

Federal Council of African Teachers' Associations

to which is affiliated:-  
The Cape African Teachers' Union,  
The Natal African Teachers' Union,  
The Orange Free State African Teachers' Association,  
The Transvaal African Teachers' Association,  
The Transvaal African Teachers' Union.

Memorandum Subsequent to the Interview of the 21st March, 1955 with  
the Division of Bantu Education, Native Affairs Department, Pretoria.

We wish, in good faith, to restate and underline various points we discussed with representatives of your Department on the above occasion. This we wish to do not merely for record purposes only, but in the hope that serious consideration may be made towards the implementation of the recommendations.

1. Closing Down of Schools:- We appreciate efforts being made towards opening Double Shift Schools in available premises to cater for the pupils and teachers of the schools that are closing down in the Johannesburg area.

We would like to make it quite clear that we are not taking sides for and against arguments leading to the closing down of schools, but we do not believe that the teachers should, in effect, be made pawns in the dispute. We pray, therefore, that teachers who may be adversely affected by the dislocation be sympathetically treated.

This also applies to Farm Schools where the landlords are unwilling to assume management of the school. It does not seem that the efforts to persuade these farmers to appoint some other manager for the school is meeting much success as he, the farmer, is still ultimately responsible for the administration of the school. It is perhaps rather ironical that many of the reluctant farmers are declared supporters of the present Government.

Our recommendation is that the Department could explore possibilities of making these farm schools become Government Schools for the time being.

2. Roman Catholic Schools:- It is a fact that the new system, whatever its merits, has come with some individual hardships, the case in point being that of teachers in Roman Catholic Schools. As the Department itself pointed out in the recent press-advertisement that, "the great majority of teachers will not be able to exercise this choice as the available vacancies in community schools will permit absorption of a small number only." Our point of view is that these teachers are not in any way to blame for the decision of the Church.

At the interview we recommended that teachers in Roman Catholic Schools with a good record who wish to transfer to community schools should be given every facility so to do, in spite of the fact that that, "would obviously have a detrimental effect on the standard of education offered." The church would have to depend for its supply of teachers from those fresh from college who voluntarily enter into the new contract.

We were grateful for the sympathetic hearing of this suggestion, and we further recommend that a directive be sent to the general preferential procedure in selecting teachers for vacant posts.

As /... ....

As we have already pointed out, the teachers have become, in practice, a most unfortunate tug-of-war between the Department and the church. This state of affairs is regrettable. We would like to make a very earnest plea to the Honourable Minister to consider the advisability of treating all teachers, who are in Roman Catholic Schools against their will, as though they were in community schools, and that they be paid the full salary till such time as they might be absorbed into Community schools. We beg to point out that teachers, on the whole, have conducted themselves with considerably commendable restraint in the recent fierce controversy about the implementation of your policies.

We have yet another suggestion in connection with this matter. Would it not be practicable to make all the teachers who are at present in Roman Catholic Schools become Government servants with the duties and privileges of such, while the church continues to take responsibility for the administration of the school. The teachers would receive their full salaries and would be liable to transfer etc. Such an experiment was successfully carried out at the Polela Institution, Bulwer, Natal and Mr. M. Prozesky might bear testimony to this. We think this system merits very careful study with a view to its possible implementation.

3. The Lower Primary Draft Syllabus:- While we have no major criticism to make on this syllabus, we have the following observations and recommendations to make:-

- (1) In our view the selection of passages for the scripture Syllabus emphasizes unduly what might be called "Retribution" (deaths and killings) at the expense of what we consider the central Christian doctrines of Love and Atonement epitomised at best by the Agony, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. As examples we might quote: the Unselfishness of Abraham towards Lot; the Reconciliation between Joseph and his brethren; the Sermon on the Mount; the Prodigal Son; the Good Samaritan, etc.
- (2) Taking into account that the pupil at the Sub A. Class would still have to learn to read and write his home language, practically, that they start with both Official languages at that stage, otherwise the pupils will be confused. It would be desirable that one of the two be postponed for a later stage. The only fair way, we think, in which this could be done, is by starting off with that Official Language which is predominant in that particular District of Region.
- (3) We think more progress could be registered in the Arithmetic Syllabus than envisaged. As example in Std.I the pupils could go up to 999 instead of up to 100 with regard to numeration and notation, addition and subtraction and multiplication and division. Similarly Std.II could go up to 9999 instead of 1,000.
- (4) The omnibus subject "Environment Study" and also Handwork, in our view, fail to take sufficient account of the difference between urban and rural environmental conditions. In the syllabi the emphasis is apparently on rural conditions without providing alternatives for urban children e.g. Ilala which can be imported instead of Umsingizane; Advisory Boards and Town Councils instead of the Chief and his Counsellors etc.

(5) /.....

