

3. COMMISSIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION FOR BLACKS PRIOR TO THE TAKE-OVER OF GOVERNMENT BY THE NATIONAL PARTY IN 1948

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at drawing a picture of the state of the education for Blacks before 1948. It would seem from the survey of literature that 1948 is a watershed in the history of education for Blacks in South Africa because of the rigorous policy changes that were effected by the National Party that took over government in that year. The Nationalists were only replaced in 1994. Nevertheless, one needs to have an idea of what the status of education was before this take-over of government by the National Party in order to understand the criticisms levelled against the Bantu Education policy after 1948. The historico-cultural background that gave rise to the appointment of the Inter-departmental Committee on Native Education (1935-1936) will be analysed. The terms of reference, findings and recommendations of this Committee will also be looked at. Furthermore, its impact on policy-making in the education for Blacks as well as the effects of the implementation of its recommendations need attention.

3.2 Historico-cultural background that led to the appointment of the Inter-departmental Committee on Native Education (1935-6)

3.2.1 The Cape Province

After the first White settlers arrived in the Cape Colony in 1652, the Dutch East India

Company established a school for slaves in 1658 (Loram, 1917:46). The history of commissions of inquiry into the education of Blacks started as early as 1685 when Adriaan van Rheeде set up the Cape Commission which recommended the establishment of a school for slaves in the Cape. According to another school Commission, by 1779 there were 8 public schools with an enrolment of 696 children. It also reported that there existed a special Slave Lodge which had an enrolment of 84 children, and a few other private schools. In 1826 the Acting Governor of the Cape, Major General Bourke, set up another Commission of Inquiry which found that there were extremely few children who were actually attending school and that the two teachers employed had very little work to do. The Commission thus recommended the closure of the Slave Lodge so that it could be converted into a hospital. It also recommended the emancipation of slaves. Subsequently the Slave Lodge was disbanded and the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in 1834 (Behr & Macmillan, 1971:375). When the slaves were emancipated in 1834 there was a need for more schools to be built. The result was the establishment of a Department of Education in 1939 which took over some control from the mission schools in the Cape. In 1841 the State started granting aid to schools for Africans and this resulted in a significant increase in the number of schools.

Another Commission was set up in 1863 under Watermeyer with the specific purpose to: "... inquire into the present state of the established schools in the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and into the conditions on which grants of money are made from the colonial treasury in aid of the salaries of teachers of schools not on the establishment; and to consider and report what measures, if any, might be desirable to adopt for the extention of sound elementary instruction to all classes of the people" (Cape of Good

Hope, Report of a Commission appointed in accordance with the addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly to inquire into and report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony, 1863:iii (G.24/1863)).

The Commission recommended that no new schools should be built. It advocated the abolition of the system of granting aid that had been introduced in 1841. It recommended that all schools should be inspected by the Inspector-General or his deputy. Furthermore, Government aid should also be given to mission schools. The Inspector-General should take over the duty of handling the allocation of funds to schools (Cape of Good Hope, Report of Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony, 1863:iii (G.24/1863)).

Following on the recommendations of this Commission, the Cape of Good Hope Education Act (13/1865) was passed. According to it, schools in the Colony were to be classified as follows: ORDER A - Class I - schools of the first class in the Chief Towns of the respective Divisions of the Colony; Class II - schools of the second class in towns and villages of the colony; Class III - schools of the third class at eligible stations among the Agricultural Population; ORDER B - mission schools; ORDER C - Border Department - Aborigines; ORDER D - District Boarding Schools among the Agricultural Population. Order C schools for the Aborigines were the only racially segregated schools in the colony (Education Act (13/1865) of the Cape of Good Hope). Loram (1917:50) reported that by 1873 there were 346 schools for Aborigines/Natives compared to 169 schools for Whites in the colony.

Proclamation 56/1874 was introduced to make amendments to the definition of ORDER

A Schools. It was stated in this amendment that further grants would be given to schools if deemed necessary by the Superintendent-General of Education. It encouraged the establishment of preparatory schools by also recommending that they should be given grants. Another amendment passed in June 1877 made provision for the subsidisation of Native Trade teachers and the purchase of tools, fittings and materials to encourage Industrial Schools among the Natives (Cape of Good Hope Additional Related Legislation and all Regulations that have appeared in reference to education since the passing of Act 13/1865, 1877).

