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# Agricultural Development in South African Bantu Areas

by

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In the request to deliver a short paper on agricultural development in the South African Bantu areas I did not see a strictly scientific assignment, since that was undertaken by other speakers. I regard it that you wish to be informed about what is being done and envisaged for the future. I should also like to dwell a while on the practical problems of implementing the policy.

One often reads in the press, especially in recent times, that development of the Bantu areas has failed and that nothing is being done. I do not for a single moment wish to claim that enough is being done or that the tempo is sufficiently rapid, but certain bottlenecks and practical considerations should always be taken into account in the work of uplifting a developing society

In the development of the homelands, and I confine myself especially now to agriculture (although the arguments apply throughout) there are three factors in particular which should be taken into account, namely:

- (a) The trustee or central body from which the initiative emanates;
- (b) the financial means for carrying out the work; and
- (c) the human material to be handled.

A prolonged argument to motivate these points is unnecessary and they are only dealt with in passing. As far as the officials of the Department are concerned, who should direct policy and take the lead, the same manpower shortage is experienced which hampers the economic development in so many sectors of our country.

Secondly, the financial aspect. Here the South African Bantu Trust, like everybody else in the public sector, is dependent on the Treasury and has to subject itself to the same monetary measures; and in recent years has therefore also been subject to the anti-inflationary policy. It is possible that the average citizen and even some in higher circles do not realize the urgency of homeland development and that in determining priorities this important aspect is not placed high enough in the order of precedence.

Thirdly, but much more important than is generally realized is the human material to be handled. The Bantu (especially in the homelands) is still largely dependent upon a subsistence economy. In addition he is influenced by traditions and superstitions and is extremely apathetic about and distrustful of accepting innovations. Thus to motivate him towards higher production and to make him aware of a money economy is in direct conflict with his training and his views on life and consequently the process should take place gradually and very tactfully. Thus only a small error of judgement can ruin years of work in a short time. Furthermore it does not help to provide money and manpower without active participation on the part of the recipient. Efforts are constantly being made, however, to let development take place as rapidly as knowledge can be absorbed. To achieve acceleration the human being must be concentrated upon and he should be made more rapidly receptive.

Agriculturally it is therefore the Department's policy to promote the "climate" for development and several measures are being taken and methods applied. My personal opinion is that more success is being achieved in the development of agriculture than in the industrial and commercial sectors.

## PLANNING

In agricultural planning there are two basic components which should be taken into consideration, namely the physical and human resources. No plan can be drawn up without taking both into consideration. The ability of the community involved will determine the success or failure of the plan. As far as physical planning is concerned, stabilizing measures are firstly concentrated upon after which production measures are proceeded with. At the same time attention should be devoted to the human being to encourage him to be more productive.

The planning of Trust lands takes place more easily than that of lands in tribal ownership. Efforts are made to divide Trustlands into economic units before settlement. With tribal land it is necessary first to obtain the full co-operation of the tribal authority. Then there are the problems of over-occupation and the fact that the head of each family has grazing rights for his cattle, plus cultivation rights on fields for

each of his wives. In order therefore to adjust policy of an envisaged single economic unit to the present situation use has at times to be made temporarily of half and even one-third economic plots. Later the intention is to consolidate these if some of the tribal members can become economically active outside agriculture.

A big external problem is that resettlement out of White areas sometimes necessitates the over-occupation of agricultural areas, seeing that at this stage there are few other economic activities within the areas. Provided industrial location can be speeded up the big burden on agriculture will be lessened with subsequent more orderly planning and increased production which it is hoped will result.

In spite of all obstacles considerable progress is being made with planning. In the Bantu areas of the Republic apart from the Transkei, approximately 54 per cent of the areas has already been planned; in the Transkei more than 45 per cent and in South West Africa less than 5 per cent. In the latter area a start was only made during 1966 and while only 72 000 hectares were planned in the first year, it was increased in the second year to more than 240 000 hectares, so that the situation will improve rapidly.

The nature of this planning is indicated in Table 1. Seeing that it deals only with agriculture, other physical works which improve the infra-structure (like roads and bridges) are not discussed.

