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VENDA PROGRESS.

(By J.P.Mutsila)

The following is an address read by J.P.Mutsila to the Venda people on Sunday the 5th July at the Helping Hand Club where Mr. Senator and Mrs. Jones; Messrs Thema, Baloyi and other important people had gathered.

Senator & Mrs. Jones, Messrs Thema & Baloyi and gentlemen of the Venda Association.

We have come here to have a discussion about the Progress in Vendaland. We the Vhavenda, have long felt that our nation is behind others in many respects; not because, as some people would comment, we are so conservative as to be blind to all measures of Progress; but because we have not been given a fair amount of those essentialities that contribute to a fostering of real Progress.

Educationally, Economically and perhaps Socially, we are still far behind other nations of South Africa.

It has been said that "KNOWLEDGE IS POWER"; so our main purpose this morning is to discuss with you our poor educational standard as a nation. Before I proceed further I wish to mention to you Mrs. Jones, that, this morning we are meeting you, not as a loose crowd of plaintive people, but as an organised association representative of the Venda nation; representative of the nation because we are not the only organised body, there is a home branch where some chiefs and indunas are included. And more-over, practically all of us here are mere workers who will sooner or later return home to our families. The vies that you get from us then, are not Johannesburg vies, but home vies. As I have said a while ago, our home is sick, the position in Vendaland is very dangerous and allows no normal progressive expansion.

We belong to a very small nation, occupying only one district in the world. Small as our number is, we have however managed to exist as a nation, with those parcularities that distinguish one nation from another. Time is out of joint, and the tide does not permit of any slow motion; we wish to roll along with the new order, because if we still lag behind, we might ourselves extint as a nation, as did some nations of the World.

There are several Missions at work in Vendaland; but their work is not such as gives us satisfaction, at least some of them. Not because we are Pre-opposed to the works done by the Missions, but because of certain details that we feel are a result of selfishness on the side of the Missions. More-over, most of us belong to what some people call "MUSHROOM CHURCHES" Our children find it very difficult indeed to carry on with education in the mission schools. We have come, therefore, Mrs. Jones, to ask you to get the Government to build Venda National Schools. We are aware that the Government does not provide money for building Primary schools, but we ask you to get it to build Secondary and Industrial schools. The Parliament has voted more money for the development of Native education and we ask you to get a share for the Vhavenda who are in great need for educational facilities.

In answer to our request Mrs. Jones you might say that there are schools in Vendaland and even a Secondary school is there. Yes, but we are not satisfied with most of the schools. In the first place, the only Secondary school there is in a Mission farm where everything is done for the fame and development of that particular Mission. What influence have we as a nation over such a school? Should we as a nation disagree with certain details in respect to that school as we really do disagree, what suggestions from us can be listened to by the Mission representatives? We as a nation look upon the only existing Secondary school as a thing of little interest to us, because we feel it is not a national establishment. It is not our intention to unearth undesirable details connected with farm schools, and I think that it will suffice here to mention that to us, a farm school is as undesirable as a farm is.

Secondly, we as a nation want an Industrial school. Just now our people are starving beyond measure; not because they are so lazy as to consume all their products in a short time, neither because they are careless in the preservation

of the crops they have raised. There are many factors which brought about this present state of deplorable conditions. First, the district is overcrowded; this makes it impossible to get adequate fields and pasture lands. The result is overstocking which is the cause of soil erosion, and because of the shortage of fields, the people are now ploughing on the slopes of the mountains and hills, to the utter ruin of the district. Yet one would argue again in favour of the Vhavendas, & That if this nation were given enough instruction in elementary principles of Agriculture, much of the land would have been saved, because each individual would learn of the value of Fertilisers and Manures,

In the third place, the Venda people depend on their fields for all their needs. with the crops they raise from the fields, they buy clothing, preserved food, they buy stock which they use for lobola and satisfy all other needs. Their crops are to the Vendas as money is to the Whites. Yet there is much harm done to the Vendas during this exchange, especially in the trading stores which exchange goods to the value of 3/6 for a bag of mealies; only to sell the same amount in time of need, such as to-day, for not less than 15/- per bag. These then are a few out of the many factors that bring this regular ruin to our people. With ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ no knowledge of practical education, even the Std. VI boys that leave school cannot make a leaving at home.

Just now Johannesburg is up against vagrant and ~~xxim~~ criminal natives. I must express my gratitude in that among the criminal names I read in the Star, for ~~xxxxx~~ house breaking and the like I have not yet come across many Venda names. Not because they are not suffering under the same strains that make the Johannesburg unemployed to commit crime, but mainly because we Venda people are law abiding and will commit crime only under unavoidable circumstances.

The conditions in Vendaland are bound to make circumstances criminal and unless something be done, our boys are sure to join the already large hooligan gangs very reluctantly. THERE is need then for Industrial education when our boys will be kept at home and make a living out of their crops.