Proclamation 113/1882 was a further amendment of Education Act 13/1865. It provided for the payment of the salaries of Principals and their deputies in schools. A syllabus was drawn in the Act for the different Classes of schools. The Cape Government passed the Education Act 4/1883 that made provision for school health services in the Colony.

Dramatic changes in the economy of the colony took place with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867. The Superintendent-General of Education in the Cape in 1889 said: "The first duty of the Government has been assumed to be to recognise the position of the European Colonists as holding the paramount influence, social and political; and to see that the sons and daughters of the colonists, and those who come hither to throw in their lot with them, should have at least such an education as their peers in Europe enjoy, with such local modifications as will fit them to maintain their unquestioned supremacy in the land" (Hirson, 1979:17).

Therefore, there was now a growing need to give Whites better education so that they

could take up leadership roles in the society. This did not prepare them for equality with the Natives. This was proved by the passing of Proclamation 388/1893 which provided for the revision of the scale of grants for certain categories of schools; for example, private farm schools and White Mission schools. Furthermore, according to this Proclamation, if there was sufficient proof that the White community of a certain locality was unable to maintain a public school or pay the usual school fees, then the Superintendent-General would give those schools extra aid.

"The grants at present available for third-class public schools will be available for any white Mission school in towns where there exists a public school of a class higher than the third..." (Schedule of the Cape of Good Hope, Proclamation (388/1893:24)). This scheme of preferential subsidisation of schools for Whites gradually encouraged the growth and development of racially segregated schools.

In 1891 the Cape of Good Hope Commission was appointed to enquire into and report upon certain matters connected with the educational system of the Colony (G.9/1891). It was appointed under the chairmanship Sir J.D.B. Knight and it was instructed to report on:

- "1. How the irregularity of attendance of children, especially in the Town schools, can be prevented and alleviated;
2. What additional facilities can be provided to meet the wants of children of persons employed on the lines of Railway;
3. What steps should taken to give the Boards of Management perpetual succession, and to provide for the tenure of Public school Property;
4. What further facilities can be afforded for giving instruction in both English

and Dutch languages, and in how far that object can be attained through the medium of the elementary and other examinations.

5. What contributions should be expected from local bodies, such as Divisional Councils and Municipalities, in support of schools, and for the erection of buildings;
6. What additional facilities can be provided to meet the wants of the agricultural population;
7. How to secure further use being made of the opportunities afforded for Education" (Cape of Good Hope Commission, 1891:v).

Because of, among other reasons, the recommendations of the above Commission of 1891, which stated that half of the school time in schools for Natives should be devoted to manual training and that the Natives should pay tax as a contribution toward their education, the Glen Grey Act of 1894 was passed. This Act made provision for the establishment of local self government and local taxation that would help in meeting the educational needs of the Natives in the Colony.

The Cape School Board Act (35/1905:4 927) was passed in order "To provide for the establishment of school Boards and for the better Management of Education throughout the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope".

The Act also provided for the proclamation by the Governor of school districts which would be under the jurisdiction of a School Board. It furthermore laid down instructions that would guide the composition, election and duties of these School Boards. Procedures to be followed in the appointment and dismissal of teachers were also

included in the Act. Only Blacks were allowed to apply to the School Boards for the establishment of schools in their areas. School attendance was made compulsory for White children only, while the school board had the power to establish compulsory attendance in its area for children of other races (The Cape School Board Act (35/1905)).

3.2.2. Natal

Loram (1917:54) reports that interest in the education of Africans in the province of Natal began with the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry in 1852 that was to look into the state of the education of Natives in Natal. This Commission recommended that some measure of education for Natives should be introduced in Natal. It advised the state that industrial schools should be built in each village and that there should be three years of compulsory education for Natives who were 7-12 years old. The medium of instruction recommended for Natives were Dutch and English. The Commission encouraged the building of infant schools as well as the teaching of religious education in schools.

