

A REALIGNMENT OF PARTIES

PROPOSAL OF MR. ROOS TO ABOLISH ARTICLE 4

SUGGESTION WELCOMED BY MANY NATIONALISTS

MODERATE AND "DIE HARD" VIEWS CONTRASTED

A declaration by Mr. Tielman Roos last night in favour of dropping Article 4 of the Nationalist Party's constitution has caused another wave of excitement in political quarters.

Mr. Roos went so far as to suggest that a new orientation of parties would come about. Moderate Nationalist opinion on the Rand welcomes the suggestions of the Minister of Justice as to dropping Article 4 and the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the flag question.

Mr. F. J. Sieling, who is a prominent Nationalist, goes further. He expressed the opinion to-day that a fusion between the moderate elements of the two parties was now inevitable. Article 4 had been a stumbling block, but in essence there had never been any real difference between a moderate Nationalist and a moderate S.A.P. At any rate he was absolutely certain that Nationalist and S.A.P. would not fight against each other at the next election. Fusion would come before then.

On the other hand Dr. Moll expresses what may be called the "die hard" Nationalist view. He says Mr. Roos is a second "Mark Tapley" and is playing a lone hand. Dr. Moll says he would "prefer to have the struggle on the flag question now and peace afterwards."

The Parliamentary Order Paper indicates that the Flag Bill is being kept back from the House pending a full Cabinet meeting, which will be held as soon as Mr. C. M. Malan, Minister of Railways, reaches Capetown from Walvois Bay, where he landed on his return from Europe.

Mr. Roos's hint about a realignment of parties has caused something like a sensation in the Parliamentary lobbies, and there is much speculation to-day.

AWAITING FULL CABINET MEETING

The Parliamentary correspondent of The Star telegraphs to-day—

The fact that the Flag Bill is relegated to a third place on the order paper for Monday indicates that the pourparlers which have been begun between General Smuts and the Prime Minister have not yet advanced to the stage when further progress with the Bill can be made. It is believed that the Government are awaiting the arrival of Mr. C. W. Malan, who is expected to reach Capetown either to-morrow or Monday. With Mr. Malan's arrival the Cabinet will be complete, and an important Cabinet meeting is likely to be held at the earliest moment to discuss the flag developments.

In the meantime the rank and file of the members profess and know nothing definite as to what is going on, but they are eagerly awaiting the announcements which will soon be made to them by their respective leaders.

MR. ROOS'S SPEECH

This morning the topic of discussion in political circles was Mr. Tielman Roos's latest speech, but in the presence of Pressmen members were reluctant to express their views. It is apparent that Mr. Roos's hints about a future realignment of parties at the time when political minds have been concentrated on their flag position has come too suddenly for members to appreciate its significance.

Everyone agrees, however, that Mr. Roos never says things without a purpose in view, and there is keen speculation as to how this speech will be received by his own party when its inner meaning becomes clear.

MONDAY'S BUSINESS

The House on Monday will resume the second reading debate on the Iron and Steel Bill, and if time permits will go into Committee on the Precious Stones Bill. Already the Order Paper has half a dozen amendments to the latter Bill tabled by South African Party members.

To the list of questions for Tuesday Mr. Marwick has added one asking Mr. Roos whether he will lay on the table a copy of the letter said to be in the possession of the C.I.D., Durban, alleged to have been received by Mr. Reyburn from a person in Durban offering Mr. Reyburn one-third of the salary of the post of court messenger, Durban, if he would use his influence to secure the appointment of the writer to the office referred to.

Sir Drummond Chaplin has given notice that he will ask the Minister of Finance at what price was the last Union loan of £5,000,000 issued to the public, what was the net price received and why no notice of the issue of the loan was published in South Africa.

FRANK ADMISSION

REPUBLIC THE INTENTION OF ARTICLE 4

In a series of interviews with several of the leading Nationalists in the Becont district it is found that the suggestion of Mr. Tielman Roos that Article 4 be deleted from the constitution of their party receives a great deal of support.

