

7 *The growing problem of external study*

The University of South Africa was legally bound, under section 18 of Act 12 of 1916, "to make provision for examining every . . . student . . . not a student at a constituent college". It has been suggested that the relevant section was included as an after-thought to conciliate the few who, in the last days of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, called attention to the plight of non-collegiate students. Whatever the reason, the legislation of 1916, in the words of a later Registrar, Langham Murray, turned "a right of the old University . . . into a compulsion", so far as the new one was concerned. Section 18 was to open wide the door to an ever-increasing number of private students. In 1919, they numbered 208; by 1944, more than 3 000 external candidates sought the degrees and diplomas of the university. The intervening years also saw a notable increase in enrolments at the colleges and independent universities of South Africa, but the proportion of external students to the national total rose from 8,6% in 1919 to 21,5% in the last full year of the second World War.

The federal university did not teach private students; it merely examined them. Not all such candidates for its examinations, however, were entirely deprived of instruction, for even before the disappearance of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, tutorial classes and correspondence colleges had been founded in South Africa to cater for their needs. Among the latter, the University Correspondence College of Cambridge, England extended its activities to the colonies before Union, providing the

SAMUEL HENRI PELLISSIER was born on 10 November, 1887 in the old mission house at Bethulie in the Orange Free State. Taught by his father until he was 11 years of age, his subsequent schooling was interrupted by the Anglo-Boer War.

He matriculated in 1905 and after a period as a school-teacher, attended Grey College, where he obtained the B.A. degree in 1909 and a teaching certificate in the following year. Further study in the Netherlands ensued. On his return, he became Vice-Principal of schools at Lindley and Boshof, before accepting a principalship at Ficksburg in 1917.

From 1927 until 1947, he was Director of Education for the Orange Free State and from 1948 to 1959, Chairman of the Board of Control of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Samuel Henri Pellissier's services were recognized in 1944, when an honorary doctorate in education was conferred upon him by the University of Stellenbosch. In the cultural field, he was the founder of the *Volksang* and *Volkspeler* movement and took a prominent part in national festivals. He also published in 1956 a biography of his French missionary grandfather, Jean Pierre Pellissier.

A member of the university Council, with one brief intermission, from 1927 until 1954, he was chosen as Vice-Chancellor for the period 1932 to 1934.

Dr Samuel Henri Pellissier, B.A., D.Ed. (h.c.)
Member of Council 1927-1948; 1948-1954
Vice-Chancellor 1932-1934
President of Convocation 1930-1931



courses of study which helped such students as Gerrit Besselaar, long Professor of Modern Languages at Natal, to obtain academic qualifications. Undertakings of this kind were to proliferate in the twenties and thirties. Some, like the *Helpmekaar* of the *Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging*, founded in 1927, developed out of the pioneering efforts of teachers or teaching associations; one – the *Volkskorrespondensie Kollege* of the next decade – sought the collaboration of a recognized university college – the federal constituent in Bloemfontein.

Two commercial institutions which did much to help the external student were David Young's Rapid Results College of Durban, established in 1928, and P. W. Zorn's University Correspondence Courses of Pretoria, directed in the late thirties by S. P. E. Boshoff and S. J. Hofmeyr. This firm, in association with the *Helpmekaar* college, became the Transafrica Correspondence College of Johannesburg, initially under the control of Boshoff and H. G. Luttig. By 1945, there were over twenty such businesses in existence. Some, perhaps, were not of high standing, but the best of them had the interests of the private student at heart.

Some external students were, in fact, attending recognized teaching institutions. The difficult position of candidates for university examinations who studied at the Potchefstroom college led to the inclusion of that institution in the federal fold; students studied for degree examinations at training colleges for teachers such as those at Paarl in the Cape and Heidelberg in the Transvaal; the technical institution in Durban also provided graduate courses before these were placed under the jurisdiction of the Natal University College. Attempts were made on more than one occasion to bring certain students into association with the university on a group basis. The Catholic Dominican Sisters of King William's Town approached the university for recognition of this kind in 1937, but the move aroused religious animosities. The militantly Protestant Grand Lodge of the Loyal Orange Institution of South Africa rejoiced because the Catholic application was turned down; others wrongly interpreted the rejection

as an example of anti-Catholic bigotry. A similar request for group recognition came at a later date from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose students study at Helderberg College in the Cape. This, too, was initially opposed by the University of South Africa.

The great majority of students, however, were not affiliated with any teaching institution, other than the correspondence colleges. They were often confused with another group which was making an impact on the university scene in the twenties – the extra-mural students. The Transvaal University College was a pioneer in this type of extension work and an extra-mural division had been formed there soon after the close of the first World War. Paterson and Macfadyen had helped to establish it and its further development owed much to the efforts of Holloway and Brookes in the fields of commerce, law and administration. The type of facility provided by the college and the opportunities for advancement which the federal university's examinations afforded those who studied privately were both part of what Brookes described in 1930 as "a rising tide" which was making itself felt in education "the world over".

The chance to earn a degree as an external student was welcomed by those who lived in neighbouring territories with no local university institutions and by non-Europeans in the Union for whom collegiate facilities were lacking. The South African Native College could not cope with the increasing demand for places, even though it took a certain number of non-Africans; at other university foundations the problem of race integration arose. In Durban, where Mabel Palmer began classes for Indian students in 1936, the road to further advancement for this section seemed to be barred by the hostility of some members of the Natal University College Council to the mixing of races on the campus. Articulate Indian opinion, on the other hand, wanted no part in the provision of a separate college for Indian students. In fact, no further expansion of such facilities for non-Europeans in South Africa took place until the efforts of the Dutch Reformed Churches resulted in the creation of the Pretoria *Kolege*

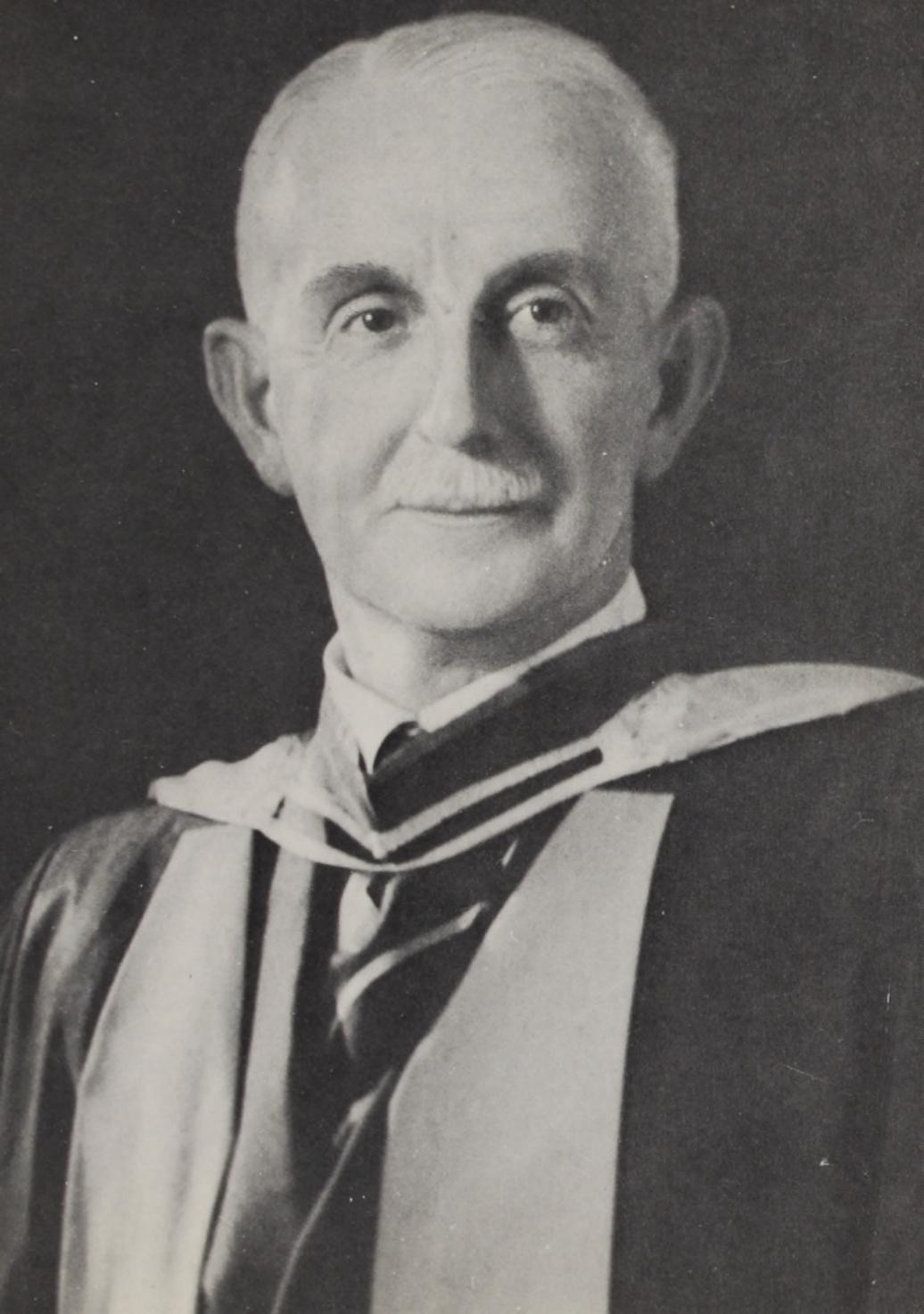
LANGHAM DALE MURRAY was born on 4 November, 1892 at Sea Point, Cape Town and was named after his great-uncle, the university's first Vice-Chancellor. After matriculating at the Boys' High School, Stellenbosch, he took a B.A., with honours in classics, at the Victoria College in 1911.