Ordinance (2/1856) was passed by the Legislative Council in order to promote the education of coloured youth in the District of Natal. This piece of legislation led to the establishment of schools for Natives and their subsidisation by the Province. These schools were to be controlled by missionaries. They were to be inspected and supervised by a government body. The curriculum in these schools included religious education; industrial training and instruction in the English language (Ordinance (2/1856)). The Select Committee on Education of 1858 recommended a

comprehensive system of English education and an inspection by state officials of these schools for Natives. Unfortunately, their recommendations were only implemented in 1864.

In 1877, the Council for Education was established when Law 15/1877 was passed. The aim was "to make better provision for Primary or Elementary Education in the Colony of Natal." It charged the Lieutenant-Governor with the duty of appointing inspectors of schools. It explained the duties of such people once appointed. As a result of the passing of this Law; a number of primary schools were established. The Council for Education was to provide school accommodation and material requisites. Aid could be granted to schools by the council based on the satisfaction of certain conditions. The Act also provided for the training of teachers and the payment of their salaries. As regards to religious education, it was stated in the Act that: "The Bible shall be read, and the principles of religion and morality therein inculcated shall be explained to the children in language adapted to their capacities; provided always that no religious catechism or formulary distinctive of any particular religious denomination be taught, and that no attempt be made to attach the children to any particular religious denomination" (Law 15/1877).

Law (16/1877) was also passed but it concerned itself with Higher Education only. A number of schools of higher education were to be established in Natal. The curriculum in such schools would include: English subjects, Latin, French, Mathematics, Natural and Physical Science. Again the Council for Education was given the duty of providing school accommodation and other requisites as well as granting aid to schools. It was only in 1880 with the passing of Law (4/1880) that primary education was defined

properly.

These laws attempted to address the problem of Native education in the province and they brought about changes to the syllabi taught in such schools as well as in the provision for education.

The Council for Education that was appointed would hopefully solve the crisis of accommodation and other requisites.

The passing of Law (1/1884) aimed at promoting elementary education among the Native children. The Council for Education was expected to not only establish and but also maintain such schools for the Natives. The curriculum was to include instruction in the principles of morality, instruction in reading and writing Zulu and English, Arithmetic, industrial training, sewing and needlework for girls. Mission schools were to be aided by the Council and an amount of 5 000 pounds British sterling was budgeted each year for the promotion of the education for Natives. The Native Trust was requested to make land and sites available on Location Land for the establishment of schools for Natives. The Governor was expected to appoint an Inspector for the education for Natives. The duties of such an official were defined in the Act. His salary and terms of appointment were defined. The age limit for school attendance was set at ages between 5 and 16 (Law 1/1884).

The Council for Education was abolished in 1894 and it was made a sub-department of the education for Africans controlled by the Governor of Natal with the passing of Law 5/1894. The Act also promulgated that the land and property of the Council should

be taken over by the Minister of Education. The Council of Education's debts and claims were also transferred to the Minister. Loram (1917:61) suggested that this change was of great help as schools no longer received annual grants as before, but it introduced the system of per capita grants. This adjusted many of the inequalities that existed in the financing of the education system of the province of Natal.

3.2.3 Transvaal

The first mission school in the Transvaal was established in 1842. There was no official recognition of the missionary schools and as a result they received no financial aid from the State. The official reports on the state of the education for Natives start after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) when the British annexed the two Boer Republics. Only then was education given attention by the government. The education for Natives was therefore also given the necessary attention. There was a scheme for Natives that was established in 1903 which formed the foundation for the granting of financial aid and of state control of schools. Missionary schools were given grants-in-aid. A course for the training of Native teachers was also drawn up (Rose & Tunmer, 1975:224).

After the Treaty of Vereeniging (1902) had brought an end to the hostilities between the English- and Afrikaans-speaking people, there was a Customs Conference held in Bloemfontein in 1903. It was there that plans for a Union of the four provinces were debated. According to Davenport (1991:221) it was only in May 1908 that agreement was reached on the formation of the Union South Africa. Before then the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903 - 1905 was appointed. It was chaired by Sir Godfrey Langden.

