

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

VOTE OF THANKS

By The Hon. Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi, M.L.A.
Chief Minister of KWAZULU

TO THE HONOURABLE MR. J.C.G. BOTHA
ADMINISTRATOR OF NATAL

AFTER PERFORMING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

ULUNDI

3RD APRIL 1984

It is indeed a privilege for me today to thank the Honourable Administrator of Natal, Mr. J.C.G. Botha for opening this Second Session of the Fourth KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. We are sincerely grateful to the Honourable Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr. P.G.J. Koornhof for asking the Honourable Mr. Botha to fulfill this important function at the beginning of this Session. In terms of our constitution, the South African Government can send a person of its own choice to carry out this function. That they have sent the Honourable Mr. Botha is a measure of compensation for the fact that the Prime Minister currently does not see the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly opening as important enough to warrant sending a Cabinet Minister. We have the kind of special regard for the Honourable Mr. J.C.G. Botha which enables me to say this in his presence without having any fear of him being personally affronted.

Although the Honourable Mr. Botha, as Administrator of Natal, is an appointee of the South African Government and therefore a member of the National Party, he - like our Commissioner-General - is respected by us, despite the fact that we reject apartheid and are deeply committed to bringing about its demise. Political opposition need not blind us to human values and we are not blinded to the qualities which have distinguished Mr. Botha during his term of office in Natal as the Province's Administrator. Unlike ardent supporters of the National Party, we do not see the Provincial Administration of this province as a White administration alien to Blacks. We see it as our Provincial Administration from which we have been excluded by short-sighted White political thinking. We regard the Honourable

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Mr. Botha as our Administrator because we regard ourselves as Natalians. For us there is no conflict in being of Zulu extraction and being Natalians and South Africans.

Our regard for you, Mr. Botha Sir, is a regard which you have earned. The traditional role of Administrators in Natal has been taken to be above party politics in the execution of their duties in this Province. When this Province had Administrators chosen from the ranks of the United Party, they stepped out of their narrow party political role on assuming office and transcended rigid party political barriers. Mr. Botha, Sir, we always feel at ease in your company. You have moved amongst us as a man of stature and you have looked us in the eye without making us feel that we belong to a lesser class of human beings.

Our regard for you, Sir, goes beyond recognition of the way in which you discharge your responsibilities as the Administrator of this Province. For me and His Majesty the King, for my mother, Princess Magogo ka Dinuzulu, her sisters present here today, such as Princess Sulumane ka Dinuzulu, Princess Mpiyamaxhegu ka Dinuzulu and other descendants of King Dinuzulu present here today, your coming here to open the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly Session this year is welcomed. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will never forget that it was the Honourable Mr. J.C.G. Botha's uncle, General Louis Botha, who released King Dinuzulu from jail in Newcastle soon after General Botha was elected the first Prime Minister of South Africa. King Dinuzulu suffered incarceration in jail after having been convicted of treason in a trial which followed the Bambatha Rebellion, so often referred to as the Zulu Rebellion of 1906. General Botha arranged for King Dinuzulu to be taken out of jail and to be transferred to the farm "UITKYK" near Middleburg in the Eastern Transvaal. The last years of our King's life were spent on this farm where he died in 1913. Mr. Botha Sir, the Zulu nation will never forget that act of compassion on the part of your uncle.

It is perhaps after all not such a strange coincidence that our highly esteemed Commission-General, the Honourable Mr. P.N. Hansmeyer, is

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also related to General Louis Botha. From the disposition of these two Government Representatives in the region of Natal/KwaZulu, it is clear that they inherited some of General Botha's kindness of disposition. We must at times like this be reminded that there is in those who oppose each other politically a deeper and underlying humanity which can draw us together, and which favours the politics of negotiation. It is all too easy for Blacks dispossessed of their South African rights, and threatened with the dispossession of their South African citizenship itself, to see all Whites, and particularly all Government appointees, as lacking in human decency. We in KwaZulu, I hope and pray, will always be reminded by some of the true White sons and daughters of South Africa that reconciliation across racial lines, and reconciliation across ideological lines, is not outside the realms of possibility.