His subsequent studies as a Rhodes Scholar at Trinity College, Oxford were interrupted by the first World War, in which he saw active service. He was taken prisoner in 1918 and was awarded the D.C.M. He returned to Oxford, completed his degree and in 1919, joined the staff of the University of South Africa. He became Registrar in 1934, retiring early in 1953.

A man of great courtesy and conservative by nature, he is remembered, like Sir William Thomson, for an astonishing memory for names and figures. His years as Registrar were not easy ones. The second World War and the introduction of the Division of External Studies in particular caused immense complications in university administration.

Langham Murray moved to Salisbury shortly after his retirement and was for a time Secretary-Treasurer and later Registrar of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, today the University of Rhodesia. In 1956, he became an examinations officer in the Southern Rhodesian Ministry of African Education, retiring from service with the Rhodesian government in February, 1973. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in administration by the University of South Africa in its centenary year.

*Dr Langham Dale Murray, M.A., D.Admin. (h.c.), D.C.M.
Registrar 1934-1953*



ya Bana ba Afrika in 1946. Much was expected of this venture, but it never rose to great heights.

A further reason for the growth of the system of external study lies in South African conditions during the depression years. Then, the examinations of the University of South Africa offered an opportunity for improvement to many whose parents could not afford to send them to a teaching university or university college. Finally, the examinations for external students were often welcomed by older men and women who, for one reason or another, had found it necessary to discontinue their studies after leaving school. Many of them were in full-time employment and had no other way of obtaining graduate qualifications.

The phenomenal and unexpected increase in the number of external students for the various examinations of the university between the two World Wars undoubtedly helped the administration financially. Nevertheless, from an academic standpoint, there was much to be said against external study and there were many, particularly in the federal Senate, who looked with great disfavour upon the prevailing system. That it should be abolished as quickly as possible was a general sentiment in South African university circles throughout the twenties and thirties.

However, if that were to happen, the field would be left open to an outside institution and students would simply turn to the external examinations of the University of London. One of the correspondence firms – Union College of Johannesburg – pointed this out in 1929, suggesting at the same time that the English university's degree requirements were not so restrictive as those of the University of South Africa. The Van der Horst Commission had made it clear in 1928 that it expected to see a speedy end to external degree work and it was one of the arguments advanced by the federal university at that time that it could at least combat the influence of the University of London in South Africa for as long as the system was tolerated. For by 1928, the University of South Africa, which had earlier tried to defend the external degree, had come to accept that it must ultimately go. What it was not prepared to accept, however, was that other

universities in the country should in the meantime be allowed to provide degree examinations for private students. And in the early thirties, the new University of Pretoria was anxious to take a bite from the external cake.

A draft bill was, in fact, prepared in 1932 to enable any university to examine external candidates, although such students would be compelled to take part of their courses internally. This would have affected all external candidates for the University of South Africa's degree examinations, except those at the South African Native College who were specially exempted from the provisions of the bill. There was an immediate outcry from individuals, teachers' organizations and spokesmen for the non-Europeans, and the bill was shelved when Hertzog and Smuts unexpectedly joined forces in the political compromise of March, 1933.

One of the most serious accusations levelled against the external student was that the standard of attainment which he brought to the examination table was markedly lower than that achieved by the collegiate student. Many circumstances contributed to this, but the blame was largely laid at the door of the correspondence firms. In 1932, when the University of South Africa suggested that their activities should be controlled, it was said that some of these institutions deliberately misled students, engaged ill-qualified staff, overcharged and provided inadequate assistance. Moreover, the federal university came to resent the use by one of them of the word "university" in its title. This problem would arise again in 1944 in a different context, when the Catholic authorities decided to establish a collegiate foundation at Roma in Basutoland, forerunner of the present university for the former High Commission territories, today Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. The term "university" should, in the eyes of the federal body, be restricted to independent degree-conferring institutions or to the federal constituent colleges.

Irritation over the poor quality of students trained by the correspondence colleges long tended to reinforce the idea that the system of external study should be brought to an end. There



MARTHINUS CHRISTOFFEL BOTHA was born on 26 August, 1886 in the district of George (Cape). He had a hard struggle to complete his education, for he came from a poor family and was compelled to work in a number of fields, including teaching, after he left primary school. He obtained the B.A. degree at the Victoria College in 1914 and after a further period as a schoolmaster, was appointed to a post at the University of Cape Town in 1918 as a lecturer in Dutch and Afrikaans. He pioneered the teaching of Afrikaans at that university and advanced to a professorship in 1921, when he had received his M.A. degree.

In 1929, he was appointed Superintendent General of Education for the Cape Province and five years later, became Secretary for Education in the Department of Union Education. Chairman of the Board of Control of the South African Broadcasting Corporation from 1936 until 1942, he was Principal of the University of Pretoria from 1941 until his retirement in 1947. A champion of Afrikaans, it was largely as a result of his efforts that the University of Pretoria was able to establish a Faculty of Medicine in which that language is used as a medium of instruction.

Professor Botha was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature by the University of South Africa in 1936 and an honorary LL.D. by the University of Cape Town in 1950.

He served the University of South Africa as a member of Council almost continuously from 1929 until 1936 and again from 1954 to 1959. He held the office of Vice-Chancellor between 1934 and 1936.

Professor Botha's death occurred in Cape Town on 3 January, 1959.

*Professor Marthinus Christoffel Botha, M.A.,
D.Litt. (h.c.), LL.D. (h.c.)
Member of Council 1929-1934; 1934-1936; 1954-1959
Vice-Chancellor 1934; 1934-1936
(Photo: University of Pretoria)*

were few suggestions that the University of South Africa itself should become a teaching university for the benefit of this class of students. Nevertheless, such a revolutionary proposal had occurred to some. As early as January, 1926, Arthur Ritchie Lord, Professor of Philosophy at Rhodes University College, had put the idea forward. His memorandum, which deserves to be remembered as the precursor of later developments, envisaged a tutorial system, with university lecturers available for guidance and interviews. It met, however, with little encouragement and his alternative, that the colleges undertake this kind of work, failed to interest the constituents.

By 1936, J. W. Bews of Natal was alarmed to note that, for the first time, the federal university had a larger enrolment of non-collegiate students than internal ones. A Senate committee was appointed to look into the problem and a number of suggestions were made, including one which had enjoyed the support of D. F. Malan as Minister of Education some years before. This was that a joint board should administer external examinations. Correspondence courses and vacation schools run by the university or by the colleges were suggested, but it was pointed out "that competition with existing Correspondence Colleges will not provide a 'walk-over' ". Lord's ideas of ten years earlier were at last gaining some degree of acceptance and Mabel Palmer in Natal submitted a detailed scheme embracing a correspondence college as part of the university, with itinerant tutors and recognition of approved commercial undertakings. How strong hostility still was to the idea of external study, however, may be gauged from the reaction of the Potchefstroom constituent, which advocated the addition of the words "external student" to degree certificates so earned.

The federal Senate at length produced a report which went no further in the direction of tuition than the possibility of starting vacation schools at the colleges. It also recommended the extension of the degree course for external students from three to four years, an idea which had been suggested several years before by E. H. G. Arndt of the Department of Economics at the Transvaal

University College. E. H. Brookes, however, accused the committee members in a minority report of displaying excessive caution and disagreed with the "underlying assumption of the majority . . . that the University should take no responsibility for the teaching of External Students".

The course for private students in the popular field of commerce and administration had already been lengthened; by 1938, this was extended to all departments of study. The administrative head of the University Correspondence Courses firm, S. J. Hofmeyr, complained immediately and submitted that the regulation was *ultra vires*. The university was forced to take action since a case was to be brought before the courts to test the legality of the measure. Steve Hofmeyr's contention also led to a conflict between the federal university and the Department of Union Education over the presentation of regulations for prior approval. The offending rule was suspended, while both the University of South Africa and the Department of Union Education sought legal opinion on Hofmeyr's argument. There was no unanimity here and the university authorities requested either legislative action to enable them to differentiate between internal and external candidates, or at least the opportunity to discuss the problem with the Minister of Education.

