

ADDRESS TO CONVOCATION - SATURDAY 8 APRIL 1978

MR PRESIDENT OF CONVOCATION, MR CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THIS IS NOW THE THIRD ANNUAL OCCASION ON WHICH I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO DELIVER TO YOU MY REPORT ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S ACTIVITIES AT RHODES. IT IS ALSO THE THIRD TIME THAT SOME OF YOU WILL HAVE HEARD MY VOICE TODAY, AND SO I SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO BE AS BRIEF AS THE MATERIAL PERMITS. AFTER SOME MENTAL ARITHMETIC I ASCERTAINED THAT I AM STILL JUST WITHIN MY FIRST 1 000 DAYS OF OFFICE, SO THAT I MUST STILL REGARD MYSELF AS A COMPARATIVE NOVICE AT MY TASK.

ONE OF THE NOTEWORTHY EVENTS OF 1977 WAS THE INSTALLATION ON THURSDAY 31 MARCH, AMID APPROPRIATE POMP AND CEREMONY, OF OUR FOURTH CHANCELLOR, DR IAN MACKENZIE. THE CHANCELLOR'S ROLE IS NOT UNLIKE THAT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH AND AS SUCH CALLS FOR RARE PERSONAL QUALITIES. WE HAVE NOW SEEN HIM PRESIDE WITH DIGNITY AND PANACHE OVER TWO SETS OF ANNUAL GRADUATION EXERCISES, BUT HE HAS NOT CONFINED HIS INTEREST IN THE UNIVERSITY AND ENTHUSIASM FOR OUR CAUSE TO SUCH FORMAL ACTS OF OFFICE. HIS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE AFFAIRS OF OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND HIS CONTINUAL AND INFECTIOUS CONCERN FOR OUR WELLBEING DEMONSTRATE, IF ONE MAY BORROW FROM SIR WILLIAM GILBERT, THAT INDEED WE HAVE "A RATHER SUSCEPTIBLE CHANCELLOR". LONG MAY HE REIGN O'ER US!

A NOTABLE RESIGNATION FROM COUNCIL DURING 1977 WAS THAT OF MR B MANCHEVSKY, REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATED RESEARCH INSTITUTES. ON MR LOUIS DUBB'S ACCESSION TO THE CHAIRMANSHIP MR MANCHEVSKY CHEERFULLY ACCEPTED THE ARDUOUS ROLE OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE, WHERE HIS FIRM GUIDANCE AND ASSIDUOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL PILOTED US SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH PERILOUS FINANCIAL WATERS. WE VERY MUCH MISS HIS SURE HAND, AND COUNCIL IS INDEED FORTUNATE TO HAVE AT ITS DISPOSAL SUCH AN ABLE SUCCESSOR AS MR J S LEVY.

KING WILLIAM'S TOWN MUNICIPALITY APPOINTED MR N E WOOLLGAR TO OUR COUNCIL, WHILE GRAHAMSTOWN REPRESENTATION HAS BEEN GREATLY STRENGTHENED BY THE PRESENCE OF PROFESSOR M ROBERTS (DONORS) AND BY DR B E LA TROBE (CO-OPTED MEMBER), WHO WAS JOINED EARLY IN 1978 BY MR L B GREEN IN A SIMILAR CAPACITY.

AMONGST THE GOVERNORS OF THE RHODES UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION TRUST WE RECORD WITH GREAT REGRET THE DEATH OF DR H A KENDALL, ONE OF THE LONGEST-EVER SERVING MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, WHOSE BENEFACTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY MUST SURELY BE AMONGST THE MOST GENEROUS EVER RECORDED. WE WERE ALSO MOST RELUCTANT TO LOSE THE SERVICES THROUGH RESIGNATION OF MR A Q DAVIES AND MR P G T WATSON. THE ONLY NEW MEMBER SINCE LAST I ADDRESSED YOU IS MR JUSTICE N C ADDLESON, ALTHOUGH EARLY IN 1977 THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS WAS STRENGTHENED BY A LARGE CONTINGENT OF APPOINTEES WHOSE PROMINENCE IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS HAS GIVEN ADDED LUSTRE TO AN ALREADY DISTINGUISHED BODY.



