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INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL
RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURBAN.

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REPORT : Meeting of the Steering Committee to be held
on Thursday, 17th October, 1963, at 10.00 a.m.

Gentlemen,

I had the pleasure to commence duties with you on 1st October, 1963.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SURVEY:

My task, as I see it, is to undertake an investigation, the usefulness of which should extend far into the future, of the present and future employment opportunities for Indian graduates; to recommend means by which these opportunities may be extended and directions in which university education should be particularly encouraged.

In order to do that, it may be necessary also to investigate matters as diverse as the organisation of businesses, population trends, the personal attitudes of employers and employees and so forth. However, the latter would be purely contributive and secondary to the primary object, namely, the employment opportunities for Indian graduates.

May I say, at this stage, that every University is ^{morally} normally bound to do its utmost to ensure that its graduates are employable, although not necessarily being obliged to act as an employment bureau. However, it may later be decided by this University College to introduce a career guidance and employment service and I therefore consider it worthwhile to start a cardex system of firms which would be likely to take on some of our graduates.

EXTENT OF THE SURVEY ALREADY CARRIED OUT.

The survey was actually commenced by the late Mr. Kanngieser in June of this year. At the date of my taking over, 113 firms (mostly European-controlled) had been interviewed, with a further 152 which had been definitely contemplated for interview, in that letters of introduction had been prepared/

tion had been prepared for posting to them.

I understood^{stand} that it had been intended to interview many more firms than the total of 265 (that is 113 which had been interviewed and 152 which had been due for interview). The majority of these 265 firms were European-controlled industrial enterprises.

REPORT OF ACTION WHICH I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN.

To date, I have interviewed the following Organisations and Departments:

1. The Natal Chamber of Industries.

Having myself been Assistant Secretary of this employers' organisation, I interviewed Mr Freakes, the Deputy Director, in the temporary absence of the Director, Mr P.H. Thomas. The Chamber is keen for us to push ahead as fast as possible with the survey in its present form, and I am sure that we can rely on the Chamber's co-operation to the limit of circumstances.

Mr. Freakes is also keen for Prof. Olivier to address one or two trade Associations, for instance, the Natal Footwear, Tanning and General Leather Goods' Association. The Rector has already addressed the Natal Chemical Manufacturers' Association. Mr Freakes said that, as an impartial observer, he had been very impressed by that address. In fact, he has offered to call together the Food Packers- and Cannerys' Association, which has not met for the past 3 years, if Prof. Olivier would care to address that body.

2. Durban Chamber of Commerce.

Like the Natal Chamber of Industries, the Durban Chamber of Commerce is very anxious that our survey be expedited.

3. University of Natal.

The University of Natal undertook a survey, started in 1955, on Indian unemployment. This was done for the Natal

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University's Institute for Social and Industrial Research and has only just been completed. It was commenced by Dr S. Cooppan and completed by Mr Humphries, under the direction of Prof. O.P.F. Horwood, of the Department of Economics.

This survey only impinges on our problem and would therefore be of only incidental interest to us. However, any thesis which can assist in the solution of our problem, should be obtained for critical study. Only 5 copies of this document were ever made, but Mr Humphries is having it retyped and duplicated, and your Institute will receive a copy.

4. Department of Indian Affairs.

I had a very interesting chat with the regional representative, Mr van Eyssen, and Mr P. Coetsee, his Assistant. The Department is undertaking a regional survey of Indian unemployment, and Mr van Eyssen was anxious that our efforts do not overlap.

I assured him that we are investigating such a restricted field, namely the employment of Indian graduates, that he need have no fears on that score. On the other hand, we have no intention of broadening the scope of our investigation beyond that which will be of direct interest to the University College. The Department has taken upon itself a task of considerable magnitude, and we ^{it} wish ~~them~~ every success.

I have so far interviewed 35 firms in the Pinetown/New Germany area, this being just over half of the concerns which must be seen in that district. Although good records were kept by my predecessor, I intend improving on organisation and methods. In business success very often depends on efficiency, and I regard this investigation as a professional business.

MODUS OPERANDI.

I have estimated that it will be necessary to interview between 400 and 500 industrial, commercial and Indian concerns altogether, for the purpose of the survey. It is my intention to classify the returns in at least 3 major categories, namely:

- A European Industrial Firms
- B European Commercial Firms
- C Indian Industrial and Commercial Firms.

It could well be that differences are reflected, for instance in their capacity to absorb Indian graduates. Results from these 3 major categories will, of course, be collected in order to arrive at a "grand total" on which trends, objective conclusions and recommendations may be based.

The framework on which this project has been started, is basically sound and, as I have said, good records have been kept. I think that I can improve on it slightly through my detailed specific knowledge of organised industry and commerce, and have in fact already done so by the inclusion of Indian and European firms in the clothing industry.

It remains to be seen from this survey whether European concerns are likely to offer more and better opportunities for the employment of Indian graduates than the Indian firms themselves. As far as the Indian entrepreneurs are concerned, I think there is quite a bit of scope for a higher employment rate of Indian graduates, provided these firms are made aware of the fact that good business depends on the handing down of responsibility to ^{Key} ~~their~~ employees.

There seems to be relatively too much:

- a) Concentration in commerce, and more particularly in small firms with little growth potential, and
- b) Concentration in family-run businesses, and
- c) Concentration of administrative affairs in one person, usually the owner himself.

The apparent shortcomings in organisation are by no means confined to the Indian community, but are to be found throughout commerce and industry. It has occurred to me that diversification would ensure the Indian community's economic future and lead to greater employment opportunities for Indian graduates with their own people.

Gentlemen, it is already obvious from the survey that quite a few opportunities exist for Commerce and Economics graduates, but very few indeed for Science graduates. To take a case in point, we have a large and prosperous clothing manufacturer in New Germany, Natal Overall Manufacturing Co. (Pty) Ltd., who is prepared to give Indian commerce graduates every opportunity to prove themselves in higher management on an initial trainee basis, yet I am told that the University has not one such final-year student to offer until the end of next year. Even then, there will only be a few who might graduate. At the same time, there is likely to be a surplus of B.Sc. graduates.

It occurs to me that, if the University is to await the recommendations arising from this survey, they could only be implemented as from the University year commencing 1965. Whether any action can be taken in 1964 to persuade promising students to embark on a degree in Commerce or Economics and, if so, the method by which that could be done, is a matter on which I would like to hear your views. Preliminary results of the survey could be available next January so that, in theory at any rate, some form of career guidance could be introduced next February. However, I am told that any attempts to advise students on the directions their studies should take, is likely to have opposite effects. However, there might be merit in the suggestion that one of our Indian lecturers interviews new students, with a view to persuading a limited number of students with a commercial background or connections, to take B.Comm. The whole matter of career guidance should be very carefully approached,

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as it can "backfire", even ^{when} ~~it~~ objectively tackled in the student's own interests.

However, at this stage, I can see no alternative to the problem of students taking unwise decisions as to the Degrees for which they enter, but some form of career guidance seems necessary. By career guidance I do not mean aptitude tests and all that, but simply advising the student against a career which would obviously be inappropriate; or put more positively, advising him in favour of a Degree which he is likely to eventually ^{attain} ~~obtain~~ and one which offers greater prospects of employment. Perhaps one of you can suggest a subtler way of tackling this problem.

I would like to hear your views.

M. Falch
17. X. 1963.