

Dr. XUMA SECONDS A VOTE OF THANKS

TO

HIS HONOUR, THE ADMINISTRATOR, GEN. J.J. PIENAAR,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

BRIDGMAN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

Madam Chairman; Your Honour; Your Worship, the Mayor; Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me great pleasure to ^{second} move this vote of thanks to His Honour, the Administrator and His Worship, the Mayor, this afternoon. Their presence here indicates the interest of the respective bodies they represent in the welfare of the whole community. In fact, it indicates that they represent, as they should, all sections of the community.

I followed, with interest, the speech of His Honour while explaining the difficulties, political or otherwise, in the providing of adequate hospital accommodation for the African. Without going into the merits or otherwise of these arrangements in the taxation of the African between the Central Government, and the Provinces, I shall merely mention some of the activities of a hospital such as this and thereby indicate what is being accomplished and what benefit it is to the State and the community.

Here ante-natal work is, or may, be done and thus the life of both the mother and baby is insured at birth; because, not only is the mother advised how to order her life during pregnancy; but the Doctor and the Nurses know what to expect at the time of birth. Being thus forewarned, they ^{are} therefore, forearmed ^{ed}

As a result, mortality, both maternal and infantile has a chance of being reduced. Birth injuries to both mother and child, puerperal infection or infection associated with birth, as well as chronic invalidity and morbidity may be decreased to a minimum. Certain cases of child blindness are ^{thus} prevented. Some of these cases would fill general hospitals and take up much needed hospital beds. Thus the State is saved great expense in extra beds and the longer stay of these patients in a general hospital. Besides, there is a reduction in the amount of blind pensions. In other words, money put in such institutions as these is an insurance and an investment against future preventable expenditure.

May I now suggest how the work of such an institution can be made of permanent value to the State and to the community.

Let us realise that the mother and child must leave the ideal surroundings of the hospital. What do they find? The home so-called is often lacking in all the usual amenities and above all in the life essentials themselves, namely, food and shelter. Insanitary surroundings and limited food supply, if not starvation, dog the life of the family. Partly as a consequence of this, that ^{between} is, a combination of poverty, ignorance, and bad sanitation, between 200 and 800 African infants die largely from preventable diseases before they reach the age of one year.

If they survive this age period, they are beset with a set of new problems. Malnutrition or starvation continues. Their body-resistance is reduced and they are victims to various diseases that make them seek admission into hospitals in greater numbers than would be if their economic standard allowed enough to keep body and soul together. Those of school going age find themselves starved bodily, mentally and morally. They can have neither the guiding influence of their mother and father, as these must go to work.

Over sixty per cent of them cannot find school facilities and accommodation which would give them the necessary discipline, since man of all animals must be taught. Most of these children, therefore, get their education on the streets and back alleys of our slum yards. They graduate into detention homes, reformatories, and gaols which are the logical goals for such students. If education and school discipline is necessary for the European children how much more urgent is it then for the African children who must adjust themselves under new and foreign conditions. Is it any wonder then that there is an increasing wave of crime which both white and black deplore. Must the African be blamed for inherent criminality or must the blame be laid at the door of those who dictate the course of his life or destiny.

Are increased police forces and "Pick-up vans", increased magistrates courts and gaols the proper, intelligent, and fair answer to this question.

Shall we build schools or gaols? Shall we develop contented, law-abiding citizens or criminals?

Boers, Britons and Bantu have got to live together in South Africa notwithstanding. Let us, therefore, one and all endeavour to follow the just and honest way of dealing with one another. We must increase their economic standard as well as their social and moral standards.

In so saying, I thank His Honour, the Administrator and His Worship, the Mayor for their presence and what they have said.

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