The Commission found that the education for Natives was poorly conducted and unsuitable buildings were being used. It was found to be very rudimentary and most of the teachers were unqualified. Many of the witnesses interviewed by the Commission regarded the education for Natives as of secondary importance. They felt that it should not be made compulsory. Missionaries should be allowed to take the lead in the education of the Natives. Lastly, they recommended that a Native College should be established soon (South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903-1905)

According to the clauses of the Transvaal Education Act (25/1907) the principle of racial segregation in schools was supported. In the Act the government pledged to build and maintain racially segregated schools for the Natives. They ruled that Natives should not be allowed access to schools for White children.

3.2.4 The Orange Free State

As early as 1835 there was some missionary work that had already started in the Orange Free State. It was only in 1878 that the Government started giving financial aid to schools that were conducted by the Dutch Reformed Churches. The Education Ordinance (27/1903) was passed and it made provision for industrial and other types of schools to be established in the Colony (Education Ordinance (27/1903)). It was further amended through the passing of the Public Education Ordinance (29/1905). This Act made provision for the division of schools into districts, the election and nomination of school committees, the code of conduct for teachers and school attendance. It stated inter alia that: "Education at all Government Schools with the exception of High schools, shall be free and open to all children of full European parentage" (Ordinance

29/1905:179).

Therefore, in the Orange Free State not only was education racially segregated, but the education for Whites was free.

3.2.5 Inter-Provincial Effort

In 1909 the South Africa Act that constituted the Union was passed. It placed all primary and secondary education under the Provinces that formed the Union. There was to be no distinction in the education system according to race. Tertiary education was to be controlled by the Union Government that had just been formed. The Act did not define tertiary education clearly. A Ministry of Native Affairs was set up to take over control of all matters relating to Natives with the exception of Education (The South Africa Act (1/1910)).

The South African College Act (4/1911) was passed to replace the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope Acts (15/1878) and (10/1904). This laid down rules for the addition or election of members of the South African College Council (South Africa College Act (4/1911)).

It is important to note that although the Union Government inherited a system of education from some provinces that was already racially segregated, nevertheless efforts were made to re-integrate the education system.

In 1916 The Provincial Administration Commission under Jagger was appointed (U.G.

15/1916) and given the task of recommending a viable system of control in education. The Commission was of the opinion that education should not be under the Provinces but should be transferred to the Union Government (Union of South Africa Report of the Provincial Administration Commission 1916-1917). This view was supported by the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1922 under the leadership of Dr. Jesse Jones. The latter Commission also criticised the unequal development of the education for Natives in the Provinces. This criticism highlighted the need for a uniform policy on the education for Natives.

After the Union of South Africa was formed there was a steady increase in the enrolment figures of children in schools for Natives. Unfortunately, the schools lacked the holding power to keep the children at school for longer periods of time. At the same time, there was no corresponding increase in the state financial support system for the schools to be able to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers. This led to the deterioration of the conditions prevailing in schools for Natives. The Economic Depression in Europe in the 1930s also contributed to a decline in the per capita expenditure on the education for Natives and in the donations made by overseas countries/bodies.

Conditions in these schools for Natives deteriorated to the extent that the Union Government appointed an Inter-Departmental Committee on the education for Natives 1935 - 1936 (U.G. 29/1936) under the chairmanship of Mr. W. T. Welsh to investigate the problem. At that time Welsh was the Chief Inspector of the education for Natives in the Cape Education Department.

3.3 **The Inter-Departmental Committee on the education for Natives (1935-1936) (U.G. 29/1936)**

3.3.1 **Introduction**

The Government appointed this Commission under the chairmanship of W.T. Welsh to look into the question of the education of Natives and make recommendations.

3.3.2 **Membership**

The Commission consisted of:

W.T. Welsh - Chairman - Chief Inspector of the education for Natives in the Cape Education Department.

G.H. Franz - Chief Inspector of the education for Natives in the Transvaal.

H.F. Kuschke - Chief Inspector of the education for Natives in the Orange Free State.

D.M. Malan - Chief Inspector of the education for Natives in Natal.

