

June, 1944.

CAPE COLOURED FRANCHISE IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCES.

The Director has been away but he was asked for his ideas on the question of the extension of the Cape Coloured Franchise to the Northern Provinces. The following points were abstracted from a letter received. He had not seen Rev. D. K. Clinton's memorandum when he wrote.

1. The Cape Coloured have the franchise on the basis on which the Europeans had it before 1931. Up to that year, Europeans had to qualify by having continuous income during the preceding year of £50 or by having continuously occupied a house with a rateable value of £75.
2. In the Transvaal Generals Botha and Smuts managed in 1906 to get the British Government to agree to a self Government Constitution on a male adult (European) franchise.
3. In Natal, when the Colony obtained self-government in 1894, it was on a male adult franchise basis with the curious proviso that "those of a race belonging to a country where no self-government obtained" would be excluded (i.e. the Indians). Actually, until the Representation of the Natives Act of 1936, there were 4 Native voters in Natal, and some 300 coloured are (to the best of my recollection) voters in Natal today.
4. In 1930 European women obtained the franchise on an adult basis.
5. In 1931 European men in the Cape and Natal came into line with the European males of the Transvaal and O.F.S., and got the manhood vote.
6. General Hertzog in his Smithfield speech in 1925 when he outlined his Native policy, indicated that his policy was to bring the Coloured into the European group rather than let them make common cause with the Native.
7. General Hertzog produced his Native Bills in 1926, he also produced a Coloured Persons' Rights Bill to give the Coloured people separate representation in the Northern Provinces. It was strongly opposed not only by the S.A.P., but also by the Coloured leaders, particularly in the Cape Province, because they regarded it as a segregation measure. It was referred with the Native Bills, and did not emerge with the revised Native Bills in 1935.
8. I believe that today many Coloured people in the North would accept a separate franchise, although there would be strong opposition - particularly from leftist groups.
9. Reverting to the Coloured franchise in the Cape. I should tell you that the Coloured vote has been politically ineffective. Although they predominate in some Cape Peninsula constituencies, they do not seem to be able to affect the attitude of the M.P. very much. Political cohesion and organisation are very weak with both Africans and Coloureds.
10. I cannot see the electorate agreeing to a resumption by the Africans of the common franchise; nor can I see the Europeans agreeing to let in the Coloured in the Transvaal and O.F.S. I think that any attempts to get the common franchise in the Northern Provinces for either or both (and do not forget the Indian) would be like crying for the moon.
11. On the other hand, in principle, there is a great deal to be said for the common franchise. It is less likely to lead to serious division in the State (especially if separate voting booths are provided).
12. On the common franchise there is a great deal of corruption (cf. the low economic status of the Coloured).
13. The separate representation of the Native has undoubtedly resulted in their needs being placed before Parliament, the Government and the country more vigorously, more persistently, and more effectively than when they shared the franchise with other races. It is possible that the Coloured and Indians would have gained by separate representation.

14. Representation for Coloured and Indians would ensure that the interests of each group would be cared for more actively.

15. The Native representatives cannot give the time necessary to care for the Coloured and Indians.

16. Senator Clarkson has expressed himself in favour of Indians having representation in Municipal and Provincial Councils and even in Parliament. Indian leaders will oppose separate representation but they will probably accept if Indians may be representatives.

17. During discussions in select committee on the Representation of Natives Bill (before brought before Parliament in 1936), on one occasion a vote was carried in favour of Natives being eligible to sit in the Senate to represent their own people. It is not too far-fetched to think of a system of separate representation under which Natives, Indians and Coloured will sit in the Senate to represent their own people.

18. There will be strong opposition to any increase of the racial representation in the House of Assembly.

19. General Hertzog originally proposed that there should be seven representatives in the House of Assembly, on condition that they could not vote on a motion of no-confidence in the Government of the day. It was opposed by General Smuts on the grounds that in a House of 157 the number was large enough to affect the political situation in the House (e.g. the Irish Party) and that it might happen that a Government would have to resign if defeated without a definite motion of no-confidence. The representative in the Senate in addition to the 3 representatives in the Assembly was the compromise reached.

20. The Native's Representative Council has pressed for additional members in the Assembly - one each at least for the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State. They are unlikely to get them - and they are less likely to get them if one or more representatives for Indians and Coloured in the Northern Provinces are added. It is not impossible that Parliament would agree to 7 racial representatives in the Assembly - four for Natives, two for Coloured (Northern Provinces) and one for Indians (Northern Provinces) but the most likely offer would be representation in the Senate (possibly, in all cases, by men of the races represented).

21. All that I have said goes to show that the problem raised by Mr. Clinton is a complex one and that it cannot, or should not, be dealt with summarily. I feel that both the Executive and the Council of the Institute should consider all the possibilities with the greatest care and that the Institute can best help by setting them out clearly and placing them before the interested bodies. It is easy enough to pass a resolution demanding extension of the common franchise to the Northern Provinces, but the Institute has a duty to set out all the factors in the situation.

22. I therefore suggest the following:-

- (1) That the subject be placed before the Executive in July.
- (2) That the Executive be asked to express itself on the principle whether or not political representation should be given to all racial sections in the Union.
- (3) That, assuming the answer to be yes, a memorandum be prepared in which all the possibilities and difficulties are set out for consideration.
- (4) That this memorandum, after consideration by the Executive, be sent out to the Council and to the bodies likely to be interested e.g. African peoples Organisation - the Coloured political body, the Indian Congress etc.
- (5) That the whole matter be discussed by Council in January 1945.

23. Turning now to the points raised in your letter. I don't think we can shirk the Coloured franchise issue. It has been our policy not to frame a political programme, but I don't think we should be right in avoiding consideration of this political issue (N.B. the Indian aspect must also be considered) but we should reach no decision without a scientific study of the matter and unless we have substantial agreement.

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