

Meer considers that not enough sub-economic housing is provided. She believes that about 80% of Indians in Natal earn less than R54 a month, whereas less than half the houses built are sub-economic. Mrs. Ramasar in a paper on "Emerging social problems among the Indian People" in 1967 pointed out the growing number of indigent Indians, stating that in 1953 "1,800 families in Durban depended on grants and social pensions alone", but in 1966 up to 11,000 families received State assistance.

For this group life is a struggle and social workers find their problems increasing, due to such factors as desertion and no support by husbands and fathers, unemployment, and sickness. Even the handing of grants to the women can cause problems as it gives them independence for the first time. Religion is losing its hold, there is a breakdown in the system of joint families, and the lack of land ownership has deprived them of a status symbol as well as a means of subsistence.

The wealthy group have contributed greatly to the economic development of the area, but have been sadly rewarded. The great demand for land has led to fantastic prices, and at the same time the homes which they have had to vacate were often valued years before they were moved out, and they were sometimes paid as little as one-third of the real value. Further the "Grey Street complex" future plan is undisclosed, and this means there is no development or investment in this part. Another worry for property owners here is that it is expected that Indians who now shop in Grey Street will eventually shop in the Townships.

The wealthy Indians have a highly developed sense of service to others and charities exist for the benefit of Africans as well as Indians. Examples are the Shifa Hospital which was built with money donated by Indians and is run by a group of Indian doctors, the Islamic Institute which is a school for 1,000 primary and secondary school children, built by the Institute and sharing running costs with the Government, and the Womens' Cultural Group which raises money for charities at Kwa Mashu, amongst others.

They are a very cultured and intelligent group, and it is they who suffer most from the restrictive legislation and inequalities, forcing some of them to leave the country. One of them told me recently that she only realised how stunted was her personality once she lived in the United States. These are the people

to whom we should be giving responsibility, and whose advice we should be seeking.

On the question of unemployment, Mr. G. Maasdorp and Mr. L. McCrystal in a paper in 1967 found that the rate of growth of the economy was being restricted mainly by the colour bar, and very little by job reservation. Perhaps even the colour bar is breaking down now, as seen in the growing number of Indians, including women, employed in shops. We only hope that the Government will not pass any legislation to prevent this growth.

On the subject of housing, having looked at some of the townships recently, we question the wisdom of providing housing for thousands of people without providing corresponding amenities. We think the time has come for a meeting of township planners, social workers, Ministers and others to discuss the whole problem, and if necessary to change policy and plans. At present, we appear to be creating vast, anonymous masses of discontented people instead of stable, happy communities, and our problems are only likely to increase.

CABBAGES

I cannot stand these long flat days,
My mind was stuffed too full in youth —
It hunts incessantly for news
And likes to weigh falsehood and truth.

Must oldsters thus be mummified
Like cabbages in kindly ground
Who are no good to anyone
But cabbagers who wealth have found?

Surely God does not want our lives
In muffled stupidity to float,
When half the world is needing help
And agony's a common note.

I know not what I'm going to do,
How break the cage in which I'm bound;
But cabbage culture wins my wrath,
I'll hunt a cure until it's found.

Jessie Hertslet (89).

Jessie Hertslet died in January 1970 just after this poem had been received. A tribute to her was published in the August, 1969 issue of *Sash*.