

A DICTIONARY FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING SOUTH AFRICANS

A correspondent signing himself "Bewildered Immigrant" recently wrote to the "Rand Daily Mail" commenting upon his experiences since his arrival in this country. A few days later, the following letter appeared in that paper:

"AS a fellow-immigrant, I feel I should do something to make your correspondent "Bewildered Immigrant" a little less bewildered. His bewilderment doubtless arises from the fact that words often mean something rather different in South Africa from the meanings they have in other lands. So here is a brief primer for English-speaking immigrants who might be tempted to feel, during their first few months in this King (sorry, **President**) of all countries, that they have landed in a cross between a Gilbert and Sullivan opera and the Last Days of Pompeii. Here goes:

PATRIOT: Anyone who says "We thank the Minister" three times daily before meals.

FACT: An unsubstantiated guess which Radio South Africa wants you to believe. The more impressively they say it, the more they want you to believe it.

(Note: Never use the word yourself. It's S.A.B.C. copyright.)

LIBERAL: A Communist belonging to the Liberal Party.

COMMUNIST: A Liberal belonging to the Communist Party.

PROGRESSIVE: A sinister new political party in which one M.P. does the work of the entire Opposition. (Never say that you think the Government is very progressive. You will be deported under house arrest.)

BANTUSTAN: A Hindustani word meaning "Shangri-La."

SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT: The official English translation of "apartheid."

DEMOCRACY: A South African word meaning: "I deserve a vote but you don't."

SABOTAGE: Among other things, a local sport in which somebody's grandmother plays Aunt Sally on any set of steps which are still unbanned.

WHITE CIVILIZATION: Everything good, including everything invented by non-Whites.

SANCTIONS: Somebody applying apartheid against South Africa, the cads.

CITIZEN: A White South African.

SUBJECT: A non-White South African.

ENEMY: The Opposition Press when it acts like the Opposition Press.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: Something practised by other countries—e.g., America, England and Sweden.

BITS: A metal gadget on a horse for measuring blood height.

STABLE GOVERNMENT: A method of ensuring that there are plenty of horses available to fit bits to.

COMMONWEALTH: Something South Africans are not sure they're not glad they're still not in (also see "sugar".)

PIG-IRON: A revolutionary South African chemical compound which changes a person's skin-colour overnight.

SUGAR: Never mention "sugar" and "Commonwealth" in the same breath. You will receive a dirty look.

IMMORALITY: Being colour-blind while being immoral.

RACE SUICIDE: Playing ping-pong with the garden-boy.

THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE: Up to mid-day tomorrow.

ALLES SAL REG KOM: Something which will happen after the foreseeable future. (Note: If some oaf claims that "tomorrow never comes," then you are entitled to give him a dirty look.)

KWASHIORKOR: Malnutrition which is is somebody else's fault.

TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE: Something which is proclaimed every now and then in the Government Gazette.

SPECIAL BRANCH: A wakey-wakey service thoughtfully provided by a benevolent government for early-rising Liberals.

"RAND DAILY MAIL": A vociferous thorn-in-the-side allegedly published by the Ghanaian Government. Sometimes known as RDM, and claimed by its readers to provide an antidote to interference on F.M.

There you are, "Bewildered Immigrant." Just commit this brief glossary to memory, and you'll soon find that this is really a delightful country to live in. You'll be able to understand a political speech if you stick at it.

L. J. CLARKE"