"It is the biggest step towards hereniging that has yet been made," said Mr. W. M. Davell, chairman of the Becont West branch of the Nationalist Party. "Personally I take a broad-minded view and realize that the intention of Article 4 was at the time it was drawn up meant to indicate a South African republic."

"The majority of the members of the Nationalist Party in this area, appreciating the statesmanship and long vision of Mr. Tielman Roos, will support his views when he says that Article 4 of the constitution should be deleted. He is the leader of our party in the Transvaal, and his opinion is our guide. On the question of full independence many of us realize that we are unable to revert to Republicanism until the population as a whole desires it. The status of independence since the last Imperial Conference given us the freedom advisable and Article 4 therefore is no longer necessary. We are getting our own flag, which is itself in a symbol, and in time a suitable substitution for Article 4 will be substituted during with the present position."

Another official of the party remarked that possibly there would be some objection among extreme members to the



MR. TIELMAN ROOS.

deletion of Article 4, but this could be overcome with the influence of their leaders. "What we want to inspire into all residents of South Africa," said he, "is that South Africa is their home and it should be South Africa first, and they should not refer to their overseas birthplace as home. A great opportunity now exists to create harmony among political opponents, and with the lead from Mr. Roos every effort should be made to achieve this."

Another prominent Nationalist remarked: "I do not like the Union Jack on the flag nor do I want the Vierkleur, but I am prepared to wait until the outcome of the consultation is made public. Personally I would like the referendum to go on, though this new development suggested by Mr. Roos may alter things."

CITY NATIONALISTS GENERALLY PLEASED

MR. ROOS'S GESTURE OF GOOD WILL WELCOMED

The moderation and tolerance of the speech made by Mr. Tielman Roos at Malmesbury last night, when he declared that Article 4 of the Nationalist Party constitution should be abandoned, has been greeted with quiet enthusiasm among prominent Nationalists in Johannesburg, and this enthusiasm has expressed itself in the confident belief that Mr. Roos has made a gesture towards, if not actual "hereniging" between the South African Party and the Nationalists, at least the formation of a new party out of the strong moderate elements in each of the two parties.

A general sense of relief at the moderate tone of the speeches of party leaders has been manifested in all circles, and it is confidently anticipated that within the next few days even further evidence of a tendency towards reconciliation and amicable settlement of the flag question will be forthcoming.

That Mr. Tielman Roos is not playing a lone hand in making these gestures of good will is the firm belief of those in Nationalist circles who ought to know.

Mr. O. J. J. van Wijk, secretary of the Nationalist Party of the Witwatersrand, in an interview with a representative of The Star this morning, said he thought that Mr. Roos was right.

MODERATE OPINION

"The moderate Nationalists have all along felt that, after what General Hertzog has achieved at the Imperial Conference, Article 4 of the Nationalist Party constitution should be scrapped or amended considerably. There is, according to the statements of our leaders, General Hertzog, Mr. Tielman Roos and others, no doubt that we are a free people and as independent a country as England or any other Dominion. Therefore, we consider that that article in our constitution is rather obsolete.

"Personally, I think that by doing away with this article a lot of friction existing to-day between the South African Party and the Nationalists, and especially among the Dutch-speaking people, will disappear and there will be far better feeling between the two parties than has existed for many years."

WHAT ARTICLE 4 SAYS

The following are the terms of Article 4 of the constitution of the Nationalist Party:—

The existing relations between the Union and the United Kingdom are frankly admitted by the Nationalist Party. As, however, the ultimate destiny and aim of the people of the Union (as of every other self-respecting nation) must be its complete freedom and sovereign independence, and as the friendly relationship between South Africa and the United Kingdom can exist only on the basis of such complete freedom and sovereign independence, therefore the Nationalist Party will seize every opportunity, and employ every means, to maintain faithfully the existing rights and freedom of the Union and further to extend them by constitutional means in the interest of South Africa, until South Africa as an autonomous State will in the fullest be on an equal footing with the United Kingdom, and will ultimately achieve complete freedom and sovereign independence.

