

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,
CAPE TOWN.

9th March, 1943.

Mr. Z. K. Matthews,
Fort Hare,
P.O. ALICE

Dear Mr. Matthews,

Many thanks for your very useful letter on the Sheshegu position.

I have placed it before Mr. Smit with my own comments and have emphasised your contention that that position presents an administrative problem and must be tackled as such. As a result, Mr. Smit is considering a visit to the district himself in company with both you and me. I hope that may eventuate. If it does, I think we should use the occasion to air all the land problems of the Victoria East area. I'll let you know how the plan goes, if it goes!

In the meantime, I understand the Native Representative Council is to have a session in May. I hope you may get a chance there to enlighten the new Minister a bit on the danger of his present attitude. The only people he has pleased so far are the Nationalists; they are thoroughly satisfied with him and say so, both publicly and privately. He is a complete segregationist of the 1936 type - and for the rest, he just doesn't understand anything. I wonder how many Africans he has ever seen except in the master-servant relationship.

I hope also you may get a chance to argue the trade union position. It has got a bit complicated by the set lines of recent propaganda which has asked for the recognition of Native Trade Unions instead of for the recognition of Native workers as employees in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act. It is now getting complicated again by

insistence ...

insistence on the right to strike when what we want is constitutional machinery to obviate the need for strikes. That is my line now, linked with the generally recognised justice of the claim and need for such machinery. This latter, I claim, should be the starting point, accepted now as such, to be followed by a genuine and imaginative effort to meet any technical difficulties which the emancipation of African workers might create in the operation of the Industrial Council system. And as a matter of fact, I gather the Industrial Council system is, itself, under sentence of reform, if not of death, for it has been found by the European workers themselves a clumsy and unsatisfactory machine.

I shall look forward to seeing you in Pretoria at the Council meetings when we may have the opportunity to discuss this and other matters.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Ballantyne

P.S. The enclosed may interest you. The friends of Africa are trying to publish a leaflet on the subject. I am now full of ideas and ambitions for a pamphlet or two. It has possibilities and it hasn't had before, I think. As the money, it is all a matter of money.