

1/12/11

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Presented to the Annual meeting of the Council held at Taj-Mahal Hotel, Maritzburg on the 28th and 29th September, 1961.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen: I have much pleasure in presenting this report to this Annual meeting of the Council.

1. QUEENSTOWN RESOLUTIONS.

At the Queenstown meeting of the Council held last December, the General Secretary's report dealt at length with the report on the interview with the Honourable, the Minister of Bantu Education on the 2nd September, 1960. It was resolved that the matter of the report on the interview be referred to the Executive Committee of the Council; and that the Provincial Associations study the replies and submit their recommendations to the General Secretary without delay. (See circular letter to Provincial Secretaries dated 12th March, 1961).

On the 29th March, 1961, the Executive Committee of the Council met at Vlakfontein, Pretoria, to consider inter alia the resolutions of the Queenstown meeting.

In respect to the report on the interview submitted at Queenstown, the Executive drew up a document embracing the Queenstown resolutions. This was subsequently submitted to the President. Although the President agreed with the Executive Committee, on second thoughts it was felt that a letter be written to the Department for a reply to the recommendations submitted on the 2nd September, 1960. (Receive oral report).

2. MEETING BETWEEN THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR BANTU EDUCATION AND TWO OFFICIALS OF THE COUNCIL.

On the 14th January, 1961, the treasurer and I met the Deputy Secretary, Mr. van Dyk, in Pretoria, on the following matters:

- (a) Uniformity in the marking of Standard six scripts;
- (b) the aggregate of 45% throughout the Primary School;
- (c) third class standard six pass for 1960;
- (d) a threat by the Natal Regional Director to those teachers who had no knowledge of Afrikaans;
- (e) the R4million Imperial Fund in the O.F.S;
- (f) Unemployment Insurance Fund;
- (g) assistants to School Board Secretaries;
- (h) the committee's findings on the teachers' salaries; and
- (i) stop order facilities.

(Give oral report and read letters from the Department on some of these matters).

3. LIQUOR SUPPLY TO AFRICANS.

A letter from the Institute of Race Relations dated 8th February, 1961, was discussed by the Executive Committee on the 29th.

March, 1961. The contents of this letter referred to recommendations of the Institute for Africans to be supplied with liquor.

After full discussions, the Executive, at their meeting at Vlaktefontein agreed with the Executive of the Institute that liquor be supplied to our people.

(See Rand Daily Mail 18.8.1961.)

4. NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD.

The Council Executive has decided to organise eisteddfods on a national basis. (See circular to Provincial Secretaries dated 3rd May, 1961.)

Details and conditions on how it is proposed to run this eisteddfod are in the hands of inter-Provincial committee, members of which have been selected from each province.

It is hoped that before the close of this meeting we shall receive a full report from this Committee.

No matter what the recommendations of the Committee are; the success of the proposed eisteddfod will depend, to a very large extent, on the support of each and every province.

This venture does not, of course, mean that we must forget about our daily problems. We can easily divide ourselves and have all our projects started.

A number of teachers might criticise us and say that we are now busy with eisteddfods instead of the struggle. We must be prepared to answer such people. We ourselves must be sure of what we are doing.

5. STATISTICS OF THE MAJOR URBAN AREAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

In our circular of the 3rd May, 1961, we requested each province to supply the total number of teachers in places mentioned elsewhere in this report. The matter was sadly neglected as will be shown by returns received so far.

	<u>Men.</u>	<u>Women.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
1. CAPE TOWN.....	nil	nil	nil
2. PORT ELIZABETH.....	137	220	357
3. EAST LONDON.....	nil	nil	nil
4. KIMBERLEY.....	nil	nil	nil
5. BLOEMFONTEIN.....	67	63	130
6. O.F.S. GOLDFIELDS.....	29	17	46 (incomplete)
7. PRETORIA.....	158	170	328
8. RAND.....	nil	nil	nil
9. VEREENIGING/VANDERBIJL PARK....	nil	nil	nil
10. DURBAN.....	nil	nil	nil
11. PIETERMARITZBURG.....	nil	nil	nil

In spite of the fact that the information was urgently required, we still find ourselves with these big gaps.

6. MATRICULATION RESULTS. 1959-1960.

Paragraph 3 of my circular letter dated 12th March, 1961 addressed to Provincial Secretaries refers.

The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association inquired deeper into this matter. Following is a document they submitted to the Council:

In 1959, 1161 pupils sat for the Matriculation. 110 matriculated.

152 obtained school-leaving certificates and 899 failed.

In 1960, 958 pupils wrote and of this number, 52 matriculated.

126 obtained school-leaving certificates.

44 were subject to a doubt and 736 failed.