At the recent Free State Nationalist Party Congress Gen. Hertzog, moving that the report of the Federal Council be noted, said the report stated that the Council had considered amending Article 4 of the constitution so as to bring it more into line with the new conception of Dominion status. The matter had been referred to three leaders of the party to draft a resolution.

Gen. Hertzog now stated that they had had no time to consider the matter and suggested it would be best not to do anything this year, but leave it over till the next congress. To this the congress agreed.

"Is Mr. Roos's speech a gesture towards hereniging?" Mr. van Wijk was asked.

Mr. van Wijk: It is rather early to express an opinion, but I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Roos that once the Clause 4 is deleted there is little difference between the constitutions of the two parties. I certainly think that if hereniging could be brought about it would be the salvation of the country. But we must leave these things to the discussion between the leaders of the party as to when the time is opportune for such a reunion. Evidently from the speech by General Smuts a better feeling exists between the leaders. The political atmosphere has certainly changed for the better in the last week and also for the good of South Africa, and we all hope that the bitterness and strife of the past will come to an end immediately. It is retarding not alone business, but it is creating a lot of bad blood.

"On behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church it would be a blessing in disguise if all the bitterness could be brought to an end, as it is certainly doing the Church a lot of harm. As a member of the Church, I feel that it will be to the good of the Church itself if unity comes about."

Asked if Mr. Tielman Roos was playing a lone hand, Mr. van Wijk said: "I don't think that Mr. Roos would do anything to prejudice the position of his Nationalist colleagues in the Cabinet. It was a model speech of his."

Asked what would be the position of Dr. Malan, Mr. van Wijk said he would not like to express an opinion on that question.

DR. MOLL WANTS TO "HAVE IT OUT"

CALLS MR. ROOS ANOTHER MARK TAPLEY

Dr. A. M. Moll, who is recognised as one of the die-hards of the Nationalist Party, considers that Mr. Tielman Roos is a second Mark Tapley, one who always looks on the bright side of things. He was too optimistic.

"I do not agree with Mr. Roos. I think he is playing a lone hand. I think it impossible that he is sending up a kite on behalf of the whole Cabinet," said Dr. Moll.

"My point is this. Much has been talked of our sovereign independence. Well, then, if it is a practical and not a theoretical sovereign independence, it must respond to tests. The first test is the national flag proposal. If we cannot have a national flag then that sovereign independence is not practical. If they do not accept that flag in that sense, then they cannot expect us to abolish Article 4. The agitation against the flag is the agitation of a section which is not willing to accept sovereign independence as a practical fact. The flag should be only the first step in evolving our position of sovereign independence. The next step would be to appoint ambassadors in other countries."

PREFERS FIGHT NOW

Mr. Roos, he went on, believed that the sovereign independence General Hertzog had gained was a practical sovereign independence. It would be proved to be practical if a clean national flag were accepted. He would himself be only too pleased if that sovereign independence were proved to be practical, so that they could scrap the secession issue. It was high time that the bitterness in political life in the country were removed, and that they should come to regard themselves as South Africans, not Britishers or Dutchmen. But he would far rather go in for a struggle on the flag question and have peace afterwards than have peace now at the expense of the humiliation of the Nationalist Party and leave an open sore in South Africa for generations to come. The Nationalists had made concessions and it was for the S.A.P. to make concessions now. The Union Jack was on the flag in a dominant position.

Asked whether there was any hope of hereniging, Dr. Moll said that he had a different idea of hereniging from the usual one. There was already a perpetual hereniging in progress, for the Dutch-speaking people were gradually going over to the Nationalists.

DR. H. REITZ, M.L.A.

WOULD CUT OUT ARTICLE 4, BUT "A BORN REPUBLICAN"

Mr. Roos's remarkable speech at Malmesbury is generally welcomed here, writes the Pretoria representative of The Star. Nor is there any desire to dwell on its "oukheids" to the general tenor of Mr. Roos's speeches. Even the acute are prepared to accept it at its face value. "I think it was a very good speech," said Dr. H. Reitz, M.L.A. "It should show the spirit of the Nationalist Party, and I think that the other side should meet it openly."

