

# Wages of Indians in Natal

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**THERE ARE** very few figures available of wages paid to Indians in Natal, but some general statistics about their living conditions and a few detailed salary scales will be given below.

The Indians in Natal, as a people, are changing rapidly — in their way of life, their needs, their desires and their type of employment. The multiple family system, that has been their traditional way of life, is giving way to the single family system. But this is not happening as rapidly as many would like, for such reasons as economic necessity and lack of accommodation. The mean size of an Indian single family is 5.8 people, while that of a multiple family is 8.8. The type of housing being provided is helping to increase the number of single-family households; and so is their contact with the western way of life.

The Indians in Natal are a very youthful group. In 1960 almost 90 per cent of them were under the age of 45. They are also increasing very rapidly, their rate of growth having been 8 per cent per annum since 1951. The biological maximum is considered to be 3.5 per cent. They are fast becoming urbanised, though only the comparatively small proportion of 25 per cent is actively able or prepared to work, whereas 40 per cent of all Whites are economically active. This is largely due to the small number of Indian women who work. Unemployment among Indians has dropped very much since 1960 when the rate was 22.7 per cent. Now it is 7.1 per cent compared with the normal rate of three to four per cent.

In 1963 the Department of Economics at the University of Natal in Durban estimated that 63 per cent of a sample taken lived below the poverty datum line of R78 per month; and 28.3 per cent lived barely above it. Only 6.6 per cent were moderately comfortable, and 1.4 per cent were well off. In 1966 Mr. G. G. Maasdorp estimated that just over 50 per cent lived below the poverty datum line, and this improvement is thought to be the result of less unemployment among Indians. According to his calculations the mean monthly household income is R95.78, and the mean monthly household expenditure is R94.27; but the median monthly household income was only R77.30 and this coincides almost exactly with the poverty datum line.

Other general figures are given in a survey of Indian housing conducted by the Department of Economics at the University in 1966, where it was estimated that 71 per cent of those desiring Council houses had household incomes of less

than R90 per month, but 3.9 per cent received incomes of over R180 per month. The sub-economic housing aspirants were the worst off. Two-thirds of them had less than R50 per month, and 89.5 per cent had less than R90 per month. The sub-economic limit of income per household was raised to R60 per month and this took in almost all those wanting such housing. Of the aspirants to economic housing 70 per cent received less than R90 per month.

The survey also gave the breakdown of those occupying Council houses:

Sub-economic	15.2 per cent
Economic	73.1 per cent
Loans to individuals	11.6 per cent

Those in the loans-to-individuals scheme would be the relatively well off. And just as an interesting point: the Indians do not at all approve of the Council's scheme for auctioning land as it leads to exploitation and high prices, there being far too many buyers for too little land.

The only detailed figures for wages that we have been able to obtain are those for Indian municipal employees and for doctors. The Durban City Council has just adopted new salary scales for their Indian employees. Graded staff, of whom they employ 339, were paid between R43 and R220 per month. These two figures went up in August this year to R48 and R244. In August 1968 they will rise to R50 and R254, and in August 1969 to R52 and R264 per month.

The wages of unskilled employees, of whom there were 1,540, rose in August 1967 from R36.10 to R39.87 per month. In August 1969 they will rise again to R44.20. Certain unskilled employees get an allowance of R2.17 per month, and all get R1.00 per month after five years service. The payment of a holiday bonus of R20 with certain limitations (unspecified) was also agreed.

The conclusions reached in compiling these various surveys seem to have been that the Indians are going forward rapidly, that the younger generation is better educated, and that their group is being employed more and more in skilled and semi-skilled employment. Their economic position is improving though many still live close to the poverty datum line. The main development recently has been their increased dependence on commerce and industry, and the relative decline in the importance of agriculture. The

purchasing power of Natal Indians in 1965 was nine per cent of the Natal total, and this amounted to about R65-million, of which about R40-million came from the Durban-Pinetown area.

There seems to be a great need for more training facilities for those going into commerce and industry, for more help from the Industrial Development Corporation or the Indian Investment Corporation if it is established; and for the same in agriculture which could play a great part in producing vegetables for the Durban area, if helped by capital and know-how.

### Conclusion

It is known that the Natal Indian is becoming more westernised. Ninety-eight per cent are able to converse in English. Language is therefore not a problem in training them. The Indian is education conscious. In 1965

14,950 passed Standard 8  
7,100 matriculated.

Approximately 1,200 graduated and 2,500 received diplomas in their particular courses. In 1966 1,661 enrolled at our universities. With the po-

pulation increasing rapidly this will mean a better educated and skilled labour force.

This field is not fully exploited. Why? The legal barrier is not entirely the cause. Job reservation affects Indians little. The restrictions preventing their movement within the Province and group areas legislation are factors. The former precludes the worker from seeking the best market for his labour, while the latter restricts him from finding the most economic location for his business.

In the Durban area particularly business expansion by the Indian does not occur because of their uncertain future. These factors are of the utmost importance, but it is customary rather than statutory restrictions that prevent the full realisation of the economic potentials of the Indian community. The attitudes of European employers and employees are restricting the rate of economic growth in Natal to a level far below the potential. The Indian labour force is not being fully exploited. Shortage of skilled labour is bound to restrict. In Natal we have this under-utilised potential skilled labour force. How long can Prejudice be yet another unjust law.

# Johannesburg Advice Office

Annual Report November 1966 to October 1967

Total number of cases	557
Total number of interviews	982
Total number of cases successfully closed	18
Total number of cases unsuccessfully closed	4

### ANALYSIS

Permits	146
Endorsements out	57
Reference books	38
Housing	8
Miscellaneous	25
Foreign Africans	6
Sent elsewhere	8

The number of cases coming to the Advice Office remains steady. The analysis of this year's figures reflects that the great majority of cases are concerned with permits, and comparatively few with endorsements out, but it must be emphasised that a number of cases classified as permits, reference books, foreign Africans and housing are subsequently endorsed out.

The number of cases successfully concluded is depressingly low and is inaccurate as a number of people do not return to the office to report the outcome of their appeals.

It has been obvious during these last twelve months that the regulations are being more rigidly enforced. One of the most distressing aspects

of present day policy is the endorsement out of teenagers, children of parents qualified to be in Johannesburg. If these parents send their children away to the country to stay with grandparents and/or to go to school there, they are deemed to have broken their domicile unless they can prove that they were bona fide scholars in the country area. When the children return home to live, the parents find that the children's names have been removed from the family housing permit. Their names can only be included again if the parents can produce the proof that they were at school in the country and that they returned home for the school holidays.

When the 16 year olds who have broken their domicile, apply for their reference books in Johannesburg they are refused the issue of a book and are told that they must apply in the country area where they were staying. (Many of them find when they do go back they are not entitled to be in that area either and their book will not be given to them.) If they are given their books in the country area, they are entitled to come back to live at home until they are 18 and they are then endorsed out of Johannesburg. Between the ages of 16 and 18 they cannot be registered in urban employment.

Another directive put into force this year is that children living at home cannot be accepted