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EDITORIALS

1. Ka-Ngwane and Ingwavuma.

We should not have been surprised by the manner in which the Government has conducted itself over Ka-Ngwane and Ingwavuma, or that it should not have bothered to consult the people of either area about what it was proposing to do with them.

In our thirty-fifth year of Nationalist Party rule we should have learnt that it is not what Blacks think about the policies proposed for them which counts, or how many of them get hurt in the course of their implementation. What counts is what seems to the Government, at any particular moment, to be the best way to ensure continued Afrikaner Nationalist control for as long as possible. At this moment, it seems, whoever manufactures Nationalist Party policy has decided that the best way to achieve that objective is to give Ka-Ngwane and Ingwavuma to Swaziland. We have some difficulty in following the argument, as we suspect most sane people would, but there it is.

That having been said, let it be said also that, however illusory the objective of the manoeuvre may be, the manner in which it has been carried out has been thoroughly unsavoury — murky diplomatic comings-and-goings, support from local dissidents, historical and ethnic

justifications which every reputable authority has rejected as being without substance; these have been the foundations on which the Government's actions have been built. Had it not been for the determination with which the Government of Kwa-Zulu, and later that of Ka-Ngwane, reacted, the whole plan might by now have been safely completed. As it is it took three successful actions in the Natal Supreme Court to halt it. But for how long? The petulant reaction of the Government to the rulings in that Court were reminiscent of its attitude when it was being thwarted by the Judges in its attempts to get the Coloured voters off the common roll. It has now taken the matter on appeal and judgement will very likely have been given by the time this issue of REALITY appears.

We are told that, more than 20 years too late, there are a fair number of Nationalists who wish they had never committed the folly of taking the Coloured voters off the roll. We suspect that, much sooner than that, they will be regretting equally the total alienation of the Zulu people which this present move implies. And that alienation will be compounded by a new hostility to them in Swaziland itself, should they be seen to become involved in trying to ensure a friendly post-Sobhuza regime there — which they now seem bound to do.

The Ka-Ngwana/Ingwavuma plan highlights in dramatic form the Nationalist Party illusion that by turning South Africans into aliens, and reducing their numbers on paper, you build security for yourself. At a more humdrum level, every day, in a hundred pass-offices, the same thing is happening. People are having stamps put in their pass-books which effectively say "You are no longer a South African". And if Dr Koornhof's new "Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill" becomes law in its present form we will be well along the road to the point where, as Dr. Connie Mulder promised ten years ago, there will be

no more Black South Africans. And will Nationalist Afrikanerdom even feel secure then? Of course not. Instead of having to worry about how to accommodate the aspirations of 20-and-more million black South African citizens, it will have to worry about something more serious. That will be the determination of those same people, as the poverty of their homelands is accelerated by growing populations and diminishing resources, while next-door the South Africa which has rejected them thrives on their contract labour, to get that citizenship back. □

2. The New Constitution

The single most important element in Mr. Botha's constitutional proposals is that all Africans must still expect to exercise their political rights in the homelands.;

Beside that, all else is insignificant.

THE MAN WHO DIDN'T MAKE IT

A Review of Phyllis Lewsen's JOHN X MERRIMAN

by Alan Paton.

Phyllis Lewsen's life of John X. Merriman is a superb book. It tells the story of South Africa from say 1860, the early days of self-government of the Cape, to Merriman's death in 1926, just after General J.M.B. Hertzog and his National Party, with the aid of Labour, won the general election, and inaugurated, although it was not apparent at the time, a new era in our history.

Great figures pass through these pages, Cecil John Rhodes, and Alfred Milner, Onze Jan Hofmeyr and W.P. Schreiner, President Paul Kruger, Louis Botha, Jan Christian Smuts, J.M.B. Hertzog. Great events happened too, the Jameson Raid of 1895, the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the First World War of 1914, leading to the Rebellion and the founding of the Afrikaner National Party. Louis Botha died in 1919, and Smuts succeeded him, only to be defeated by Hertzog in 1924. Let us face the fact that it is a white history. We meet Tengo Jabavu, J.L. Dube, and Sol Plaatjie, but only as they react to white history. The

history of our country being what it has been, a biography of Merriman cannot be other than a white history.

Merriman had considerable intellectual gifts, but he did not have the brilliance of Smuts, nor his massive self-confidence that was near to arrogance. Nor did he have the charismatic gifts of Cecil John Rhodes, nor indeed his arrogance. There were people who thought that Merriman was arrogant too. The CAPE TIMES thought, on one occasion at least, that he was animated by "personal spite" against Milner, and the CAPE ARGUS called him, on one occasion at least, a "bitter dialectician". One could not come to such conclusions after reading Phyllis Lewsen. In fact this reader's affection and esteem for Merriman went on increasing as the book progressed.

Many people, including ex-President Marthinus Steyn of the defeated Orange Free State, wanted Merriman as the first Prime Minister of the new Union of South Africa, which after the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 was seen to be the inevitable outcome of this tragic period. It was also a