These figures include the High Commission Territories. In Bantu Education schools in the Republic of South Africa the position is as follows:-

<u>No. of candidates who wrote</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>S.</u>	<u>F.</u>
718	28	92	598
	16.7%		83.3%

SUBJECT ANALYSIS IN 1960 EXAMINATION.

	<u>Total.</u>	<u>Pass.</u>	<u>Fail.</u>
English Higher Grade	710	156	554
%		22%	78%
Afrikaans Lower Grade	425	111	314
%		26.1%	73.9%

BANTU LANGUAGES.

	<u>% PASS.</u>
Xhosa.....	100%
Zulu.....	65%
N. Sotho.....	79.4%
Tsonga.....	72%
S. Sotho.....	58.3%
Tswana.....	58.1%
Venda.....	52%
Biology.....	77%
Botany.....	81%
Geography.....	77%
History.....	67.3%
Agriculture.....	60%
Zoology.....	54.1%
Latin.....	57%
Mathematics.....	46%
Physical Science.....	43%
Bookkeeping and Commerce.....	32.7%

N.B. Poor results in English Higher Grade and Afrikaans Lower Grade.

Moderately poor results in S. Sotho, Tswana and Venda.

According to the "Star" of 10/3/1961, under the heading: Native Education: examination results contrasted.

The same figures mentioned above are repeated. In addition there is this report in the "African Mail" Lusaka, on February 28th, 1961:

"85 of 111 candidates from African Secondary Schools in Northern Rhodesia were successful in Cambridge oversea School Certificate examinations held in November/December, 1960. 19 others were not awarded full certificates but gained the G.C.E. certificate for subjects passed at ordinary level." The report lists the successful candidates, of whom 20 passed in the first division, Cambridge overseas School

Certificate and G.C.E. are respectively the technical equivalents of Matriculation and School-leaving certificates in the Republic of South Africa.

(See also "Star" of 10/3/61. Why Natives fail Matric.)

SOME OF THE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF POOR RESULTS IN MATRICULATION.

1. Poor Foundation in the Bantu Junior Certificate, especially in English, Afrikaans, Mathematics and Physical Science. For example in almost all Matriculation in the Transvaal about 70% of the pupils in Junior Certificate have done English B not English A; 3/4 former Junior Certificate Mathematics syllabus and the "so-called" General Science taught without laboratories. There is an increasing tendency to test by Ballard type of questions in Junior Certificate; but within 2 years the Joint Matriculation Board demands and expects critical essays and lyrical answers far above what the pupils could possibly learn within 2 years. The position has become aggravated by the Afrikaans/English medium of instruction which is being followed in the Junior Certificate today. (N.B. This is being progressively enforced in all community schools).

2. Insufficiently qualified teachers in the Secondary and High Schools.

Since 1955, a large number of High School teachers have left the country to go to Ghana, Nigeria and Protectorates or even alternate employment. The serious drain on man-power when the number of High Schools has risen so tremendously militates against all forms of efficiency. Most of the teachers were graduates, including valuable science and Mathematics teachers. Speaking under correction, there is hardly a day school (with Matric classes) in the Transvaal which has more than 7 graduates on its staff. Schools with recognised boarding facilities are no better, if you exclude the European staff.

3. Lack of good libraries.

The shortage of books in the official languages and in the Bantu languages is a perennial evil. This goes side by side with a lack of newspapers, magazines and periodicals in the schools. The habit of reading which is a sure road to examination success is not possible in the majority of schools. So long as candidates have confined their reading to class-texts, so long will matriculation results in the languages be poor.

4. Schools.

Private, Catholic schools entered 145 pupils in 1960, passed 51, supplemented 17 and failed 77. Passes are still registered in Inkamana, St. Francis (Natal), Pokella (Transvaal), and Mariazell (Cape).

The schools of the other missions either closed or were taken over by the State. In the transition stage these schools have almost all experienced difficult times. There have been strikes, temporary closing, expulsions and all forms of lawlessness. It is difficult to teach successfully where the boarding departments experience difficulties. In the period 1955-1961 there is hardly any state school, originally controlled by a mission, which has not experienced these upheavels. The mass expulsions could hardly be expected to exclude intelligent pupils who would pass under normal circumstances.

5. Miscellaneous difficulties peculiar to schools.

We note the contents of the Bantu Education Journal March 1961 pp. 73 and note that "policy" bedevils the search for true causes of failure. It has become fashionable to put all blame on "lazy" teachers in 1961, as if those of 1910 were more hard working and as if those of 1970 are more likely to change their habits.

DECLINE OF THE STANDARD OF ENGLISH IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS.