Meanwhile, the Minister, Jan Hofmeyr, had resigned for a brief spell over the native representation question and had been replaced by Henry A. Fagan. It was the new Minister who, with the Secretary for Education, G. von W. Eybers, met a joint delegation of Council and Senate on 25 November, 1938. The member of Council and future Vice-Chancellor, A. A. Roberts, was the chief spokesman for the external students, in the absence of Brookes. While he felt that there was a tendency for some correspondence colleges to become mere degree mills, he considered that the university Senate members were generally far too hostile to this method of study. This was strongly denied, but Professor Dreyer of Bloemfontein was not prepared to see the rights of internal students prejudiced in any way. Professor J. McKinnell of Natal mentioned the proposal which had been



FRANÇOIS DANIËL HUGO was born on 27 February, 1883 on the farm Grootstraat in the Touws River district of the Cape. At the age of 12, he enrolled at the Spes Bona School, De Doorns and subsequently attended the South African College, where he obtained the B.A. degree in 1906. He also qualified as a teacher at the Normal College in Cape Town.

He joined the inspectorate of the Natal Department of Education, was made a full Inspector in 1912 and was transferred for health reasons to the head office in Pietermaritzburg four years later. He was appointed Acting Chief Inspector in 1923, a post which was made permanent in 1931. In that year, he became Superintendent (later Director) of Education for Natal and retained this position until 1941, when he entered the service of the national government as Secretary for Union Education. He retired in July, 1944.

François Daniël Hugo was long active in the life of the Afrikaans-speaking community in Pietermaritzburg and as the first Afrikaner to take charge of the Natal Department of Education, did much to encourage the study of his home language in a largely English-speaking province.

He served on the university Council in his official capacity from 1931 until 1941 and was chosen as Vice-Chancellor for two years in 1936.

He died on 4 September, 1959 at Strand, near Cape Town.

François Daniël Hugo, B.A.
Member of Council 1931-1941
Vice-Chancellor 1936-1938

made to institute oral examinations as a supplementary test of the external student's ability. The Vice-Chancellor, F. S. Malan, alluded to the peculiar difficulties of the South African Native College in its relations with the federal university and F. D. Hugo spoke of the interest then being shown by Indians in Natal on the subject of higher education.

The discussion led to the framing of a bill which included the extension of the external course to four years. Widespread indignation followed, on a scale which suggests that it was not entirely spontaneous. Certainly, the commercial firms, doubtless fearing a loss of income, were implicated. The Minister, the Department of Union Education, individual members of parliament, the federal university and the press were bombarded with angry letters. The new measure, as a Wynberg (Cape) correspondent in the *Argus* pointed out, showed the external student little consideration. The authorities, he went on, with a delightful disregard for metaphor, were simply "putting spokes in our wheels thus rendering the way for us more difficult to pave". Another in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* rose to the defence of the correspondence firms which he described as "the poor man's home university". Steve Hofmeyr of the University Correspondence Courses submitted to the Chairman of the Public Service Commission a statement which enumerated various disabilities under which the external student worked. He also pointed out that three-quarters of his students were teachers and civil servants who needed special consideration.

Protests were as strong from the Afrikaans-speaking section as from the English. The *Transvaler's* editorial of 22 February, 1939 spoke of the issue as one which concerned "die versterking van die Afrikanerdom", while the Bloemfontein *Volksblad* painted a touching picture of the tired external student sacrificing his leisure while others enjoyed social relaxation. The *Vaderland* struck a lighter note: "„Wat is 'n eksterne student, Jaap?" vra Vroutjie my gisteraand. „Eksterne student, skatlief? Dis 'n man wat hom in sy vrye tyd met studie besig hou – ek bedoel studie vir 'n graad, nie van sy finansiële moeilikhede soos ek nie.' . . .

„En wat mag interne studente presies beteken, . . . ?” „Tog baie duidelik, . . . Interne student is ’n man wat die hele dag sy vrye tyd maak en dit aan sy pa oorlaat om in sy vrye tyd oor die finansiële moeikhede te bekommer.”!

The general indignation even led to the establishment in Johannesburg of an external students’ association which presented a petition to the Minister of Education, protesting against what it described as “a form of class legislation”. The barrage of words achieved the desired result and the external student was able to show that he had some political influence. The bill, which contained other clauses such as that which provided for additional examination centres, was amended and Act 21 of 1939 made no mention of the four year course. It appeared in the annual *Calendar* until 1951 as a suspended measure, but the University of South Africa remained for some time critical of external standards and increasingly dissatisfied with the work of some of the correspondence firms which provided the instruction.

It was in part this lack of confidence in the work of the commercial undertakings and in part the coming of war in 1939 which led to a change of attitude within a university which had done little enough in the past to assist the private student. The Registrar’s Secretary, Kreine Alexander, submitted a report on the University of London’s external system early in 1939, but at that date Senate did not consider that the limited assistance afforded students by the English body was applicable to South African conditions. However, book loan facilities were improved with the co-operation of the State Library in Pretoria and a watchful eye was kept upon the whole situation. Problems soon arose in connection with wartime study, involving such an extension of external examination as the holding of practical tests in science in distant Cairo.

From 1942, there was a sharp rise in external enrolments for examination purposes, after an initial drop in the first years of the war. The University of South Africa might soon have to face a deluge of applications when serving members of the armed forces returned to civilian life and saw the advantage of “learn-



FRANÇOIS STEPHANUS MALAN was born on 12 March, 1871 at Bovlei, near Wellington in the Cape. After attending schools in the Paarl district, he entered the Victoria College, where he obtained the B.A. degree in 1892. He completed his studies at Christ's College, Cambridge, gaining an LL.B. in 1895.

Finding little work as an advocate on his return to the Cape, he turned to journalism and became editor of *Ons Land*. During the Anglo-Boer War, he suffered imprisonment for his outspokenness, but came to see the importance for South Africa of harmony between Boer and Briton.

In 1900, he was elected to the House of Assembly as the member for Malmesbury, a seat he retained in the Cape and Union parliaments until 1924. He held cabinet rank under Merriman, Botha and Smuts and was South Africa's first Minister of Education. His major achievement in this capacity was the university legislation of 1916. Elected a Union Senator in 1927, he was President of the Senate in 1940 and 1941.

F.S. Malan was active in the affairs of the Dutch Reformed (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde*) Church and also in cultural life. A founder member of the *Akademie* in 1909, he helped to further the cause of Dutch and Afrikaans. In 1912, he became the first speaker in the history of the examining university to give a graduation address in Dutch. His writings include a biography of Maria Koopmans-De Wet and a chapter in the eighth volume of the *Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1936).

A member of the British Privy Council in 1920, he also received honorary degrees from two universities: the LL.D. of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1917 and the D.Ed. of the University of Stellenbosch in 1931.

F.S. Malan served briefly on the Council of the University of South Africa in 1932 as Acting Director of Education for the Transvaal and again from 1936 until 1940 as a representative of the Huguenot University College. He was chosen as Vice-Chancellor for two years in 1938.

He died in Cape Town on 31 December, 1941.

Senator François Stephanus Malan, B.A., LL.B.

LL.D. (h.c.), D.Ed. (h.c.), P.C.

Member of Council 1932; 1936-1940

Vice-Chancellor 1938-1940

(Photo: Government Archives)

ing while earning". Now that the university seemed certain to lose several, if not all of its constituent colleges, its role as inquisitor for students not connected with those scattered teaching units assumed a greater importance. There were even enquiries from beyond the borders – from Kenya, where post-matriculation work was contemplated; from the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, requesting external courses in mining engineering; from Moçambique, where the organization called British Education in Lourenço Marques began to think of providing instruction based upon the university's examinations. Here was an opportunity for the federal university to extend its influence yet further and, indeed, to perpetuate its own existence.