TABLE 1 - Details of planning in Bantu Areas

Item	Transkei	Other Bantu Areas (excluding Transkei)
Area planned	1 857 950 morgen	7 054 500 morgen
Fences	24 369 miles	63 965 miles
Grass strips	128 569 miles	175 785 miles
Equipped boreholes	305	5 970
Dipping Tanks	804	2 406
Conservation Dams	980	4 656
Contouring	2 208 miles	16 909 miles

#### EXTENSION AND TRAINING

It has already been mentioned that efforts are constantly being made to make the human being amenable to innovations and to urge him on to improvement and higher productivity.

Thus there are four training centres (one of which is in the Transkei) to assist in preparing suitable Bantu personnel to carry out the development work. A three years' agricultural

diploma is provided for and besides a number of basic agricultural subjects, courses in administration, planning, economics and extension are also given. At present there are 260 students in their different years receiving training as well as a few foresters and stock inspectors. In the Transkei there are about 170, in the other Bantu areas of the Republic 440 and in South West Africa about 20 extension officers to assist with the educational process. In addition to extension work on an individual basis use is also made of other methods. Thus there are for example 356 demonstration plots in the Transkei. Furthermore more than 150 agricultural shows were held last year both in the Transkei and in the other areas. It is estimated that in the Transkei about 227 000 people attend about 8 000 lectures and 1 700 demonstrations a year, while in the other Bantu areas more than 13 000 similar meetings were held and about 350 000 people attended. A number of film units were also used in 1967 and in the areas other than the Transkei more than 80 000 people saw specially prepared films and colour slides on aspects of extension work. From time to time short refresher courses are given to refresh and supplement the knowledge of field personnel.

#### PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Many people are inclined to criticize agricultural development on the strength of disappointing production statistics. Several reasons can be advanced why statistics of Bantu areas cannot be accepted without reservation. I mention a few of the most important:

- Fragmented areas (especially before planning) which cause the statistics of cultivated areas to be incomplete.
- Inexperience and insufficient training of enumerators.
- Continuous movement of Bantu farmers from the homelands to the White sector and back.
- Marketing does not take place in standardised containers.
- A large portion of the crops is consumed at home, (often before harvesting).
- Suspicion that information is gathered with ulterior motives.
- During planning land is sometimes withheld from production but nevertheless classified as ploughed land.

It is hoped that the situation will gradually improve. With more complete planning and more and more trained personnel in the field and possible co-operative marketing, statistics should improve. The fact that the rural population has increased, while the cultivated area remains more or less static, does point to the fact that more and more products are being consumed

at home so that the production per morgen probably did increase. National accounts and agriculture's contribution to the gross domestic product are being drawn up for the first time for all the areas and with this information available and continuous efforts to improve and to refine it, more attention can be given to backward areas.

A few points to which attention is already being given can be mentioned:

(a) Extension. - The training of officials and the intensive extension programme have already been dealt with. It is being done to make the Bantu farmer aware of the necessity of the optimal economic use of his farming unit.

(b) Irrigation. - Schemes are being established wherever possible. Occupiers of plots are strictly selected, they must farm according to directions and under supervision and they are dismissed from their plots if they are not successful. In the Transkei a scheme of 1 000 units has just been completed and the selection of farmers is at present taking place. Up to the present more than 24 000 morgen of irrigation land have already been developed and considerably more is being contemplated. The possibilities are also being investigated in South West Africa.

(c) Trust projects. - In the case of industrial crops in particular where large units are desirable, the Department acts as entrepreneur. It develops the project, acquires the experience and knowledge, and meanwhile provides work for a large number of Bantu. It is envisaged to transfer these projects to the Territorial Authorities as soon as they are able to manage them. Crops included here are:-

Citrus: about 144 000 trees (Transkei excluded).

Sisal: 9 100 morgen (Transkei excluded).

Phormium tenax: 2 030 morgen in the Transkei and 2 470 in other areas.

Tea: 250 morgen in the Transkei

Pyrethrum: 35 morgen in the Transkei

Coffee: Both in Transkei and in other areas on an experimental scale.

Forestry: In the Transkei there are at present 233 538 morgen of commercial forest plantations which yielded in 1968 an income of R773 000. In the other areas in the Republic there are approximately 70 000 morgen of commercial forest plantations.

