

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO CONVOCATION 7 APRIL 1979

MR PRESIDENT OF CONVOCATION, MR CHANCELLOR, FELLOW MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION, IT IS EXACTLY 364 DAYS SINCE I LAST HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT TO YOU, AND IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD, NOTABLY DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS, YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS SWELLED BY THE GREATEST SINGLE ENTERING GROUP WE HAVE EVER BEEN PRIVILEGED TO WELCOME, IN SPITE OF THE RECENTLY IMPOSED R10 GRADUATION FEE. IT TOOK YOUR VICE-CHANCELLOR APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS TO SIGN THE RECORD NUMBER OF DEGREE AND DIPLOMA CERTIFICATES THAT WERE PLACED BEFORE HIM, ONE OF THE MORE PLEASANT DUTIES HE IS CALLED UPON TO PERFORM DURING THE COURSE OF A BUSY YEAR.

THE YEAR 1978 SAW THE END OF A LONG PERIOD OF SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, ON THE PART OF MR LOUIS DUBB, HIMSELF A MEMBER OF THIS AUGUST BODY. MR DUBB'S RECORD OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE EASTERN CAPE, AND MORE PARTICULARLY TO PORT ELIZABETH, WHERE HE HAS BEEN A PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN, ATTORNEY AND MAYOR OF THAT CITY, MUST BE VERY HARD TO MATCH. HE CROWNED HIS SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL BY TAKING THE CHAIR FOR THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS, AFTER A LONG PERIOD AS VICE-CHAIRMAN AND AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE. MANY OF THE IDEAS HE INTRODUCED HAVE CONTRIBUTED HEAVILY TO THE MORE EFFICIENT CONDUCT OF BOTH THE COUNCIL'S AND THE UNIVERSITY'S BUSINESS, AND THEIR EFFECTS WILL BE FELT FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. THE CHAIR IS NOW MOST ABLY OCCUPIED BY ANOTHER OF OUR MEMBERS, MR JUSTICE ADDLESON.

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL WHO RELINQUISHED THEIR POSITIONS AFTER LENGTHY PERIODS OF SERVICE WERE MR J C K ERASMUS AND MR G J KRIGE. AMONGST THE NEW MEMBERS WERE MR L B GREEN, MR E B NORTON, MR H L REICH AND MR J G YOUNG. IN A NEW DEPARTURE TWO MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE RHODES UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION TRUST HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO THE COUNCIL. THE FIRST TWO GOVERNORS TO SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY ARE DR J ROSS-SPENCER AND MR A CHUBB. TO THE OLD MEMBERS WE EXTEND OUR THANKS FOR A TASK WELL DONE, AND IN THE NEW WE EXPRESS OUR CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL BE EQUALLY DILIGENT IN THEIR PURSUIT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S BEST INTERESTS.

IN SPITE OF THE UNSETTLED TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE WE CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE OUTSTANDING SERVICES OF A STABLE, DEDICATED AND COMPETENT STAFF, ACADEMIC, TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE. OUT OF APPROXIMATELY 220 ACADEMIC STAFF, FOR EXAMPLE, WE LOST THE SERVICES DURING 1978 OF FIVE THROUGH RETIREMENT AND EIGHT THROUGH RESIGNATION, IN NEARLY EVERY CASE ON PROMOTION ELSEWHERE. THERE MUST BE FEW UNIVERSITIES INDEED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD WHICH CAN LAY CLAIM TO AN ACADEMIC STAFF TURNOVER OF LESS THAN SIX PER CENT! AMONGST THOSE RETIRING I SHOULD LIKE TO MENTION BY NAME PROFESSOR P MAYER, OUR DISTINGUISHED ANTHROPOLOGIST, WHOSE PARTING GIFT TO ACADEMIC LIFE WAS A MONUMENTAL STUDY ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MIGRANT LABOUR, PROFESSOR R W JONES (LAW), MRS H L NIXON (FRENCH) AND MR H H K CURRIE (PSYCHOLOGY), WHO IS CURRENTLY MAYOR OF GRAHAMSTOWN. AMONGST THE ADMINISTRATIVE RETIREMENTS ONE MUST NOTE IN PARTICULAR THOSE OF MRS J HEARD WHO AS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF ADMISSIONS WAS WELL KNOWN TO INNUMERABLE

GENERATIONS OF ENTERING STUDENTS FOR HER KINDLINESS AND ENCYCLOPAEDIC KNOWLEDGE, AND OF MR C T WOODBRIDGE, EXAMINATIONS OFFICER, WHOSE CHEERFULNESS ENDEARED HIM TO ALL, AND WHO DEALT IMPERTURBABLY WITH EVERY CONCEIVABLE CRISIS. NEW ACADEMIC STAFF APPOINTED TO VACANT OR NEW POSTS INCLUDED THREE PROFESSORS, FOUR SENIOR LECTURERS, NINE LECTURERS AND THREE JUNIOR LECTURERS.

