

618  
Fort Hare,  
Alice, C.P.  
28-12-42.

Senator C.H. Malcolmess,  
Wolseley Estate,  
P.O. Berlin.

Dear Senator,

Thank you very much for your letters, and especially for the kind words of advice contained in ~~it~~ them regarding the attitude I should adopt in my work as a member of the Native Representative Council. I think Mr Godlo will have told you how we got on in the first session of the new Council, and Senator Brookes who was present for some time will also be able to give you his impressions. I think that on the whole the first session went off very well, although some of the new members were inclined to be gactless. My own belief is that the African has such a good case for justice and fairplay in this country that there is no need for him to be either extreme or crude in the presentation of his case. You can depend on it that as far as I am concerned I shall do all in my power to state the African case as fully as possible, without fear or favour, but I shall not work against the Department or the Government. It is to them that we must look for justice and fairplay, and no good purpose will be served by antagonising them.

In your first letter you asked for particulars about Fort Hare as you would like to tackle Hofmeyr about grants for the College. I think you also wrote to Dr Kerr. He is not here at present, but I think he will be writing you in due course. My own opinion is that the chief trouble with Fort Hare is the system of grants. The grant to Fort Hare is based upon the fees paid by the students. The students pay £45 per annum in fees: of this amount £24 is for tuition fees and for purposes of grant only the tuition fee is taken into account. Now the only way Fort Hare can earn a higher grant is by raising the tuition fees, and with the Native people as poor as they are, there is a limit to the extent to which the tuition fee can be raised. Our contention is that we have already reached the limit as far as our fee-income is concerned. We can not go much higher than £45 for the total amount of fees. I think that the only practical suggestion to make to the Minister is that in view of the poverty of the Native people, the grant to Fort Hare should be based on the whole of the £45 and not only on the £24 tuition fee. I know of course that the Minister will say that Fort Hare is treated the same as other European Colleges, but then the economic circumstances of European and African students are not the same. We would have no complaint against the present system if our students were not so poor because we could then increase our grant simply by increasing our fees. But the result of these limitations is that we are hopelessly understaffed. Every member of the Staff at Fort Hare is doing at least twice as much as his opposite number in a European College, and some thrice as much. Although we ought to be doing research into problems affecting Native welfare, we simply have no time to do so. The result is that instead of developing into a real University College, we are simply a glorified High School. We get applications from African students wanting to do advanced postgraduate work, but we simply have to refuse them owing to lack of staff. With a more generous system of grants we could increase our staff and do much better work.

Regarding the Native Affairs Commission I think the elevation of Senator Heaton Nicholls to the Administratorsip of Natal provides us with an opportunity for reconstruction. I took the opportunity to say in the N.R.C. that this new appointment must not be a political appointment. We must have in the Commission people who are sympathetic and who are not going to be a brake on progress. Personally I think the appointment should go to one of our representatives in the Senate. I suppose as Senator Nicholls was a Natal man, the Prime Minister will probably want to appoint someone from Natal. In that case Senator Brookes will be the logical man. Otherwise I think someone with knowledge of industrial problems should be appointed. Then there is the question of the nominated Senator. We must have a man who is "acquainted with the reasonable wants and wishes" of the Native people. I think that that appointment should go to Mr Rheinallt Jones. If any man deserves that position he does, in spite of the fact that he was defeated at the election.

Regarding the Native Affairs Department I think that Mr D.L.Smit should be freed from the details of departmental routine. He should be given a freer hand to meet and consult with the Native people. He is very highly respected among Africans, but he is much too busy. I should like to see him continue as Chairman of the Native Representative Council and of a reconstructed Native Affairs Commission. I think Mr Mears would do well as the man in charge of the departmental work. Mind you, Senator, I do not want Mr Smit removed from the Secretaryship of Native Affairs, but only that he should be freed to attend to Native Development as a whole.

Now I do not know how I can see you, Senator, before you go down to Cape Town. I think we ought to have a discussion about these matters. Unfortunately I cannot manage to go down owing to lack of petrol. Are you likely to be in King sometime before the 8th of January? I shall be leaving here on the 8th January. I am going to Mafeking via Blanc. I have been invited by the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government to attend a Conference in Mafeking on January 11th and 12th to discuss educational and medical development for Africans in the Protectorates. So it is not the Union that I have to work for. I am simply overwhelmed with work.

In case we do not meet before you go down, Senator, I want you to watch the Bethelsdorp question for me. I spoke about it in the Council and protested emphatically against the incorporation of that area by Port Elizabeth. If you were to see the conditions under which Port Elizabeth wants to take in those people, you would agree with me that it should not be allowed. Port Elizabeth must put Korsten right before it can think of incorporating further areas.

Another matter which must be tackled is the financing of Native Education. The present system has proved a hopeless failure. Hofmevr must loosen the purse-strings if the Native people are to receive a square deal in this matter.

I must not take up any more of your time, Senator. I think you have heard that an African principal has been appointed at Greenpoint-- another victory for you. Mr Hobson, the Chief Inspector, made a very good impression on the Councillors at Pretoria. When you meet Dr de Vos Malan tell him we are very pleased with the appointment he has made in Mr Hobson and with the consistent policy of appointing African principals wherever possible. The improvements which have been made in Teachers Salaries are very welcome but we want more, especially a pension scheme.

I have just had a telegram from Halley Platje telling me about the death of his mother. She was a fine old lady. I only wish her sons could be like her and like their late father.

I must close with best wishes for a successful session at Cape Town and with kind regards to Mrs Malcolm.

Yours sincerely,