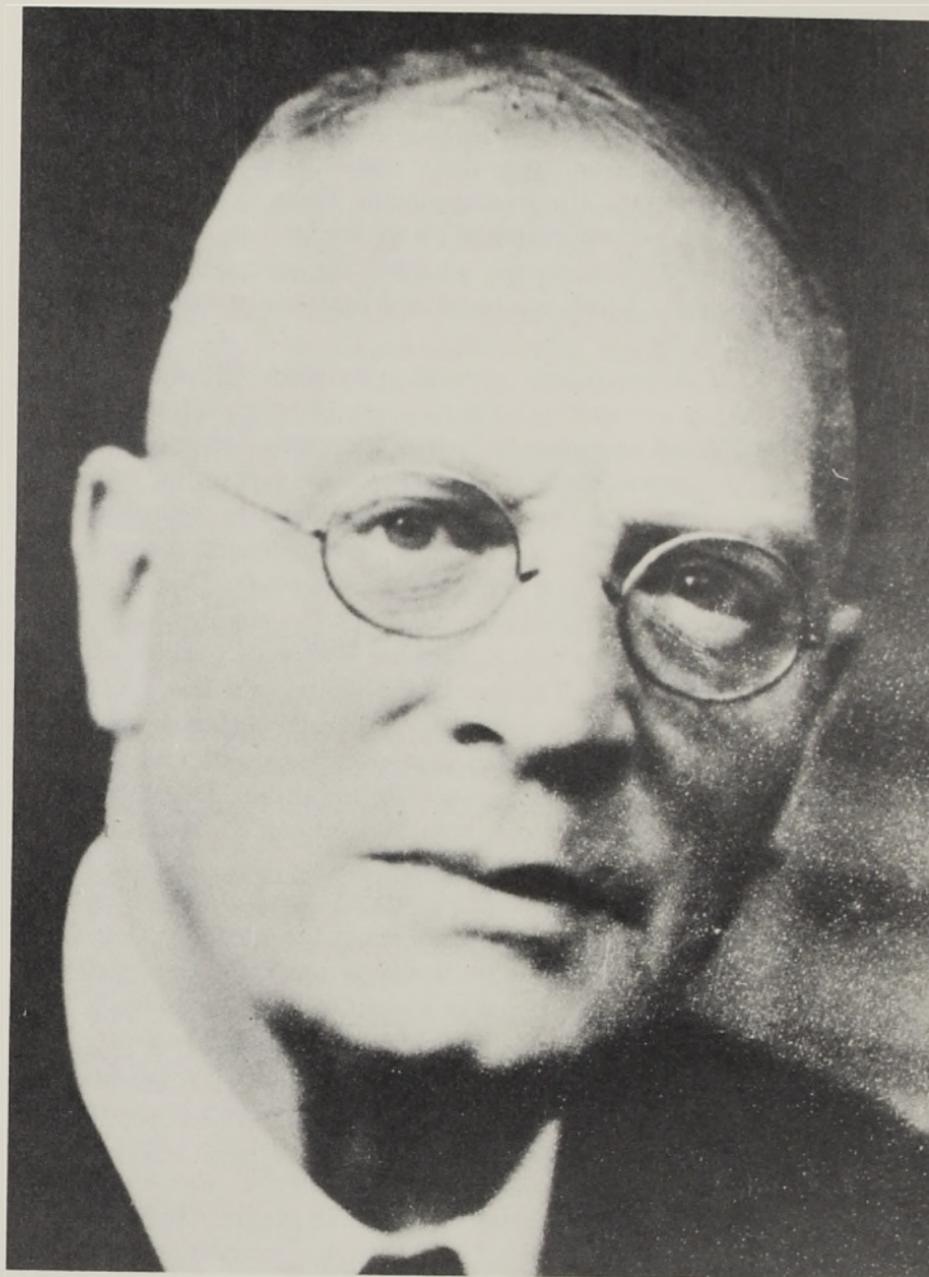
A movement which would in time lead to the reconstruction of the University of South Africa began in 1944. At the Senate meeting held that year in Bloemfontein, the problem of external study was discussed with a view to submitting evidence to the recently constituted Committee on Adult Education under the chairmanship of G. von W. Eybers. On this occasion, a motion was put forward by the historian of the University College of the Orange Free State, C. J. Uys, in the name of the Senate of his college. It proposed that the federal university "stappe doen om die beheer oor die opleiding van studente wat begerig is om . . . eksamens ekstern af te lê in oorweging te neem met die doel om moontlik self in die behoefte vir onderrig deur middel van korrespondensielesings te voorsien". This motion was accompanied by a memorandum drawn up by Uys himself. The federal university, he insisted, had two courses open to it: to undertake correspondence work or to draw the commercial firms into the federation. The University of South Africa could no longer stand aside. A new approach was required, consistent with the needs of the present, for as Uys said: "Ons roeping is om ons eie beskawing te bestendig en aan te help, wat sy eie behoeftes en eise het, nie die beskawing wat deur die middeleeuse universiteit gedien is nie".

The University of South Africa was never enthusiastic about the incorporation within the federal framework of commercial

institutions of which it disapproved. They, in their turn, defended themselves before the Eybers Committee with spirit. There is no doubt that the best of them, among which may be mentioned the Rapid Results College and the Transafrika amalgamation, did in fact do good work and provided a useful service for many thousands of students. The correspondence firms were at least able to resist the recommendation of the committee that they be state-controlled; government accepted the alternative of a national association which would set and maintain standards of conduct.

The federal university was to move away from the commercial undertakings and at length enter into competition with them. Senate's Standing Committee on External Students recognized in 1944 "that the external student system has come to stay and that (it) is undesirable that the training of such students be left solely to commercial institutions". It therefore recommended the appointment of an officer to be known as the "Director of External Studies", with clearly defined responsibilities. Government assistance was to be sought to help finance the proposed extension of the university's functions. The constituent colleges were lukewarm in their approval of this new departure. The Potchefstroom institution went so far as to suggest that an investigation into the external student problem undertaken by the officer designated by the Senate committee would, "uit die aard van die saak", be no objective enquiry.

Individual expressions of opinion varied. One of the more ardent supporters of any scheme to bring the university into closer contact with the external student body was E. Eybers, head of the Department of Education at Bloemfontein. "It requires", he said, "only a limited vision, backed by a controlled imagination, to foresee the immense opportunities presented for satisfying an urgent need for disinterested service . . . There is similarly an almost limitless scope for assistance to the Africans who are more than ever hungering for education". On the other hand, the Registrar, Langham Murray, was unenthusiastic. "External Studies", he wrote in October, 1944, "are not university educa-



FERDINAND POSTMA was born on 15 July, 1879 at Aliwal North and received his early education at Middelburg (Cape) and Burgersdorp. In 1898, he wrote the Intermediate B.A. examination at the theological school of the Reformed Church in the latter town, continuing his studies at the *Vrije Universiteit* in Amsterdam. He passed the *Candidaatexamen* in 1904, a success which entitled him to admittance as a B.A. of the University of the Cape of Good Hope.

On his return to South Africa, he was appointed professor at the theological school in Burgersdorp and moved with it in 1905 to its new home at Potchefstroom. In 1911, he became a candidate for the ministry of the Reformed Church and three years later, received a doctorate from the *Vrije Universiteit* for a thesis presented in Latin.

When the Arts Department of the theological school was converted into a university college in 1919, Ferdinand Postma was chosen as Principal. He held this post until his death, combining his duties with active teaching until 1945. He fought hard for the incorporation of the college as a constituent of the University of South Africa and when this had been achieved in 1921, campaigned for the restoration of its full title: Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education.

Professor Postma was a member of several educational and cultural bodies, among them the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* and the Joint Matriculation Board. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, he was a prolific writer. His publications include a biography of Paul Kruger and the first Afrikaans-Latin dictionary.

In 1949, the University of South Africa presented him with an honorary doctorate in education. He had devoted many years to the service of the federal institution. A member of Council from 1919 until 1950 and Vice-Chancellor for two terms between 1940 and 1944, he was also Chairman of the Committee of Studies in Classics and twice Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Chairman of Senate.

Ferdinand Postma died in Potchefstroom on 4 November, 1950.

*Professor Ferdinand Postma, B.A., Litt.Dr.,
D.Ed. (h.c.), F.R.S.A.
Member of Council 1919-1950
Vice-Chancellor 1940-1944
Dean of the Faculty of Arts 1924-1926; 1931-1933
Chairman of Senate 1926-1928; 1936-1938*

tion. The essential element in a university education is sitting at the feet of a Gamaliel; it is not merely acquiring knowledge, which is a subsidiary element in the process; it is the association for a period of the immature and enquiring mind with the trained and stored mind of a teacher, and is thus 'education' in the truest sense of the word". It was, Murray considered, a fallacy to imagine that the passing of examinations entitled a candidate to a degree. As for the proposed Director, he doubted whether many students would seek his advice on their studies, if that were to be his main function. Moreover, the new officer would be placed in an anomalous position as an administrator with academic duties. It would almost be a return to the first years of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, when the Registrar played so intimate a role in university affairs.

Council decided to appoint a Director of External Studies on a temporary basis for one year. Several names were suggested for the post, including that of the university's most distinguished external student of earlier days, E. H. Brookes, then a Union Senator. The man finally chosen was Professor A. J. H. van der Walt of Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education. His first task was to consider the whole question of external student of earlier days, E. H. Brookes, then a Union on the subject was to guide the future academic development of the University of South Africa. He concluded, after a comprehensive survey of the problem, "that the aims of the University, namely, to ensure a satisfactory training for external students, thereby safeguarding the standard of the degrees, and to serve the general interests of university education, could best be realised by the institution of a Department of External Studies to undertake the training of students in the faculties where this is practicable". As some subjects, particularly those requiring laboratory work, did not lend themselves to tuition by correspondence, he felt that it would be "expedient to limit the work of the proposed Department to the Faculties of Arts, Law and Commerce".

The conclusions reached were in agreement with those expressed by the Eybers Committee in a report published in the

same year. They were accepted, with minor changes, by the Council of the University of South Africa. Professor van der Walt was invited to take charge of the new section, an invitation which he accepted with the promise that he would do all within his power "om van die nuwe onderneming 'n sukses te maak, in belang van die goeie naam van die Universiteit, van die opvoeding en van die eksterne studente".

It was to be expected that, when a bill was published early in 1946 to give effect to the new approach in university education, there would be opposition from the commercial firms, for they, as Langham Murray felicitously put it, "like the silver-smiths of Ephesus feared that their craft would be endangered". L. L. Boyd of the Rapid Results College submitted a memorandum to government pointing out that Professor van der Walt's strictures on the work of the correspondence colleges were not based upon direct consultation with them. He was also opposed to anything in the operation of the proposed scheme which would in any way place the University of South Africa at an advantage. Another critic was S. P. E. Boshoff of Transafrika and a Convocation member of the university Council. He wrote at some length on the question in a series of articles entitled "Rommelpot in die hanekot", which appeared in the commercial firm's journal, *Horison*, and were subsequently issued in pamphlet form. In them, Professor Boshoff showed a similar irritation with the assumption that the correspondence firms were unequal to the task of providing an efficient service and wondered whether the University of South Africa's new department would do better.

