

people regarded themselves as one people, and that generally speaking the enmity and antipathy had been incited by the leaderships.

PROFESSOR FRANCIS WILSON

(The full verbatim transcript of the evidence of this extremely articulate white Ciskeian is recommended to commissioners, but the following inadequate summary has been prepared to prevent the overall version of the May evidence from becoming too bulky.)

The witness asked for and received assurances that the commission had a completely open mind, that its definition of Ciskeians was not incompatible with his own; that the commission was doing more than conducting an opinion survey; and that the commission's report would be published.

He declared himself as a Ciskeian in the same way that someone might feel that he was a Freestater, but if, he said, the question of the political independence of the Ciskei were at issue, then he would have to pause and choose between being a Ciskeian and being a South African. The same sort of thing would apply to Ciskeians of all colours - or at least they should be given the opportunity of having such a choice.

What he was going to present to the commission would be an economic analysis and a political analysis. He did not think that the political analysis would be a sophisticated one, but would be made from his own point of view merely as a citizen. However, from the conclusions he would be drawing from both analyses, he would come down very strongly against independence for the Ciskei.

Taking the economic arguments first, the central and strongest one, in his view, was that for something over a hundred years the Ciskei had been one of those areas integrally part of South Africa which had contributed to a vast amount of capital accumulation within South Africa. At the same time because these areas had also supplied labour for, for example, the mining industry, countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana had made comparable contributions, but they could not be regarded as analogous to the Ciskei, because they had never been part of the actual South African political entity. The vast capital accumulation that he had referred to, the building up of infrastructure, the development generally - all had to be mobilised, and in charge of mobilisation was the government, which decided on investment of the total capital resources according to its own list of priorities. It was not necessary to impugn any wrong motives to the government for the way it did its job, but quite obviously development capital was being invested in areas which in the view of the government would appear to benefit most. This was all very well as long as a single entity

existed to share the total revenue accruing from the development exercise. However, as soon as one started drawing boundaries, problems would arise. If the area within one boundary had received less than its "fair" share of development capital then it would be disadvantaged permanently on that area becoming independent compared with the rest of the country to which it had made its fair contribution. Secondly, as long as the whole country was together, however limited people's rights might from time to time be, all the people in that country had some right to the decision-making capacity of that country. By opting out of the single country, the decision-making right was lost. If a time had to be chosen for opting out, then he could imagine hardly a worse time than the present. Although he had not studied Riekert and Wiehahn in any detail, it was obvious that South Africa was on the move. Things were changing in society generally for the better. All the people should benefit in these changes for the better and not just any blacks who happened to be left in South Africa after all the others had opted out.

The next economic factor was his forecast that South Africa was moving into a labour surplus position. Forecasts were more than likely to be wrong, but if this held true, then the position of the Ciskei would be that it was a deprived area with even less chance than hitherto to sell its one major asset - labour - in the richer parts of South Africa. When this sort of earning deprivation began to hit it would be natural for people to go and look for fringe activities - the informal sector - to earn some sort of living, and these sorts of activities tended to work well enough in and around the major metropolitan areas where there was always some money available, but the hope of stimulating a demand for fringe activities in the Ciskei or even around East London was a very small one.

RIR and others asked him to put his mind to the sort of compensation that might just be acceptable even if one were relinquishing so much. After all, a bird in the hand... What if the Ciskei were guaranteed an expenditure of 5% of South Africa's GDP for ever? While admitting that this sort of proposition, however unlikely, had its attractions, the answer still was that one could not sell one's birthright for a mess of pottage. EJM asked how one could really establish the share of the overall cake that would be commensurate with the quality and quantity of the inputs of, in this case, the Ciskeians. Wilson said that he had spent some two and a half years on a tax committee set up by the Prime Minister and the homeland leaders whose purpose was to investigate whether "the Bantu in general and the homelands in particular" were receiving a fair share of South Africa's direct and indirect tax sources. The conclusion he came to, and he would be glad to let us have a copy of his report, was that there were huge parts of the overall public revenue which could not be allocated in this way. How, for example, to allocate the huge goldmining revenue?

Wage differentials were another question, and although these were not as unfavourably loaded towards the blacks as they had once been, the differentials were still huge (the 1971 ratio was 21:1 in favour of the whites and this had now improved, from a black point of view, to about 8:1 - this is the goldmining figure).

Asked to comment on some specific economic areas, he compared the Keiskamma dairy scheme unfavourably with an Indian buffalo scheme which had grown to be the second largest dairy in the world. He was one of those who could see little hope for Middledrift either. The number of real growth centres in South Africa was extremely limited. With all the hundreds of millions, perhaps even thousands of millions of rands that had been pumped into Welkom, for instance, this would never be one of those major growth areas. Middledrift was hopeless. It had nothing more than a railway line and a good tarred road. Even East London did not come into the big league. If he referred to the single most successful industrial enterprise in and around the Ciskei - Good Hope Textiles - it was a fact that the manager had told him that if they had been able to choose again they would have located that factory in Johannesburg.

Turning to political questions, he emphasised that what he had to say was as a citizen. He could not contemplate the legitimacy of a political move towards independence, when, for a period of twenty years, every new political voice that had arisen had been banned. There was no meaningful choice to the citizenry with ordinances such as R252 in force. This was merely looking at the question from an internal Ciskeian point of view, but what about the consultation with those who were Ciskeians or were going to be branded as Ciskeians who were living in South Africa? And his third objection on the question of the patent consent of the participants was that secession should not be contemplated, or take place, without the agreement of the majority of South Africans as a whole. Where would other countries in the world be, he wondered, if little bits and pieces of them decided - or their governments decided, or they were allowed to decide - that they would like to go off and do their own thing? Would the United States permit Georgia to secede? And what about Biafra?

Decentralisation of power was an enormously good thing, but he would prefer this to be done on a regional and not an ethnic basis.

He also wanted to warn the commission against South Africa's apparently all too ready willingness to create political boundaries all over the place. He said it was all very well to dream about ultimate federations or confederations, but once one had drawn a new political boundary it would always be hell to get rid of it.

Finally, he declined to estimate the population of Crossroads, saying that the surveys that had been done there were too small to be reliable, but that

Page 52 if the commission wished to talk to the key people on the Crossroads committee they should consider the names of Mr Nxobongwana, Mr Waka, Mrs Yanta, Mr Tom and Mr Ntloko.