"What do you think of Mr. Roos's very definite statement?—He, Mr. Roos, considered it was essential that Article 4 should go so as to remove any suspicion that might still remain about South Africa's constitutional position."

Dr. Reitz replied, "I will be quite satisfied if the Nationalist Party wishes to delete Article 4. I do think that such deletion would make for peace, and we all want peace."

"But," added Dr. Reitz, "I was born a republican, and I have no reason to change my political theories."

(Continued in next column.)

TICLE

GESTURE OF GOODWILL

Great Speech by Mr. Roos

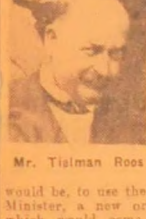
NAT. PROGRAMME

URGES DELETION OF FAMOUS CLAUSE

Malmesbury, Friday.

SPEAKING at a public meeting in the Town Hall this evening, Mr. Tielman Roos said although they had heard much about differences among the people in the country and about sharp differences at public meetings, he thought there was a greater feeling of friendship among the different political parties and among the different sections of the people than he had ever seen in South Africa. They found this feeling of friendship in Parliament, where fierce political struggles were dying out.

In the past they had fought and said hard things about each other, but to-day they felt that the common cause



Mr. Tielman Roos

which bound the different parties together, namely, the building up of their fatherland, was stronger than the things which divided the two parties. It would be difficult, he contended, for the Nationalist Party in the future to find points of difference with the

S.A. Party. He thought that there would be, to use the words of the Prime Minister, a new orientation of parties which would come about as a result of differences among the parties themselves. But the bitter struggles of the past had gone.

STRUGGLES OF THE PAST

On the understanding which the different parties had reached as a result of the struggles of the past, said Mr. Roos, they were building to-day, and it was as a result of that understanding that the people had advanced so far on the road of national unity. Mr. Roos then referred to the obtaining of sovereign independence for South Africa as a result of the last Imperial Conference, but he declared the freedom that had been achieved was not solely the work of General Hertzog, as the foundations had been laid by the leaders of the South African Party.

One of the things which would make for a better understanding among the people and create a better spirit, Mr. Roos declared, was the amending or the deletion of Article 4 of the National Party's programme of principles.

In this way they would remove all suspicions about South Africa's constitutional position. The National Party had fully accepted the constitutional position as laid down by the last Imperial Conference, and as it had achieved what it had fought for in the past, he thought the Federal Council of the National Party should take into consideration the amending or the deletion of this clause.

He considered it was essential that Article 4 should go, so as to remove any suspicions that might still remain about South Africa's constitutional position.

PEACEFUL MOOD

"I don't know how you feel about it," Mr. Roos said, "but those are my views. Perhaps you would like me to smack the South African Party hip and thigh, but I am in a peaceful mood to-night." (Laughter and applause.)

Referring to the recent disturbances at political meetings, Mr. Roos, in a particularly jovial mood, said that the National Party had experienced the same difficulties in the past, but the leaders of the party had never complained. He personally throughout his political career had never seen an egg being thrown at a political meeting, but, he added amid laughter, perhaps that was because he was tactful.

After a particularly mild and moderately-worded speech, in which he dealt with such diverse matters as agriculture, industries and fertilisers, Mr. Roos said he hoped that the audience would not think that he was always so patient and mild as otherwise he would lose his reputation. "The position in South Africa to-day is of such a nature," Mr. Roos remarked, "that it is imperative that we must do away with the bitterness in our political life. I don't think it will do us any good."

COUNSELLED PATIENCE

There seemed to be considerable disappointment among the audience that Mr. Roos had not spoken about the flag, and when he sat down there were cries of "What about the flag?"

Mr. Roos told the meeting that they would have to be patient, as in a few days the flag question would once again be before the public. It was very difficult for him to talk about the flag now. "Anyone who says anything about the flag to-night will be doing more harm than good."

Mr. P. A. Bergh, M.L.A., referred to the moderate speeches made by Mr. Roos and by General Smuts at Darling that morning, and said that as a result of that moderation they hoped a peaceful position would be arrived at.

A vote of confidence in the Government was unanimously carried. -Leader.

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