Jan Hofmeyr, as Minister of Education and Finance, had to tread lightly in the delicate matter of placing a state-aided institution in open competition with private concerns. The government was prepared to find a subsidy of R17 000 on the understanding that the University of South Africa would itself raise R20 000. This financial support would give parliament a voice in deciding future policy should a deficit occur in the working of the scheme. The Higher Education Amendment Act received the assent of the Governor-General on 8 May, 1946. It had met

ALFRED ADRIAN ROBERTS was born on 18 February, 1890 at Fauresmith in the Orange Free State. He matriculated at Selborne College, East London, graduated at the Transvaal University College in 1911 and completed his studies at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he passed the law tripos.

He practised in Pretoria until 1919, when he was appointed Registrar of the Transvaal University College, a post he held until 1929. He then resumed his legal career, becoming law adviser to the government in 1935.

Secretary for Education in the Department of Union Education from 1944 until 1949, he was subsequently chosen as South Africa's High Commissioner in Canada. During his four years in this office, he was several times a delegate to the United Nations Organization. In 1954, he led the South African delegation to the Commonwealth Conference in Lahore.

In 1960 and 1961, he was an acting judge of the Transvaal Provincial Division and at the time of his death, Commissioner for Patents. A man of diverse interests and the author of several legal works, he was also a member of a number of educational bodies. In 1959, the University of Cape Town conferred on him an honorary LL.D. degree in recognition of his services.

A member of the Council of the University of South Africa from 1930 until 1946, he was chosen as Vice-Chancellor for two years in 1944.

Alfred Adrian Roberts died in Pretoria on 7 April, 1964.

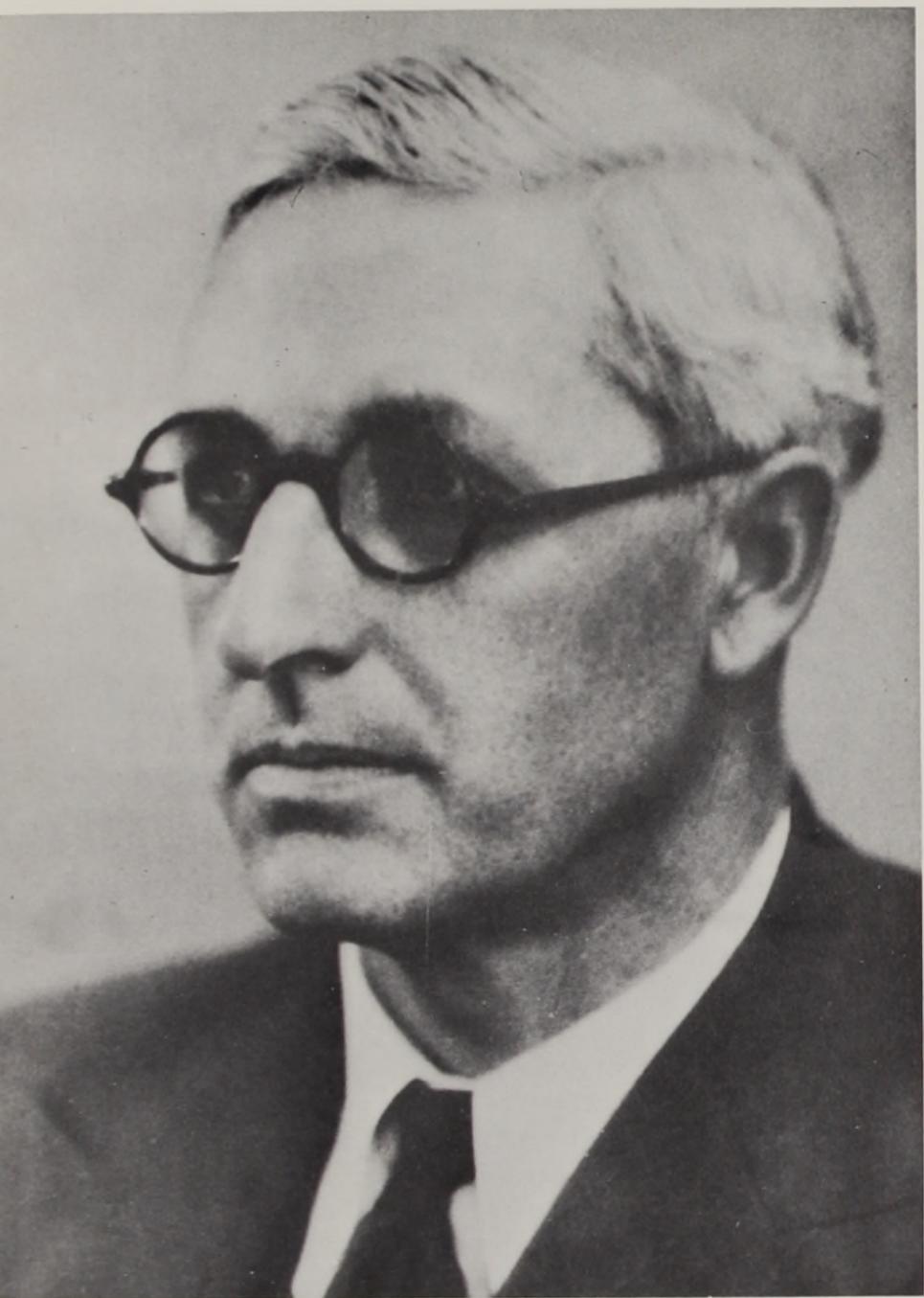
Adv. Alfred Adrian Roberts, M.A., LL.B., LL.D. (h.c.), Q.C.

Member of Council 1930-1946

Vice-Chancellor 1944-1946

President of Convocation 1928-1929

(Photo: University of Pretoria)



with some opposition in its passage from such determined supporters of the commercial undertakings as the Dominion Party member for Pinetown, J. S. Marwick, the British-born Labour Party member for Durban North, the Rev. C. F. Miles-Cadman of the Anglican Church, and the Transvaal Nationalists, S. J. Swanepoel of Gezina and W. D. Brink of Christiana. Jan Hofmeyr was able, however, to reassure the House of Assembly that the Division of External Studies would devise a method to ensure that its students obtained no unfair advantage over those who studied with the private concerns. Senator Brookes gave the bill his blessing in the upper House and in the House of Assembly, the New Zealand-born educationist and economist, J. R. Sullivan of the Durban (Berea) constituency, spoke for many when he expressed the hope that the new venture would "lead ultimately to the establishment of a great national university – a people's university – in South Africa".

By the time the Brookes Commission of 1947 was deliberating on the future of the University of South Africa, the institution had therefore been set upon a new path. It had not yet ceased to be a federation of colleges, but its future greatness would not lie along federal lines. It had often been the object of attack in its Cape days as a mere examining board; as a federal university, it had lived under the threat of dissolution almost from the day of its birth. It had, however, at last succeeded in justifying its existence by undertaking the tuition and guidance of those candidates for its examinations whose welfare it had largely ignored for almost three quarters of a century.

8 *First steps along a new path*

Professor van der Walt began his career as full-time Director of the Division of External Studies on 15 February, 1946, with one typist, Pamela R. Storey, to assist him. The University of South Africa of today, both as a teaching institution and as an administrative body, had been born.

The new section was not, however, welcomed with open arms on all sides. Even within the university, it was very much a fledgling in the nest and, for many, an unwelcome intruder. The salaries of Director and Registrar had been placed upon an equal basis to avoid any suggestion that the head of the teaching branch of the university was to be considered a more important officer than the senior administrative official. For the Registrar's office was, after all, the nerve centre which controlled not only collegiate affairs and examinations, but also the vital matter of finance. Langham Murray, ever courteous and gentlemanly as Registrar, was nevertheless zealous in guarding the rights of the existing administration. The Division of External Studies, if it ever survived its infancy, was to be no more than a constituent section of the University of South Africa, with a specialized task.

And indeed, Langham Murray was not one of those who expected it to succeed. He said so on more than one occasion and was confident that he would outlive the newcomer. He would doubtless have agreed with much that was asserted about its probable direction by the Natal University College in 1947, when an "External University" was described as "an overflow activity of



The distinguished historian and university administrator, ANDRIES JACOBUS HENDRIK JOHANNES VAN DER WALT, was born on 12 October, 1893 in the district of Steynsburg (Cape). His early education was seriously interrupted and he did not matriculate until 1916. An outstanding university student, he completed his studies at Potchefstroom University College by obtaining the M.A. degree in 1921. Seven years later, he was awarded the degree of D.Phil. by the Kaiser Wilhelm University in Berlin.

He had already lectured at Potchefstroom before he left for Germany and on his return, was appointed Professor of History there. He played an active part in the academic life of the college and of the federal university. Long a member of the Committee of Studies in History of the University of South Africa, he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1943 until 1946. The author of a number of books and articles, he collaborated with J.A. Wiid and A.L. Geyer in the production of a general history of South Africa in two volumes.

