

26.5.6

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL  
REGIONAL COMMITTEE.

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"COFFEE-CARTS".

27.2.51.

Mrs. Rheinallt Jones reported that, together with Mr. Ngakane, she had investigated a number of the "coffee-carts". At Croesus alone, they had found eleven such carts stationed. There was only one restaurant, which could not act as a substitute for the eleven carts. In addition, the carts commenced operations earlier than the restaurant which did not cater for the needs of the early morning workers. They had found that the standard of cleanliness of the carts varied, but that they were all near taps where running water was available. She felt strongly that these carts fulfilled a need and that, provided they were licenced and supervised, they should be permitted to continue what was undeniably an essential service.

The Chairman reported that Mr. Venables had agreed that there would be no interference with carts located where no other facilities were available.

DECIDED that a deputation consisting of Mrs. Rheinallt Jones, Mr. Broomberg, Mr. Ngakane, Mr. Norton, Mr. Rathebe and Dr. Hellmann should seek an interview with Mr. Venables and Dr. Donally.

14.3.51.

The Chairman reported that the deputation, appointed at the last meeting (with Mr. Rathebe also representing the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Africans) met the Deputy Medical Officer of the Health and members of his staff and had a lengthy discussion. The deputation had submitted that the coffee carts fulfilled a need not otherwise met; that while it might be desirable to reduce the number drastically from the existing number of approximately 700, the institution of a system of licencing, the requirements of certain minimum standards of hygiene, combined with supervision, and the demarcation of specified sites would remove many of the present objections; that, although discrimination was not intended, in fact the proposed measures would prove to be discriminatory in that the withdrawal of African coffee cart vendors, as these Africans could not hire or purchase premises in the areas they now served, would mean that the provision of these services would pass into European hands; that it viewed with the utmost dismay the enormous gap between the standards of nutrition and hygiene proposed by the Department and imposed on coffee cart vendors and the actual circumstances of the vast majority of the African people and their consequent incapacity to fulfil these standards.

The Medical Officer of Health presented an exhaustive analysis of the situation stressing inter-alia, the following:-

The withdrawal of the coffee carts was necessary to promote a long-range plan for raising nutritional and hygienic standards: that as long as they were subject to the competition of coffee carts, eating houses could not improve their facilities; that a system of licencing had been tried some years earlier but had not been proof against deliberate abuse; that it was impossible to exercise proper control over storage, preparation, of food stuffs by coffee cart vendors.

That the food supplied from coffee carts was unhygienic, of little nutritional value, and no cheaper than food from Native eating houses, and the Jubilee restaurant. The City Council had applied to the Administrator for permission for Native eating houses to be open between 5 and 7.30 a.m. and for the necessary exemption for persons there employed. It was also making attempts to encourage the provision of alternative sources of food supply. The deputation was assured that action would not be taken against coffee cart vendors unless alternative feeding facilities existed.

The Chairman further reported that the Committee had been represented by Mr. <sup>K</sup>heinallt Jones and himself at a meeting called by the Town Clerk and the Departments of Non-European Affairs and of Health and attended by representatives of the Transvaal Chamber of Industry and of Commerce to consider the provision of feeding facilities. These latter representatives had emphatically emphasized that no further action should be taken till alternative feeding facilities had been provided. The meeting had decided to set up a sub-committee to investigate alternative feeding schemes (e.g. plans for a more permanent type of coffee house which employers could construct and let to Africans.)

The matter of the coffee vendors had also been raised when the deputation met the Manager of the Non-European Affairs Department. It had been understood that no further prosecution beyond the three pending against vendors in Jeppe were to be instituted, yet the Press had reported a further seven prosecutions. The Manager and the Acting Medical Officer of Health stated that this was a police matter, but they would investigate. DECIDED that Mr. A. Norton serve as the Committees representative of the feeding sub-committee.

#### 11.4.51

Mr. A. Norton reported on a meeting of the Sub-Committee on Feeding. The M.O. H. had stated, in reply to submissions made earlier, that the seven additional prosecutions were not against coffee-cart vendors but against vendors of fruit, vegetables, etc.

In regard to the provision of alternative feeding facilities, two schemes were being discussed:

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