



The development of Bantu education in South Africa, 1652-1954
by Andrew Leonie

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Education
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Abstract:

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the development and nature of the national (post-1954) Bantu educational system in South Africa. The problem resolved itself into three parts: 1. an understanding of the background of Bantu education through the development of the South African multiracial society; 2. an understanding of the nature of colonial (pre-1954) Bantu education through its historical development; 3. an understanding of the nature of the national Bantu educational system through its historical development.

The historical method was used in securing the data, and the research was limited to the development of elementary and secondary Bantu education in South Africa from 1652 to 1954 .

Conclusions drawn from the study were: 1. Colonial Bantu education lacked defined objectives with respect to curriculum and administration, except that it purposed to Christianize the Bantu.

2. The educational thinking found within the colonial Bantu educational system was not child-centered or Bantu-centered and not planned for the Bantu populace.
3. The educators of the colonial Bantu educational system did, however, demonstrate a desire to educate the Bantu peoples.
4. The national Bantu educational system is a culturally based system, making of education a Bantu national institution.
5. The national Bantu educational system is a child-centered system.
6. It is designed to fit the apparent needs of the Bantu child growing up in a developing Bantu society.
7. And, it is a system designed around the usage of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction which its formulators believe facilitates better learning.

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144

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the development and nature of the national (post-1954) Bantu educational system in South Africa. The problem resolved itself into three parts:

1. an understanding of the background of Bantu education through the development of the South African multiracial society;
2. an understanding of the nature of colonial (pre-1954) Bantu education through its historical development;
3. an understanding of the nature of the national Bantu educational system through its historical development.

The historical method was used in securing the data, and the research was limited to the development of elementary and secondary Bantu education in South Africa from 1652 to 1954.

Conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. Colonial Bantu education lacked defined objectives with respect to curriculum and administration, except that it purposed to Christianize the Bantu.
2. The educational thinking found within the colonial Bantu educational system was not child-centered or Bantu-centered and not planned for the Bantu populace.
3. The educators of the colonial Bantu educational system did, however, demonstrate a desire to educate the Bantu peoples.
4. The national Bantu educational system is a culturally based system, making of education a Bantu national institution.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educational systems reflect the destinies of nations. They also are vehicles which carry cultures over the roads of environment to habitats of societal change. Changes in education evoke change in environment, change in environment also changes the direction of education, and all these changes become vital instruments which bring forth cultural and societal changes; thus, today's school is the tool shaping the man of tomorrow.

Since World War II education has enjoyed much change and progress. Countries, both large and small, have restructured, reorganized and improved their educational systems to fit their needs; UNESCO has made a significant contribution in the education of preliterate peoples, by giving assistance and direction in the setting up of educational systems for these "new" nations; the United States of America has desegregated her schools; Britain has made education accessible to all with ability and aptitude; France has extended compulsory education to sixteen years; Germany has liberalized her thinking on education; and Russia has geared her education for the elimination of illiteracy.

Along with the major powers, smaller countries have also experienced changes in their education. Some post-war emergent nations without any educational system devised their own, others revised previously

adopted colonial systems to fit their cultural needs.

Africa, the land of many new nations, found herself in an educational dilemma when the colonial powers made their exits. But today these nations of Africa have adopted education as a task force that will conquer illiteracy, superstition, and backwardness. For some of these nations the present end of education is nationalism, for others it is for cultural and economic growth, but for all it means progress.

This dissertation is a study of the structures and philosophies of the South African pre-1954 Bantu educational system (colonial system) and those events that led up to Act 47 of 1953 when a new Bantu educational system (national system) was installed for the Bantu peoples in South Africa by the South African government. This is an attempt to provide those insights into Bantu education necessary for a better understanding of Bantu education in South Africa.

The writer begins by tracing the historical development of South Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries showing the evolution of the South African multiracial society, and thereby creating a historical backdrop for the study of Bantu education. Out of this historical setting the writer described Bantu education as it developed from 1652 to 1954. The date 1954 is used as a division point between what the writer calls the colonial system of Bantu education and the national system of Bantu education, for it was in 1954 that steps were

taken by the government to remodel Bantu education.

