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PROFESSOR FACES BIG PROBLEM

Daily News Correspondent

PORT ELIZABETH, Monday. — Prof. Z. K. Matthews, vice-principal of Fort Hare and one of South Africa's most prominent educationists, is facing the most difficult decision of his long career.

The Bantu Education Department — which has taken over the control of the university — has announced it is prepared to continue to employ him. But the offer means he must resign from the African National Congress. He has only till the end of the year to decide.

Under the old university system Prof. Matthews — like all other university men — was allowed to belong to a political organisation. But he will be a civil servant under the new system. This will bring him under the Public Service Act which lays down he cannot belong to political organisations like the African National Congress.

Prof. Matthews has been a member of the African National Congress for many years. He was chairman of the Cape section for some time.

The Government provision means that if Prof. Matthews does not resign he can be dismissed — and deprived of his pension rights and provident fund contributions.

The money involved is estimated to be several thousand pounds.

If he decides to resign before the end of the year — deadline for all African staff members offered re-appointment — he will lose his pension right but probably be able to collect his provident contributions.

If Prof. Matthews quits the African National Congress it will mean sacrificing a principle he holds very strongly. Prof. Matthews has always been outspokenly anti-segregationist.

Prof. Matthews is only two years from retirement — and still has three children at college to support.

He was the first graduate at Fort Hare.