IN MY LAST ADDRESS I PAID TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR E S TWYMAN, WHO RETIRED AS VICE-PRINCIPAL AND PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR IN MID 1977. HE WAS SUCCEEDED IN AUGUST BY PROFESSOR J W BROMMERT, THEN PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS EDUCATION AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND. IT IS REMARKABLE HOW READILY SCIENTISTS, PARTICULARLY PHYSICISTS, ARE ABLE TO LEAVE THEIR LABORATORIES AND ASSUME THE ADMINISTRATIVE MANTLE. PROFESSOR BROMMERT, EVEN IN THESE SHORT MONTHS, HAS MADE HIS BENIGN AND EFFECTIVE PRESENCE FELT, AND WE WISH HIM A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL SECOND CAREER AT RHODES.

RETIREMENT BROUGHT TO A CLOSE TWO LONG AND NOTEWORTHY CAREERS, EACH SPANNING MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. PROFESSOR H M ROBERTS LEFT US AS HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING. WHEN HE ARRIVED IT WAS SAID THAT HE WAS THE ONLY FREE STATE FARMER TO HAVE BECOME A RHODES PROFESSOR. WE NOW BELIEVE THAT HE IS THE ONLY RHODES PROFESSOR TO HAVE BECOME A FREE STATE FARMER. DR F G VAN DER RIET, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN FOR THIRTY FIVE YEARS, RAISED OUR LIBRARY TO A VERY HIGH PITCH OF EFFICIENCY AND HAS THE DISTINCTION OF HAVING TRAINED MANY UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS DURING HIS LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS TERM OF OFFICE.

IT IS A COMMONPLACE FACT THAT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE LOSING MORE ACADEMICS OVERSEAS THAN THEY ARE GAINING. RHODES HAS SUFFERED PROPORTIONATELY LESS THAN OTHERS, BUT DURING 1977 WE LOST NO FEWER THAN FIVE SENIOR ACADEMICS IN THIS WAY. THIS IS A LOSS THAT WE AND THE COUNTRY

CANNOT SUSTAIN FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME WITHOUT SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR ACADEMIC LIFE. AMONGST THE MOST NOTEWORTHY WAS OUR DISTINGUISHED HEAD OF THE CLASSICS DEPARTMENT PROFESSOR B C DIETRICH, WHO HAS ACCEPTED THE CHAIR AT ABERYSTWYTH IN WALES. HE AND MRS DIETRICH WILL BE MUCH MISSED IN GRAHAMSTOWN. IN NEARLY ALL CASES WE WERE FORTUNATE TO FIND SUITABLE REPLACEMENTS. THE YEAR ALSO SAW THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVEN NEW PROFESSORS (A NUMBER EQUALLED ONLY ONCE BEFORE IN 1971), AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND FIVE SENIOR LECTURERS.

AMONGST SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS WE WELCOMED MR J J M VAN HEERDEN TO THE NEWLY CREATED POST OF PHYSICAL PLANNING OFFICER. AN ARCHITECT OF STANDING AND EXPERIENCE MR VAN HEERDEN HAS BROUGHT IMAGINATION, ZEAL AND HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS TO BEAR ON THE MANY AND VARIED PROBLEMS WITH WHICH HE HAS TO CONTEND. SIMILARLY, MR C A LANHAM HAS ADDED A NEW DIMENSION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND EXPERIENCE TO THE ROLE OF DEPUTY FINANCE OFFICER AND ACCOUNTANT, WHILE MR L SMIT HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF DEPUTY REGISTRAR (STAFFING).

THE MOST NOTABLE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS PROBABLY BEEN THE INTRODUCTION OF AN M.Sc. COURSE IN EXPLORATION GEOLOGY, THE ONLY SUCH COURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE GENEROUS SUBVENTION OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES. WE WERE VERY FORTUNATE TO SECURE THE SERVICES OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR R MASON FOR THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAMME. THE FIRST STUDENTS HAVE NOW ENROLLED, AND WE ARE RECEIVING NUMEROUS ENQUIRIES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.