E.G. Malherbe - Director of the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research.

A striking feature of the membership of the Commission is that no Africans were appointed. Therefore, the number of variables that could affect the objectivity of the

said Commission became limitless, and Van der Walt's (1991:24-26) comment about people from different classes developing different conceptions of social reality as well as different conceptions of the desirable, becomes particularly relevant. He argues that the Commissioners' aspirations, hopes and fears would also be different.

3.3.3 Terms of reference

The Inter-Departmental Committee was instructed by the Government of the Union:

"(i). to examine and report upon the systems on the education for Natives in the Provinces

(ii). to consider and make recommendations as to:

(a). whether in view of the extent to which the Union Government has assumed financial responsibility for the education for Natives, it should take over the administration from the Provinces, and if so, in what way the education for Natives should be administered;

(b). what should be the relationship between the state and missionary bodies in the matter of the education for Natives.

(iii). to consider and make recommendations on the following educational matters:

(a). the aims of the education for Natives

(b) the aims having been defined, the methods and scope of the education for Natives

(c) the part to be played by the Vernacular and by the two official languages in the education for Natives" (Inter-Departmental Committee

on the education for Natives, U.G. 29/1936:5).

Despite the mentioned discrepancy in its membership, the Welsh Commission's terms of reference are of sound educational value because they demonstrate the Government's concern about the state of the education for Natives in the country. The instruction according to the terms of reference that the Commission should: "... examine and report upon the systems of the education for Natives in the Provinces" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:5) called for a factual analysis of conditions prevailing in schools for Blacks. It did not require the investigator to formulate personal opinions, but only to report on the existing state of affairs. This made the Commission historically relevant since it had to supply the Government with the critical information needed to make objective decisions.

This Commission of Inquiry was expected not only to reveal the truth about the issues under study, but also to "consider and make recommendations" as to whatever was at stake then (Report: U.G. 29/1936: 5). This was why the constitution of its membership, the context and the method of investigation became important, because in order to recommend, the members had ultimately to make up 'their' minds on what 'they' considered to be desirable. Perhaps this is where Seloane's (1992:3) comment is most relevant: by virtue of their different backgrounds, the commissioners saw and understood the world differently. Worse still, as 'onlookers' in the system of education for Natives, their perception of the desirable would obviously differ from that of the 'participants'- the Natives themselves. This is what made the membership of the commission of inquiry important.

The Welsh Commission was also instructed to assess: "whether in view of the extent to which the Union Government has assumed financial responsibility for the education for Natives, it should take over the administration from the Provinces, and if so in what way the education for Natives should be administered" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:5).

This instruction was of historical importance, in that there was a need then for a uniform policy on the education for Natives. But it was also of pedagogic value because there was a dire need to improve the situation in schools for Natives. The commissioners were asked to look at conditions under which 'they' thought the education for Natives would thrive. Though their recommendations on this matter would be based on assumptions, their findings, if objective, would be used as a guide to help the Government design its policy on the education for Natives. At the same time such a clause had already assumed that the education for Natives was entirely divorced from the education of other groups in the country.

As a result of this segregationist approach, it was also asked to consider:

- "(a) the aims of the education for Natives
- (b) the aims having been defined, the methods and scope of the education for Natives" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:5).

This means that the terms of reference assume that Native education should have different aims, and methods and a different scope from national education. This view is a reflection of the politics of the time, when the Native question was a bone of contention. Apart from political reasons, there was no justification for educationally

separating societies that were increasingly economically integrated (Molteno, 1988:63).

The Welsh Commission was also asked to make recommendations on "the part to be played by the Vernacular and by the two official languages in the education for Natives" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:5).

This again was of educational importance since it directly affected the design of an education system. While it is generally acknowledged that a child should ideally be taught in his or her mother-tongue for maximum benefit, it becomes difficult to apply this principle if that language is not sufficiently developed to enable its users/speakers to continue learning in that language throughout their scholastic careers. A second language has to be introduced so that it can replace the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction. But the greatest question now becomes at what stage/age should the second language be introduced to enable the child to make the switch with relative ease? This was the decision that the Commission had to make on behalf of the Natives. This linked directly with the reasons put forward as to why it was necessary for a commission of inquiry to be representative of the people who would be directly affected by its recommendations. In this case decisions should not have been made on behalf of the Natives, but by the Natives themselves.

