I should like to say at the outset a word of thanks to the Convocation of Notre Dame University for the honor you have done me in inviting me to attend and to address your annual meeting. I am quite sure it would have been quite easy for you to have invited more suitable speakers, and I cannot think why you have decided to pick on me. However, the decision was arrived at and I owe you a word of thanks for it.
2. Although I have never been directly associated with the University of Natal, I have had very close associations with the Province in Natal. It was to this Province that I came as a young teacher in 1925. I had in 1928 become the first African to graduate from the BA degree of the University of Natal, and when I looked for a place where I might put to use the knowledge I had gained during my years of study, it was Natal in the BA degree that was Natal. I found my surroundings so engrossing that it was not until ten years before I decided to move on.
I became the first African to obtain the degree of L.L. B. of the University of South Africa. This I did by private study under the expert tuition of Professor F. B. Burchell of the then Basmane Natal University College, who has since been succeeded by his own in the chair of Law. I do not know what kind of teacher of Law he is but if he comes anywhere near his father then the students of Natal University are very fortunate in having him as their Professor of Law.

It was also as a result of the advice and guidance of a Natal man — the late Dr. Chile T. Loram — that I was able to
proceed overseas to study first at Yale University in America and later at the London School of Economics in the London United Kingdoms before I returned to join the staff of Fort Hare in 1936. Since then I have been closely associated in various capacities with the growth and the development of the institution whose leadership is now in the hands of the younger generation. As Fort Hare is about to undergo a complete change in its character I have thought it necessary to write this letter to you to consider briefly what Smith Africa owes to Fort Hare as an African development council
History. As is well known, the University College of Fort Hare, formerly known as the South African Native College, was founded by the then Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, General Louis Botha, in February 1916. Its establishment in that year represented the fulfillment of the hopes of those missionaries, educators, local-minded Europeans and others interested in African welfare, as well as leaders of African thought, who saw that soon or later it would be necessary to provide, as an integral part of the South African educational system, an institution characterized from the Africans and other non-European education under Christian auspices, of university standard. The first official suggestion for the establishment of the college was a recommendation of the South African Native Commission of 1903-5, commonly known as the Inter-Colonial Commission. The recommendation was to the effect that a Central Native College
or similar institutions be established and aided by the various States for training native teachers and in order to afford opportunity for higher education to native students.” Their scheme for the establishment of what came to be called the “inter-State Native College” at once exploited the needs of those interested in African education, including the Union themselves. From 1905 onward, enquiries were canvassed to consider the steps that might be taken to implement their recommendation and committees were set up for the raising of funds. It was fully ten years before the contributors and various bodies interested in the scheme could see their way to the formulation of a foundation scheme of the college, deciding upon a site for the college and with ambitious staff and getting ready for the opening in February 1916.
The beginning of the college was most inauspicious, although higher education had by then been going on for generations, there was not a single African qualified to be admitted as university students. Of the 20 students who entered the college in 1916, none possessed the matriculation certificate and only a few had even obtained the junior certificate. In the words in building up the college, the foundation had to start from scratch, without pre-university training, and it was not until 1925 that training for the university degree of the University of South Africa really got under way, with only a few qualified students. It is only from such small beginnings that Fort Once has gradually developed into the institution which we know today.

Now that Fort Once is about 50 years old, its relationship with the African Institutions is much better, who can and should use its facilities for us to consider and improve our teaching.
I should say that the first lesson which can be drawn from the experience of the two in relation to the capability of your late mental ability of the non-European people is our number. At the time when it was established that were many people, some of whom might be described as genuine friends of the native people. This is to whether they would be able to make the grade for higher education and to embark on a scheme for the higher education of Natives. This was an act of which many people were taken. This was so not just this capable. This was not only among the white people. It was even more among the native people themselves. Among the Natives people themselves. As we who were there at the beginning of the hunting first time I know it for a fact that many Natives were skeptical about whether the Queen brain could stand the strain of higher education.
It is to the credit of the founders of the institution that they had the faith in the ability of the African and to the credit of the students of those early days that they were willing to take part in an experiment which might have proved abortive.