Mrs. Jones, our brothers are up North, fighting for the right course of LIBERTY. Whenever I look at the lists of the roll of HONOUR, I always find, without preudice, that my people from Sibasa have a larger number than any other district in the UNION. This then makes me and all of us believe that our people are more represented than all others propotionally. If the Government will remember us in time of need; why should it be difficult to make such establishments as will make us more usful even in time of peace? I take it that my people will be more than satisfied at their return when they find that the Government for which they were fighting has erected buildings for the education of their sons and daughters.

This morning you are meeting the Venda Nation in its naked state. If I have to be presumptuous, I would say that you have about the BLIND CONSERVATISM of the Venda nation, unfortunately not from the Vendas themselves but from certain individuals who might have worked many years among our people with very poor results; and yet they will not trace their failure back to their lack of tact and sympathy in dealing with us.

There must be a cause for the erection of Public schools; and that cause I presume is a right one. For that cause, the only right cause, have we come again Mrs. Jones, to ask you to take quick action to-wards its maintainance.

One other fact we wish to point out is the precarious position of our home teachers. Year in and year out our teachers are either dismissed or given notice to terminate their services on very vague or no grounds at all save that a superintendent has a right to give due notice to what teachers he pleases. here again we are not consulted when notices are being served to our teachers; neither can we protest against such a move as the superintendent is all powerful. We wonder if it is a christian move to dismiss teachers for nothing else but domestic affairs? There are teachers whom we strongly feel would not have been dismissed if the schools were under public control It must not be thought that we advocate public schools in order to have loose teachers. We are christians and it will not be out of order to mention here that some of our congegational by-laws and regulations are very stringent. We support no form of immorality and loose

an extract from the Star

heard

Character. Yet we are not ^{so} credulous as to support the idea that all teachers in Vendaland are dismissed because of their immorality. We have proved it time and again that most of our teachers have been dismissed without cause. It is not a healthy spirit to make specific quotations; yet we shall do no harm in saying that some superintendents appear to be malevolent to-wards ~~xxx~~ a progressive teacher.

Before I conclude I must mention one bitter thing. It is common knowledge that the Native Affairs, after bitter cries from the native people, has abolished schoolfees., and has provided money for buying such articles as ink and sewing materials and has gone to the extent of paying sanitary fees.

You will learn with surprise this morning Mrs. Jones that in most of the Mission schools in Vendaland, it is still imperative that the pupils pay schoolfees. The question then arises, after all things done by the Department, what are all these fees for? A ready answer from a superintendent concerned will be; that funds be raised for the erection of new buildings. This then solves the question--- Who built the so called Mission school buildings?

When there is a building to be erected, we are told that the building is to be used by our children; which is quite right; and that we have got to collect so much per head; which thing we do. But after the building is complete real ownership is not ours but the Mission's. I wonder if you do not call it criminal to make the people work and collect money for a thing that they will have very little or no say about?

These are the few among the so many factors that have necessitated this assembly; and we ask very passionately that quick action be taken in the line of redress.

If you would allow me Mrs. Jones, I would suggest that a deputation be sent to the Native Affairs in connection with grants for the establishment of Secondary and Industrial schools in Vendaland. Here we are; we have brought our complaints; craving for nothing but education.

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NATIVES RALLY TO CALL

RECRUITS PROMISED BY CHIEFS

Louis Trichardt, Monday.

A large gathering of chiefs and indunas, representing the Venda and Shangaan groups assembled at Sibasa to hear Colonel E. T. Stubbs, Director of Non-European Army Services who brought a message from General Smuts appealing for every able-bodied man and women in the Union to volunteer for active service.

Colonel Stubbs congratulated the natives on the excellent response made to his appeal two years ago, when 3,000 of the young men enrolled in the Army. Their conduct in the Union had been excellent, and as stretcher-bearers in the front lines they had behaved nobly.

The time had now come for every man to volunteer. He had lately visited South-West Africa and Ovamboland, where the natives had responded to the call amazingly. They remembered there what the Germans had done to the Heriros.

Ratshilingwa, speaking on behalf of Chief Sibasa, said, "You can tell General Smuts that we shall gladly respond to his call, for we realise that the veld is ablaze and it is the custom of our people in such an emergency to go out any distance to meet the fire and extinguish the flames."

THREE COMPLAINTS

Chief after chief came into the arena and endorsed Ratshilingwa's promise. They had three complaints to make. Firstly, in times of peril it had always been the chief's prerogative to call on his young men to undertake the defence of the country, but under the present Government their powers had gradually deteriorated. Even in the old Republican days they were expected to order out their natives in war-time. They asked for restoration of the old status to assist them in their war efforts. Secondly, a very large number of volunteers for defence work were turned down by medical authorities.

Thirdly, they said their women folk were being hunted for using saplings cut down from woodlands where their forebears had lived for generations. They pointed to the hills and said: "There are the trees and the timber left by our people. Call off the present disabilities, at any rate for the duration of the war."

Colonel Stubbs said that the representations had his fullest sympathy, and he promised that they would be attended to immediately.—Sapa.

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