THE B.A. (TRANSLATION) PROGRAMME IS OFF TO A SUCCESSFUL START, AS IS THE NEW B.Sc (INFORMATION SCIENCE), WHICH ENABLES CANDIDATES TO COMBINE COMPUTER SCIENCE AND OTHER MATHEMATICAL DISCIPLINES WITH COMMERCE SUBJECTS, PARTICULARLY ACCOUNTING. A MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT HAS BEEN OUR INABILITY THUS FAR TO FILL THE IMPORTANT CHAIR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, SO GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY THE PAUL AND STELLA LOWENSTEIN TRUST. WE ARE HOPING NOT ONLY TO PROVIDE A THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION IN THIS FAST-DEVELOPING FIELD, BUT ALSO TO TAKE A LEAD IN PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS DESIGNED TO AMELIORATE THE VERY ADVERSE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SOCIAL CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED IN THE EASTERN CAPE, BORDER AND TRANSKEI AREAS.

LAST YEAR WAS ONE OF GREATLY IMPROVED HOUSING FOR NEARLY HALF OUR ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS. THE NEW ARTS BUILDING, FINISHED IN JUNE, HAS FINALLY COMPLETED THE MAIN QUADRANGLE AND PROVIDED EXCELLENT ACCOMMODATION FOR SEVEN ARTS, MAINLY LANGUAGE, DEPARTMENTS. THE OLD DROSTDY BARRACKS HAS BEEN BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT HOME FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE. EDUCATION HAS MOVED INTO SPACIOUS RENOVATED PREMISES FORMERLY AND FITTINGLY BELONGING TO THE OLD GRAHAMSTOWN TRAINING COLLEGE. THE FIRST PHASE OF RESTORING SELWYN CASTLE HAS PROVIDED A HOME FOR ANTHROPOLOGY, AND EXTENSIVE LABORATORIES ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN AFRICAN STREET FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION, WHILE THE LAW DEPARTMENT HAS BENEFITTED FROM A NEW STAFF READING ROOM AND LECTURE ROOM.

IN THIS RESPECT WE ARE GRATEFUL TO DR PERCY YUTAR, FORMER ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE TRANSVAAL THROUGH WHOSE GOOD OFFICES SOME BEAUTIFUL COURTROOM FURNITURE WAS ACQUIRED.

THANKS TO A GENEROUS DONATION FROM OLD MUTUAL WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COMPLETE THE SPLENDID NEW OLD MUTUAL SPORTS PAVILION AT THE PROSPECT HOUSE SPORTSFIELDS. THIS SPLENDID ADDITION TO OUR SPORTS FACILITIES WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED ON 14 MARCH BY MR J G VAN DER HORST, CHAIRMAN, CHAIRMAN OF OLD MUTUAL.

OUR AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR THE COMPLETE RENOVATION OF THE OLDER RESIDENCES RECEIVED AN AUSPICIOUS START WITH JAMESON HOUSE, WHICH NOW HAS AN ADDITIONAL STOREY ADDED TO THE REAR WING, AND A SPACIOUS NEW COMMON ROOM. THE JAMESON GIRLS, "WITH ALL MOD CONS" AND BEAUTIFULLY REFURBISHED ROOMS, ARE THE ENVY OF ALL THE OTHER HOUSES. ST MARY DINING HALL AND KITCHEN HAVE BEEN ENLARGED AND IMPROVED, WHILE THE RESTORED ORIGINAL FACADE OF OAKDENE ENHANCES RATHER THAN DETRACTS FROM THE APPEARANCE OF SOMERSET STREET. INCREMENTAL INCREASES IN ACCOMMODATION HAVE BEEN SKILLFULLY ADDED TO LIVINGSTONE, WALKER, PRINGLE AND PIET RETIEF HOUSES. THE RESIDENCES IN AGGREGATE CAN NOW HOUSE OVER 1 600 STUDENTS, BUT IT WILL BE SEVERAL MORE YEARS BEFORE WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DECLARE OURSELVES SATISFIED WITH THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF ALL THE HOUSES.



STUDENT NUMBERS DURING 1977 ROSE VERY SATISFACTORILY BY ABOUT FIVE PER CENT TO ALMOST 2 650. A NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF THE GROWTH WAS THE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN POSTGRADUATE, HONOURS AND OTHER POST-BACCALAUREATE ENROLMENT, ENCOURAGED IN PART BY THE RESIDENCE BURSARIES MADE POSSIBLE BY THE EDA FISHER BEQUEST AND THE POSTGRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNORS. WE WERE ABLE TO WELCOME SEVENTEEN NEW BLACK STUDENTS, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME BLACK STUDENTS AT RHODES COULD NOT BE COUNTED ON THE FINGERS OF ONE HAND. PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION FIGURES FOR 1978 INDICATE THAT THESE TRENDS ARE BEING MAINTAINED.