The opportunity to make changes in Bantu education was brought about by the most significant historical event in Bantu education, when Act 47 of 1953 was passed by parliament placing Bantu education under the direction and within a division of the central government.

Multiracial South Africa consists of three million Whites, nine and one-half million Bantu, more than one million Coloreds (those of mixed blood) and over one-third of a million Asians.¹ Presently it is receiving much international attention because of its political policies which are founded upon the doctrine of apartheid. Apartheid is an Afrikaans (South African Dutch) word which when translated literally means "apart" or "separate." To most Americans it means a fanatical approach to a system of racial segregation.

The South African government indicates on the other hand that apartheid is a plan of racial separation for the purpose of separate development:

The objectives of South Africa's policy of separate development are to safeguard the identity and nationhood of the White and the Bantu peoples and to provide for the progress of the emerging Bantu towards (a) self-government, (b) autonomy, and (c) independence, each in its own "homeland"--the territory originally settled by people of that particular group. Thus the policy aims at viable

¹Union of South Africa, State of the Union Year Book for South Africa 1959-1960, p. 57.

and self-sufficient Bantu societies enabling all people, wherever they may live and work, to be actively associated with the cultural and political life of their own nation. By gradually withdrawing trusteeship over the emerging Bantu peoples (many of whom are still in a primitive phase) as the Bantu national states are established, the most explosive element in South Africa's political make-up, conflicting nationalism, can be avoided.²

According to the critics of South African politics, the new Bantu educational system was not established for the benefit of the Bantu peoples; but is an institution planned for the propagation of the ideology of apartheid. Whether this is so or not is debatable. Reverend Reeves writing in 1956, called the Bantu Education Act a "piece of racial legislation."³

Carter in discussing the Bantu attitude on education says the Bantu believes in universal education but in a universal education which is standard for all, and that general education for White and Black should be alike.⁴

Shortly after the 1953 legislation of the Bantu Education Act, the Bantu peoples also demonstrated fears about it. They feared that the very

²Union of South Africa, Information Service, South Africa in Fact, n.d., unnumbered pp.

³Reeves, R. A., "Church and State in South Africa," Africa South, vol. 1, no. 1., December, 1956, p. 11.

⁴Carter, G. M., The Politics of Inequality in South Africa Since 1958, p. 109.

label now attached to their education was planned to make it inferior⁵ and that the syllabi of the new system would stress vocational education at the expense of academic education.⁶ These fears on the part of some Bantu parents precipitated an unsuccessful boycott of government schools by some Bantu groups in April, 1955.⁷

Education to the Bantu is of vital importance. The psychologist de Ridder says:

It is the supreme desire of the vast majority of urban (Bantu) parents to give their children the opportunity of an education. . . . Educational achievement is synonymous with success.⁸

Tabata, an ardent antagonist of the apartheid policy in South Africa, condemns Bantu education on the basis that to him its function appears to be pointed in the direction of racism and suppression of the Bantu.⁹ Again this point of view is open for debate. This study does not make any attempt to evaluate the Bantu educational system in terms of those political

⁵"Why So Much Smoke?" editorial, The Bantu World, March 26, 1955.

⁶Carter, G. M., op. cit., p. 109.

⁷Feit, Edward, South Africa, 1962, p. 51.

⁸de Ridder, J. C., The Personality of the Urban African in South Africa, 1961, p. 87.

⁹Tabata, I. B., Education for Barbarism in South Africa, 1960, pp. 16-29.

implications that may surround it.

Richard Greenough, writing in a UNESCO report on African education, does indicate that education in Africa must be African and culturally based:

Education has a strategic position in the battle for progress. If it is to fulfil its many functions satisfactorily, education in Africa must be African; that is, it must rest on a foundation of African culture and be based on the special requirements of African progress in all fields.¹⁰

It was the personal desire of the writer to fulfil two aims in producing this dissertation: first, that this thesis be a volume of knowledge which will enlighten those scholars who seek to know more about Bantu education in South Africa. Second, that the information included be of practical value to the educator working with preliterate peoples.