(5) The Hygiene Syllabus could lay more stress on factors such as malnutrition as being contributory to many diseases and how such could be overcome. Prevalent diseases such as tuberculosis, dysentery etc. should have a place in the syllabus.

4. Regulations for School Committees and School Boards:-

(1) Chiefs who are, in our view, a dying institution in African society have been given extra-ordinarily wide powers both in their control of School Committees and School Boards. Many of them are illiterate and have not even educated their own children, and hence they lack interest in educational matters. Education is a specialised field and its fate should not be subject to the initiative of uneducated persons regardless of race.

(b) "Consultation" in the Regulations is not defined so that a chief may interpret it the way he pleases, which may mean no consultation in the accepted sense. Chiefs being human will tend to appoint their satellites and favourites rather than men who would best serve the interests of education.

We would also like to point out that Chiefs are by and large Government nominees and as such tend to represent the official view rather than the best interests of their people.

(2) In urban areas Native Commissioners have been given similar powers to those given to chiefs in rural areas. Many of these officers are also magistrates of their Districts, and as such have their hands quite full already, and this additional onerous burden of Bantu Education will tend to be neglected. In addition, many of them do not know the best men in their Districts as they often come in contact, besides criminals, with men involved in litigation. They will therefore be inclined to rely on the recommendations of their favourites.

(3) We think it is a mistake to confine the word "parent" or "guardian" to the people who happen to have children in school at the time. This will deprive the Committees and Boards of some of the best brains in the communities. In any case, in African society the interpretation of "parent" is wide enough to include all adult mature persons with established homes.

(4) We fail to see for what purpose members of the School Committee must have access to the school. If there is any need, we think the aims and purposes of a visit must be clearly defined if unnecessary friction and domineering is to be avoided.

(5) We believe the gates of snooping and scheming are being opened far and wide by allowing any member of the community to write complaints for the consideration of the School Committee and Board against the teaching staff.

Already teachers are being threatened by jubilant grievance-manufacturers. The Committees will have to sit day in and out to consider petty frivolous complaints. In such a poisoned atmosphere it would be difficult to do any constructive work.

(6) We are disturbed at the inclusion of the provision in Section 13(b) (6). This amounts to an enforcement of tribalism in the teaching staff. There are various categories of teaching such as the Sciences in a Secondary School which may not require knowledge of the Local Language.

(7) It seems to us, notwithstanding Regulations 15 (3) and 31, School Boards are being made rubber-stamps to the Department in all the constructive aspects of their work. Their powers are severely circumscribed.

We wish to protest particularly at Regulation 32 (Liability of Members of a School Board). This will tend to bring the element of undue caution, if not of fear to the Board members, thereby promoting conservatism and sterility whereas in education a certain measure of imaginative experimentation should be encouraged if it is not to become static.

5. Conditions of service:- We fail to understand the point in Regulation 3. Why should the subsidy of a teacher be liable to withdrawal "without reason given"?

As we pointed out at the deputation, the Department may have good reason for such action, but the trial of the teacher is in secret and here are none of those securities promised by the Eiselen Commission Report, "Annexure Q" (P. 215).

We are not satisfied with the argument that a good teacher need not be afraid. It is a Sword of Democles all the same, and the people who may suffer are not necessarily the scoundrels, but might be men of principles who may genuinely view their duties towards their people from a different angle from the official view-point.

(2) We consider it a very serious thing to terminate the services of a man in permanent employment and we feel that Regulation 7 for fully qualified teachers should have a condition that the notice of termination of contract from the Board should give valid or justifiable grounds for the notice.

6. Misconduct:- (1) We were glad to get the assurance that Section II (i) will not be narrowly interpreted as education, all education, is a dynamic process and the current theories, principles and practices must constantly be subjected to a critical examination otherwise the educational system becomes static and formalised. We believe it is necessary in the best interests of Bantu Education that African educationists, especially through their duly constituted professional organisations to voice intelligent criticism even if it is pungent sometimes.

(2) As Section 13 (6) prohibits legal representation at an inquiry, we request that a teachers' organisation be permitted to appoint a representative to assist their colleague by cross-questioning the witnesses and addressing the Board. This privilege was allowed in the Cape, and extending it to the present system would promote the interests of natural justice and equity.

(3) We are disturbed by the implications of Section 15 (3). The Board may be coloured by local petty prejudices and jealousies. Thus we have grave fears about the advisability of making the decision of the Board final, in spite of the fact that the Inspector and the Native Commissioner will be advisory to the Board. We are aware that some of your Inspectors themselves share our misgivings in this regard.

We recommend that a channel of appeal to the Regional Director's Office be instituted. This is a matter that is of fundamental importance to us and even to the Boards themselves. Under the present circumstances we can foresee a lot of unpleasant litigation which would tend to disrupt and discredit the chaminery and efficacy of the system you are experimenting upon.

