

St. Teresa Secondary School,
P.O. Steynsburg,
Berendse, Cape Province.

13th October, 1948

Mr. J. Matthews,
Secretary,
Congress Youth League,
PORT HARE.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 24th September, I wish to submit the following information:-

1. At Conference of the A.N.C. Youth League delegates have in the past gone as ordinary members of the Congress, in which case they have had the same voting rights as any other member of the A.N.C. It was like this in the Transvaal to which Province up to December 1947, the Youth League was unaffiliated:

Youth League branches were in localities where there was a Branch of Congress. Now the Youth League membership cards were the same as the Congress membership cards, so that Youth Leaguers beyond the age of 17 automatically became Congress members with all the rights of adult members as long as they paid their subscriptions to date. Thus in Conferences they obtained direct representation indirectly through the branches and provincial Congress. The Constitution of the A.N.C. (Senior body) provides that any branch of the A.N.C. is entitled to one delegate for every 20 members on its roll. Youth Leaguers have availed themselves of this clause in the Constitution to flood the Conferences of the A.N.C. with their members. In future the Port Hare Branch of the Youth League will have to be accorded the status of a Branch for the purposes of direct participation in National Conferences of the A.N.C. This year the matter can be allowed to stand until the Annual Congress Conference at Kimberley when the whole question of financial and administrative relations between the Mother Body and the Youth League will be gone into. This will include the question of the branch provincial and national status of the Youth League in relation to the Senior Congress. You see the question of status has been purposely left over for the time when, like this year, we are comparatively strong to make our voices heard in Congress. We did not want to press for status when we were still weak for fear of being pressed heavily down by the old Congress die-hards.

To-day we are well-established in the Transvaal in Natal they have a powerful Youth League, in the Free State roots are being struck and in the Cape we are just beginning to establish bridge-heads at Port Hare and at Herchel. So then, the fact is that so far as we have been sending delegates by controlling the votes in those Congress branches where we had our branches, and that worked well. But this year we are reaching a higher stage.

(2) The National Executive of the Congress Youth League is summoning a National Conference of Youth League members who will participate in the Conference on a delegation basis. The venue is Bloemfontein, and the dates have been fixed tentatively as the 13th and 14th December, 1948 - two days before the Senior Congress Conference which I understand will be at Kimberley. As many delegates from Port Hare as you choose to send may attend the Youth Conference at Bloemfontein.

All they should carry are credentials signed by the Secretary and countersigned by the President of the Fort Hare Branch showing that the delegate/delegates is/are bona members of the Fort Hare Congress Youth League. Concerning membership cards I shall inform soon.

Yours for Mother Africa;

(Signed) A.P. MDA.

P.S. Meeting at Bloemfontein will be of far-reaching significance to Africa !!

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