Statement of the Problem

The chief problem of this study was to determine the factors of the movements and influences in the development of the national Bantu educational system (post-1954) which is presently in use in the Republic of South Africa. The problem resolved itself into three definite parts:

¹⁰Greenough, Richard, Africa Calls, 1961, p. 33.

1. An understanding of the background of Bantu education through the history of South Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

2. An understanding of the nature of the colonial Bantu educational system through its historical development.

3. An understanding of the development and nature of the national Bantu educational system culminating with the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953.

Procedures

Three basic procedures were employed in securing the data for this investigation. They were:

1. A review of the available literature consisting of South African governmental documents and pamphlets; UNESCO reports, South African archival documents; South African, UNESCO, and American books, periodicals, and newspapers; and publications of South African anthropological and cultural organizations.

2. Personal interviews with U. S. Office of Education officials, South African embassy and consular officials, and educators in the field of comparative education.

3. Letters of inquiry to Whites and Bantu of various stations.

All translations from Afrikaans or Dutch publications were made by the writer.

Limitations

In 1652 education was introduced to the South African aborigine and in 1954 education for the Bantu was nationalized. This study was limited to the development of Bantu education in South Africa from 1652 to 1954 as is characterized by what is commonly considered community education or elementary and secondary education. The study was further limited to:

1. The evolution of the South African multiracial society through exploration by the White man and migration of the Bantu into South Africa.
2. The factors which influenced the development of colonial education (1652-1954) and a description of its character, the structures, organizational changes, and the evolving of syllabi.
3. The factors which influenced the development of national Bantu education (post-1954) through commission reports, parliamentary and legal procedures showing the character, structure, organization and implementation.

Definitions

Since most people are not acquainted with the national structure of the South African society and the practice of education within its communities it became necessary to define the unfamiliar terms used in this study.

Bantu. Bantu is a collective name for one of the principal indigenous racial groupings of peoples on the African continent. The following statement defines the Bantu group in terms of a description of their habitat:

With the exception of a few tribes, people of the Bantu group inhabit the whole area south of an imaginary line drawn from the bulge of the West African coast and passing south of Nigeria eastwards through French Equatorial Africa to Lake Albert, then swinging southwards to the lower end of Lake Victoria and thence crookedly eastward through Tanganyika to the mouth of the Tana River on the east coast.¹¹

Bushmen. The Bushmen are the race of people which anthropologists believe occupied most of the sub-continent of Africa until about a hundred years before the discovery of the southern tip of the African continent by the Europeans in 1486.¹² The Bushmen are recognized as being the true aborigines of Southern Africa.¹³ Bushmen lived as vagabond

¹¹ Digest of South African Affairs, vol. 3, no. 8, April 16, 1956, p. 3.

¹² Burkitt, P., South Africa's Past in Stone and Paint, n.d., pp. 15-25.

¹³ Union of South Africa, Government Paper No. 41, 1926, p. 19.

hunters;¹⁴ they had no knowledge of soil cultivation, but lived by their hunting, and the eating of honey, wild plants, and locusts.¹⁵ Later the Bushmen were involved in bloody clashes with other African tribes and the White man.¹⁶

Colored. The colored people are a group with mixed blood living in the Republic of South Africa. According to Du Preez¹⁷ the first racial groups that the colonists or settlers contacted (1652) were the Bushmen and Hottentots. It was soon discovered that these individuals were not satisfactory for labor and in 1657 importation of slaves from Malaya, Madagascar, and East Africa began. A mixing of Hottentots, slaves, and colonists occurred, and a new group called the Cape Colored emerged, using the language of the colonists.

Hottentots. The Hottentots are those tribes that were in possession of the land at the time the Dutch arrived at the Cape in 1652.¹⁸ They readily traded with the Dutch settlers, bartering cattle for the White man's

¹⁴Schapera, I., The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa: Bushmen and Hottentots, 1930, chaps. 5, 6, 8.

¹⁵Theal, G. M., South Africa, 1894, p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Du Preez, A. B., Inside the South African Crucible, 1959, p. 32.

