold.) The rate of increase of the population of Greater Cape Town has not been steady over the whole of this period; but, as has already been implied, and as appears in the calculations in Table 1.5, it has been appreciably steadier than the rate of increase of the population of the Municipality.



TABLE 1.5  
INCREASE OF THE POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE TOWN

| CENSUS      | INTER-CENSAL PERIOD IN YEARS | POPULATION | PERCENTAGE INTER-CENSAL INCREASE | AVERAGE INTER-CENSAL RATE OF INCREASE PER CENT. PER ANNUM |
|-------------|------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 5 MAR 1865  | 10                           | 38,791     | +15.2                            | + 1.4   |
| 7 MAR 1875  | 16                           | 44,688     | +70.9                            | + 3.6   |
| 5 APR 1891  | 13                           | 79,055     | +120.7                           | + 6.2   |
| 17 APR 1904 | 7                            | 174,447    | - 7.0                            | - 1.0   |
| 7 MAY 1911  | 10                           | 162,298    | +30.3                            | + 2.7   |
| 3 MAY 1921  | 15                           | 211,461    | +62.8                            | + 3.3   |
| 5 MAY 1936  |                              | 344,223    |                                  |   |

It is of interest to attempt to calculate the relative importance of biological reproduction and urbanization in contributing to this growth. This could be done with accuracy if we had statistics over the whole period of the table for:-

- (i) births
- (ii) deaths
- (iii) migration into the area of Greater Cape Town both from overseas and from districts within the Union
- (iv) migration from Cape Town
- (v) the net absorption of population by extension of boundaries.

In fact, most of these statistics are lacking. But by legitimate indirect methods of estimation, we are able to construct a table of approximations which are probably not far from the truth of the matter. The materials and assumptions for such a calculation are:-

- (i) records of births and deaths within the Municipality, calculated and published by the Medical Officer of Health from the year 1894 onward
- (ii) the assumption that both the birth rate and death rate within the Municipality were at a maximum level in the early 'nineties and that the rate of natural increase did not vary seriously over the period 1865-1895
- (iii) the assumption that the rate of natural increase of Greater Cape Town has been consistently equal to that of the Municipality
- (iv) estimates of the population absorbed by gradual extension of boundary within inter-censal periods, interpolated from Census records

- (v) the Census records transcribed in Table 1.5, from which may be calculated the gross increase in each inter-censal period and hence, by subtraction of the contribution due to natural increase and urban expansion, the contribution of net immigration.

The list of assumptions may appear formidable in comparison with the list of records, but it fortunately so happens that the periods for which the records are scantiest are almost certainly those for which estimation is most reliable, and for which errors in estimation are likely to affect our totals least.

The assumption that the rate of natural increase was steady over the thirty years 1865-1895, for instance, is much more reasonable than any similar assumption for a subsequent period could be, and, as may be shown by making alternative, extreme, assumptions, cannot affect our final total very seriously even if it should be wide of the truth within any reasonably imaginable limits. Again, the rate of natural increase in the non-municipal portions of Greater Cape Town is highly likely to be different from that within the municipal portion, since both the age composition of the non-municipal population and its specific birth rates and death rates must be expected to differ from those of the municipal population. But these differences are reasonably certain to cancel one another in some degree; and since, for the rest, we are seeking an estimate of natural increase throughout Greater Cape Town, and not merely within the non-municipal portions, we may rest assured that any remaining differences between the rates of the municipal and non-municipal portions are at the worst halved in our calculations for the whole of Greater Cape Town, and in the latter years, when mistakes would most seriously affect the total, are reduced to less than a quarter.

We may therefore proceed with some confidence along the lines suggested, and deduce the following totals:

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| total increase in population of<br>Greater Cape Town over period<br>of 71 years from 1865-1936 | 305 thousand  |
| of this, biological growth   | 126 thousand  |
| and sociological increase  | 179 thousand. |

It thus appears that biological reproduction has been responsible for 41 per cent. of the total growth of Greater Cape Town in this period and sociological factors for 59 per cent.; and it is clear that estimates of the future growth of the population are likely to be very far wrong if they are based on the assumption of some simple biological law of reproduction.