ONE FEATURE OF OUR ACADEMIC LIFE THAT NEVER CEASES TO IMPRESS ME IS THE VOLUME OF PUBLISHED MATERIAL GENERATED BY OUR LECTURERS AND PROFESSORS. I HAVE HEARD IT SAID, BUT I CANNOT QUOTE MY AUTHORITY, THAT RHODES ACADEMICS, PRO RATA TO THEIR NUMBERS, PRODUCE MORE PUBLISHED WORK THAN THEIR COLLEAGUES ELSEWHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT THEIR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS REQUIRE NO FEWER THAN TWENTY EIGHT PAGES OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT TO DESCRIBE.

IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE OF CONSOLIDATION RATHER THAN EXPANSION WE HAVE NOT CREATED ANY NEW DEPARTMENTS. IN ONE SENSE, HOWEVER, WE HAVE GONE ONE BETTER, AND SPAWNED A NEW FACULTY. THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION HAS GIVEN HIS FORMAL ASSENT TO THE FORMATION OF A PHARMACY FACULTY, INDEPENDENT OF THE PARENT SCIENCE FACULTY. THIS STEP WILL COME INTO OPERATION IN 1980. AMONGST OTHER IMPORTANT ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS ONE MUST GIVE PRIDE OF PLACE TO THE B SC (INFORMATION PROCESSING) DEGREE. THIS UNIQUE DEGREE STRUCTURE, SOMETHING OF A SCIENCE-COMMERCE HYBRID, HAS ENGENDERED WIDESPREAD INTEREST, AND HAS ALREADY ATTRACTED STUDENTS IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS. MENTION

SHOULD ALSO BE MADE OF THE EXTENSION OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY AS A TWO-YEAR MAJOR SUBJECT, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ENGLISH IN AFRICA COURSE AT THE SECOND YEAR LEVEL.

AMONGST THE MAJOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENTS WERE THE FINAL COMPLETION OF THE NEW ARTS BLOCK, EXTENSIONS TO THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE COMMISSIONING OF SALISBURY HOUSE IN THE ST PETER'S AREA, AND THE ALTERATION OF BEETHOVEN HOUSE TO ACCOMMODATE THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT. WE CONCENTRATED THE REMAINDER OF OUR EFFORTS IN IMPROVING EXISTING ACCOMMODATION, IN SOME CASES VERY EXTENSIVELY. NO FEWER THAN FOURTEEN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND TWELVE RESIDENCES BENEFITTED FROM THIS PROGRAMME. A MEASURE OF THE SUCCESS OF OUR OWN INTERNAL PLANNING AND BUILDING UNITS IS THAT THE TOTAL VALUE OF SOME THIRTY-SEVEN PROJECTS STARTED AND COMPLETED BY THEM DURING 1978 AMOUNTED TO APPROXIMATELY R650,000. ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE ALWAYS MORE COMPLEX THAN THE EQUIVALENT IN NEW PROJECTS, AND WE OWE A GREAT DEAL OF GRATITUDE TO OUR RESIDENT ARCHITECT, MR J J VAN HEERDEN FOR THE COMPETENCE AND IMAGINATION WITH WHICH HE AND HIS TEAM HAVE DIRECTED THIS WORK.

IN ORDER TO ATTRACT THE BEST AVAILABLE HOUSE AND HALL WARDENS TO OUR RESIDENCES WE ARE STEADILY UPGRADING THE ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE. DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE WORTHWHILE IMPROVEMENTS IN THIS DIRECTION IN EIGHT OF OUR TWENTY-NINE RESIDENCES. THE POLICY HAS ALREADY PAID DIVIDENDS IN THE CALIBRE OF THE NEW WARDENS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ATTRACT.

