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October 30th, 1938.

The Agent General for India,
Carlton Hotel,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Mr. Hans Rau,

Proposed Investigation on the Social
and Economic Condition of Indians in
South Africa.

You will remember that I suggested to your predecessor, Sir Hans Ali that an investigation into the Social and Economic Conditions of the Indian people in South Africa would be of great value since there is so little material available to those who are interested in the Social and Economic problems of the Union, and more particularly those who are concerned for the welfare of the Indian people of the Union.

As you know this Institute has discussed with you and with the authorities of the Natal University College - and more particularly with Professor Burrows, head of the Department of Economics of the College - the practicability of the proposed investigation. As a result of the discussions, Professor Burrows put forward the outline of a restricted enquiry on Indian employment in Natal, which, if funds were made available, he and his department would be willing to undertake. I enclose herewith a copy of the outline. This was submitted to the Council of Educational and Social Research with an application for a grant of £100 towards the expenses of the enquiry. As the Council does not make grants in respect of salaries for such enquiries, the application had to be confined to a request for help for out-of-pocket expenses. The Council, I understand, was much interested in the proposed enquiry, but as a detailed estimate of the expenses to be incurred was not submitted, it deferred making any grant. The Council will meet again early in 1939.

The delay has caused me to re-consider the proposed study, and I have decided to suggest to you that an effort should be made to have the comprehensive enquiry which I suggested originally.

The reasons

The reasons for this are:-

1. We have now in the Union the reports of three major enquiries of first rate importance viz:-
 - (a) The Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Poor White Problem.
 - (b) The Report of the Native Economic Commission.
 - (c) The Report of the Commission on the Social and Economic Condition of the Cape Coloured People.These are comprehensive studies of three separate racial groups. We lack only an authoritative and comprehensive study of the Indian communities of the Union.
2. It is impossible to appreciate what the uplift clause of the Cape Town Agreement should really signify unless we have before us a clear picture of the present circumstances of the Indian people of the Union.
3. Social Welfare workers lack an understanding of the real condition of the Indian people, and do not know where to begin in Social Welfare Work among them.
4. The concentration of the Indians in certain areas makes a comprehensive study more easily attainable in respect of Indians than for any other racial group.
5. Public opinion in South Africa can only be educated to a more sympathetic attitude towards the Indian if the facts are made available. These are at present sadly lacking.

The investigation on the Poor Whites was made possible by the Carnegie Corporation, which I believe, had the final choice of investigators who were chosen for their special capabilities - a Psychologist, an Educationalist, an Economist, a Sociologist and a Social Worker.

The Native Economic Commission was set up by the Union Government and included an Economist, the Chairman of the Wage Board, and several others with less technical (and perhaps more political) qualifications.

The "Coloured Commission" was first suggested by this Institute and was intended to be on the lines of the Carnegie Commission. It was set up by the Union Government and included a Psychologist (who had served on the Carnegie Commission), a Public Health Officer, a Director of Education, and former Chief Inspector of Factories, a Barrister and a leader of the Coloured people (Dr. Abdurahman).

It might...../

It might be possible to persuade the Union Government to set up a Commission for the Indian enquiry, but in the present political situation I should fear an attempt being made to give it too much of a political flavour.

I should like to suggest that an effort be made to secure co-operation between the following:- the Government of India, the Union Government, the Natal University College, the Institute of Race Relations, and the Council of Educational and Social Research, for a full investigation of the social and economic position of the Indian population in the Union, either through a Commission of experts or through the appointment of a full time research worker, who would be assisted by consulting members of a voluntary committee. In either case the cost should be borne, mainly by the Government of India and the Union Government, with possibly grants from the Council of Educational and Social Research. It might be possible to enlist financial help from well-to-do Indians. The choice of personnel should be shared by the Government of India so that it could be satisfied that the enquiry would be objective and free from political influences.

If a full-time man is preferred (and I personally think this would be the more effective method) I should like to suggest that Mr. Quentin Whyte might be considered a suitable man. As you know he was invalided from the Indian Civil Service, but he is now well again and wishes to engage in work for and among the Indian people. From all accounts I have had of him he is a very able person and would prove a competent investigator. He would be helped by an Advisory Committee consisting of say Professor Harrowe, Mr. Ridley, Professor Gray (head of the Department of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand), myself and/or another representative of the Institute of Race Relations and Mr. Kaje. Possibly Mrs. Palmer and an Educationist could be added. Although the Educational aspect has been covered by the recent Education Commission of Natal, certain social aspects of Education call for fuller treatment.

It is difficult to work out the probable cost of the investigation, but the full-time investigator would probably require two years for the task. His salary, travelling and secretarial expenses would have to be provided. I should very much like to see a young Indian graduate also appointed who would gain experience in methods of research which would make him a valuable person to the local (South African) Indian community. Possibly this Institute might be able to raise the funds for a fellowship for this purpose. An Indian clerk-typist might also be used.

I have no idea what salary Mr. Whyte would expect, but putting the appointment on the scale of a University senior lecturer, I suggest £600. Thus the cost of the investigator might be:-

Salary of Investigator 2 years	1200
Travelling and subsistence allowance 2 years.	100

Fellowship...../

Fellowship - Indian graduate 3 years	400
Clerk-Typist	200
Travelling Expenses of Consulting Committee	200
Incidentals	250
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	1050
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Could the Government of India be approached to pay half of this cost if the Union Government and other South African sources meet the other half? I am sure that we ought not to rely on the Union Government appointing a Commission and I think it would be unwise to let it do so.

I am suggesting to Professor Barrow that the restricted enquiry should be continued in the meantime.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

JMSJ/PBO

Enclosure: Outline of scheme.

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