

the fact that they had had no choice but had been forced to move to Lenasia. In common with many other Indians, living in Lenasia, these are cultivated people forced to live where there are no cultural facilities whatsoever. There is increasing emigration of teachers, lawyers and doctors to countries like

Canada. Educated people of this type fear the stultifying effect of Apartheid, and neighbouring Black States are willing to pay well for professional immigrants.

Apartheid is destroying a community which was making a real contribution to South Africa.

WORKMENS' COMPENSATION

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ON FEBRUARY 20TH of this year, Mr. G. N. Oldfield M.P. Ombilo, asked the Minister of Labour a comprehensive question in the House of Assembly on the subject of unclaimed awards in terms of the Workmens' Compensation Act of 1941. Mr. Oldfield asked for information regarding the value of unclaimed awards and the number of untraced claimants in each of the different population groups. The Minister replied that the total sum of unclaimed moneys since 1943, including old cases under the previous Act, amounted to R1,365,131, representing less than 1% of the total awarded over the same period. He could not give precise information about the proportion of persons untraced in the different population groups, and assured Mr. Oldfield that all possible avenues of tracing claimants had been explored. In the case of "Bantu workmen, an arrangement was introduced in 1967 whereby advances were made by the larger employers in respect of temporary total disablement . . ." Bantu Affairs Commissioners and the Bantu Reference Bureau of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development supply information regarding the whereabouts of claimants, which is followed up by the Workmens' Compensation Office . . . Details of unclaimed benefits are also published regularly in the Government Gazette.

Fatal accidents

In the event of fatal accidents, the Minister explained, the dependents of workmen are entitled to the claims and Bantu Affairs Commissioners are responsible for arranging that the money goes where it should.

It is evident from this statement, recorded in Hansard No. 3 Paragraph 835, that the authorities do use the cumbersome official

channels available for tracing individual claimants. It is also evident that this system has many drawbacks, like all the processes of bureaucracy. Many workers, particularly Africans, never get to hear that there is compensation money awaiting them at all. A survey of the Government Gazettes shows that the proportion of African claimants is very high indeed. What would appear to be needed is more general information on the subject, and the chief responsibility for acquiring this information and for passing it on to all workmen as a matter of essential routine devolves upon employers, large-scale and small. Employers should realise the importance of informing *all* workmen of the existence of the Workmens' Compensation fund, and in the event of injury should ensure that claimants have a written note giving any available details, particularly the claim number when available. African claimants should be instructed to maintain contact with the Department of Bantu Affairs. No workman who has been injured at work should ever be discharged without clear instructions about claiming his compensation. Many of the bigger firms pay their injured workmen in advance, as the money takes about six months to come through. They are then entitled to reclaim this amount from the Compensation money before the balance is handed to the recipient. Awards for temporary disablement are handed out as lump sums, whereas for permanent disablement a regular fixed allowance must be fetched.

ADVICE OFFICE RECORDS

During the first three months of the year:

Firms circularised approx.	180
Number of workmen involved: over 200	
Replies received:	54

Addresses supplied	16
Injured men paid by firm: over	10
Untraced — no addresses given	53
Deceased: (Dependents of 1 untraced)	4
Balance — no reply	
Traced directly through Advice Office	4

These 200 men were the African workmen whose names appeared in a series of three Government Gazettes Extraordinary, the third of which appeared on 24th January 1968. The heaviest toll of injury appears to be in the Stevedoring industry, which has a central office in charge of African labour and does not reply to us.

Vast majority untraced

It would seem that the vast majority (i.e. over 75%) of Africans listed in these Gazettes have remained untraced.

In April 1968, a new circular was prepared by the Advice Office, and sent to about twenty firms which had replied to our original query but had been unable to supply information. This new circular suggests that "fewer names might appear in the Gazettes if firms would as a matter of routine advise such workmen when discharged that they should keep in touch with the Department of Bantu Affairs, in order to claim their compensation money when it arrives . . . Records of forwarding addresses are moreover extremely important . . ."

This second circular called for no reply and none has been received so the reaction of firms cannot be gauged. A new Government Gazette Extraordinary appeared on July 12, and the Advice Office has just circularised those firms employing Africans whose names appear as having over R2 due to them. Over 30 of the original circulars have been sent out, and an Afrikaans version is being prepared for firms considered likely to prefer this medium.

Ignorance and misunderstanding

During May, the Advice Office was visited by two members of the editorial staff of "Post". Particular interest was shown in our efforts to trace workmen owed unclaimed Compensation money. An article in Post subsequently drew attention to this aspect of our work, and to the fact that large sums of money are lying idle because they have not been claimed through "ignorance, misunderstanding or lack of information". As a direct result of this article, the Advice Office received a spate of inquiries from people both Coloured and African, who thought

that they might well be among the untraced claimants. They were referred to the correct section of the Department of Labour or the Department of Bantu Affairs, and it was explained that Claims take about six months to come through from Pretoria. Names are published approximately once in three months in Government Gazettes when the money has been unclaimed for twelve months or more.

Later (18th August 1968) Post carried the story of ABEL SIBEKO who had been owed R1,716 since 1964. They said "we didn't find Mr. Sibeko. That was hardly surprising. He was killed instantly in the accident in 1964. But we did find his widow. And it didn't take us days — let alone years. It took exactly 30 minutes. A reporter telephoned the factory where Mr. Sibeko had worked and was given the name of his attorney. The attorney gave the address of Mrs. Sibeko. Post was delighted to find her, and shocked by the ease of doing it. Shocked too by her tale of four years of misery. She and six children have been surviving—living is hardly the word — on R10 a month since 1964. Because officialdom had not done its job."

This has made us realise how essential it is to obtain the maximum publicity for these long lists of Africans and others owed money under Workmens' Compensation by means of newspapers such as Post which are widely read by working people. We are most grateful for the help given to our cause by "Post".

The case of Nasipi Mteleki shows how easily claims can get mislaid through sheer lack of information. This man was a night-watchman for a firm at Vasco. In June 1967 he was assaulted while on duty, and stabbed severely in the leg. He has been unfit for work ever since, and is a case of temporary total disablement. He expects to be unfit for possibly another two years. His firm paid him for two months after the assault. Since then he has subsisted on the kind assistance of friends. He came to the office to enquire about his rights with regard to Compensation. An enquiry at Department of Bantu Affairs revealed that his claim had in fact come through during September of this year. When the firm has returned the form which has been posted to them, he will be able to collect his money, R240, after the amount already paid by the firm and refundable to them has been deducted.