

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 1976 AT 9.00 A.M. BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BANTU EDUCATION, WEST RAND BANTU AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION BOARD AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE URBAN BANTU COUNCIL, SCHOOL BOARD AND TEACHERS OF SOWETO, IN THE OFFICES OF THE WEST RAND BANTU AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION BOARD, 80 ALBERT STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

PRESENT

Department of Bantu Education

Mr. G.J. Rousseau
Dr. A.B. Fourie

(Chairman)

West Rand Bantu Affairs Administration Board

Mr. H.P.P. Mulder
Mr. J.C. de Villiers
Mr. N.P. Wilsnach
Mrs. S.S. Helberg

Black Representatives

As per attendance register.

After the Chairman, Mr. G.J. Rousseau, requested all unauthorised persons to leave the meeting, Rev. Nataboge opened the meeting with prayer.

The Chairman welcomed everyone at the meeting where matters relating to education which might have given rise to the unfortunate occurrences during the past week could be discussed. He requested that the meeting be held in a calm and responsible manner.

The Hon. the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and Bantu Education requested that this meeting be convened in order that the views and representations of the educational and civic leaders be submitted to him enabling him to make definite decisions and a public statement as soon as possible in this regard. The Chairman stressed that all decisions and discussions of this meeting be regarded as confidential.

It was envisaged in the Bantu Education Act that the medium of instruction be in the mother tongue. This is the first and primary principle involved. However, realising that the Bantu languages had not developed enough for post-primary education, the Department decided that the official languages should be used for this purpose. Due to the lack of proficiency of teachers in these languages, it was decided in 1955 to give them five years in which to improve their knowledge of the languages. Regulations were such that if teachers did not comply, they were given an extension of time to obtain the necessary qualifications.

The mother tongue was used up to Std. 5 and Afrikaans and English were introduced on the same level thereafter. Whether Afrikaans or English was to be used was determined by the nature and environment of the school. It was, however, found that English was used more and furthermore that in cases where English was used as a medium of instruction, higher standards were in fact achieved.

Due to the fact that a whole term was spent on revision of terminology when the pupil came into contact with education in the official languages, it was decided to introduce the official languages from Std. 5. The efficiency of this change was proved by the fact that there has been an increase of 140% in results over the past two years.

Some teachers were, however, not fully proficient in the official languages and because such proficiency was and will always remain the determining factor when applications or exemptions are considered, a start was made in 1973, after consultation with teachers in primary schools, with in-service training of teachers in the official languages.

In spite of the fact that the facilities for in-service training as well as the teacher/pupil ratio in Soweto is by far the best in the country, the Department, realising the dire need for teachers, decided to establish a Teachers' Training College in Soweto. Donations for this purpose have already been received and arrangements will be made to expand on this.

Mr. R.L. Peteni, who spoke on behalf of the teachers, asked why a differentiation is made between White and Black schools in that Black schools are forced to teach in both official languages whilst White schools teach only in one. Proficiency of teachers as well as the standard will further be improved if only one medium of instruction is used. Afrikaans should, however, be retained as a subject. He mentioned that they had not asked for Afrikaans and all bodies have opted for English as a medium.

Mr. Peteni requested Mr. H.H. Dlamlenze to represent him during the rest of the discussions as he had to leave the meeting at that stage.

Mr. Dlamlenze referred to Regional Circular No. 2 of 1974 received from the Regional Director of Bantu Education in which principals were not only instructed to present 2 subjects in Afrikaans, but were told even which 2 subjects.

He continued by reading a Memorandum on the medium of instruction in African schools under Bantu Education, addressed to the Secretary of Bantu Education and requested that this document be accepted as the meeting's representation to the Minister.

The Chairman ruled that this could not be done as representations to the Minister should be made by the meeting as a whole.

Mr. T.J. Makhaya of the Urban Bantu Council mentioned that the Black school pupils demonstrated to prove that they were not happy and that it did not warrant the action taken by the police. He appealed to the Department to reconsider the 50-50 basis of education and to retain Afrikaans only as a subject in the schools.

Mr. S.P. Maphike of the School Board said it was not only the language but also the attitude of the White officials (Circuit Inspectors and Regional Director) that gave rise to the problems. They were arrogant when approached in connection with the 3-language media and only 3 weeks previously the whole matter had been discussed with the Regional Director. He pointed out that the purpose should be to make learning easier for the student and to this Afrikaans did not contribute. The insistence

of the Department to force Afrikaans upon them as a medium of instruction, in spite of repeated appeals for English as medium, turned the whole matter into a political problem.

