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I.

THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE BANTU. [1905?] [Incomplete]

The Bantu form by far the greater part of the population of South Africa. It is perhaps a platitude to say that the welfare of any country depends to a considerable extent upon the welfare of the majority of its inhabitants. This elementary principle of politics need hardly be brought to our notice to make us concede the point that the progress and prosperity of South Africa depend upon the proper settlement of all questions that have a bearing on the life of the Bantu. This being so, we would expect to find that the Native Question in this country was made the subject of very careful study and attention; but as a matter of fact until very recently Native Affairs in South Africa were sadly neglected. The attention of those in authority was directed to the seriousness of the Native question only or mainly by the occurrence of Native riots or rebellions such as Bambata's Rebellion, the Bullhoek Affair, and to come nearer home, the recent Durban riots. At such critical times, after perhaps needless bloodshed, a Commission of Inquiry would be appointed; the commission would point out the defects in the existing system of Native Administration, and suggest improvements. In the meantime the disturbance would have been quelled, and the report of the Commission would by itself be of no avail against the apathy of the Councils of State towards Native Affairs, and gradually there would be a return to previous conditions until another riot shook the Government out of its lethargic condition when perhaps a piece of legislation affecting Natives, and introduced with a view to meeting the imminent contingency, would be passed. In other words the Native Policy of the various governments in South Africa, if it could be called a policy, was one of drift. In this way "the unconscious national purpose" of South Africa, to borrow the phrase of an earnest student of the Native question, found expression in various legislative measures from which it is possible to gather some impressions, though imperfect, of the place South Africa is prepared to accord to the Bantu in its body politic. No question dealt with in his "unconscious" way can ever be settled satisfactorily. In dealing with

a matter which affects everyone in the country so deeply nothing other than sustained, purposeful and well-directed study can lead to any fruitful result. It is a matter for gratification, therefore, that there is observable all over South Africa a new spirit of inquiry and determination to get at the truth regarding different aspects of the Native question. The Question is being discussed more freely in Colleges and Universities, in Joint Councils, Rotary Clubs, and in conferences such as this; there is an ever growing literature on the subject, including books showing great penetration into the question, laying contribution various sciences such as Anthropology, Race Psychology, Economics, etc., to see if they can help us to arrive at a solution of our national problem. This is a triumph of that Scientific Spirit which General Smuts in his Rhodes Lectures referred to as the most significant tendency of modern times. As Oldham says, in these days, "an attempt must be made to bring the resources science and the vitalising and stabilising influence of the scientific attitude to bear even on the problems of government."

Of all aspects of the South African Problem--for the problem is not so much Native as it is South African--that which is in most urgent need of satisfactory solution is the political. In some respects this may be a startling statement to make. No doubt there are those among us who think that the economic and perhaps the educational aspects of this matter are of far greater importance than the political, for has it not been said that "in the modern world economics/ questions and education are almost the whole of politics"? To think so, however, is to ignore the South African attitude and outlook towards these problems. It is doubtless a great pity that questions like Franchise Bills, Flag Bills, Dominion Status, etc., should usurp the place which appears to belong to grave issues like land settlement and unemployment. This is inevitable in a new country like ours which is at present laying the foundations upon which its future progress must be based. South Africa has only recently come of age, and is consequently not yet of one mind regarding its scale of values.

For the older nations the sobering effect of generations of autonomy have enabled them to concentrate upon the bigger issues as a result of their knowledge of a proper evaluation of the questions with which they have to deal. We in South Africa must be pardoned if we succumb to the contagion of regarding the settlement of our political questions as an indispensable preliminary to our development in other directions. Dr.C.T.Loram, than whom few are more competent to deliver an opinion on the matter in giving evidence before the Select Committee on General Hertzog's Bill dealing with the place which the Bantu should occupy in our political system put the South African attitude in a nutshell when he said, "We feel our country won't progress, and our native people won't progress (and without their progress the country cannot go ahead), until the present fear of black domination is removed. As things are to-day, while the franchise system exists as it is, a considerable mass of our white people are afraid that with the growth of education, and with the growth of their economic position, more and more political power will pass into the hands of the natives, and because of this fear they are inclined to resent native progress in education, in economic affairs, and in other directions. We believe that if that fear of black domination can be removed we can get ahead much more quickly in the development of the natives and in the development of our country." On the other hand the Bantu are also alarmed about their future in the land of their birth. The trend of legislation affecting natives especially since Union has not been such as to inspire him with confidence in the white man's erstwhile protestations of just intentions. The native case has been well summed up by the writer of "Caliban in Africa" who says, "The Statute Book and the catalogue of Departmental Acts have become a mass of discriminations against the native on grounds of race and colour. In regard to land, to industry, to education, and to parliamentary representation, the tale points all the same way. Native rights to acquire land have been severely curtailed, and the promised compensation after seventeen years, still denied. As regards native employ-