

**THE
SOUTH AFRICAN
COMMONWEALTH**

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMONWEALTH

BY

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CONSTITUTION — PROBLEMS — SOCIAL
CONDITIONS.

Tandem fit surculus arbor.

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ERRATA.

page 45, line 16, for "or" read "of".

page 60, line 24, for "firse" read "first."

page 192, at end, add footnote reference to Theal's Records, 1803,
page 178.

page 211, line 15, for "have" read "had".

page 272, line 8, for "no rent is charged for the first year, while 2 per
cent." read "at a rental of not less than 4 per cent. per annum".

page 368, line 1, for "large"; read "larger".

page 410 line 27, for "Wast" read "West".

page 445 line 3, for "Bay" read "Boy".

page 454 line 39, for "Impotrant" read "important".

page 463 line 9, for "spiritual" read "scriptural".

page 470 line 19, for "pubic" read "public."

PREFACE.

NEARLY TEN YEARS have elapsed since the inauguration of the Union of South Africa—a period sufficient to enable one to form an opinion with regard to the principles and conditions under which the young Commonwealth is governed, and some of the chief problems which await solution by its people in the future. In this work I have proposed to myself, in the first place, the task of describing, in plain language, the system of government of the Union, in its various divisions. Among useful published treatises which deal with the subject may be mentioned those of the Hon. R. H. Brand, Mr. W. Basil Worsfold, Mr. C. P. Poley, Mr. Frank R. Cana, and Dr. A. B. Keith. All of their works, however, deal with the subject somewhat briefly and concisely, and, although they give correct summaries of the constitution, they are, in the main, of a theoretical nature, as at the date of their publication no experience had been gained of the actual working of the South Africa Act. Nor are any of these writers South Africans by birth. Between the 31st May, 1910, and the present time two Governors-General have held the highest office under the Crown, and there have been many ministerial changes. Two general elections for the Union Parliament, and three general elections for the Provincial Councils have taken place. These persons and bodies have been engaged for almost a decade in legislating and in influencing public opinion, which has also had many opportunities of manifesting itself in other ways during the period in question, wherein South Africa has experienced a war and a rebellion; two great strikes, besides lesser industrial disturbances among both the European and the native population; changes in the judicial system and (what is perhaps more important in the life of the people) the educational system; and has suffered the ravages of a terrible epidemic of influenza. Three new Universities have come into being. The language question has been much debated. In the industrial centres, there has been much socialistic propaganda, and there have

been attempts to introduce Bolshevism. The country, as a whole, has made great strides in manufacturing industry, commerce and agriculture. The future of the mining industry, the supply of labour, skilled and unskilled, and the relations between Europeans and natives, are much-debated problems. Of several of these, as well as of existing social conditions and intellectual movements, I have endeavoured to give a brief account, with such reflections and suggestions as appear to be relevant to the matter under consideration. In short, I have attempted to present a general view of the constitution, political and general problems, and social conditions of the Union, which now ranks as one of the great self-governing Dominions or Commonwealths of the British Empire. While I do not claim any special qualifications for the task, I venture to refer to the fact that during the past forty years I have been enabled to acquire a fairly accurate knowledge, on the spot, of most of the leading institutions, political and social, in South Africa, as well as an acquaintance, in some cases of an intimate kind, with the majority of the men who have figured prominently in the history and public work of the country during that period. While it may be true that "lookers-on see most of the game," a treatise on the Union and the life of its inhabitants, by one who was born and has lived a lifetime within its borders, and has the requisite local knowledge, may be of advantage to the student of politics and institutions, as well as to the general reader. It has been my endeavour, throughout, to deal with the subjects under discussion from a thoroughly impartial standpoint, except where such a mode of treatment would involve a sacrifice of principle, or would result in a presentation of facts so devoid of light or colour as to produce no impression at all. If I succeed in conveying a tolerably accurate delineation of affairs within the Union, in their leading features, which may serve both for information and suggestion, my object will have been achieved.

