

The Cape Times

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Mr Botha's speech

THE PRIME MINISTER's wide-ranging and protracted speech in the Assembly yesterday will call for mature digestion and analysis, because of its critical importance at this stage of our national fortunes, and because of Mr Botha's reference to possible lines of constitutional development in his proposed "constellation of states".

But certain immediate impressions are in order. It is apparent from the tone and substance of Mr Botha's remarks that the 1980 session of parliament will not be notable for far-reaching reformist legislation or the repeal of offensive statutes such as the Immorality Act.

Public expectations, aroused by the prime minister's courageous and forthright speeches in the recess, are not going to be realized. Mr Botha will proceed at a steady and deliberate pace, having taken soundings in his party, no doubt, and concluded that the weaker spirits among his followers cannot be rushed along the reformist path too rapidly — but will require some time to become acclimatized to the new political atmosphere. Mr Botha is plainly anxious not to unsettle his

conservatives and the somewhat restive Transvaalers.

The prime minister's performance will disappoint the many South Africans who had hoped for something better — as well as western observers who were on the look-out for signs that the Republic is indeed taking the kind of steps which could restore this country to its former high standing in the western alliance of nations. People of democratic instinct will be appalled by Mr Botha's threatening tone in his remarks directed at Mrs Helen Suzman MP, one of the most distinguished members of the Assembly.

Mr Botha may have satisfied his restive party caucus and the Nationalist faithful. He has not satisfied the majority of the people of South Africa — who are not Nationalists — and neither has he made a positive contribution to the ideal of national unity in a dangerous world. It was an aggressive party political performance by a party political leader at a time when South Africa, above all else, is crying out for statesmanship — and a policy of urgent national reconciliation.

But the sessions has many weeks to run yet. We can only hope for better things.

Koornhof a very liberal thinker, says US politician

Political Reporter

MRS Virginia Catt, leader of a group of 10 United States Democratic Party members visiting South Africa, ranks Dr Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, as a "very liberal thinker."

Although she does not fully share his view that apartheid is dead, she does think it is "dying" rapidly enough for her to carry a positive message back to the United States.

Mrs Catt, from Las Vegas, is heading a group of Democrats from different parts of America on a two-week fact-finding visit.

Hosted by the South African Freedom Foundation, they have met several Cabinet Ministers, opposition party leaders, and black leaders including Dr Nthatho Motlala of the Soweto Committee of Ten.

During their two-day stay in Durban they will meet officials of the KwaZulu Development Corporation and Mr J. N. Reddy of the South African Indian Council.

In a brief interview soon after their arrival in Durban yesterday, Mrs Catt said she was "pleasantly surprised" at changes she had seen in the country and was pleased, after her talks with white politicians in Cape Town, to see that "all parties are making a

great attempt to solve the apartheid problem".

"We met Dr Koornhof, who I think is a very liberal thinker, as well as Mr Dirk Mudge, while we were in South West Africa. I certainly believe that apartheid is on its way out."

She said reports about South Africa in American newspapers were not always reliable and she hoped "to make an impact in my constituency on the positive side of South Africa when I return."

"For instance, we sometimes hear about the cruelty to minorities (sic) here, but this is not true."

"There are definite changes. For instance, I understand that the

minorities (sic) pay little for medical treatment at hospitals, compared with others."

Asked about her meeting with Dr Motlana, Mrs Catt said she found the Soweto leader to be "aggressive."

"He needs to moderate his stand if he wants a sizeable constituency."

The group, she said, was not upset at reports that some of her colleagues on the Democratic Party national committee had dissociated themselves from the visit.

"We do not represent the party of the United States and our opinions are wholly personal," she said.



Mrs Virginia Catt (right) relaxes with her Democratic Party colleague, Mrs Wallace Albertson, at their hotel in Durban.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1980

The Daily News

Botha shifts policy on urban black rights

Daily News Political Correspondent

THE Government is starting to accept that at least some urban blacks should not be forced to exercise their political rights through the homelands.

This is the view of several observers following a speech by the Prime Minister, Mr P. W. Botha, in the non-confidence debate in a Parliament yesterday.

Traditional Nationalist policy has stipulated that urban blacks get some form of say in a Council of States where matters of common interest are discussed.

He said most blacks were tied to the homelands. However, if there were some who, for practical reasons, could

not be represented by their "national states", a look could be taken into how they could be accommodated in a constellation of states.

Mr Botha also raised the possibility of the thorny citizenship question being solved through a confederation of states.

Several observers have welcomed the indication that urban blacks may not be forced to exercise their political rights through the homelands. However, they were sceptical about the benefits of a confederal system.

"There is no formal concept of a confederation. The form varies from one case to another," said one observer. "It has no more formal content than a constellation or a commonwealth of states. There is no real joint decision-making," he said.