Messrs. L. Mlonzi and T. Thebehali were of the opinion that officials of the Department of Bantu Education were responsible for the issue at hand and requested their dismissal forthwith.

Mr. S.I.P. Kgame stated that parents preferred their children to be taught in the language of their own choice. He requested that schools participate in the election of their own School Boards.

Mr. B. Mdaka pointed out that all School Boards opted for English as medium of instruction when approached in this regard during 1972. When this matter was discussed with the Circuit Inspectors, it was mentioned that not only would grants not be made to schools, but even existing grants would be withdrawn if the instructions of the Department were not carried out in full. Mr. Mdaka mentioned that they are not objecting to Afrikaans as a language but are concerned about the problems that arise when Afrikaans is used as a medium of instruction by teachers who are not proficient in the language.

The Chairman stated that it has been the policy of the Department since 1919 to at all times consider applications for deviation from the 50-50 ruling favourably in cases where real problems were experienced and mentioned that, in fact, for the first time in history a subject was offered in Afrikaans in Port Elizabeth at the beginning of 1976.

Mr. P.M. Lengene mentioned that when the matter was discussed with him the Senior Regional Inspector, informed that the matter did not concern the Urban Bantu Council. The fact that the School Board was nominated and not elected by the parents made the position worse. He requested an immediate decision to take home to the people.

Mr. M.T. Moerane said that the deplorable confusion and misunderstanding as mentioned by the Minister, was in his opinion, at the door of the officials of the Department. He further held the opinion that it was not a question of the proficiency of the teachers, but that the crux of the matter was the enforcement of 2 foreign languages upon the children. He implored that the African people have more opportunity to make decisions regarding their own education.

In reply to the Chairman's statement that better results in Afrikaans have been obtained over the last few years, Mr. P.N. Mephlane stated that these results have been manipulated to show an increase and were definitely not classroom results.

Mr. S.J. Maphike said that the threats and intimidations of the Department belonged more at home with the police and not with education. He requested Mr. Rosseau to give a ruling that English should be used until such time as the Minister decided on the matter.

The Chairman pointed out that further discussions on the matter would serve no purpose at that stage and that the meeting's representations would be conveyed to the Minister as soon as possible.

The meeting at that stage unanimously resolved to submit the memorandum, previously submitted by Mr. Dlamlenze, as amended, attached as Annexure A, to the Minister as their official representations on the matter.

Mr. Moerane implored that the children's education not be made a political matter.

Mr. L. Mosala requested that in order to arrive at a lasting solution, a national conference be convened with Black leaders, to discuss education from university to primary level. He stated that in view of the fact that the Black people had not rejected Afrikaans, the bloodshed had been unnecessary.

Mr. Mulder said that the views expressed at the meeting would be conveyed to the Minister immediately and if at all possible a decision would be given before the schools re-open. As several of the views expressed belong with the Commission of Enquiry, Mr. Mulder pointed out that it was the duty of the Black representatives to submit these views to the Commission. He requested the representatives not to make their own statements on the meeting and suggested that one statement be drawn-up on behalf of the meeting. He thereafter read the proposed statement.

Mr. Mlonzi pointed out that the people are waiting for the outcome of the meeting and expressed the opinion that the statement should satisfy the public. The people should see that attention was being given to the matter and the appointment of a 3-man deputation would contribute to that end.

Rev. Nataboge requested that dialogue should continue and that Blacks be given the opportunity to participate in such dialogue.

Mr. L.B. Mehlokhulu stressed that they as leaders have an obligation to inform their people of the outcome of the meeting.

Mr. R.J.P. Maphonya agreed with Mr. Mulder that a joint statement must be made as not to defeat the purpose of the meeting.

RESOLVED :

- (a) That the memorandum submitted by Mr. Dlamlenze, as amended, attached as Annexure A be submitted to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and Bantu Education;
- (b) that the press statement, attached as Annexure B be accepted as the meeting's joint statement;
- (c) that the following persons be appointed to represent the members of the meeting on a deputation to the Minister :

Mr. T.J. Makhaya	-	Urban Bantu Council
Mr. H.H. Dlamlenze	-	Teachers
Mr. S.J. Maphike	-	School Board.

Mr. Mulder thanked those present for the cordial manner in which discussions took place and that they were willing to attend the meeting, at such a difficult time.

Words of thanks were also spoken by Messrs. T.J. Makhaya and P.N. Mehlape.

THE MEETING TERMINATED AT 1h30.