In Africa the medium of instruction has always been a problem, since most states were colonies of European powers. These colonial powers had left their mark in the education system of the colonised countries. Lowe, Grant and Williams (1971:199) discuss this problem and contend that: "Perhaps the greatest problem in most ... African countries is that not only the education system and the media of instruction, but

the very states themselves, were the creation of the European colonial powers ... It is not surprising, therefore that few states can find a viable medium that is both national and African."

They conclude therefore that most African countries used either French or English as media of instruction in schools. They further state that: "Some African vernaculars are employed to varying degrees at the primary stage, but English and French are introduced as subjects early in the course, frequently in the first year, and are employed as instructional media as soon as possible. In many cases even primary education is conducted in the ex-colonial language throughout, as are secondary and higher education everywhere" (Lowe, Grant & Williams, 1971:200).

Various reasons have been forwarded to explain why African countries prefer international languages as media of instruction. Most of their languages were not developed enough to be viable media of instruction beyond primary school. Secondly, most African countries were also divided into tribes so that there is no one language that can be termed a national medium. The use of an internationally current language has other advantages. It discourages the growth of tribalism and makes possible the use of international text-books and teachers. Lowe, Grant and Williams (1971:204-205) further argue: "... that in the Republic of South Africa most emphasis is placed on vernacular education - Zulu, Sotho or Xhosa rather than English; 'Bantu education' in medium as well as content. This can be seen as the educational counterpart of the Bantustan policy, the logical outcome of apartheid, whereby Xhosas can have citizenship of a sort in the Transkei and nowhere else. Bantu education fobs the Africans off with a substitute, which is recognised as such, and disliked, by those who

have to undergo it. But even if it were admirable in quality, it would still tend to reinforce tribalism and divide Africans from each other. This, of course, is the South African regime's intention, a point which is unlikely to be lost on the independent African states."

Though teaching in a second language is problematic, the issue of the medium of instruction had been highly politicised. Eiselen (1949-1951) suggests that children in schools for Natives should be taught in the vernacular in the first eight years at school. The two official languages should be introduced as subjects after four years of schooling. Recently, the HSRC/De Lange Commission (1981:par. 4.11.2) criticised the use of three languages in schools for Natives and supported the idea of introducing the second language as soon as possible to enable the child to gain proficiency in the use of that foreign language very early in its scholastic career.

3.3.4 Findings

The Inter-Departmental Committee on the education for Natives (1935-1936) found that each Province had a Provincial Education Department. The head of that department was assisted by the Chief Inspector of the education for Natives. This Department had a separate sub-department that was in charge of the education for Natives. The Missionary bodies were represented in a special Advisory Board for the education for Natives (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 170-173).

The Commission found that the system of education consisted of an eight-year primary school course which included two sub-standards and six standards. Secondary schools

were used to prepare the children for an externally controlled Junior Certificate Examination. There were a few other schools that offered a Senior Certificate Course. The Committee found that there were 27 teacher training institutions for Natives in the four Provinces. These institutions either offered a Lower Primary Teacher's Course which would take three years for a student who passed std. six or a two-year Higher Primary Teacher's Course for those with a standard eight certificate. In the Cape Province and Natal training was also offered to boys who had passed standard six and wanted to go for industrial or trade training. With the exception of the Orange Free State, the Provinces also offered industrial and other forms of training to girls after standard six. In the Cape Province, there was also an Inter-State Native College (Fort Hare) that had produced over 50 graduates by 1936 since its establishment in 1916 (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 182-188).

Regarding the education for Natives Fund that was established in 1925, the Welsh Committee found that the annual state grant of 340 000 pounds British sterling when added together with 20% of the proceeds of the Native General Tax, was not enough to sustain the education for Natives. As a result of this insufficiency of funds, the schools were grossly under-staffed and over-crowded. In other schools unqualified teachers were employed. The ratio of the per capita expenditure on Whites compared to Blacks was 40:1 at that time (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 217-251).