In 1945, Professor van der Walt was invited to report upon the possibility of inaugurating a system of tuition for external students. His findings were accepted by the university and in the following year, a Division of External Studies was established under his guidance.

He remained Director of External Studies until 1953, when he became the first Principal of the University of South Africa, a position he held until his retirement three years later. On 14 July, 1956, the university conferred upon him an honorary doctorate in literature and philosophy. It was a fitting tribute to his academic achievements and his great work in pioneering new methods of teaching in higher education.

Professor van der Walt, who had been a member of Council since 1946, retained his connection with the governing body until 1971, when he declined further nomination. His death occurred in Pretoria on 16 August, 1972.

*Professor Andries Jacobus Hendrik Johannes van der Walt,
M.A., D.Phil., D.Litt. et Phil. (h.c.)
Member of Council 1946-1971
Director of External Studies 1946-1953
Principal 1953-1956
Dean of the Faculty of Arts 1943-1946*

the university proper", powerless to maintain standards and leading directly to the creation of "a cramming shop".

As the Director and his staff began to feel that their role in higher education was not necessarily going to be a transient one, the gap between the administrative and teaching sections grew wider. There seems, for example, to have been a good deal of unnecessary letter writing, when frank discussion of problems would perhaps have cleared the air. There was also too much overlapping of the sections and a certain amount of friction regarding promotion prospects among the senior administrative staffs of each as the Registrar approached retiring age.

And, if there was a lack of faith in the value of the Division of External Studies in Langham Murray's department, this only reflected similar scepticism elsewhere. There were some who hoped to see the University of South Africa make a success of its new undertaking; many, however, of those who sat on its Council or who safeguarded the interests of the constituent colleges in the federal Senate treated the Director's small staff with condescension. College professors and heads of departments far outnumbered the representatives of Professor van der Walt's section at Senate meetings in the early days and academic control was firmly exercised by the college members throughout the federal period. Indeed, it was to be some years before the Division of External Studies would have its own Chairman of Senate and a full range of faculty Deans.

However, it must be admitted that those who lectured under Professor van der Walt were as yet beginners in their trade. It was therefore no bad thing that the colleges held the initial balance of power. In that way, uniform high standards could be maintained in the interests of the university as a whole. This, at all events, was how the situation was regarded by W. F. Barker, the Professor of Chemistry at Rhodes University College, who served as Chairman of Senate from 1948 until 1952, in succession to H. van der Merwe Scholtz of the University College of the Orange Free State.

So far as meetings of the university Council were concerned,

the Division of External Studies spoke only through the Director, and then merely by courtesy of Senate. Ten of the twenty-five members represented college interests, while the heads of the provincial education departments and their colleagues from South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia also attended. In this connection, it may be noted that the teaching division faced some initial hostility, both in Cape and Transvaal educational circles, with regard to the recognition of external degrees.

There was one other body directly concerned with the university's new task – the Joint Committee of Council and Senate for External Studies. This consisted of the Chairman of Senate and two other Senate members, the Vice-Chancellor, the Chairmen of Council's Finance and Staff Committees, the Principal of the South African Native College, the Deans of the Faculties of Arts and of Commerce and Administration and the Director of the Division of External Studies. The Director was later supported by one of his colleagues.

Here, as in other spheres, the teaching arm of the university was largely manipulated by outsiders. The Director could, however, usually count on the support of the Principal of the Fort Hare college – Alexander Kerr until 1948, when he was succeeded by C. P. Dent. Although that institution enjoyed a special link with the federal university until its brief affiliation with Rhodes, its students were still considered to be external candidates for examinations. The University of South Africa and its Division of External Studies were also fortunate in having A. J. R. van Rhijn as Vice-Chancellor from 1948 until 1952. The Nationalist Member of Parliament for Bethlehem in 1948, Dr van Rhijn became Administrator of South West Africa two years later. He was at all times a strong supporter of the university's teaching venture, both in the House of Assembly and in other areas of public life.

Once the Division of External Studies had been approved, Council authorized the appointment of a number of lecturers and clerical officers. It was, however, none too easy to find staff of any kind at that end of war period. The vast expansion of the

existing universities and colleges to meet the needs of returning members of the armed forces absorbed most available lecturers; moreover, there seemed little certainty that the new section would become a permanent addition to the teaching universities. Many approved posts remained vacant and most of the lecturers appointed came to the University of South Africa from other fields of education, particularly the secondary schools. Most of the men and women selected for posts in the early years and subsequently were Afrikaans-speaking. This circumstance at once reflects the greater degree of bilingualism among teachers in this group, a wider hostility towards the new method of university teaching among English-speaking graduates and above all, the availability of larger numbers of Afrikaans-speaking candidates for posts.

The first member of the teaching staff to be appointed was H. J. J. M. van der Merwe, head of the Department of *Afrikaans en Nederlands*, who had just received his doctorate from the University of Pretoria. He was then teaching in an acting capacity at the College of Education in the city, after several years as a teacher at the Central Junior High School, housed in the building in Van der Walt Street from which a young Winston Churchill had made his escape during the Anglo-Boer War.

The appointment of three more senior lecturers soon followed. These were A. S. Roux and C. B. Smit, both long in the service of the university, and K. D. Venter, who died shortly after his recent retirement. A. S. Roux, head of the Department of Psychology, came to the university with teaching experience not only in schools, but also in the correspondence college field with which the Division of External Studies was now in competition. C. B. Smit of the Department of Geography was on the staff of the Pretoria Technical College, whose Principal, J. P. Duminy, was to prove a good friend to the new university venture. K. D. Venter was the first head of the Department of Economics and joined the staff of the University of South Africa with extensive teaching experience in the Cape and the Transvaal. A great practical joker, he helped to make the task of getting the Division of External Studies on its feet a little lighter.

These were the men who gathered at Somerset House on the morning of 30 July, 1946 to meet the new Director and to plan the course ahead. They were soon joined by others. At the second formal meeting of the staff on 3 September, 1946, in an association which ultimately became the Board of Tutors, six more lecturers and senior lecturers were present. These were P. J. Coertze, J. Albert Coetzee, C. F. J. Muller, F. M. P. Oosterhof, H. L. Swanepoel and J. A. van der Walt. Two – C. F. J. Muller and J. A. van der Walt – were to make a permanent career with the university.

Dr Coertze was the first member of the teaching staff to be appointed with full-time lecturing experience at another university. He came to the Division of External Studies from Stellenbosch as Senior Lecturer in African Studies. This embraced the fields of anthropology, Bantu languages and Native administration, now separate departments. He did not, however, remain long with the new teaching section, leaving in 1949 to join the staff of the University of Pretoria as Professor of Bantu Languages. Already, in 1947, the university had appointed the man who was to succeed him. E. F. Potgieter, who left to assume the rectorship of the University College of the North in 1959, was a tower of strength in the university and worked in close harmony with the Director to promote its welfare. Long after his departure, he maintained a close interest in the affairs of the University of South Africa as a member of its Council.

Dr J. Albert Coetzee headed the Department of Politics and Public Administration, separately designated in the early *Calendars*. He has been described as the stormy petrel of the first years, with wide-ranging interests by no means confined to the teaching of his subject. His resignation in 1950 was occasioned by his aspirations as a journalist and his subsequent career took him into provincial and national politics. He was for some years the Nationalist Member of Parliament for the Kempton Park constituency in the Transvaal. His place was taken in October, 1950 by a young clerk in the university's administrative section, Willem

A. Kleynhans, later to obtain a professorship in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

C. F. J. Muller joined the staff of the Division of External Studies as Senior Lecturer in History, after a distinguished university career at Stellenbosch and Oxford. The son of the brilliant Rev. "Tobie" Muller, he brought to the new venture in Pretoria some experience of university teaching at Stellenbosch and school teaching in Cape Town. Christoffel Muller obtained his doctorate under H. B. Thom in 1947 and was to become the leading authority on the Great Trek period in South African history.

F. M. P. Oosterhof had been a Dutch exchange student at the University of Pretoria before the war and had joined his nation's armed forces, only to be imprisoned by the Japanese in the Far East. When the world conflict ended, he returned to South Africa and was appointed to the teaching staff of the university as Lecturer in French and in Classics. He was later promoted to a senior position and in 1949, was granted leave to study for his doctorate in Paris. After his return, he obtained a professorship at Stellenbosch and held this post until his death a few years later. His absence in 1949 and 1950 brought to the service of the Division of External Studies a young scholar who was later to return in a permanent capacity to the Department of Classical Languages. This was G. van N. Viljoen, who had been recommended to Oosterhof as a suitable temporary replacement by Hilgard Muller, then lecturing in Latin at the University of Pretoria and destined to become South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The first appointment in the Department of Law was that of Dr H. L. Swanepoel, who subsequently lectured in that field at Potchefstroom. As he was unable to move permanently to Pretoria, his place was soon taken by Dawid J. de Villiers, who had already joined the administrative staff of the university's teaching section as a clerk. Advocate de Villiers, who died in Pretoria in January, 1967, was a graduate of both Stellenbosch and Oxford, with experience in the correspondence college world. He was affectionately known to his colleagues as "the Judge" and

to him fell the spade-work in developing the university's present Faculty of Law.

