

SADA

(Extract from a report presented to Conference)

By DEENA STREEK

It has been very difficult to obtain any information whatsoever.

All the information I have been able to glean is second-hand, but I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the facts, as three entirely separate reports agree in practically all respects.

The following is a summary of conditions at Sada:

Where is Sada?

Approximately 27 miles, north-west of Queenstown (about 24 miles off the main Queenstown/Johannesburg road). It is at the foot of bleak Bram Nek Hill and about 3 miles from a very small European village called Whittlesea. 2 miles away is a Moravian Mission (all Xhosas) called Shiloh.

What is Sada?

According to Hansard it is a township with rudimentary services for Bantu established in 1963. A transit camp originally, which is being converted into a township for the resettlement of displaced persons and pensioners.

It is a permanent home for Africans who have been endorsed out of towns in the Cape or have been rejected from farms by white farmers because they can no longer work as a result of old age or physical disability. It is the home for derelicts and unwanted people. Mr. H. S. Coetzer says he is filled with admiration for the way the Government and officials are working at break-neck speed to house these otherwise homeless people.

What does Sada mean?

"At last we have a place".

Who is in charge of Sada?

A white Superintendent, Mr. S. Bredenhann, and an African clerk who use two single-room huts as their offices.

The Population of Sada

According to Hansard there are 560 families all residing there *voluntarily*.

Total population 2685 made up of:

Males over 18	482
Women	718
Children under 16	1485

There are apparently no children between the ages of 16 and 18.

The majority of the inhabitants are women —

widows, unmarried mothers and their hordes of children.

Housing

According to Hansard 589 residential units have been built by the Bantu Administration and Development people and 564 are occupied. They are prefabricated wooden, asbestos and wood and iron huts with latrines.

Mrs. Price, who has seen the houses from the road says they look appalling — row upon row of small one-roomed shacks and made entirely of corrugated iron, alternated with row upon row of lavatories.

Another report says that "the present houses are inadequate in the extreme. Leakproof is all one can say in favour of them. The first houses that were built were the best, wooden sides, hip-roof-one room. The second were worse, smaller with a lean-to zinc roof. They are about 15' x 12'. They have one long narrow window, 1½' x 6' high at the back. They look like lavatories. They are like a furnace in summer and an ice-box in winter. One cannot bear to touch the sides in either of the extreme seasons.

Mr. H. S. Coetzer says new and better houses are continuously being built. Rooms are being added on to the old houses and even 4-roomed houses are being built and that he himself would not mind having one of these dear little cottages at the seaside.

Some of the floors are cement, most are mud. No wooden floors or ceilings.

Rent

R1.45 per month per hut. Only those who afford it pay. Those who get Old Age Pensions and Disability Grants are exempt.

Fuel

A major problem — for cooking and warmth. Wood has to be bought — R6.00 a large lorry-load, R3.00 a smaller lorry-load or 20c per bundle. The demand sometimes cannot be met. On one day 20 women were fined R2.00 each for stealing wood.

There are no fireplaces in the corrugated iron houses, fires are made on the floor. The only means of escape for smoke is through the windows or doors.

Pensions

No reports agree, they vary from R2.00 to R4.70 but all say these are only paid every other month.

Food

There is a feeding scheme. Mr. H. S. Coetzer says all needy people are fed. Only able-bodied men are excluded. Most reports agree with this though there seem to be some very hungry people who are classified as not being "needy." The Border Regional Kupugani Organiser was prevented from accompanying the Red Cross on a tour of inspection.

Water

Procurable from taps between the houses for household purposes, not available for cultivation.

Employment

Hansard says men are employed by the S.A. Bantu Trust on its projects such as irrigation schemes and the development of the town itself.

All reports say this is limited. Mr. H. S. Coetzer says that "men can leave their families safe and snug in a new house and go and work on the Orange River Scheme where they can earn from R20.00 up." Another report says that many men prefer to remain unemployed rather than work at the Orange River Scheme at 85c a day all found — the work is trying and the conditions unsatisfactory.

There was a certain amount of employment for the women, chopping out noxious weeds, and work in the lands near Shiloh but last month most of the workers were paid off as there is no more agricultural work to be done on account of the drought. This relief work earned them about 25c a day.

Medical Care

There is a clinic at Shiloh, 2 miles away with one African nurse in attendance. The District Surgeon from Queenstown calls once a week, sometimes twice, and spends at the most 2 hours

at the Clinic each time. The suspected T.B. cases are taken to Queenstown to be X-rayed free of charge by the Divisional Council.

For emergencies the nearest doctor is 25 miles away — bus fare return — 70c.

Schooling

Until now about 100 children from Sada have attended the Shiloh Bantu Community School, 1½ miles away, the rest have had a long holiday. After the Michaelmas vacation the new primary school in Sada was due to be opened. Another primary school is due to be completed early next year and one high school is being built.

Churches

The Roman Catholics, the Moravians and one other congregation are building.

Clothing

The Red Cross found the needs desperate and through the publicity in the Daily Dispatch collected thousands of articles and fitted out the families. The State gives a blanket or two if necessary.

Gardens

Each house has a plot of land but stealing is rife and a hardworking gardener has his garden flattened over night. There are at present no fences anywhere.

Mount Coke

This is a very much smaller camp which Mrs. Curry and I have both visited. It seems to be a real "transit" camp as many of its inhabitants have been moved to Sada. It is a bleak spot but not quite as cut off from kindly interested people as Sada is, as it is next door to a Methodist Mission Hospital. Otherwise in all respects it is very like its counterpart.

It is our business . . . rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy than to loiter out our days without blame and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

Burke—Thoughts on Present Discontents.

Solution to Crossword on page 30.

Across: (1) Evicts; (4) Banished; (8) Their; (9) Transkei; (11) Is as usual; (14) Homeless Persons; (19) In protest; (22) Attendant; (24) Uncut; (25) Liberals; (26) Aliens.

Down: (1) Entrench; (2) Idealism; (3) Terror; (4) Black Sash Stands; (5) Note; (6) Hit; (7) Denial; (10) Senses; (12) Seek; (13) Zest; (15) One; (16) Enrage; (17) Obstacle; (18) Statutes; (19) in gaol; (20) Sequel; (21) Idea; (23) Tab.