3.3.5 Recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee (1935-36)

One of the main and crucial recommendations of the Inter-departmental Committee was the centralisation of the education for Natives. The Committee agreed: "From the

evidence before it the Committee is convinced, therefore, that some reform of administration, with which not only the Provincial Councils but also the Native Affairs Department are concerned, is urgently needed. To leave the present system as it is and to think that the defects will vanish is unfair to the Native people, missionaries and Government officials and to the education for Natives. The Committee accordingly recommends that the education for Natives be transferred from the control of the Provincial Councils to that of the Union Government" (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 287).

The Committee advocated the establishment of a National Board which was to control the finances which should come from the Union Government. Because the money allocated for the education of the Natives was found to be insufficient, the Committee suggested subsidisation by means of a per capita expenditure system rather than through an inflexible annual grant system. They proposed that at central Government level a department for the education for Natives should be established. This would form part of the Union Department of Education. At Provincial level, they recommended the appointment of a Superintendent of the education for Natives who would consult with the Provincial Advisory Board (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par.291-295).

The Committee believed that the State should give as much support to mission schools as it could. They advocated free primary school education for all Native children. The State also subsidised school buildings, salaries and the purchase of books, furniture and equipment. Compulsory education should be introduced at the discretion of the Minister. The Provincial Superintendent of the education for Natives, together with his Advisory Body, should be given the power to decide on which official language was to be used in schools. The Committee decided that the medium of instruction could be

the mother-tongue for the first four years at school. There were areas however, where it was just not possible to clearly divide the pupils into language groups. In such areas the official language decided upon could be introduced as soon as possible (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 412-450).

The Committee summarised the aim of education for Natives as follows: "The effective organisation of the Native's experiences so that his tendencies and powers may develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and the community in which he lives, by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:Par. 467).

They also proposed that the curriculum in schools for Natives should consist of: religion, health and sanitation, literacy in the vernacular, arithmetic, music, geography, history and other skills such as manual work, industrial training and agricultural science (Report: U.G. 29/1936: Par. 468-479).

It would seem from the recommendations that the Commissioners felt that the education for Natives had been grossly neglected and underfunded; they therefore put forward suggestions that would lead to its development. The most important recommendations made were that education for Natives should not only be centralised, but also be free and compulsory.

3.3.6 Policy adopted by the Government

In the same year that the Inter-Departmental Committee tabled its findings (i.e. 1936)

the then Prime Minister of the Union government, General J.B.M. Hertzog, passed three pieces of legislation that were strongly opposed by the Natives. These led to an escalation of protest action against the government.

These laws were the Representation of Natives Act (12/1936) which allowed the Natives to choose a White representative in Parliament. The Development Trust and Land Act (18/1936) set aside an additional 7 250 000 morgen which would be ceded to the 'homelands'. The Natives Laws Amendment (46/1937) prohibited Blacks from buying land in White-designated areas of the country, unless they were permitted by the Government to do so. As a result, stricter influx control measures were applied (Horrell, 1971:10-11). The passing of these Bills led to the convening of the All-African National Convention by Prof. D.D.T. Jabavu in Bloemfontein in 1935. This was done at the time when these laws were still bills awaiting sanction by parliament.

The two most crucial recommendations of the Union of South Africa Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the education for Natives were the change from an annual grant system of finance to a per capita expenditure system and the centralisation of the education system. These recommendations were not accepted by the Government. Instead the percentage of Native taxes paid into the Native Development Fund was increased to two-fifths in 1936, three-fifths in 1937, two-thirds in 1940, five-sixths in 1942 and finally the whole amount in 1943 (Malherbe, 1977:545).

Due to the outbreak of the Second World War (1939-45) not all the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee were implemented. Nevertheless, it was as late as 1945 when the education for Natives Finance Act (29/1945) was passed by the

Union Government (Rose & Tunmer 1975:242). It pledged to finance the education for Natives from the Consolidated Revenue and no longer from African taxation. The Provinces would retain their administrative role in education. This meant that only in so far as financial arrangements for the education of Natives were concerned, was the Inter-departmental Committee instrumental in directing policy.