A FEATURE OF 1977 WAS THE INCREASED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP, BOTH WITH REGARD TO THE SRC AND THE VARIOUS HALL AND HOUSE COMMITTEES, WHO ARE PLAYING A LARGER ROLE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. RAG RAISED A MOST IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF R36 000 AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION TO CHARITIES. ALL RAG ACTIVITIES WERE CONDUCTED IN FINE SPIRIT AS WAS ALSO THE INTERVARSITY AT UPE, WHERE IN THE MOST EXCITING RUGBY FINISH SEEN IN YEARS WE EQUALISED THE SCORE AT 15 - 15 LITERALLY IN THE LAST MINUTE OF PLAY.

MR CHAIRMAN, I CANNOT CONCLUDE WITHOUT MAKING SOME REFERENCE TO THE DIFFICULT SUBJECT OF FINANCE. IN PRE-VATICAN II DAYS A ROMAN CATHOLIC LAYMAN ONCE ASKED A RATHER OLD-FASHIONED PRIEST WHAT THE DUTIES OF THE LAITY WERE. "THE DUTIES OF THE LAITY," CAME THE LACONIC REPLY, "ARE THREE: TO PRAY, TO PAY AND TO OBEY." WHILE I AM ALL FOR STUDENTS OBEYING, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT PAYING IS A QUESTION THAT MUST EXERCISE THEIR MINDS CONSIDERABLY.



WE HAVE HAD TO INCREASE BOTH ACADEMIC AND RESIDENTIAL FEES CONSIDERABLY IN 1976 AND AGAIN IN 1977 FOR 1978. STUDENTS MAY NOT PRAY AS MUCH AS THEY USED TO, BUT SUBSIDY CUTS, PENSION INCREASES, ELECTRICITY TARIFFS AND INFLATIONARY PRESSURES HAVE CERTAINLY FORCED YOUR VICE-CHANCELLOR AND HIS ADVISERS TO THEIR KNEES.

BY DINT OF CAREFUL BUDGETARY CONTROL, THE FREEZING OF SELECTED POSTS, PRACTISING ECONOMIES, ELIMINATING WASTE AND INEFFICIENCY WHEREVER WE COULD IDENTIFY IT, AND BY THE MOST COMMENDABLE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT ON THE PART OF STUDENTS AND STAFF ALIKE, WE WERE ABLE TO REDUCE EXPENDITURE DURING 1977 BY AN IMPRESSIVE R400 000 WITHOUT HARMING THE ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSITY. PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT WE HAVE COME THROUGH 1977 WITHOUT CONTRIBUTING TO THE ALREADY ALARMING ACCUMULATED DEFICIT. FORTUNATELY, OUR DONORS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT US MORE STRONGLY THAN EVER, AND THANKS TO THEIR GENEROSITY THE GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS GETTING THE FINANCIAL SHIP BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL. THE CURRENT YEAR WILL REQUIRE EVEN GREATER VIGILANCE AND COOPERATION IF WE ARE TO KEEP OUR HEADS ABOVE WATER.

A SOMBRE PROSPECT IT IS INDEED, MR CHAIRMAN, WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF A DEDICATED STAFF, BOTH ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE, WHO HAVE RESPONDED SO GENEROUS-MINDEDLY TO THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE ACTION OUR PROSPECTS WOULD INDEED BE BLEAK.

I SHOULD LIKE TO RECORD ALSO MY APPRECIATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AND THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, ALL OF WHOM GIVE SO UNSTINTINGLY OF THEIR TIME AND EXPERIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY. STUDENTS, BOTH PRESENT AND PAST, ARE THE HEART OF ANY UNIVERSITY. IT IS THEREFORE A GREAT PRIVILEGE, AS WELL AS A PLEASANT DUTY, TO PRESENT MY ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONVOCATION OF RHODES UNIVERSITY, KNOWING AS I DO THAT ALL MEMBERS, BOTH THOSE PRESENT AND THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND TODAY, ARE ALWAYS AVID FOR NEWS OF OUR ALMA MATER AND WILLING TO AFFORD THE BEARER AN ENTHUSIASTIC HEARING.

D. S. HENDERSON

8 APRIL 1973.