That the standard of English in African schools has shown an alarming deterioration of late cannot be denied. Speaking of deterioration in the standard of English in African schools presupposes the existence of an appreciably high standard prior to the introduction of Bantu Education. It is, therefore, necessary to establish that there has been a tolerably high standard before.

To prove the existence of a fairly high standard of English up to, say five years ago, one will have to examine the Institutions and colleges that trained African teachers, and the changes that these Institutions have undergone.

African teachers for Lower and Higher Primary Schools were almost entirely drawn from Institutions and colleges that were predominantly staffed by English-speaking teachers. Needless to say, the influence of these college teachers on the student-teachers went far beyond enabling the latter to utter a few correct English sentences. In the Boarding Schools (colleges) the English teachers were able to create an "English atmosphere" in such cultural activities as school debates, dramatic societies and all types of sport. The African student-teacher had, as it were, an all-round English atmosphere.

The trainees of these Institutions and colleges then brought back with them to the schools where they were later engaged as teachers not only a mastery of English but also a love and deep appreciation of English as a rich and mature language. This fluency in and love of English was passed on to the African infant which also ended at the same colleges.

What then has since happened? With the introduction of Bantu Education, African Education was wrested from the churches that had attracted good English-speaking teachers from England and Scotland. The immediate result of this move was that English-speaking teachers left the colleges. This exodus, in turn, resulted in the dropping of teaching standards, particularly the teaching of English. This evil has, as should be expected, snowballed. In short, the Primary school child is now without the good foundation it used to enjoy.

What remained of English in the Primary schools was deeply and firmly buried in the introduction of Mother tongue instruction! Prior to Bantu Education, African pupils received instruction through the medium of English; officially from Standard three to Standard six and in reality from as early as Standard one. (That is true of the Transvaal Province.) Today they are taught through the vernacular medium from the day they commence school up to Standard six. These Primary School graduates enter the Post Primary Schools barely able to express themselves in simple, coherent and comprehensible English. The teacher of English in the Post Primary schools has no more to do than to harken to the exhortation: "Look on my works, ye mighty - and despair".

Under Bantu Education, the student teachers are trained through the medium of both English and Afrikaans, i.e. half the subjects they take during their training are done in English and the other half

in Afrikaans. (That is also the case with secondary school students). This condition presupposes that the secondary school pupil has reached so high a degree of proficiency in both official languages that it can actually take tuition in them.

The entrance qualification to a teachers training college is a pass in standard six. This is a retrogressive step taken by Bantu Education; for it will be remembered that in the late forties, the Transvaal Education Department curtailed the training of such teachers, and left the entrance qualifications for teacher-training at Junior Certificate.

The Sub 'A' syllabus (Bantu Education), lays down that one-hundred words should be learnt in that class, and 150 new words should be added each successive year. How little this is, forcibly impresses itself upon us if we remember that in the pre-Bantu Education days English as a medium of instruction was introduced in standard two.

A new problem has arisen with the growing number of school-going children in urban areas and to some extent in rural areas too. The classes are very large and the teacher cannot give individual attention and drill work, especially if she must reserve her energy for the children in the Second Session. A factor which is often overlooked is that the African child has to grapple with two foreign languages, i.e. English and Afrikaans, at the same time. (The child begins with the first official language within three months after entering school, and the second official language after another three months.....naturally there must be confusion in the child's mind).

The modern approach of teaching grammar functionally has in many incapable hands deteriorated and the child is not even given the rudiments to assist him to an understanding of the structure of the language.

At all stages the syllabus of Bantu Education stresses private reading and we appreciate that, but there is no evidence when the pupils reach the Secondary School that they have ever acquired the habit of reading on their own. The reasons are not far to seek:- First, there are hardly any facilities for such reading.

Secondly, the pupil will read what he enjoys, and will enjoy what he understands. Having never mastered the mechanical difficulties of the language he never acquires the habit of reading for pleasure. The gap between the Primary School and the Secondary School is such that the majority of children just must do English on the Lower Grade in the Secondary School.

There are no suitable libraries for all grades of schools.

Our Council has always maintained that to preserve a high standard of English, English must be used as a medium of instruction from the Primary School level i.e. from standard III. To the African the mastery of English has always been looked upon as a gateway to Higher Education and self improvement.

The vernacular, both as a medium of instruction and as an instrument, does not satisfy the requirements of the modern world in which he lives.

The acquisition of library facilities for children would in some measure assist the pupils in improving their English.

It would also be in the interest of efficiency to raise the entrance qualifications into teacher-training colleges to Junior Certificate.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion I should like to thank Mr. Motsepe and the Education Committee of the T.U.A.T.A. for the assistance they have given us in obtaining some of the valuable information contained in this report.

H.H. DLAMLENZE.
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FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AFRICAN
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