

DR. JOHNSON ON SOUTH AFRICA

On the Republic in general

- (1) "It is a most unnatural state, for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority.
- (2) "Where a great proportion of the people are suffered to languish in hopeless misery, that country must be wretchedly governed: a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilisation."

On Nationalist speakers about Afrikaans-haters

"Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am heartily sick of both."

On Banning

"Where secrecy or mystery begins, vice and roguery are not far off."

On election speeches

"When a butcher tells you that his heart bleeds for his country, he has in fact no uneasy feeling."

On certain speakers

"A wicked fellow is the most pious when he takes to it. He'll beat you all at piety."

On the Budget

"You may have a reason why two and two should make five; but they will still make but four."

On Commissioners to the Bantu

"There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity than condescension, when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for the company."

On stopping fishing on Sundays

"While half the Christian world is permitted to dance and sing and celebrate Sunday as a day of festivity, how comes your puritanical spirit so offended with frivolous and empty deviations from exactness?"

Any Minister at election time

"Sir, patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

Two reflections after reading Hansard

(1) Boswell: "Suppose we believe one half of what he tells."

Johnson: "Ay, but we don't know *which* half to believe."

(2) "In the tumult of conversation, malice is apt to grow sprightly."

On "Current Affairs" on the S.A.B.C.

"They excite in my mind no ideas and hinder me from contemplating my own."