Naught for the new Fort Hare's comfort in three fresh shocks

To the Editor, The Argus
SIR.—The debasing, protests and clamour past, we are now being assailed from Alice with the death rattle of what was once the pride of Christian missionary endeavour in this country, the leading institution for non-White higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, and a university renowned throughout the free world.

The torture is being applied by an instrument known euphemistically as "The University College of Fort Hare Transfer Act."

It was introduced—late, in a guillotined session—with charges scarcely Holocaustian against the evidence, concerns for church interests, cultural misconception, profanation of the historic mission, that peculiarly effective brand of nationalisms and assumption of hurt at any done or disbelieved in those actions, and accusations of pre-landing.

But it is too late to re-cancel the news of what was probably the most subtle, tragic and dangerous application of political power to the derision of individual and corporate rights in all the madness of the last years.

Dangerous

It was dangerous because with luck you can continue unjust pain, subversive, unearned, and branded, but you cannot, with all Africa, for knowable, lead intelligently away from the colour-boundaries of free universities and make him drink the breakwater of Government-controlled booze—so late, not without building up a vast picture of kinship en masse among the mass-industrial elements of the new community.

But if the policy is irreparable, we can still protest at the methods used. Three new items have come in from Alice since the Act was passed. Bush Cairo Nationalist thought it to be flattering immorally.

Firstly, the membership (though Government-appointed) of the new Council, has been announced.

New one of the main grounds advanced by the Minister of Bantu Education for the Transfer was the "sub-settlement" nature of the old Council. It had representatives of teachers' unions and certain universities, this apparently being unfair to those not represented. See 1949 House of Assembly Hansard, 440.

It is with shock, therefore, that we hear that the new Council has undergone changes of omission, not of form. There are no representatives of certain beleaguered universities and of one church.

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Secondly, the new governing regulations have been promulgated. One the Government expounded throughout that the transferred Fort Hare would be no less a university than before, and that it would continue with a new impetus in its destiny as a full-blown member of the academic canopy.

In the Select Committee proceeding the Government witnesses, Mr. M. A. Newlands, the minister-designate for Bantu Education and now Bantu-designate of the University college was not observed at the process of a university under the direct administration of a Government department. Indeed, he found the idea, if anything, inspiring.

I think the advantage is in fact probably with the Administration. The Minister has greater resources at his disposal, and if he organizes this department properly, I think he can produce results which are as good as those produced by an ordinary council, if they are not better.

We must guard that the new Fort Hare is to be administered with all the departmental precautions and mid somber jumbo stuck on a branch post office to police obedient.