J. A. van der Walt was the first Senior Lecturer in Sociology. He had obtained his M.A. from the University College of the Orange Free State and joined the Division of External Studies after a period as a school-teacher in Bloemfontein. He obtained his doctorate under J. de W. Keyter, and was later appointed to a professorship as head of his department.

By the date of the staff meeting of 16 October, 1946, three more pioneers had been appointed. J. H. (Demps) van der Merwe joined the staff as Senior Lecturer in Mathematics. He was awarded a Ph.D. degree by the University of Cape Town in 1956 and became a professor and head of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics. Hugo Hofmeyr, a qualified chartered accountant, was the first appointment in the Department of Accounting. His tragic death two years later left a vacancy which was filled by L. M. du Toit, who had experience in both the private sector and in government service. He was to become head of a separate Department of Auditing, created in 1960.

The third newcomer was D. H. Cilliers, who had wide experience in primary and secondary education in the Cape Province before he joined the University of South Africa to organize a Department of Education. Danie Cilliers, who was born on a mission station in what was then the Nyasaland Protectorate, completed his doctoral thesis under the guidance of the Potchefstroom educationist, J. Chr. Coetzee. After the single department had been divided into four within the Faculty of Education, D. H. Cilliers became head of the Department of Method and Administration, later the Department of Didactics and Comparative Education.

Early in 1947, the first series of appointments was completed when Edward Davis became head of the Department of English. Davis, born in London, emigrated to South Africa in 1922 and obtained an M.A. degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. He later spent two years at Oxford and immediately prior

NICOLAAS JACOBUS DE WET was born on 11 September, 1873 at Mooifontein, Aliwal North (Cape), where he first attended school. He obtained the B.A. degree at the Victoria College in 1893 and studied subsequently at Cambridge, gaining the LL.B. and winning the Chancellor's Gold Medal.

In 1896, he was admitted to the Cape bar and also to that of the South African Republic, where he practised until the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. He served on the staffs of Generals de la Rey and Botha during the conflict.

After the war, he resumed his practice and also entered politics, becoming a member of both the Union House of Assembly and Senate. He was Minister of Justice from 1913 until 1924, when he again returned to private legal work.

Appointed to the bench in January, 1932, he became Chief Justice on 19 July, 1939. From July, 1943 until December, 1945, he acted as Officer Administering the Government, following the death of the Governor-General, Sir Patrick Duncan.

He was chosen as Chancellor in 1943 and installed on 13 April, 1944, when an honorary LL.D. degree was conferred upon him by the university. He resigned the chancellorship in 1951.

Chief Justice N.J. de Wet died in Pretoria on 16 March, 1960.

*Chief Justice the Right Hon. Nicolaas Jacobus de Wet, B.A., LL.B.,
LL.D. (h.c.), P.C.
Chancellor 1943-1951*



to his appointment with the Division of External Studies was on the staff of the Krugersdorp High School. He left the university at the end of 1962 for Tel Aviv in Israel, but returned to South Africa to become Professor of English at the University of Port Elizabeth.

Professor A. J. H. van der Walt found particular difficulty in recruiting suitable men as Lecturers in Commerce and in Philosophy. Not until 1949, when F. E. Rädcl became a full-time member of the teaching staff, was a permanent Lecturer in Commerce appointed. Dr Rädcl was born in Germany and had come to Stellenbosch as an exchange student in 1939. He was interned as an enemy alien from 1940 until 1946, but was then able to return to the university to complete his doctorate. In 1948, he began work as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Economics and ultimately took charge of the Department of Business Economics.

The vacancy in the Department of Philosophy was not filled until 1951, when the internationally known scholar, Herman J. de Vleeschauwer, was selected. Dr de Vleeschauwer, who was born in Belgium in 1899, had been associated with higher education in his own country since his appointment to the University of Ghent in 1924. An honorary LL.D. of the University of Glasgow, he had been a prolific contributor to many European scientific journals.

From 1947, other men were appointed as the work of the new section increased. L. J. le Roux was briefly attached to the Department of Economics, before joining the University of Pretoria, where he obtained a professorship in a different field – that of chemistry. R. D. Tromp, long with the university, was appointed to the Department of Geography and J. L. Steyn, later Professor Steyn, began work with H. J. J. M. van der Merwe in *Afrikaans en Nederlands*. The sensitive poet from the Scottish Highlands, F. D. Sinclair, joined the Department of English. His death in 1961 was a sad loss to the university and to South African letters. Also attached to this department for a period was Mrs Phyllis Warner, a pioneer in the development of the modern theatre in

this country. To the Department of Psychology came Mrs L. C. Gerdes. She was to become the second woman member of staff – after Anna F. Steyn of the Department of Sociology – to hold a professorship in the university as reconstituted in 1946. Finally, Christoffel Muller was joined in the Department of History by Theo van Wijk, who had been a government archivist in Windhoek, South West Africa. At the time of his appointment, he was lecturing at Rhodes University College, Grahamstown. He married Cilna J. Labuschagne of the Department of Sociology in the University of South Africa and, as Professor van Wijk, was to contribute outstanding services to the university, both as teacher and as administrator.

The staff in the early years was never able to cope with all its problems without the assistance of temporary helpers in the various departments. Sometimes additional aid was needed when permanent members of the teaching staff were unavoidably absent. This occurred, for example, in the Department of History, when the former Boksburg Headmaster, A. E. du Toit, was brought in to replace Dr Muller, who was sent to the United States of America in 1951 to carry out important archival research. The late Dr du Toit was long associated with the department and was a well loved figure. Francis Ward assisted in the Department of English in 1948. Father – later Monsignor – Ward was Chancellor of the Catholic Archdiocese of Pretoria at the time of his death in December, 1971.

The first year in particular imposed a very heavy burden upon the small staff of the Division of External Studies. Lectures had to be written and translated for each stage of the various courses in order to provide for the needs of those students who in 1947 elected to enrol with the university rather than with one or other of the commercial correspondence colleges. It was also decided at an early stage that the lecturers would, from the start, undertake post-graduate work wherever possible and at the same time handle all correspondence in connection with it. The compilation of lectures imposed special problems. Not only were many members of staff unfamiliar with the technique of giving instruc-

tion in this way, but books were also in short supply in the years immediately following the end of the second World War. This meant that the lectures had to be more comprehensive than might otherwise have been the case. In some fields, outsiders were called in to help, as with F. J. Language, later the Professor of Anthropology at the University of the Orange Free State, but then working for the Brakpan Municipality. The Director himself took a hand in compiling history lectures.

It was a period of unremitting labour and although the *Sunday Times* of Johannesburg gave some publicity to the recreational activities of one zestful lecturer who liked to skip barefoot through the dewy grass of Burgers Park in the early morning sunshine, few members of the Director's team found much time for relaxation during the working day. Office hours were long, too – and more applicable to those for civil servants than to those for university lecturers. Until 1950, when a “mornings only” rule was introduced, staff were expected to be on duty from 8 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon in summer and from half past eight until half past four in winter. An hour and a quarter was allowed for lunch.

A larger clerical and administrative staff was soon needed to cope with the increasing volume of work. From the Registrar's office came the Accountant, Barend F. J. van Rensburg, as Secretary to the Division of External Studies. He was later to become Registrar himself, but at that period, few in Langham Murray's department felt that his transfer would be a stepping-stone to further advancement. Others came with him and new appointments were made. Stephanie Solomon joined Pamela Storey and each year saw the arrival of more clerks and typists. Stephanie left the university, returning later as Mrs van Niekerk. She was to become Secretary to the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics.

The early administrative staff included proof-readers, production and despatch clerks and librarians. An Organizer to the Division was decided upon and F. H. J. Quass was chosen for the post. He was soon succeeded, however, by Alewyn J. Vorster.



*The Proes Street, Pretoria home of the
Division of External Studies*

The formation of the DIVISION OF EXTERNAL STUDIES resulted in an increase in the staff of the University of South Africa. Somerset House could not accommodate all the additional members and a private house in Proes Street, Pretoria was rented. It provided a temporary answer to a growing problem.

The Librarian was Heinz O. K. Zastrau, who eventually joined the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg. Another of the early clerical assistants was Michiel G. van Niekerk, who rose to be the university's Chief Despatch Officer.

Under Langham Murray's control, and responsible, among other duties, for examination arrangements, was the Assistant Registrar, Petrus A. Taljaard. He, like Principal Clerk H. W. Harold Hewson, returned after retirement to work for the modern university. Both died recently. Louis G. van der Merwe, long to play a leading role in university administration, became Chief Clerk at this period and in 1948, Johannes J. Brits was appointed Senior Clerk. Others who would give many years' service to the University of South Africa included Albertus T. Laubscher, then a Principal Clerk, and two juniors, Willem H. le Roux and Gerhardus C. Kachelhoffer.

