



"THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY IN SA - FUTURE OF EDUCATION"

*No matter what your programme says,
not going to talk to you for an
hour. Discussion. Now do a
Calvin Coolidge, man of few words. Preach, like
Fr. Barnes*

MR PRESIDENT, GUESTS, MEMBERS OF SATA, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AS I CONTEMPLATE THE TASK ASSIGNED TO ME, I FEEL A GREAT SENSE OF TREPIDATION. WERE I TO BE DISCUSSING THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL AND THE UNIVERSITY IN SOME IDEALISED UTOPIA, WITH A HOMOGENEOUS POPULATION AND CULTURE AND NO SHORTAGE OF RESOURCES, OR EVEN IN SOME EARTHLY APPROXIMATION TO SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH FOR EXAMPLE AS ICELAND, DENMARK OR FINLAND, I SHOULD FEEL ON MUCH SURER GROUND. ONE COULD THEN SAY THAT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOULD PROVIDE THE 3 R'S, THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD ON THE PRIMARY FOUNDATION, AND GO INTO

KEY SUBJECTS IN GREATER DEPTH, WITH A VIEW TO PREPARING PUPILS FOR A USEFUL FUNCTION IN SOCIETY OR TO BE IN A CONDITION TO PROFIT FROM TERTIARY EDUCATION. THE BUSINESS OF A UNIVERSITY IN SUCH A SOCIETY IS KNOWLEDGE, ITS PRESERVATION, PROPAGATION AND EXTENSION. GIVEN THAT RESOURCES WERE GENEROUS, ADEQUATE PROVISION COULD BE MADE FOR CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS MUSIC, ART, DRAMA AND SPORT. A PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO OF 20:1 IN SCHOOLS, 10:1 IN UNIVERSITIES AND PROPER EQUIPMENT, BUILDINGS AND LIBRARIES WOULD BE ASSURED. EVERY PERSON EXPERIENCING SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD DO SO ON AN EQUAL FOOTING. OBVIOUSLY ONE COULD WARM TO AND EXPAND ON SUCH A THEME, AND EVENTUALLY RESUME ONE'S SEAT, TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF SOME TEPID APPLAUSE.

THE MOMENT THE WORDS "IN SOUTH AFRICA" ARE ADDED TO THE TITLE, NOT TO MENTION "FUTURE OF EDUCATION", THE DIFFICULTIES SEEM TO MULTIPLY

ALMOST WITHOUT LIMIT. WE CAN BY ALL MEANS RETAIN OUR ROSEATE PICTURE OF THE IDEAL EDUCATION SYSTEM - YOUR OLD MEN MUST DREAM DREAMS AND YOUR YOUNG MEN MUST SEE VISIONS - BUT WE HAVE TO BEGIN FROM WHERE WE ARE. WE ARE MANIFESTLY INHOMOGENEOUS, CULTURALLY, RELIGIOUSLY, GENETICALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY. RESOURCES ARE NOT ADEQUATE. STABILITY AND ORDER ARE AT STAKE, AND OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM IS GOING THROUGH A FUNDAMENTAL TRANSITION, TOO RAPIDLY FOR SOME AND NOT REMOTELY RAPIDLY ENOUGH FOR OTHERS.

LET US CONSIDER IN MORE DETAIL SOME OF THE FACETS OF OUR PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SITUATION. ITS QUALITY RANGES FROM REASONABLY SATISFACTORY, EVEN BY DEVELOPED WORLD STANDARDS, FOR MOST OF THE WHITE SUBSYSTEM TO HOPELESSLY INADEQUATE FOR THE BLACK. ITS COST IS APPROXIMATELY R6 000 000 000 PER ANNUM, OR 18% OF A TOTAL STATE BUDGET