¹⁸Van Riebeeck, Jan, Dagverhaal, December 10, 1652.

iron, copper, beads, and tobacco.¹⁹ The Hottentots soon learned to speak some Dutch and assisted the Dutch settlers with the transportation of building materials.²⁰ As the Cape Colony developed the settlers at times engaged in war with the Hottentots,²¹ but it was not these wars that almost annihilated the Hottentots. For in 1713, a disastrous epidemic of smallpox broke out in the Cape, causing many deaths among the Whites and the slave population, and almost wiping out the Hottentots.²²

Griquas. The Griquas are the descendants of a Hottentot tribe that was known by different names. The Chariquiriqua, Charinquirina, and Chariquas.²³ Today most of the Griquas are found in the area of Kokstad, Natal.²⁴

Native. The term "native" is commonly used as an equivalent to the word Bantu. In South Africa the term "native" is not used when referring to the White, Coloreds, Asians, or any race other than the aboriginal

¹⁹Ibid., December 6, 1652, and May 6, 1660.

²⁰Ibid., June 15, 1652.

²¹Ibid., April 7, 1674.

²²Dutch East India Company, Dagregister, 1652-1798, May 10, 1713.

²³Van Riebeeck Society, The Early Cape Hottentots, n.d., (citing the writings of Olfert Dapper et al.).

²⁴Halford, S. J., The Griquas of Griqualand, n.d., p. 203.

racés or tribes.²⁵

Whites or Europeans. The White or European group consists principally of two stocks--the Dutch and the Anglo-Saxon. Other European nationalities represented in lesser numbers are also classified under this grouping.

Asians or Indians. Asians or Indians are defined as the descendants of Indians from Madras or South India now living in South Africa. In 1860 in the province of Natal, under the pressure of sugar planters, the British and Indian governments opened the way for Indian immigration to Natal. These agricultural workers belonged to the "untouchable" class and lived in a state of semi-starvation in their homeland. After serving their work contracts in Natal, they were given the choice either to stay in South Africa or return home to Madras or Southern India. This choice to them meant freedom. Freedom from the rigid caste system and from starvation caused them to choose to stay. Today there are over 350,000 Asians residing in South Africa.²⁶

²⁵Union of South Africa, Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1953, Act. 1, sect. 5.

²⁶Union of South Africa, State of the Union Year-Book . . . , op. cit., p. 70.

Education. The grade levels of the educational systems discussed in this dissertation do not go beyond the secondary school. It is clearly defined in the Education Act No. 47 of 1953 as:

"Education" means education other than "higher education" within the meaning of section seventeen of the Financial Relations Consolidation and Amendment Act, 1945, (Act No. 38 of 1945).²⁷

Philosophy. The term philosophy as used in this report not only refers to those basic theories upon which the educational systems were structured, but is also a summary of that thinking and those principles which harmonize educational theory and educational practice.

Colonial Bantu Education. When using the phrase colonial Bantu education reference is arbitrarily made to Bantu education as it existed prior to 1954 in the Republic of South Africa.

National Bantu Education. The national Bantu educational system is the educational system which is presently employed by the Bantu in the Republic of South Africa. This system of education is based upon the Bantu culture and is nationalistic in spirit; it was put into operation in 1954.

²⁷Union of South Africa, Statutes of the Union . . . , op. cit., p. 258.

The preceding definitions in giving a knowledge of the Bushmen, Hottentot, Bantu, and Whites and their relationships will help the reader to better understand the development of South Africa from its earliest settlement to the twentieth century. Chapter two describes the development of South Africa and includes a map of this new country indicating its expanse.²⁸

²⁸See Figure 1. This map is an edited copy of a map in "Education for the Bantu of South Africa," Lantern, vol. 11, no. 1, July-September, 1961. The editing by the writer was done to especially indicate pertinent areas and places discussed in the text.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE SEVENTEENTH, EIGHTEENTH, AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

From its earliest beginnings South Africa, as shown in Figure 1, was a country of many complexities and differences, and before one can begin to understand the educational practices for the Bantu in South Africa, one should have a basic knowledge of its peoples, their origins, and the relationships that exist among those who inhabit that country.