(d) Animal husbandry. - Efforts are continually being made to make the Bantu aware that his livestock is more than a status symbol and that it can serve as a source of income. Considerable success is being achieved. Thus 135 cattle sales were held in the Transkei in 1968 and 12 224 head of cattle were sold to the value of R750 000. In the Republic's other Bantu areas, 509 auction sales were held in 1967 and more

than 45 000 head of cattle and 22 000 small stock were sold to the value of R3 340 000. This is apart from personal sales. Furthermore efforts are being made to improve the breeding material by means of selection and subsidising. In the Transkei 62 subsidised bulls and 111 rams were sold in 1968 and in the other areas in the Republic 623 bulls and 152 rams were sold in 1967. Inferior Bantu breeding animals are being culled as rapidly as possible. In the areas other than the Transkei a total of 6 356 bulls and 2 083 rams were sold to Bantu farmers up to the end of 1968.

(e) Crop farming. - Better practices are continually being encouraged. Fertilizer and hybrid seed are being accepted to an increasing extent. As far as can be determined, in 1967 about 48 500 Bantu farmers in the areas outside the Transkei had applied fertilizer and in the process used more than 8 000 tons, with a further 4 000 tons in the Transkei. At the same time outside the Transkei 2 111 tractors were already in use, an increase of more than 400 on the previous season. Efforts are also being made to encourage new non-traditional crops. In the areas of the Republic there were at the end of 1968 more than 9 500 morgen under cotton, more than 9 000 morgen under sugar-cane and 1 400 morgen of lucern. Vegetable and fruit crops increase year by year.

(f) Finance. - A problem with agricultural production is that there is a tremendous shortage of working capital. At present a comprehensive programme is being studied to provide credit to Bantu farmers. While these details are being worked out a reserve fund is being built up which with the latest grant will amount to over a million rand.

(g) Co-operatives. - In order to unite the large number of small producers and thereby increase their efficiency the establishment of co-operatives is being propagated. The Transkei has already passed legislation in this connection and there are more than 4 800 members of co-operatives. Legislation for the other areas within the Republic is nearing completion and as soon as it is passed the registration of co-operatives will be proceeded with. These bodies can greatly assist with the administration of the credit scheme to which reference has been made.

#### SELF-GOVERNMENT

The process of self-government which is being granted, is an important step towards advancing development. At the outset, more than five years ago, full self-government in certain affairs was granted to the Transkei while the Government of the Republic still manages other affairs for them. After the growing pains of this important step were ironed out, further progress has taken place and partial self-government is being granted as rapidly as practicable to the other ethnic groups. The Departments for which they themselves will gradually have to take over responsibility include Agriculture, as well as Community Affairs, Justice, Finance and Public Works.

It is hoped that with their own greater responsibility they will make a more real contribution and will not remain passive. Recently all the remaining groups in the Republic (the Ciskei-Xhosas, Tswanas, Vendas, North Sothos, Shangaans and South Sothos) with the exception of the Swazi and Zulu groups were given partial self-government. In South West Africa a start was made with the Ovambos while the other groups are still being prepared (Hereroland, Okavangoland, Caprivi, Damaraland, Bushmanland, Namaland and Kaokoveld).

In respect of agriculture they assume responsibility on such aspects as:

- (a) Promotion of better farming practices;
- (b) extension tasks;
- (c) instruction; and
- (d) administrative auxiliary services.

They are continually being guided in these tasks, but at the same time it gives the Department more time to concentrate on broader policy. Suitable officials are made available to them as long as it is necessary to advise and guide them.

To sum up I shall single out four important points which are basic to accelerated development:

1. Give attention to the people themselves. Train them as quickly as possible so that they can think and act for themselves.
2. Something must be done to the industrial and other sectors to try and lighten the excessive burden on agriculture. Other economic growth points will have to be created to assist and supplement agriculture.
3. Give attention to the method of land tenure. If a price is put on the right of use of land and the user can dispose of it, land may be regarded as a production factor instead of "a place of security" and may be used more economically.
4. Some development works and projects may be carried out more quickly or done better elsewhere than in the public sector. Following on this working capital and suitable channels for it is regarded as essential to progress.