

**THE EDUCATION OF THE
SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE**

THE EDUCATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE

BY

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PREFACE

IN his famous address before the Congregation of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1909 on the Native Question, Lord Selborne, then High Commissioner for South Africa, said, " I believe that everyone who loves South Africa is bound in honour to make what contribution he can to the solution of the problem." As a native-born South African, I feel that the call is a direct one to me, and in the following pages I have attempted to deal with one phase of the problem, although fully aware of the difficulties of the task. It is commonly said in South Africa that no one who has lived for more than a year in the country would dare to write on such a complex and difficult subject as the Native Question. When it is known that the present writer was born in that province which is most thickly populated by Natives, that he was brought up with Native attendants, and that he has spent all but seven years of his life in the country, his temerity may excite all the more wonder. I believe, however, that those very circumstances, coupled with exceptional opportunities of studying a similar problem in the United States, make it incumbent upon me to do what I can towards the solution of the greatest problem confronting my native land.

The difficulties which have confronted me have been very real. First and foremost is the absence of any scientific

account of the ethnology of the Bantu. Books describing Native customs and habits there are in abundance, but no adequate accounts of the particular physiology and psychology of the Bantu have appeared. There is a good deal of *opinion* on the subject, but nothing which can altogether be relied on as a basis for the structure of an educational practice. A few studies on the physiology, craniology, and psychology of Negroes in other parts of the world have been made, but very little agreement of opinion has been reached. A second difficulty is the absence of any definite policy on the part of the governing Europeans towards the Native people. The difficulties of race adjustment have been so great, and the problems so unique, that the governing Europeans, busy with the absorbing struggle with their natural environment, have not succeeded in establishing a uniform Native policy founded on principles. Their non-success is the less to be wondered at when it is realised that other and older countries have failed in the same respect. A third difficulty is the fact that until 1910 the four colonies had separate governments, separate Native policies, and separate schemes of Native education. A fourth difficulty, and one that has militated against the completeness of the present study, is the inadequate treatment of Native education in the annual reports of the Education Departments. In the Cape reports, which are more detailed than those of the other provinces, statistics regarding Native education are lumped with those of other non-European peoples under the term "Coloured," and it is impossible to separate them. The incompleteness of the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Basutoland reports has been a serious hindrance.

These very real difficulties have tempted me more than once to abandon the study in despair, but the vital necessity

for some such study at the present time has induced me to continue.

Since the Union, Native affairs have become a national and not a provincial concern, and the five years during which, and "until otherwise determined by Parliament," Native education was to be a matter of provincial administration, have elapsed, so that the time seems to be peculiarly appropriate for a consideration of the relation of education towards the whole problem, for it is in the proper education of the Native that the greatest hope for the settlement of the Native Question lies.

A few words as to the methods used in the investigation are necessary. Such a study should be based on unassailable facts, but what should be the procedure when the facts are not available? The method here used has been that advocated by Principal J. C. Maxwell Garnett of the University of Manchester in his address before the Educational Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1915: "Where facts are available we should use them. . . . When facts are not available we should, if possible, ascertain them by direct experiment; and, if that is not possible, we should have faith—that is, we should ascertain the facts indirectly by acting on a hypothesis with a view to its verification or modification by subsequent experience." There can be no finality in educational theories and practice; this is particularly true of Native education, where we are only at the beginning of our knowledge; and although it is believed that this study is sound so far as it goes, and points the way to action on approved lines, further research may upset our conclusions. In any case, the march of civilisation among our Native peoples will compel us to revise our educational practice from time to time.

In arriving at my conclusions I have made use of :—

(a) *Reports of Government Commissions.*—The European method of surveys by commissions is followed in South Africa. Of the educational surveys of this nature an American writer, Mr James Mahoney, in a report to the United States Bureau of Education, says: "The scope of the foreign survey is in general wider; it looks less to local conditions than the American survey. The method of the European survey is (a) by oral testimony of school directors, inspectors, and others who have knowledge of schools; (b) personal investigation of the schools by recognised experts; (c) by circular letters or questionnaires (1) to all persons directly concerned with the schools in question, (2) to eminent men competent to judge of educational matters; (d) through personal investigation of schools resembling those under investigation in all the other progressive nations."¹ Similar methods are followed by other than educational commissioners.