The South Africa of today is very different from what it was before the advent of Christ, when man first scrutinized its shores. Today it is a modern and progressive country made up of many kinds of peoples who call it their home. Not only is it financially progressive and wealthy, but is also a country very concerned about its cultural and educational development. Education is important to all South Africans regardless of their race or color.

To provide a historical background for the study of education, a description of the country's development was made by surveying the history of South Africa (1652-1900) paying special attention to the following important aspects: (1) the exploration of South Africa by the White man, (2) the Bantu migration into Southern Africa, and (3) the developing of a multiracial society.

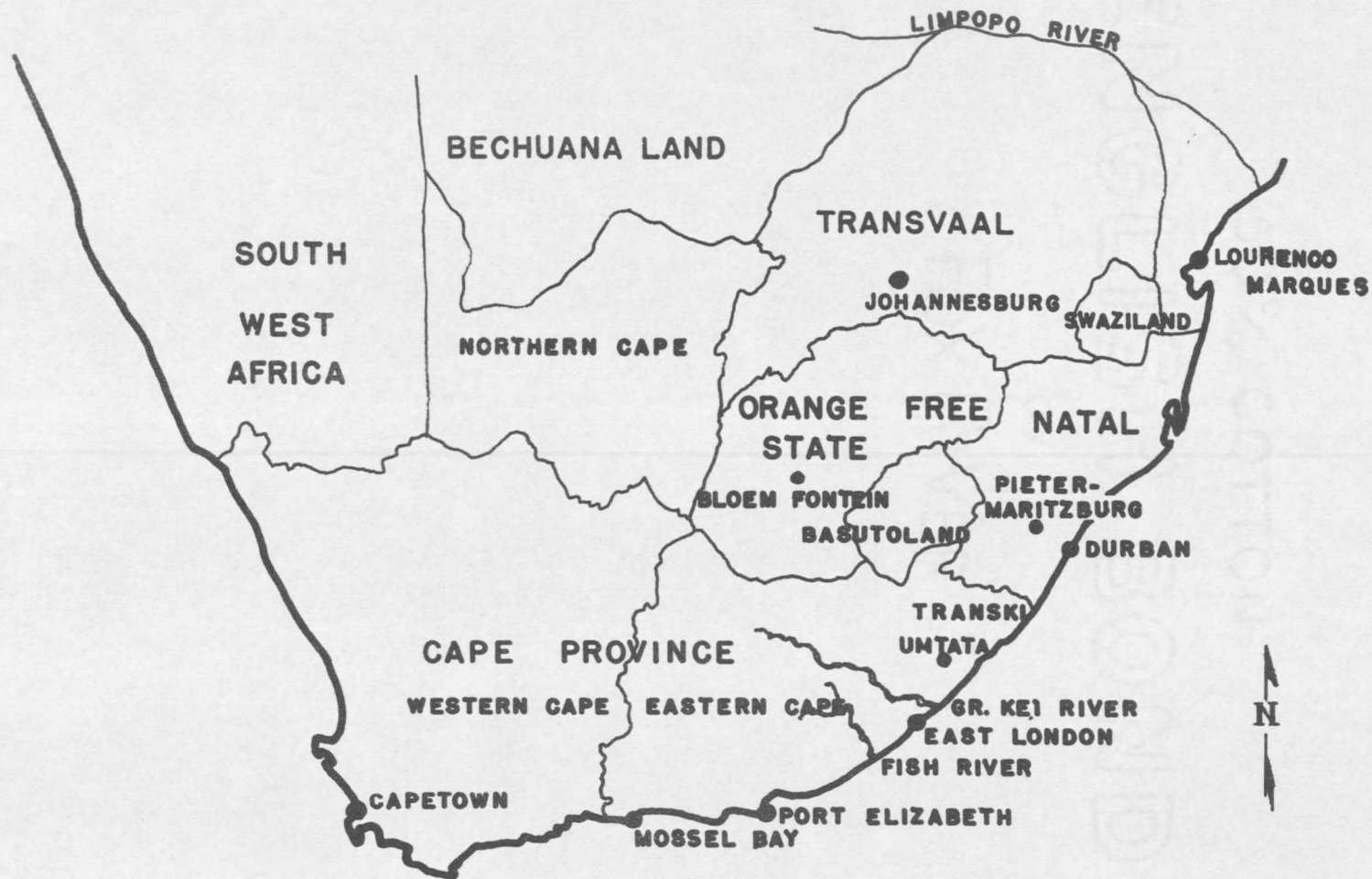


FIGURE 1. MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Exploration of South Africa by the White Man

Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, Pharoah Necho commissioned his royal ships to explore the South African coasts.¹ His royal fleet sailed from the Red Sea, through the Indian Ocean, swung around the African tip to the Atlantic, and returned to Egypt after a three-year voyage. For the next two thousand years South Africa basked unperturbed under her sunny skies. Prince Henry the Navigator in the year 1434 sent out an expedition from Portugal to seek a new route to India, the land of silks and spice.² This expedition from Portugal rounded Cape Bojador but never arrived in India, yet, paved the way for the finding of a new sea-route to India.³

In 1486 Bartholomew Diaz, officer in command of two small vessels, was instructed by the King of Portugal to find a way to India via the extremity of South Africa.⁴ Diaz and his men rounded the Cape and anchored at Algoa Bay in September, 1486, but since his weary crew could

¹Punt, W., and Ploeger, J., "Age-old Republican Ideal Realized," South African Panorama, May, 1961.

²Fairbridge, Dorothea, A History of South Africa, 1917, pp. 16-17.

³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴Halford, S. J., The Griquas of Griqualand, n.d., p. 1; Theal, G. M., South Africa, 1894, p. 8.

gather no information from the aborigines about India, they turned about and sailed back to Portugal.⁵