OF APPROXIMATELY R32 000 000 000. THE BUDGET IS BY NO MEANS EVENLY SPREAD. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COST PER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL IS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN IN THE HIGH SCHOOL, WHILE FEWER THAN 250 000 TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM A SIXTH OF THE EDUCATIONAL BUDGET BEING DEVOTED TO TERTIARY EDUCATION. WE ARE ALL EVEN MORE AWARE OF SOME OF THE INTERRACIAL INEQUITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY 13% OF PUPILS ARE ENROLLED IN WHITE SCHOOLS, YET ALMOST AS MUCH IS SPENT ON THIS SECTOR AS THE REST COMBINED. FEWER THAN 10% OF BLACK TEACHERS ARE EFFECTIVELY QUALIFIED, AND THE VAST MAJORITY ARE UNDER THIRTY YEARS OF AGE AND HENCE A LIMITED NUMBER HAVE SUFFICIENT CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES. THE PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO HAS IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY OF RECENT YEARS AND STANDS AT ABOUT 40:1. THE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO GROW AT MORE THAN 5% PER ANNUM, WHILE THE WHITE SYSTEM IS STATIC OR EVEN DECLINING. AN ARMY OF 135 000 BLACK TEACHERS IS EMPLOYED. ANOTHER

44 000 MUST BE FOUND, EVEN FOR A STEADY-STATE SYSTEM, IF THE RATIO WERE TO COME DOWN TO 30:1 AND YET AN AGGREGATE OF ONLY 19 000 ARE IN TRAINING. LABORATORIES AND LIBRARIES ARE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT, AND IN MANY CASES BASIC SERVICES SUCH AS WATER AND ELECTRICITY ARE LACKING. IN MANY AREAS AN ENDEMIC CONDITION OF DISORDER HAS ENSURED THAT FOR SEVERAL YEARS ONLY A FEW WEEKS OF REGULAR SCHOOLING PER ANNUM HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. GREAT NUMBERS OF SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN DAMAGED OR EVEN DESTROYED.

MOST OF US ARE MORE OR LESS AWARE OF AT LEAST THE OUTLINES OF OUR GRIM CIRCUMSTANCES. THE GOVERNMENT, TO ITS CREDIT, HAS COMMITTED ITSELF IN PRINCIPLE TO PARITY OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, AND HAS UNDERTAKEN THAT EXPENDITURE ON BLACK EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS WILL INCREASE BY 4% P.A. IN REAL TERMS. BEFORE WE BECOME TOO EUPHORIC AS TO WHAT THIS

WILL ACHIEVE LET US CONTEMPLATE SOME UNDERLYING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REALITIES. AS BRIAN KANTOR, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, HAS COGENTLY STATED, THE PROFESSIONAL, ENTREPRENEURIAL AND MANAGERIAL SECTORS OF OUR POPULATION, WHO ARE MAINLY WHITE, ARE BY AND LARGE HIGHLY MOBILE. IF THEY ARE TAXED ANY MORE HEAVILY THAN AT PRESENT, OR SEE THEIR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS LEVELLED DOWN TOO FAR, *or at least many of them* THEY WILL SIMPLY LEAVE. THE ABILITY OF THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM EVEN TO PRODUCE THE PRESENT LEVEL OF WEALTH WOULD THEN BE SEVERELY COMPROMISED, AND ALL THAT WE COULD HOPE FOR IS AN EQUALITY, PERHAPS, BUT AN EQUALITY OF MISERY. ANY PROSPECTS OF UPGRADING EDUCATION WOULD VANISH.

THE EXTRA MONEY FOR BLACK EDUCATION IS THEREFORE NOT GOING TO COME IN SOME MAGICAL AND PAINLESS WAY FROM INCREASED TAXATION, RENDERED BEARABLE THROUGH AN INCREASED POOL OF WEALTH AVAILABLE TO TAX AT