STUDENT NUMBERS DURING 1978 CONTINUED TO EXHIBIT AN UPWARD TREND. THE TOTAL NUMBER REGISTERED WAS 2776, AN INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE PER CENT OVER THE TOTAL FOR 1977. THE NUMBER OF BLACK AND BROWN STUDENTS ROSE TO THIRTY FIVE. THE FIGURES SO FAR AVAILABLE FOR 1979 INDICATE THAT THE FINAL COUNT WILL BE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS FOR 1978, ALTHOUGH THE BLACK STUDENT TOTAL WILL HAVE REACHED NEARLY ONE HUNDRED. POTENTIAL CAUSES FOR CONCERN WITH REGARD TO FUTURE STUDENT ENROLLMENT ARE THE CONTINUED UNCERTAINTIES IN THE RHODESIAN SITUATION, THE CONTRACTION IN THE NUMBER OF BURSARIES AVAILABLE TO EDUCATION STUDENTS AND THE AS YET UNKNOWN EFFECTS OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY DEGREES IN PHARMACY MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND NEIGHBOURING COLLEGES FOR ADVANCED TECHNICAL EDUCATION. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SLACKEN OUR EFFORTS TO ATTRACT STUDENTS OF QUALITY TO RHODES. IN THIS RESPECT OUR PROGRAMME OF SCHOOL VISITS TO GRAHAMSTOWN TOGETHER WITH THE VISITS TO SCHOOLS BY THE DEAN OF STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLICITY EFFORTS OF OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, MORE PARTICULARLY THROUGH THEIR EXPANDED AND RECONSTITUTED JOHANNESBURG OFFICE, ARE BEARING, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT.

STUDENT AFFAIRS GENERALLY ARE IN A HEALTHY CONDITION, BOTH AS TO QUALITY AND QUANTITY. WE HAVE PERFORMED CREDITABLY AND ENJOYABLY IN A WIDE VARIETY OF SPORTS, THE SRC MANAGES ITS AFFAIRS WITH INCREASING COMPETENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY AND HOUSE AND HALL COMMITTEES, ALTHOUGH WITH HESITATION AND UNCERTAINTY AT TIMES, ARE BEGINNING TO RISE TO THE OCCASION IN THE NEW

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY ARE EXPECTED TO PLAY A GREATER
ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS.

MR CHAIRMAN, I SOMETIMES STAND ACCUSED IN SOME QUARTERS OF
AN UNDUE SENSITIVITY TO FINANCIAL MATTERS, AND SO I SHALL
NOT DWELL TOO LONG ON THIS UNAVOIDABLE BUT SOMETIMES
OBTRUSIVE SUBJECT. WHAT VICE-CHANCELLOR, HOWEVER, COULD DO
OTHERWISE THAN PAY A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION TO SUCH CONCERNS,
WHEN ONE OF THE EARLIEST PIECES OF NEWS FOR 1978 WAS THE
ANNOUNCEMENT OF A R600 000 SUBSIDY CUT? IN SPITE OF THIS
SET-BACK THE PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT WE HAVE EMERGED
FROM 1978 IN A FAR SOUNDER POSITION THAN WE ENTERED, IN FACT
IN A SITUATION MORE FAVOURABLE THAN I HAD DARED TO HOPE. THIS
IS AN OCCASION FOR CONGRATULATION TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE
UNIVERSITY WHO MADE HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MORE CAREFUL
HUSBANDING AND DISPOSITION OF OUR STRICTLY LIMITED RESOURCES.
IT IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY SENSE OF
EUPHORIA. MANY STORM CLOUDS LIE AHEAD, BUT WE NOW HAVE A
DEMONSTRATED CAPACITY FOR RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC
STRINGENCY, AND SO WE FACE WHATEVER THE FUTURE MAY BRING
WITH COURAGE AND CHEERFULNESS.

IN CONCLUSION I SHOULD LIKE TO RECORD MY APPRECIATION TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AND THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS,
ALL OF WHOM GIVE SO GENEROUSLY OF THEIR TIME AND ADVICE IN
THE SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY. CONVOCATION MEMBERS TOO HAVE
TAKEN A KEEN INTEREST IN THE WELLBEING OF THEIR ALMA MATER,
AND IN THIS RESPECT MR JUSTICE CLOETE, YOUR PRESIDENT, HAS

GIVEN AN ADMIRABLE LEAD. FINALLY, I CANNOT LEAVE THE PODIUM WITHOUT ADDING MY TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF OUR FORMER PRESIDENT OF SO MANY YEARS, MR JUSTICE JENNETT, WHOSE RECENT PASSING HAS ROBBED US OF THE PRESENCE OF ONE OF OUR MOST DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS. IT WAS INDEED FITTING THAT THE UNIVERSITY WAS ABLE TO HONOUR HIM PRECISELY A YEAR AGO BY THE CONFERMENT OF A DOCTOR OF LAWS, HONORIS CAUSA. SELDOM HAS THIS LATIN TAG BEEN MORE FITTINGLY BESTOWED.

D S HENDERSON
VICE-CHANCELLOR

7 APRIL 1979