In dealing with the Constitution and its working out-growths, I have avoided resort, as far as possible, to commentaries and text-books, preferring to deal with the actual phraseology and application of the South Africa Act, in its natural significance, in accordance with the maxim—*melius*

est petere fontes. Wherever possible, technical language has been eschewed. Here and there, suggestions have been made with regard to points of weakness which have manifested themselves, and to the desirability, as well as the possibility, of future changes. While, on the one hand, the main outlines of the Constitution are stated, I have tried to avoid copious details, which would merely overburden the work and distract attention from the main points under consideration. The same principle has been followed in the discussion of political and social conditions. The main factors have been stated, so as to aid the reader to form his own conclusions—the object being to provide suggestions, rather than to bias the judgment, or to indulge one's own prepossessions or preconceived ideas. For this reason, also, while endeavouring to be accurate, and to present the facts truthfully, I have refrained from seeking outside assistance as far as may be, preferring to bear *in propria persona* whatever blame or demerit must attach to this work.

In special chapters, and throughout the work, reference has been made to the position which the Union occupies in relation to Great Britain and the British Empire at large, intimately connected, as it is, with the form of the constitution and various political problems of importance. There has, however, been no attempt to express dogmatic opinions, or to venture upon forecasts with regard to a future which is hidden from us. For the same reason, I have refrained from discussing in detail the position of South Africa as a member of the League of Nations, because both the materials for judgment are wanting at the present day, and there has not been time for opinions to form or to crystallise. All that can be said is that South Africa is prepared, along with her sister nations, to take upon herself her due share of the burden and the heat of the day, and to face whatever fate may befall with undaunted courage and an assured hope. The ancestry and the history of the people who form the Union give assurance that they will, in the main, hold true to those ideals of liberty and civilisation and honour which animate the best and the greatest among the nations.

Johannesburg,
July, 1919.

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Appendix.

Statistical Table.

Area of the Union	473,076 sq. miles.
" " " Cape Province	276,966 "
" " Natal Province	35,291 "
" " Transvaal Province	110,430 "
" " Orange Free State Province	50,389 "

Date of Discovery of the Cape by Bartholomew-Diaz	1487
" " First Dutch Settlement by Van Riebeeck	1652
" " British Occupation	1795
" " Surrender of the Cape to England	1806
" " Great Boer Trek	1836-7
" " Annexation of Natal	1843
" " Foundation of Orange Free State	1854
" " Foundation of South African Republic	1857
" " Responsible Government at the Cape	1872
" " Responsible Government in Natal	1893
" " Annexation of Boer Republics	1900
" " Responsible Government in the Transvaal	1907
" " Responsible Government in the Orange Free State	1907
" " Passing of South Africa Act	1909
" " Inauguration of the Union	1910

Population — year 1672 — Europeans, 600	Cape of Good Hope.
" " 1770 — Europeans, 10000	
" " 1806 — Europeans, 26,000	
" " 1865 — Europeans, 181,592	
" " — Natives, 314,789	
" " 1875 — Europeans, 236,783	
" " — Natives, 484,201	
" " 1891 — Europeans, 376,987	
" " — Natives, 1,150,237	
" " 1904 — Europeans, 579,741	
" " — Natives, 1,830,063	Natal.
" " 1911 — Europeans, 582,377	
" " — Natives, 1,982,588	
" " 1891 — Europeans, 46,788	
" " — Natives, 497,125	
" " 1904 — Europeans, 97,109	
" " — Natives, 1,011,645	
" " 1911 — Europeans, 98,114	
" " — Natives, 1,095,929	

Population — year	1890	— Europeans	119,128	Transvaal.
"	"	1904 — Europeans.	297,277	
"	"	" — Natives,	972,674	
"	"	1911 — Europeans.	420,562	
"	"	" — Natives,	1,265,650	
"	"	1880 — Europeans,	61,022	Orange Free State.
"	"	" — Natives,	72,496	
"	"	1890 — Europeans,	77,716	
"	"	" — Natives,	129,787	
"	"	1904 — Europeans,	142,679	
"	"	" — Natives,	244,636	
"	"	1911 — Europeans,	175,189	
"	"	" — Natives,	352,985	
"	"	1911 — Natives,	4,697,152	The Union.
"	"	" — Europeans,	1,276,242	
"	"	Total,	5,973,394	
"	"	1918 — Europeans,	1,424,690	

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