ACCEPTABLE RATES. THE MONEY IS TO COME RATHER FROM A FAIRLY DRASTIC REDISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES CURRENTLY SPENT ON EDUCATION AS A WHOLE. THE SIGNS ARE ALREADY TO BE DISCERNED. UNIVERSITY SUBSIDIES FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW HAVE BEEN CUT BY BETWEEN 15 AND 20%, AND THIS SITUATION IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER. UNIVERSITIES ARE UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE TO RATIONALISE THEIR COURSE OFFERINGS, AND TO SHARE AND OPTIMISE RESOURCE UTILISATION. THE AUTHORITIES ARE QUITE OBVIOUSLY PREPARING FOR THE DAY WHEN FEES ARE TO CHARGED AT PRESENTLY ALL-WHITE STATE-RUN SCHOOLS, UNLESS SUCH SCHOOLS RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO FALLING BACK TO SOME UNIVERSALLY APPLICABLE STAFFING NORM OF PERHAPS 30 PUPILS PER TEACHER. THOSE COMMUNITIES WHICH FIND THIS UNACCEPTABLE WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE THE EXTRA RESOURCES THEMSELVES, JUST AS THE NOW SUBSIDISED PRIVATE SCHOOLS DO.

WHILE WE SHOULD LIKE TO SEE THE BUSINESS OF SCHOOLS CONTINUING TO BE EDUCATION, AND NOT BEING TRANSFORMED INTO POLITICAL SLOGANEERING, WE ALL SURELY RECOGNISE THAT THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION, AS DISTINCT FROM EDUCATION ITSELF, IS MOST DEFINITELY ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA, AND FURTHERMORE, OUGHT TO BE SO. THIS SITUATION PLACES ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITIES ON ALL SOUTH AFRICANS, WHITE AS WELL AS BLACK. WHITES WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL DISPENSATION SIMPLY CANNOT CONTINUE, AND THAT ITS DEMISE IS TO BE MEASURED IN YEARS RATHER THAN DECADES. EXCLUSIVELY WHITE SCHOOLS ARE DESTINED TO BECOME THE EXCEPTION RATHER THAN THE NORM, IN THE NEAR RATHER THAN THE DISTANT FUTURE. CERTAIN UNIVERSITIES AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS LIFE AFTER THE BARRIERS HAVE FALLEN, AND THAT EDUCATION CAN CONTINUE IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. OF COURSE THERE ARE PROBLEMS AND RISKS, BUT ONLY THE UTTERLY NAIVE CAN IMAGINE THAT

SUCH CHANGES CAN COME ABOUT ENTIRELY WITHOUT PAIN. THE PAIN FACTOR, I VENTURE TO SUGGEST, IS LIKELY TO BE A GREAT DEAL HIGHER IF THE STATUS QUO IS PROMOTED FOR VERY MUCH LONGER.

BLACKS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL ALSO HAVE TO LEARN TO RECONCILE THEMSELVES TO SOME EQUALLY UNPALATABLE EDUCATIONAL REALITIES. IN THE FIRST PLACE, EVEN WITH THE BEST WILL IN THE WORLD, AND GIVEN SOME PROSPECT OF POLITICAL SANITY AND STABILITY BEING ACHIEVED, THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY WHATEVER OF SOME MAGICAL "QUICK FIX" FOR OUR PRESENT EDUCATIONAL DISARRAY. EDUCATIONAL NIRVANA IS SIMPLY NOT AROUND THE CORNER. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRESENT ALL-WHITE SYSTEM INTO AN OPEN, FEE-PAYING SYSTEM WILL CERTAINLY PROVIDE SOME WELCOME RELIEF TO THOSE SECTORS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY WHO CAN AFFORD, OR ARE PREPARED TO MAKE GREAT SACRIFICES, TO MEET THE NECESSARY FEES FOR A LESS INADEQUATE EDUCATION.