7. Post of Responsibility:- (1) We think that the School Board Secretary has a very responsible task to perform and we suggest that the remuneration attached to the post should be made much more attractive than envisaged, in order to minimise any danger of misappropriation of funds as well as make the post attract the best material even from among the Principals of Schools. This could be ensured by adopting the recommended scale of allowances for Sub-Inspectors, and the latter be put on a much more generous scale.

(2) We believe that there are sufficient African educationists who, by virtue of their efficiency, experience, integrity and qualifications, could be happily appointed fully-fledged Inspectors of Schools. We therefore respectfully request that no new European Inspectors be appointed henceforth and all future vacancies be progressively filled by African Inspectors.

8. Salaries and Pensions:- (1) We note from the March Bantu Education Journal that the present salaries will continue, and as we stated at the interview, we appreciate the fact that salaries for newly employed teachers have not been reduced. But as set out in our Memorandum 2 on Finances of March 29th, 1954, we would greatly welcome an improvement of the present salaries. We might point out that amidst the ever-rising cost of living, our salaries have remained at the present level since 1948, and teachers are very much hard hit. Even a raise of only 5 per cent would be appreciated. We also request that the cost of living allowance or part thereof be consolidated to the basic salary.

We would like to comment on the argument often advanced that there is no shortage of applicants for vacant teaching posts and this is taken as proof that salaries are attractive. But we would like to point out that the crux of the matter is that many who enter the profession do not find avenues open to enter other professions for which they would, by far, be more suited. So that this flow is not due at all to remunerative attraction, but rather it is a result of an economic weakness in the South African set-up. This fact is definitely admitted by the Eiselen Commission Report. (see P. 125, Paragraph 710).

There is no question of a strong bias towards the teaching profession. A considerable section of African teachers use the profession merely as a stepping stone to other walks of life such as business, the Church, law, medicine, etc. That is why the Eiselen Commission discovered that, "the average period of service is relatively short." After quoting figures the Commission went on to observe that, "These figures would indicate a constant change of teachers which must inevitably have a harmful effect on the efficiency of teaching." (P.79, Paragraph 441).

(2) We are not happy to note that the recommendation of the Eiselen Commission Report (p. 215, Annexure Q., 1(e) with regard to "a reasonable pension on retirement after satisfactory service" has not been implemented. We had hoped that the present Natal Non-European Provident Fund would be superseded by a proper pension scheme which would be extended to teachers throughout South Africa. On the contrary, Section 32(2) of the Regulations excludes all teachers even in Natal employed after the 31st March, 1955. This cannot be regarded as a progressive step.

We /....

We note, however, that the Bantu Education Act does not prohibit the establishment of a pension scheme, but merely protects existing privileges. We therefore pray that this very vital security be given serious consideration with a view to implementation at the earliest possible moment.

We welcome the suggestion made at the interview that we make practical recommendations as to how the requested scheme could operate. We have made an intensive study of various pension schemes at present in operation. Our recommendations here are based largely on the Natal Ordinance (European) Teachers' Pension Fund.

We suggest that the rates of contribution for members of the proposed pension fund be as follows:-

<u>Age at Commencement of Pensionable Service</u>	<u>Percentage of Pensionable Emoluments</u>	
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
39 and under	8.0	9.0
40 " "	8.2	9.2
41 " "	8.4	9.4
42 " "	8.6	9.6
43 " "	8.8	9.8
44 " "	9.0	10.0
45 " "	9.2	10.2
46 " "	9.4	10.4
47 " "	9.6	10.6
48 " "	9.8	10.8
49 " "	10.0	11.0

N.B. The above figures are based on the presumption that the retirement ages of men and women will be 60 years and 55 years of age respectively.

Retirement Benefits:- On retirement upon attaining the age limit or at an earlier age in case of ill-health retirements, members should be entitled to the following benefits:-

(a) An annuity calculated on the basis of one-eightieth (1/80) of his service, for each year of his service. This means that the annuity would be calculated as follows:-

$$\frac{\text{(Average Pensionable Emoluments X Number of years of service for the last 7 years)}}{80} \text{ Pensionable Service}$$

(b) In addition to the above annuity, he would be entitled to a gratuity equal to 3.6 times this annuity in the case of men, and 4.5 times the annuity in the case of women members. This could be calculated thus:-

$$\frac{\text{Average Pensionable Emoluments X Number of years of Pens. Service for last 7 years}}{80} \text{ X } \frac{100}{100} \text{ X } 3.6 \text{ (4.5)}$$

(c) The minimum service required to qualify for a pension should be ten years service. But should a member retire, say on ill-health grounds before the completion of ten years service, he should receive a cash sum equal to twice his own contributions.

Death Benefits:- (a) If a member who has retired on pension dies within five years of his retirement, his widow, or other full dependant should receive a cash sum equal to the difference between five years annuity and the annuity already paid to the pensioner.

**Collection Number: AD1715**

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation*

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

©2013

**LEGAL NOTICES:**

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.