

LABOUR'S VIEWS ON **NEED FOR NATIVE EDUCATION**

At the Annual Conference of the Labour Party (Transvaal Province) a proposal was unanimously passed calling for compulsory primary education for all non-Europeans. The Labour Party considers the time ripe for implicating this demand. It considers that education is not a matter for philanthropic or charitable effort. If South Africa is to develop and progress, the State must introduce a system of State Control Primary Education. It is generally accepted in Democratic countries, that primary education, at least, is a State function. In this country it is certainly time to replace the system of private and voluntary education for Native children by a compulsory system. Though missionary achievements in Native education is fully admitted, it is apparent that the missions can no longer cope with the growing demand for secularisation in education. The overlapping of missionary endeavour leads frequently to the establishment of schools with less regard for the educational needs of a particular area than for the interests of a particular denomination. The Interdepartmental Committee's Report (1935-1936) lists thirty-two missionary bodies besides a number of unclassified bodies as educational agencies. The missions themselves have realised the wastefulness of competition and have made strenuous efforts at securing some degree of co-ordination. This at best can be only partially successful.

The natives, particularly the teachers, are becoming restive under the paternal form of control exercised by the missionaries, and look for emancipation to some other system similar to that which prevails for European education.

The Labour Party therefore recommends—

1. That the Government accepts the principle of compulsory primary education for all non-European children. (As a consequence of education being compulsory, it must therefore be free).

2. That the Government enforce this principle immediately, and apply it over a period of, say, ten years, to selected areas by:—

- (a) Establishing hundreds of new schools;
- (b) Taking over existing schools that give tuition to Native children;
- (c) Providing as a temporary measure, for a system of Government Schools growing alongside the aided system, as already obtains in Natal, until such time as the Government can fully take over.

3. That the administration, control and financing of education be a Union responsibility and not Provincial, but while it is Provincial for European, Indian and Coloured Education, Native Primary Education be based similarly.

N.B.—

- (a) This implies that Native Education, until ultimate Union Control, be administered by the T.E.D. as a directing body, and by existing School Boards for local control, and

- (b) That Native Primary Education be subsidised on a per caput basis. This per caput subsidy must provide for qualitative as well as quantitative expansion, otherwise there will be the same inadequate education for more and more Native children.
4. That conditions for teachers'-salaries—teacher training be considerably extended as follows:—
- (a) Steps be taken to increase the number of qualified teachers and to prevent undue wastage among those already in service.
 - (b) Facilities be provided for free teacher training or at least Loan Bursaries for students as obtain in European Training Centres.
 - (c) Security of office be guaranteed in the same way as for European Teachers.
 - (d) Teachers be subject to uniform regulations under which all cases of irregularity or inefficiency, etc., be dealt with.
 - (e) Posts be applied for in open competition—nominations to be subject to the approval of the Director of Education.
 - (f) The status of teachers be properly defined.
 - (g) Adequate provision be made for sick pay, vacation and study leave, and pensions as laid down by the T.A.T.A. in their Memorandum.
 - (h) Salaries for African teachers be very considerably increased. The Labour Party strongly supports the demands of the T.A.T.A., and their new salary scales.

5. That as a hungry or ill-nourished child cannot profit by learning, we consider the provision for school feeding for Native children a fundamental educational measure.

N.B.—The Labour Party supports the proposal by the Inter-Departmental Committee for Native Education that the Administration and financing of Native education should be dissociated from the Native Affairs Department, and placed with the Union Education Department.

The above Memorandum has dealt with primary education. The very important questions of vocational training and higher education are matters to be dealt with separately.

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