Further, we may sub-divide the sociological total as follows:

|            | CONTRIBUTION<br>IN THOUSANDS<br>OF PERSONS | = PER CENT.<br>OF SOCIOLO-<br>GICAL GROWTH | = PER CENT.<br>OF TOTAL<br>GROWTH |
|------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| net influx | 152  | 85   | 50                                |
| expansion  | 27   | 15   | 9                                 |

These proportions, and their historical distribution, set forth in Table 1.6, have a bearing on the planning of the future of Cape Town that it will be necessary, in a later Report, to examine at length.

TABLE 1.6

GREATER CAPE TOWN  
POPULATION INCREASE 1865 - 1936

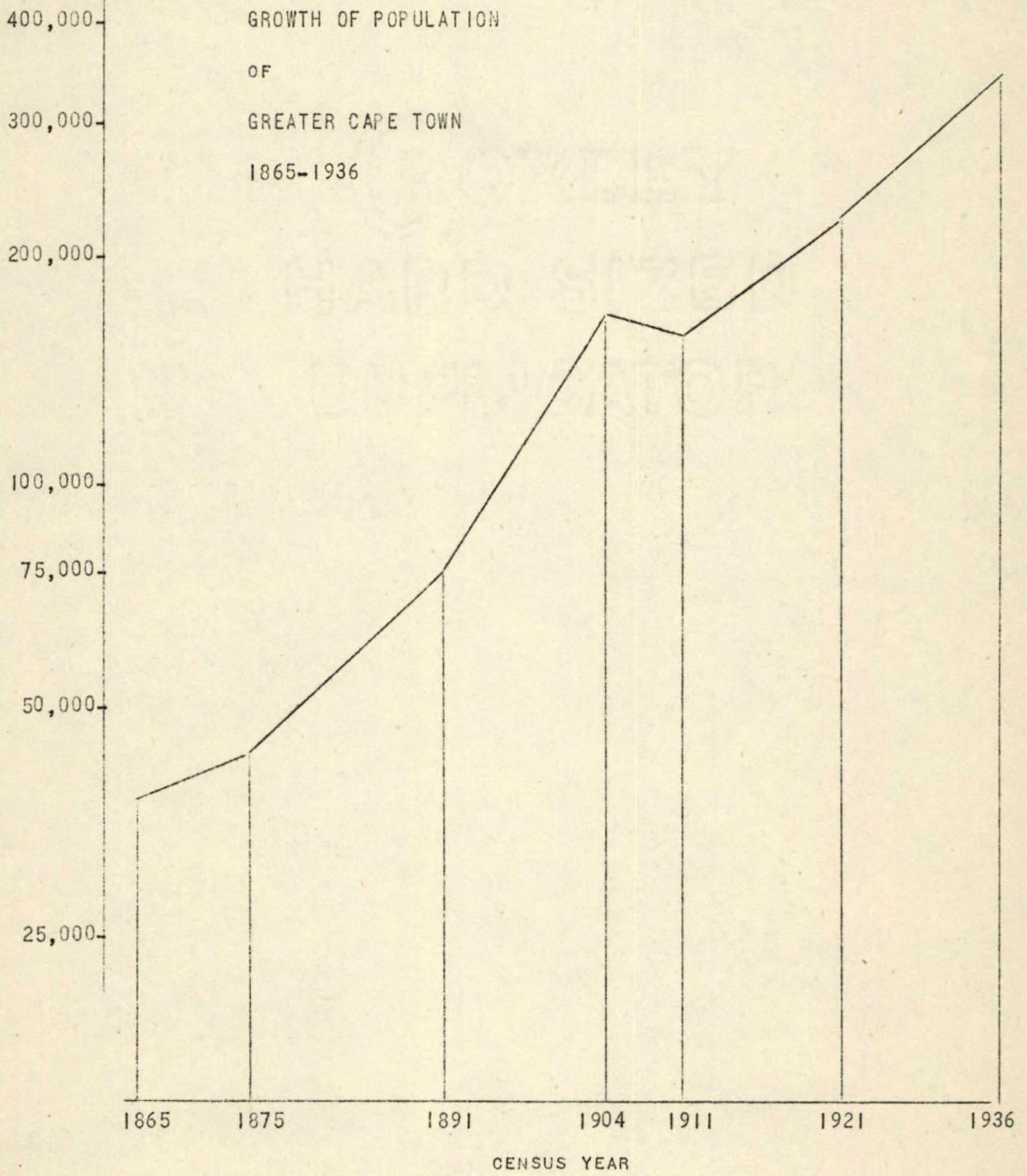
IN THOUSANDS OF PERSONS

| INTER-CENSAL PERIOD | LENGTH OF PERIOD IN YEARS | INCREASE OF POPULATION |                       |           |        | TOTAL  |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|--------|
|                     |                           | BIOLOGICAL GROWTH      | SOCIOLOGICAL INCREASE |           | TOTAL  |        |
|                     |                           |                        | NET INFLUX            | EXPANSION |        |        |
| 1865-1875           | 10                        | 3.5                    | 2.5                   | -         | 2.5    | 6      |
| 1875-1891           | 16                        | 7                      | 26                    | 1         | 27     | 34     |
| 1891-1904           | 13                        | 12.5                   | 83                    | -         | 83     | 95.5   |
| 1904-1911           | 7                         | 16                     | - 31.5 *              | 3.5       | - 28 * | - 12 * |
| 1911-1921           | 10                        | 20.5                   | 29                    | -         | 29     | 49.5   |
| 1921-1936           | 15                        | 67                     | 43                    | 23        | 66     | 132.5  |