FOR THE VAST BULK OF THE FIVE OR SIX MILLION POTENTIAL BLACK SCHOOL-
GOING POPULATION, THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS ARE NOT ROSY, UNDER ANY
POLITICAL DISPENSATION. CONSIDER EVEN THE MORE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS.
INITIALLY, A LEGACY OF INFANT MALNUTRITION AND A GENERALLY NON-
EDUCATIONALLY SUPPORTIVE HOME AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT ENSURE THAT
THE ENTRANTS TO THE SYSTEM LABOUR UNDER ENORMOUS DISADVANTAGES. THE
SCHOOLING THEN TAKES PLACE IN SUBSTANDARD PREMISES AND IS DELIVERED BY
TOO FEW, INADEQUATELY PREPARED AND INSUFFICIENTLY EXPERIENCED TEACHERS.
TO THIS IS COUPLED THE NEED TO ADJUST AFTER A FEW YEARS TO A CHANGE IN
THE LANGUAGE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION. THE WHOLE PROCESS TAKES PLACE
AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF GRINDING POVERTY, AND IN MANY CASES, FEAR AND
INSTABILITY.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES CAN BE UPGRADED TO A SATISFACTORY LEVEL IN UNDER TWO DECADES OF DEDICATED AND BACKBREAKING COMMITMENT. THIS IS OF COURSE A DISAPPOINTING, EVEN A DEVASTATING CONCLUSION, BUT I CANNOT ENVISAGE ANY HONEST ALTERNATIVE. BUILDINGS DO NOT ARISE OVERNIGHT, TEACHERS CANNOT BE TRAINED INSTANTLY, WEALTH BE CREATED AND THE NECESSARY POLITICAL STAMINA BE MOBILISED IN THE TWINKLING OF ANY EYE. LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT I AM ALLUDING HERE MUCH MORE TO THIRD WORLD RATHER THAN APARTHEID-TYPE DIFFICULTIES. QUASI-APARTHEID PARALLEL SCHOOL SYSTEMS, WHERE THE SEPARATION IS OCCASSIONED MORE BY LANGUAGE OR RELIGIOUS CLEAVAGES, EXIST EVEN IN SUCH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AS CANADA, HOLLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND OR ISRAEL. IN THESE CASES PARALLEL SYSTEMS DO NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY INFERIORITY OR INEQUALITY OF RESOURCES AND STANDARDS. THE DIFFICULTIES TO WHICH I AM REFERRING ARE EXPERIENCED IN COMMON WITH

THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, WHERE PROBLEMS OF INCREASED EXPECTATIONS AND INADEQUATE RESOURCES CAUSE AS MUCH CONCERN, AND PROVIDE AS FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES AS THEY DO HERE.

honest
thinking

exp Latin America : UNESCO studies
(a) Mother tongue edue as late as poss
(b) Teachers retire 40 → 25 don't make such a mistake
diff (c) Home background vital.

WHAT I HAVE SAID SO FAR MAY NOT IN ANY OBVIOUS WAY BE CONVERGENT WITH THE THEME OF YOUR CONFERENCE, "EDUCATION - A BASIS FOR HOPE", PARTICULARLY IF HOPE IS TO BE EQUATED, AS IT OFTEN IS IN THE POPULAR MIND, WITH WISHFUL THINKING. I PREFER TO REGARD HOPE AS A REASONABLE EXPECTATION GROUNDED IN REALITY. IN ORDER TO EXERCISE THE VIRTUE OF HOPE SO REGARDED IT IS FIRST NECESSARY TO DETERMINE, AND NOT FLINCH FROM, THE TRUE REALITIES OF OUR SITUATION, WHICH HAS BEEN THE BURDEN OF MY REMARKS UP UNTIL NOW. GRIM THOUGH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES MAY, THE PROSPECTS ARE FAR FROM HOPELESS, PROVIDED WE KEEP COOL HEADS, AND HUSBAND OUR COURAGE.

LET US PUT THE OBVIOUS POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT, AND CONCENTRATE MORE ON THE FUTURE OF OUR EDUCATION AS A MANAGEMENT PROBLEM, WHICH, I AM CONVINCED, IT VERY LARGELY IS, OR CAN BE MADE TO BE, GIVEN THE REQUISITE MODICUM OF GOODWILL. A GOOD MANAGER CONSIDERS HIS TRADITIONAL RESOURCES OF MEN, MONEY, MATERIALS AND MACHINERY. FURTHERMORE, HE RECOGNISES THAT HE ALWAYS HAS TO MAKE DECISIONS UNDER CONDITIONS OF INCOMPLETE INFORMATION, WITH TIME CONSTRAINTS, AND THAT HIS RESOURCES WILL ALWAYS FALL SHORT OF HIS AMBITIONS. ONE OF HIS MAJOR TASKS IS THEREFORE TO SET PRIORITIES.