Vasco da Gama, another Portuguese, sailed in 1497 via the same route as did Diaz, becoming the first navigator to complete the voyage to India.⁶ One hundred years later, around 1600, the British, the Dutch and the French began to make use of this sea route to India which da Gama had discovered.⁷

Among the first contacts between the White man and the aborigines for the purpose of trading were those made by da Gama, Antonio de Saldanha in 1503, and Francisco d'Almeida in 1509.⁸ But it was the Dutch traders who first recognized that the Cape would make a valuable supply station for their trading ships plying the waters between Holland and India.⁹ In 1619 the directors of the English East India Company

⁵"As he passed the huge headland he named it Cabo de Los Tormentos (Cape of Storms). This appellation was changed by his royal master to the more auspicious title of Boa Esperanza (Good Hope) from the prospect it offered of finding the much desired maritime route to the East Indies." (Halford, op. cit., p. 1.)

⁶Union of South Africa, Information Service, South Africa's Heritage, 1652-1952, 1952.. Cited hereafter as Union of South Africa, South .

⁷Ibid.

⁸Theal, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

⁹Union of South Africa, South . . . , op. cit.

approached the Council of Seventeen of Holland for permission to build a fort and refreshment station at the Cape, but were turned down.¹⁰

For some years no attempt was made to make use of the Cape as a place of settlement. But toward the end of the year 1651 two ships and a yacht under the direction of Jan van Riebeeck left Holland for the Cape of Good Hope.¹¹ Van Riebeeck and his party of 70 to 80 people arrived at Table Bay on April 5, 1652.¹² From this first group of Dutch settlers a council was elected which became the first "government" to be established at the Cape.¹³ Immediately friendly communication was established with the nomadic tribes living at the Cape whom the Dutch called Hottentots.¹⁴ A quantity of brass wire, tobacco, and copper, brought from Holland, was used by the Cape settlers to barter with the Hottentots for cattle and sheep.¹⁵ The commander, Van Riebeeck, conducted the trading with the Hottentots personally so as to be certain of keeping peace with

¹⁰Theal, op. cit., p. 20.

¹¹Halford, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Theal, op. cit., p. 27.