| 1865-1936           | 71                        | 126.5                  | 152                   | 27.5      | 179.5  | 305.5  |

\* NET DECREASE

Appendix A

POPULATION  
ON LOGAR-  
ITHMIC  
SCALE



## Appendix B

TABLE 1B.1

TOTAL POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE TOWN  
IN RELATION TO POPULATION OF COLONY/PROVINCE  
AND OF UNION

| CENSUS<br>YEAR | POPULATION OF GREATER CAPE TOWN<br>AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION OF |         |
|----------------|---|---------|
|                | COLONY/PROVINCE   | UNION   |
| 1865           | 7.81  | .       |
| 1875           | 6.20  | .       |
| 1891           | 5.20  | .       |
| 1904 *         | 7.24 *  | [3.37]* |
| 1911           | 6.33  | 2.72    |
| 1921           | 7.60  | 3.05    |
| 1936           | 9.75  | 3.59    |

\* POPULATION INCLUDES TROOPS

[ ] POPULATION OF AREA SUBSEQUENTLY EMBRACED BY UNION

¶ A LATER REPORT WILL DEAL WITH THE PROGRESS OF URBANIZATION IN THE CAPE PENINSULA. THE ABOVE FIGURES ARE REPORTED HERE WITHOUT COMMENT FOR THE SAKE OF THE ADDITIONAL LIGHT THAT THEY SHED UPON CERTAIN STATISTICS IN THE PRESENT REPORT.

## Appendix C

### Acknowledgments

Facilities for the consultation of reports, documents, and maps, used in the preparation of Reports SS 1 and 2, and personal advice and guidance, were courteously given to the Survey by Messrs. C. Graham Botha, Chief Archivist of the Union, and members of his staff, P. Ribbink, Librarian of Parliament, G. Parker, Librarian of the University of Cape Town, and by Dr. T. Shadick Higgins, Medical Officer of Health of the City of Cape Town. Dr. E. Barnard Fuller advised upon the interpretation of statistics relating to the period during which he was Medical Officer of the City of Cape Town; and the Survey incurred a special debt of gratitude to Dr. P.J. Venter of the Archives Department, upon whose good nature and expert knowledge it made very heavy demands. To these gentlemen the Survey makes grateful acknowledgment.

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