Not only were doubts expressed about the ability of the African to undertake higher education in general, but they were certain about subjects about which it was agreed that they could not prove the beyond this range. Language and literature might possibly be within the range of his capability, but clearly science and mathematics would be a greater stumbling block for him than for other species. Anyone who succeeded in showing proficiency in these latter subjects must be a fluke for these flukes have turned up as if from the heavens of time.
1.abilities among the white people does not vary significantly from what is  
2. to be found among the groups represented in the South African population.

2. And not only has the full time student 
3. that, given the opportunity and
4. with proper guidance, the African student
5. can measure up to accepted university
6. standards but also that he can do so
7. within the normal time usually set aside for the completion of the requirements of the university degree. 
8. Irving regards to the fact that normal background 
9. of the average student and to the fact that 
10. he has to do all his work through the 
11. medium of a foreign language, it is 
12. remarkable that so many African 
13. students are able to turn into the quality of the work they do and that failures are not abnormally high among them compared with the portion of the university institutions in the country.
A second important fact which God has established during the last forty year is that it is possible for both black and white to live and work together in peace and harmony. Although Fort Hare was established primarily for the benefit of the Native race, it has been an open university college and has admitted to its student population and to its staff representatives of all sections of the South African population. In doing this the university realised the doing this was not unaware of the rifts and the antagonisms between the white and non-white but also between the different sections of the non-white population, but then going beyond the conventions which has been confirmed overseas.
again during the years that the matters
which unite much prove stronger
than the which divide. The African,
Church, Indian and European
student have worked together harmoniously
and at no time has it been necessary
to put down inter-tribal or inter-faculty feel of any kind. On the contrary,
contact between these different groups
has promoted mutual understanding
and appreciation and has resulted
in the establishment of lifelong friendships which have withstood
the test of time after college.

As for us the staff is concerned
members of staff have come from
both the English-speaking and
the African-speaking groups. They have
been of different nationalities and
come from different universities and
have been of different political
positions but the way in which
they have worked together has been
beyond expectation.
The relations between staff and students have never been characterized by hostility or bitterness. On the contrary lasting friendships have been formed and relations have been such as to be found between students and teachers in all normal university institutions. These relations have been maintained by voluntary, not by law, done to serve the one or way on the other.

3. Without being unchallengeable towards the open universities in South Africa I should like to suggest that they should close their doors to non-South African students, after forty years had improved the capabilities of the non-white student. Although the prospects of the non-white student were not better than from serving the order after forty years had improved the student.
that they began to exercise their
rights to admit non-white students
until we find that today that the
number of non-white students at the
so-called white universities taken together,
exceed the number of non-white students
at first.
The teacher is the link between child and parent, between the school and the community. To such people it is essential that they be given advice from all sides—from the parents if their children are beyond their control, from government officials if school results are not what they ought to be. The teacher must not only be aware of the difficulties with which he is confronted successfully; he is a part of a movement such as the one from which he can draw inspiration and not only in conferences such as this, but in the branch meetings nearer home, which the places more frequent.

Now that you stand on the threshold in the next fifty, we can do no less than wish the Association to grow, to flourish, until every teacher has been brought within its fold, let us hope, by the year 2006 when you celebrate your
Century teachers will have reached the
position that has been attained by
professors such as Law & Medicine
which enjoy a large measure of
autonomy & freedom from others through
their National Council and have their
own discipline codes to which every
member of the profession must adhere.

We look forward to great things
from our teachers, and I have
sufficient confidence in the African
teachers to believe that he will
deliver the goods whatever the system
under which he is called upon to work.

I now have great pleasure
in declaring this fifteenth Conference
of the T.A.T.A. officially closed.

End Mess Africa