(b) *Reports of Government Departments.*—Although these reports leave much to be desired in what they include and in their arrangement, the figures are trustworthy and the opinions expressed worthy of consideration.

(c) *Reports of School Superintendents and Government Officials* in the United States, India, and elsewhere; and the very valuable Special Reports issued by the English Board of Education.

(d) *Books, Pamphlets, Articles in Periodicals.*—The value of these depends upon the experience, sincerity, and methods of presentation of their writers.

(e) *Statistical and Experimental Investigations.*—The writer has made several studies on what he believes to be approved

¹ "Some Foreign Education Surveys," *United States Bureau of Education Bulletin*, 1915, No. 37, p. 5.

scientific methods. The difficulty of framing tests for Natives which do not depend on school training and comprehension of English has been only partially overcome, but the writer hopes shortly to derive a series of tests free from these disabilities.

(f) *Personal Experience and the Experience of Colleagues.*—As an inspector of schools in Natal, and as a member of a special commission appointed to investigate Native training colleges, I have had experience in matters connected with Native education. I have been fortunate in having been in close contact with fellow-inspectors, missionaries, and teachers who have devoted their lives to supervision and instruction in Native schools. I have also received replies to a questionnaire from forty-two of the most experienced missionary teachers in South Africa. During the fifteen months which I spent in the United States I took every opportunity to obtain a first-hand knowledge of Negro education. The results of my observations at Hampton, Tuskegee, Virginia Union University, and various types of Negro schools in Virginia, Alabama, and Maryland, are incorporated in this study.

My obligations are numerous and varied. In footnotes I have attempted to acknowledge all the sources of my information. My deep gratitude is due to the Honourable F. S. Malan, Minister of Education for the Union of South Africa, and the Executive Committee of the Natal Provincial Council, who very generously extended the period of my leave of absence, and made it possible for me to undertake the study; to Mr C. J. Mudie, Superintendent of Education in Natal, and Mr George Hofmeyr, Under Secretary of Education for the Union, for encouragement and interest in my studies; to the Secretaries of the several Education Depart-

ments, and to my colleague Mr S. B. Theunissen, Inspector of Native Schools, Natal, who have supplied me with valuable data ; to the principals of the training institutions and schools, both European and Native, who have replied to my questionnaire, given me additional information, and assisted me in the tests. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to several missionaries : in particular to the Rev. J. Henderson and the Rev. J. Lennox of Lovedale, the Rev. David Stormont of Blythswood, the Rev. F. J. Briscoe of Kilnerton, the Rev. J. Arnt of Bloemfontein, the Rev. E. Jocottet of Morija, the Rev. F. R. Bunker of Durban, the Right Rev. Bishop Roach of Pietermaritzburg, and the Rev. A. E. Le Roy of Adams Mission Station, Amanzimtoti. To the last mentioned, and to Mr B. M. Narbeth of the Durban Technical College and Mr G. Rees of Addington School, Durban, I am particularly grateful for help in the supervising and scoring of tests.

My indebtedness to Mr Maurice Evans is not limited to the extracts from his well-known book. By the loan of books and pamphlets and by friendly encouragement he has helped more than he knows towards the completion of my undertaking. Mr Evans, Mr James Dick, and the Rev. Father Bryant have kindly read the book in manuscript and have made valuable suggestions.

The study was first undertaken as a doctoral dissertation at Teachers' College, Columbia University. To Dean Russell and the authorities of the College, to Professors Dewey, Monroe, Strayer, Thorndike, M'Murry, Kilpatrick, and Bonsor, under whom I studied, my sincere thanks are due for countless kindnesses. Professor Strayer in particular has given me the benefit of his wide knowledge of administrative systems, and has shown as much interest in our South African problems as if they were his own. Among my fellow-students at Teachers' College, Messrs Eaton, Spencer, Marquard, and

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I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to my good friends Mrs W. R. Poynton, Dr S. G. Campbell, and Mr G. A. Payne of Durban for their constant encouragement and generous help. The assistance rendered by my wife in the completion of the manuscript and in countless other ways is but imperfectly acknowledged by the dedication.

C. T. L.

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