

INKUNDA WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 1948.

## Prof. Matthews On The Boycott

PROFESSOR Matthews nearly reduced his stature at East London when made certain remarks in condemnation of the boycott. The remarks as published in "Umteteli wa Bantu" are not worthy of a leader of his stature. He said the boycott was being kept alive by people with personal ambitions and that, at any rate, it is an addled egg.

Smaller minds than his always attribute sinister motives to those with whom they do not agree and their favourite choice is the motive to gain personal power. But a leader of his standing ought to see deeper than mere personal motives. And, in any case, if the boycott movement is dead, why should a great man like him waste his and our time flogging it?

The boycott weapon is the last hope of the oppressed masses against Segregation. It is a direct product of the Union's policy of refusing to recognise the African as a human being with a personality as sacred as the whiteman's. Since there is little evidence to show that the powers that be are prepared to be reasonable in their attitude to the African, the only course left to the African is to refuse to co-operate in his own oppression; and the boycott is the expression of that refusal.

The boycott certainly leaves the door for negotiation open until it is conclusively proved that the other side is not prepared to negotiate. In other words, the boycott will flourish or die in proportion as the powers that be are prepared to meet the African's legitimate aspirations.

For a man in Prof. Matthews' position to come now as the self-

declared crusader against the boycott movement is to undermine the very movement towards freedom which he is at present leading in the Natives Representative Council.

In any case, the main issue before our people now is not the boycott. All men whose views are worth taking seriously agree that the boycott is a long term weapon and that for the present, we have only to negotiate until the door is slammed to our face. That door has not as yet been shut. It is because it has not been shut that our people decided to return Professor Matthews to the Council—not to enable him to turn round and fight the boycotters, but to strengthen his hand when he negotiates in Pretoria.

The boycotters would very effectively accuse Prof. Matthews of trying to divert African attention from the NRC front on to the boycott issue in an effort to run away from taking certain decisions which will sooner or later be taken. But this counter-accusation would be as sterile as his own charges against the boycott movement and would in the end serve only to strengthen the hand of those who oppress us.

Efforts are being made in many directions to create the impression that the return of the overwhelming majority of the members of the last Council is not an endorsement of the Moroka Freedom Resolution. Professor Matthews should be busy correcting these misrepresentations and giving the country a lead to enable it to see the elections in their proper perspective, instead of conducting a witch hunt for boycotters.