

“Language apartheid” in schools: the Union “will be poorer”

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Bloemfontein, Monday.

THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT of the language provisions in the new Free State Education Ordinance would be to split the cultural, social and economic structure of the country on a language basis, said the headmaster of St. Andrew's School, Mr. E. L. Harison, in his report today to the Bloemfontein Diocesan Synod.

Could there be any more tragic happening? he asked.

Mr. Harison said he had come across no really reliable statistical evidence to warrant so gross an interference with the rights of parents who, for the best possible motives, wished their children to be educated through the other official language.

“We are assured repeatedly that this provision of the ordinance has been made for sound educational motives but we are asked at the same time to accept quite illogical reasons for its imposition.”

“UNFORTUNATE”

Mr. Harison said one of the most illogical reasons given was that the numbers affected would be so small that it did not warrant all the fuss being made about it.

If the numbers affected were so small, the obvious reply was that it would have been better to have left so unfortunate and contentious a piece of legislation alone. Schools would be poorer for this “language apartheid.”

Schools had succeeded in a large measure in turning out balanced and tolerant South Africans regardless of their background.

“We shall continue to turn out South African citizens but the balance is bound to be upset where South African boys are to be denied, by virtue of their language, the opportunity of mixing freely at school with each other. In years to come South Africa is going to be poorer for this legislation.”

For some years now the Church schools had felt uneasy about their futures, Mr. Harison added.

“We must hang on to our cherished ideals of education. Complacency is our great weakness. We must not sell the pass,” he concluded.

STATE TO CONTROL ALL TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Step will provide free vocational education

From the Political Correspondent

Pretoria, Monday.

THE CABINET has decided to introduce legislation without delay to place all technical colleges under the direct control and responsibility of the Department of Education. At present technical colleges are semi-independent institutions subsidised by the State.

In a statement today the Minister of Education, Mr. Viljoen, said that, in the interests of the child as well as of the industrial development of the country, it had become necessary to provide "free, properly planned and State-controlled vocational education."

The Cabinet, he added, found it anomalous that there should be free education in academic secondary schools run by the provinces and also in secondary vocational schools run by the State, whilst fees are payable for full-time secondary vocational education up to Matriculation standard at technical colleges.

ANOMALY REMOVED

The Cabinet had decided to remove this anomaly. The step involved acceptance by the State of "practically the entire cost of full-time education at technical colleges, and it is therefore only logical and in keeping with the principles of sound public finance that the State should have full control of these institutions

"In addition the pattern of the exceptional Union-wide industrial development demands planning in close collaboration with Government departments and national employers' and employees' organizations as visualized in the De Villiers Commission's report.

"Only under a system of centralized planning, control and policy could this object be realized effectively. Hence the Cabinet decided that technical colleges in all their ramifications should be transferred to the Department of Education, Arts and Science as full State-controlled institutions and that the necessary enabling legislation should be introduced without delay.

FUNCTIONS

"As some confusion prevails among the public in regard to the functions of the Government on the one hand and the Provincial administrations on the other concerning the fields of secondary education entrusted to these two authorities respectively, the Cabinet review the question and reaffirmed that all aspects of vocational education except agricultural education and the training in manual skills of mentally retarded pupils under Act 9 of 1948 is, and remains, the functions of the Government."

The enabling legislation will, I learn, be introduced next year and the transfer of the technical colleges to the State Department of Education will begin in 1956.

FUTURE OF STAFF

The Government intend to retain the present technical college councils in advisory capacities. The Government believe that these councils can fulfil useful advisory functions.

At present technical colleges appoint their own staffs and the Union Department of Education confirms the appointments. In future appointments will be made by the department.

Existing staffs will be given the option to stay on present conditions and retain their privileges or to transfer as departmental officials. Where posts become redundant the occupants will be given the option of transferring to suitable vacancies in the department at the same salary scales.

There will be no change in curricula as these are laid down by the department now, and pupils sit for examinations prescribed by the department.

In the past grants, gifts, and bequests from the public have contributed largely to the building up of the technical colleges. Such gifts will in no way be affected and if any should be made in the future the Department of Education would see that they were devoted to the precise purposes for which they were intended.

PRESS STATEMENT

The South African Congress of Democrats condemns the punitive retaliatory methods of the Nationalist Government against the protest made by the African people against the introduction of Bantu Education into African primary schools. The African people have made it uncompromisingly clear to the Government, to South Africa and to the world that they are unwilling to accept this discriminatory education which is clearly designed to indoctrinate the African children for a position of permanent inferiority.

The threats of the Minister of Native Affairs to remove the schools in the areas where the parents and their children have courageously defied the actions of the Government and the references to possible banishment of liberatory leaders must be clearly seen for what they are - yet further attempts to intimidate the African people, and a proposal to punish the people for a perfectly legal and constitutional action. There is not and never has been compulsory education of African children. The parents committed no crime in withdrawing their children; Verwoerd threatens punishment for a crime which has not been committed. It is obvious that to oppose the Minister of Native Affairs is a punishable offence.

The South African Congress of Democrats supports the demand of the African people for universal education and their complete rejection of Bantu Education and supports fully the intensification of the campaign announced by the African National Congress.

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ON THE BOYCOTT OF SCHOOLS.

A statement issued by the Federation of South African Women, Tvl. Region.

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It is right that the public should know the true facts about Bantu Education, and the attitude of African mothers to this Act. The Federation of South African Women is representative of wide sections of African women, and speaks on behalf of progressive-minded women of all races in South Africa today. Our Federation is strongly opposed to Bantu Education, and supports to the fullest extent the fight against this particularly pernicious form of poison.

We ask all South African mothers: would you want your child to be taught to be inferior, to be taught that his role in life is to be a slave? Would you permit your child to receive a form of instruction - not education - that would deprive him of true education and learning, that would close to him the culture and understanding that should be open to every child?

Because the Bantu Education Act is designed to destroy the young minds of the African children, to bring them up in spiritual poverty and ignorance, and to make them willing slaves of the unscrupulous and perverted ideas of apartheid, we are not prepared to subject any children to Bantu Education.

Education for African children has never been compulsory, and was always enjoyed by a minority only. Therefore the parents are committing no crime in rejecting Bantu Education, nor can they be deterred by threats against their children, themselves, or against those teachers who refuse to be a party to this co-called 'Education.'

We are determined to assist the African women to find means of educating their children correctly and bringing them up in a true spirit of democracy and progress. We shall act together as women, in rejecting Bantu Education, and in doing whatever we consider right to prevent any children from being exposed to this poison.

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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