I AM FEELING BOLD ENOUGH TO SUGGEST THIS MORNING THAT OUR HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY, OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE, SHOULD BE TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD, BLACK, BROWN OR WHITE IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND THAT WE SHOULD DELIBERATELY CONCENTRATE ON THE

BASICS OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY. UNLESS WE SUCCEED IN THAT OBJECTIVE WE ARE WASTING OUR TIME, BECAUSE THERE WILL BE NO SURE FOUNDATION FOR THE SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, WHICH WILL BE THE PRIVILEGE OF SOME, OR THE INFORMAL, FURTHER SELF-EDUCATION, WHICH IS THE OBLIGATION OF ALL.

HE WHO WILLS THE END NECESSARILY MUST WILL THE MEANS. THE MOST CRITICAL MEANS TO MY STATED END IS AN ADEQUATE CORPS OF SUFFICIENTLY TRAINED AND MOTIVATED TEACHERS. THE PROVISION OF PROPER SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR THE PRIMARY TEACHER CORPS IS NO TRIVIAL TASK IN ITSELF, AND IS OBVIOUSLY PART OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.

AN ADEQUATE PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM IS AN OBVIOUS HOPE-GENERATOR, BECAUSE IT WILL AFFECT EVERYBODY. EACH PERSON WILL ACCEPT THAT HE HAS

BEEN AFFORDED AT LEAST A MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN LIFE. FOR THE SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM FUTURE WE HAVE NO REASONABLE PROSPECT AT ALL OF PROVIDING SECONDARY, AND STILL LESS, TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR ALL. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE SHOULD REGARD SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION AS PREPARATION FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES. WE HAVE A GREAT NEED FOR WISE LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS, IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNITY LIFE, THE CHURCHES AND THE MEDIA, AND ALSO FOR BOLD AND IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE WEALTH-PRODUCING ACTIVITIES OF COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY. CLEARLY, MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT UNLESS MORE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S OBVIOUS POTENTIAL WEALTH IS REALISED AS ATTAINABLE WEALTH, THE GOOD LIFE WE SHOULD LIKE TO SEE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE WILL ELUDE US THROUGH LACK OF RESOURCES. THERE IS A SHORTSIGHTED TENDENCY SOMETIMES TO IMAGINE THAT THE GOOSE WILL GO ON FOREVER LAYING THE GOLDEN EGGS. THE INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNICAL GOOSE

REQUIRES VERY CAREFUL AND SPECIALISED CARE AND FEEDING BY HIGHLY EDUCATED MEN AND WOMEN. ONE OF OUR HIGHEST PRIORITIES IN SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION MUST THEREFORE BE THE PROVISION OF PROPERLY TRAINED MANPOWER FOR OUR VITAL INDUSTRIAL BASE.

IN THE SHORT TERM WE SHOULD ALSO DO WELL TO MAKE SOME UNORTHODOX PROVISIONS FOR THOSE DISAPPOINTED PEOPLE FOR WHOM WE CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE CONVENTIONAL PROVISION IN THE UPPER REACHES OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. FORTUNATELY, WE ALREADY HAVE A HEALTHY TRADITION ON WHICH TO BUILD. THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA HAS ESTABLISHED UP A WORLD-WIDE REPUTATION OVER DECADES IN THIS FIELD. MORE LATTERLY WE HAVE SEEN THE CREATION OF TECHNIKON RSA. PERHAPS THE TIME IS NOW RIPE FOR HIGH SCHOOL RSA, IN ORDER TO GIVE A SECOND CHANCE TO THOSE WHO NEVER HAD THE INITIAL OPPORTUNITY. WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK EITHER THE EXCITING

AND INCREASING POTENTIAL OF COMPUTERS AND TELEVISION IN THE PROVISION OF SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION.

