Recent Developments in Native Education

[Incomplete 1940s?]

1. It is not necessary to make any apology for speaking at a Church conference about education for throughout the ages the Church has been the chief custodian of the education of the people. Long before governments recognized the necessity for the support of education by means of grants-in-aid the Church had entered the field by way of helping parents to bring up their children not only in the knowledge of fear of the Lord but with the knowledge or labor skills necessary for living with secular.

South Africa has been no exception to this rule. In this country also the Church has been in the vanguard as far as education is concerned, more particularly has this been so in regard to the education of non-Europeans. That is why to this day the vast majority of the school and college of non-Europeans are
under missionary control. With the Church having played such a great part in the development of education among the people it is necessary for the Church to keep in touch with all the latest movements in education, so that the Church should continue to play its part with distinction in this important sphere of the life of the people.

2. One of the most significant facts in the educational situation today as far as Africans are concerned is the way in which the people are responding to educational efforts on their behalf. Without compulsion and in spite of the poverty from which they are suffering as a result of their depressed economic conditions the Africans people are sending their children to school by the thousand. No room in a school opened than it is filled to capacity. Additional classrooms added have no room been
completed than it becomes necessary to start planning for further expansion. It is not common knowledge that there are now more African children in school than European children in spite of the poor support from the Government compared with the support given to European schools. The Government with its present system of financing Native education is finding it impossible to keep pace with the demands for education among the African people. In 1921 the education of the African children at school cost the Government £340,000; this year the amount provided is approximately £2,000,000, nearly six times as much as it was in 1921. Yet this amount has already been shown to be unable to meet the needs of the children who are at school, to say nothing of the many who are
outside the school and yet we continue to come in. In some places, so great is the demand for accommodation in the existing school that it has become necessary to run the school in two shifts, some children going to school in the morning, while others go to school in the afternoon.

But not only are African children coming to school in large numbers, but nowadays they are kept at school longer than they used to in the older days. It was a common saying in times gone by that the vast majority of African children detested attending school just long enough to pass Standard 8 and after that they left for various reasons. In fact some people were beginning to say that African children left school at such Standard 10 because they did not have the brains to go further, in other words that the African mind could not take in more than a certain amount of learning.
Today there is a different story to tell. Although it is still true that far too many children leave school at too early an age, the number is increasing of those who remain long enough to finish their primary education and the number is increasing rapidly of those who go even further than that.

3. This brings us to another very significant development in Native education and that is the development of post-primary education. Whereas in 1916 when Fort Hare was established there was only one secondary school for Africans in the Cape Province, today the African child in the Cape alone has 26 secondary or high schools to which he may go and practically all of them are full to capacity. The same development is taking place in the other provinces, and if it were not for lack of funds even more secondary schools would have been made added to the list.
4. But not only is the enrolment in our school rising rapidly, not only is the number of our first-primary schools increasing at a very rapid rate, but the quality of the work turned out in the school is steadily improving. The change from mere parrot work in the schools is becoming more and more unjustifiable. Education in our schools is becoming less and less bookish and more and more related to the real needs of the people among whom the children are going to live. It would be untrue to say that these defects have disappeared altogether from our schools. They have unfortunately not yet disappeared, but I think it is only right for us to admit that the thousands of teachers in African schools to whom we have entrusted the education of our children are doing a magnificent job. All honour to them. Those of us who have to deal with these products of their schools in the later stage
If their education can testify to the fact that a better product is being turned out in the schools today than was the case, say, ten or twenty years ago. A further proof.

A further proof of the good work being in the school is the fact that our children are completing their primary school at a much younger age than was the case a few years ago. The average age of students entering college and university is becoming more but and more as it ought to be.

In this connection a tribute must be paid to African parents who are increasingly realizing the importance of sending their children to school at an early age. The excuse of "minding the baby young children at home" or "looking to after cattle" is becoming less and less acceptable to our parents. That is a great gain, because the proper time for the education of the child is when it is young, when its mind is flexible and malleable and
before it has become involved in the cares of and the problems of adult life.

So far we have dealt with the attitude of the fifteen people themselves towards education. We have seen that as they are concerned, the position has been reached where it is no longer necessary to as it used to be preached to them about sending their children to school.

The task with which we are faced is that of getting the Government and the European public opinion which controls the Government to accept the fact principle of State responsibility for Native education. In some European quarters it is still as difficult as ever, it was to get people to realize that an over ignorant Nigger is not an asset to the country but a positive menace. There are still some people who cling to the exploded idea that education spoils the Nabor. Fortunately their numbers is steadily decreasing. More and more people group
the black Europeans are accepting the inevitability of educating their Union if the country is to take its place among civilized nations. It is a significant fact that an increasing number of school boards elected by Europeans are accepting responsibility for the control of Native schools in the areas under their jurisdiction.

In particular, with the recent good European origin of the number of farmers who are allowing schools to be established for their children, the number of farmers is increasing. This has not only done much to educate European public opinion about the need for Native education and in this connection I should like to pay a special tribute to the late lamented Mrs. Rheinhardt Jones, who had in recent years paid a great deal of attention to the question of propaganda in favour of Native education. Motion must also be made...
to our European representatives in the House of
Assent, and in the Senate, who have carried the war
right into what may be called the enemy's camp!
They find it easier which concerns native
education which they have been able to place
with such telling advocacy have not been without
their effect on those august bodies which are
so well of bearing as far as native affairs are
concerned. In Government circles, the question
as to whether the African should be educated
is no longer a debatable question. Instead of
that being a question being uppermost today
the attention of the Government is being directed
at the question of the control and financing
of native education. As you know the Enronent
at the beginning of this year called together
a conference at which the question of the
future control of financing of native
education was fully discussed and at
its last date it is expected that the

Government will make a pronouncement which will place this important national devise on a sound footing. It is hoped that as a result of that the new system will emerge, concerted attack will be made upon the problem of the children of school going age who have not yet been brought within the scope of our educational system; that the question of buildings and equipment for native schools will receive greater attention than it has done in the past and that the teachers who have borne the brunt of the burden for native education will not be forgotten when conditions within the district are being improved.

Much work remains to be done. All our vigilance will be required to see that in the period of post-war reconstruction in the world that is to be the pressing...