An efficient service could never have been provided if all newcomers in those months of rapid expansion had been accommodated in Somerset House, the university's home since 1918. There was some talk that the owners of the building would soon construct another nearby, more suitable to the University of South Africa's needs. This never materialized, but in the meantime, something had to be done quickly to solve a growing problem. Accordingly, a property was acquired at 222, Proes Street. This private house was a welcome addition to the university's accommodation. It was not an imposing building, but suitable offices were in short supply in those early days of peace; it was, however, reasonably central and accessible and had, in the back yard, a large room which seemed to have been both stable and store-room combined. This was ideal for the production department which soon became known as the stable section! Even the library found a temporary home there. There was one drawback, however. Whenever it rained, water poured through the roof!

The house provided offices for the Director and for the Secretary and his staff. There was also room for some of the lecturers, although most of them remained at Somerset House. At length, however, the accommodation problem grew so critical that many

lecturers were allowed to work at home. Several departments – of one staff member each, it should be remembered! – were compelled to share an office. At one period, the Departments of Law, Psychology, Sociology and French (with Classics) were housed together, with desks almost touching. Geography shared with History and also, for a time, with English. Inevitably, there were some disagreements between members of staff working in close proximity, but on the whole, relations were remarkably harmonious. The members of the Division of External Studies grew to know each other well and the hard work of the first months was relieved by occasional humorous incidents. J. A. van der Walt of the Department of Sociology later recalled Advocate de Villiers's discomfiture when he collected a present from his mother-in-law. She had sent him a box of tomatoes by train from Nelspruit and he was by no means pleased when he found that he had to pay railage charges which cost him more than three times the price of a similar box in the Pretoria market!

Staff meetings often took place under the large wild fig tree in the garden of the Proes Street house, sometimes to celebrate such events as the Director's birthday. The easy, friendly informality of those early months may be seen in the minutes of meetings, where congratulations upon staff anniversaries and, on one occasion, an engagement, were duly recorded by A. S. Roux of the Department of Psychology, who acted as Secretary.

Lectures, despite all difficulties, were finally completed and handed over to the production staff to be put into suitable form for despatch. The Division of External Studies had to face problems in this field, too. There was, for example, a general shortage of paper and of duplicating machines after the war. The Pretoria branch of the well-known firm of Gestetner assisted the university to overcome the deficiency; so, too, did J.A. van der Walt of the teaching staff. Translation and proof-reading tasks had to be shared and even the Director and the Secretary were pressed into service here. As a special precaution, lecturers were requested to keep duplicate copies of all the material which they compiled, as the fire hazard in old buildings was by no means a

HERMAN HEINRICH GERHARD KREFT was born on 18 June, 1888 in the mission house at Tulbagh (Cape). On matriculation in 1904, he trained as a teacher at the Normal College, Cape Town. After teaching for a year, he enrolled at the South African College, where he graduated with honours in modern languages in 1909. He returned to teaching until 1915, when he was made Inspector of Schools for the Burgersdorp-Aliwal North area.

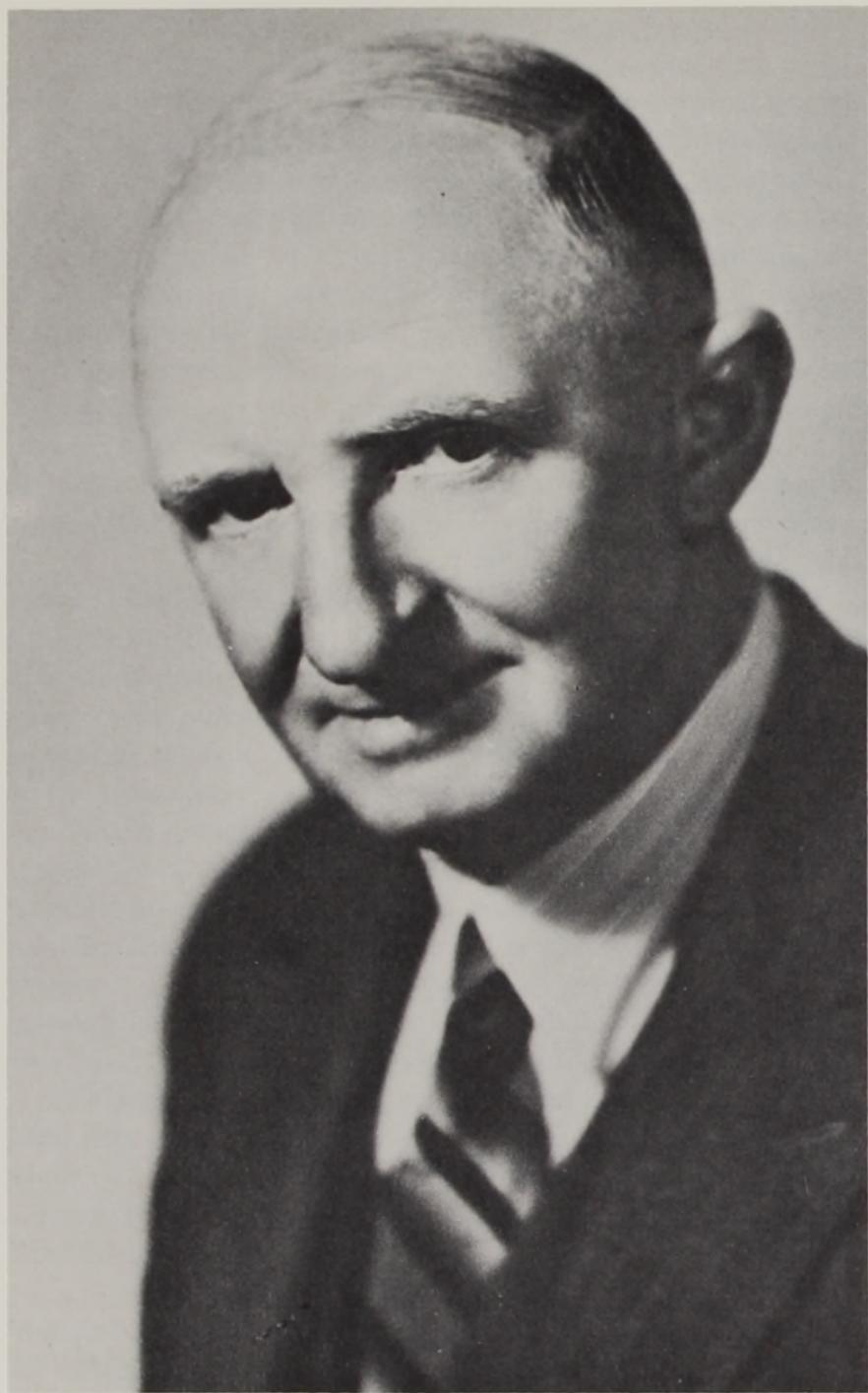
He became Director of Education for South West Africa in 1922 and 12 years later, was transferred to the Transvaal as Technical Adviser to the provincial Department of Education. From 1937 until his retirement in 1948, he was Director of Education for the Transvaal.

He actively promoted language teaching. As a member of the Joint Matriculation Board he helped to introduce German as a third language and, with the assistance of missionary bodies, did much to foster the teaching of African languages in South West Africa. He received the honorary LL.D. degree from the University of Cape Town in 1948.

After his retirement, he devoted himself to the interests of children in need of special care.

A member of Council from 1937 until 1948, he was chosen as Vice-Chancellor for two years in 1946.

Dr Herman Heinrich Gerhard Kreft, B.A., LL.D. (h.c.)
Member of Council 1937-1948
Vice-Chancellor 1946-1948



matter to be neglected. The Secretary's connection with teaching was not, incidentally, confined to occasional assistance in producing lectures. At one time, his services were enlisted as acting head of the Departments of Commerce and Accounting!

The need to produce lectures of good quality was of the utmost importance, for it was through them that Professor van der Walt and his colleagues would make their chief impact upon the student body. A high standard of tutorial guidance would do much to convince candidates for university examinations that enrolment with the new teaching arm rather than with the commercial colleges was the best guarantee of success in their studies. It would be some time before the colleges withdrew from the field of undergraduate instruction and in 1947, many firms were still confident that their courses were more comprehensive than anything the University of South Africa could offer.

The Division of External Studies had one advantage in its contest with the commercial undertakings, for it operated under the name of the university; on the other hand, it laboured under a serious disability. The private firms could advertise their courses and their successes; Professor van der Walt and his colleagues could not. Any attempt to do so would have been construed by the commercial correspondence colleges – both individually and in association – as unfair competition from a state-aided institution. The Director was able to offset this restriction in some measure by writing articles for popular periodicals and specialist journals. A *Newsletter* was also published in 1947, a modest journal which was expanded the following year as *The External Student*. This publication was issued annually from 1950 under the title *Student* and later adopted yet another name, *Unisa*. It was early decided to distribute copies of the journal to such institutions as teacher training colleges and hospitals and to make them available to various government departments. For some time, too, the examination successes of students enrolled with the Division of External Studies were listed in its pages.

By the end of February, 1947, all was ready for the start of postal tuition. The first batches of lectures were prepared for

despatch and a small ceremony was held on Saturday morning, 1 March, to inaugurate the new service. The Vice-Chancellor of the day, H. H. G. Kreft, gave a short address before sealing the first packet. The name of the recipient has been recorded and it was thus that A. P. J. Heiberg of Boksburg, who obtained his B.A. degree in 1948, played his small part in the continuing history of the University of South Africa. A new era had dawned.