I HAVE OFFERED SOME PERSPECTIVES ON HOW A RATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM MIGHT EVOLVE IN A NEW SOUTH AFRICA. IN OUR ENTHUSIASM LET US NOT OVERLOOK A VITAL ROLE THAT EXISTING, WELL-ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES CAN PLAY, THE ROLE OF SUCCESSFUL MODELS. FACED WITH A GIGANTIC TASK WE ARE OFTEN DISCOURAGED BY ITS SHEER ENORMITY, AND UNDERESTIMATE THE INFECTIOUSNESS OF EXAMPLE. SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES CAN AND SHOULD PLAY THE SAME ROLE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AS AN INSPIRED INDIVIDUAL DOES IN LIFTING THE MORALE AND PERFORMANCE OF A SPORTING TEAM. IN THIS WAY THE EFFECT OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR AN INSTITUTION CAN BE MULTIPLIED MANY TIMES OVER, UNTIL THE POINT IS REACHED THAT AN OTHERWISE IMPOSSIBLE SEEMING TASK SUDDENLY BECOMES WITHIN OUR GRASP.

of Danie Gobel DeKatch
or Graeme Pollock

IN OUR ANXIETY TO REBUILD SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION THERE ARE MANY TRAPS INTO WHICH WE CAN FALL. SOMETIMES THE WISDOM OF A CANDID FRIEND SHOWS US THE DANGER MORE EASILY THAN WE OURSELVES COULD PERCEIVE IT. SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT HAVE MANY SUCH CANDID FRIENDS REMAINING IN TODAY'S CRITICAL WORLD, BUT ONE UNDOUBTEDLY IS US AMBASSADOR HERMAN NICKEL, WHO HAD THIS TO SAY IN A RECENT DIPLOMA CEREMONY ADDRESS AT THE M L SULTAN TECHNIKON:

"I ALSO HEAR A GOOD DEAL OF HEADY TALK THAT EDUCATION MUST BE GEARED TO CONFORM TO A PARTICULAR IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF RADICAL CHANGE. AS SOMEONE WHO IN HIS YOUTH IN THE GERMANY OF THE THIRTIES WAS EXPOSED TO SIMILAR THOUGHT CONTROL, I CAN ONLY WARN AGAINST THIS IMPOSITION OF NEW POLITICAL BLINKERS, WHICH TO MY MIND IS THE NEGATION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM. CALL ME OLD-FASHIONED, BUT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND, FOR THE LIFE

OF ME, THE MEANING OF SO-CALLED PROGRESSIVE ARITHMETIC, GEOMETRY, OR COMPUTER SCIENCE. I AM OLD-FASHIONED ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT THE OPEN-ENDED SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND THE ACQUISITION OF PRACTICAL SKILLS WILL HELP TO SET YOU FREE, ALL THE MORE SO IF THIS LIBERATES YOU FROM THE POLITICAL-IDEOLOGICAL DICTATES OF THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND AUTHORITIES AND FADS OF THE DAY.

IT IS THIS KIND OF EDUCATION, NOT POLITICAL AGITPROP, THAT IS NEEDED FOR THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA WE WOULD ALL LIKE TO SEE."

AS EDUCATORS, NOT POLITICIANS, LET US GIVE HEED TO THE PERENNIAL WISDOM ECHOED IN THESE FRIENDLY WORDS.

LET ME END, THEREFORE, BY ECHOING A NOTE ON WHICH WE BEGAN. THE POLITICS OF THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LEAVE TO THE EDUCATORS. EQUALLY APTLY, THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF EDUCATION ITSELF IS TOO IMPORTANT A MATTER IN WHICH TO ALLOW THE POLITICIANS TOO FREE A HAND.

D S HENDERSON

20 JUNE 1986