3.3.7 Effects

The Inter-Departmental Committee could not be credited as one of those Commissions that were able to steer Government policy. Although the Union Government did make attempts to implement some of the recommendations of the Committee, objections from missionaries, teachers, politicians, Provincial Administrators and the Blacks in general made it decide to shelve the report indefinitely.

It is doubtful that the Union Government would, despite the outbreak of the Second World War, have transferred the education for Natives to the central government. The reason for this assertion is that several commissions that were appointed before the Inter-Departmental Committee had long recommended centralisation of the education for Natives. The University Commission (1914), the Provincial Administration Commission (1915), the Native Affairs Commission (1921), the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1922) had all recommended Union take-over, but this had never been implemented.

The educational policy of the government then was to ensure that the White races in the country should be prepared for a superior role in the country. Therefore, the

education of Blacks could not be placed on equal footing with the education of Whites. This view was shared by the Inter-Departmental Committee because it stated in its report that the fact that Blacks and Whites were economically inter-dependent did not give them equality of opportunity. They concluded that: "To frame pious aims for the education for Natives such as 'fullness of life for each and all' is easy, but it is rather futile if not actually misleading. Such an aim can be striven after by education in European society which is homogeneous and democratic" (Report: U.G. 29/1936:88).

Racial segregation and inequality in educational opportunities caused bitterness within the Black communities. They lacked faith in the educational system since it did not improve their life-chances either as individuals or collectively, as a community (Molteno, 1988:76). These feelings of despondency led to a number of incidents of unrest in various institutions. There were riots, strikes and boycotts in many schools. Hirson (1979:30-31) reported that the problem was so serious that the government appointed commissions of inquiry into the grievances and unrest in Black schools in 1940 and 1946. The findings of these Commissions were never published. However, the findings of the Lovedale Commission of Inquiry (1946) were published. Though this Commission concerned itself with one institution, nevertheless the findings were applicable to the rest of the country. The Commission attributed the strikes to:

- "(i) General state of unrest throughout the world;
- (ii) race consciousness, evident not only in South Africa, but in other parts of the World - in India, Java, the Middle East, African colonies and elsewhere;
- (iii) The tendency on the part of the students to assert their freedom of action, and the urge to do things for themselves;

- (iv) The Colour Bar and Economic Disabilities of the African people;
- (v) Resentment of authority and weakening of discipline during the war period and the breakdown of tribal and parental control;
- (vi) Political influences, both within and outside the Institution, political propaganda, the distribution of inflammatory literature and undesirable contacts during the vacations" (Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Lovedale Missionary Institution Disturbance (1946:13)).

The Commission further acknowledged the development of a highly politicised Black middle class. The parents and teachers opposed the structure and content of the education for Natives. They were also against the Inter-Departmental Committee's recommendation on the medium of instruction. They wanted their children to be taught in English and/or Afrikaans from the early stages, while the mother-tongue was to be learned only as a subject. There was also a call for a free and compulsory education system for Natives.

In the many conferences held by Black parents and teachers they finally decided to remove their children from State schools and they established 'shanty' secondary schools in Orlando, Western Native Township, Brakpan, Atteridgeville and Alexandra. "The various forms of resistance which had arisen in and around the schools by the time the National Party came into power contained the seeds of what were for the dominant classes ominous potential developments from below" (Molteno, 1988:88).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter gave a brief historical background of the circumstances that led to the appointment of the Inter-Departmental Committee in 1935. It analysed the membership, terms of reference, findings, recommendations and effects of the Commission's recommendations on the society in general. The Commission has not been acclaimed as one that has had great influence on the policy of the government regarding the education for Natives, though it can be credited with contributing towards the education for Natives by recommending a better system for financing it. It cannot be credited as one of those commissions that was able to steer Government policy on the education for Blacks. Nevertheless, it has been discussed in order to contrast its recommendations to those of the subsequent commissions of inquiry that were appointed after the National Party take-over of Government in 1948. In that respect, it can be categorised as one of the pre-apartheid commissions of inquiry into the education for Blacks in South Africa.