On behalf of His Majesty the King of the Zulus and on behalf of the KwaZulu Government and the people of KwaZulu, I want to thank the Honourable Mr. Botha for being here today and for opening this Session of the Legislative Assembly. We thank him for his remarks in opening this Session.

When I ask the Honourable Mr. Botha to convey KwaZulu thanks to the South African Government for the aid that they have given the people of KwaZulu, first for the long drought we have suffered here, and secondly for the aid the South African Government has extended to the victims of the recent devastating floods, I do so with sincerity. We are indeed grateful for what has already been done, even though the aftermath of both the drought and the floods will be felt for a considerable time yet. Very few people have any real conceptions of just what devastation has been caused by both the drought and the floods. In conveying the nation's gratitude to the South African Government, I am not saying that it has in fact already provided all the aid that is needed or that there is nothing more which could have been done. I do, however, say that what has already been done amounts to a substantial though incomplete contribution towards the rehabilitation of the stricken areas. We thank you as well,

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Your honour for what your own Provincial Administration is doing towards repairs of our infrastructure.

In well-established farming communities the drought and the floods which followed may have been devastating, but as integrated as organised farming is in the cash economy a recovery is possible which cannot be mirrored by those in the subsistence sector of our communities. The Government can pour millions into the meat industry; to aid a greatly stepped up meat-canning programme which will enable organised farming to dispose of surplus cattle which the veld cannot sustain. The Government can pour millions of rand into organised farming to help farmers consolidate their debts and reduce the interest payable to the Land Bank. Through the various control boards, organised agriculture can work hand in hand with the Government to rehabilitate White farming areas. The farming industry is an important sector of the economy, and it is right and proper that the Government takes these kind of steps.

When, however, it comes to the subsistence economies of so-called homeland areas like KwaZulu, we are faced with such an array of intangible problems that the prospects of doing something meaningful for the peasant victims of the drought and the floods are slim indeed. Subsistence farmers living on a hand to mouth basis have no Land Bank buffers between them and annihilation. There are no control boards which can soften the shock of devastating droughts and floods. The importance of the farming industry to the South African economy and its integration of it in the economy, has led the Government so to distribute its aid that yet once more it is White society which benefits most. A Black peasant when he loses all perhaps in fact loses more than his counterpart in organised White farming. When a White farmer loses his cattle, his crops and when his debts overwhelm him, he is losing money, but he does not lose the opportunity of rehabilitating himself. When a peasant loses everything, he can only go to other peasants who have also lost everything. There is no employment for him in the cities; there are for him no alternative business ventures, and there is for him no opportunity to move to another part of South Africa where peasant farming has not been so badly hit.

The drought5/

The drought in KwaZulu and the floods which followed have done more than devastate individual lives. The combined weight of drought and flood has in a very real sense been a devastating blow to the developmental infrastructure which we have been struggling so hard to develop for so many years. It is almost impossible to put a cash value on the damage that has been caused by the drought and floods, but informed estimates are beginning to throw up pictures in which total losses are running into hundreds of millions of rand. Money that should have been used for developmental purposes and the building of infrastructures has now to be diverted to the fundamental task of keeping people alive. It is therefore that, with qualifications that we convey our genuinely felt gratitude towards the South African Government for what they have already done. It is clear to all of us here that the State will have to do a great deal more than it has ever done in the past to take the impoverished rural areas away from the brink of total and irreversible disaster. Rural poverty cannot survive the kind of devastation we have experienced in recent years and again this year. When a people are as poor as we are, disasters of these magnitudes translate poverty into death and hope into hopelessness and rural under-development into the kind of mass Black tragedy from which only a legacy of bitterness can flow.

I make this observation with a particular pertinence. Our peasants have suffered devastating droughts for years and towards the end of 1983 the rains came and the hopes of the people soared. They toiled to make good the years that the locust had eaten. They tended their cattle, tilled their fields with the purposefulness of people filled with new hope. And then came the floods, to devastate not only that which they were building up, but to devastate hope as well. This devastation of hope is taking place at a time when the South African economy is bordering on a state of depression. There are no jobs in industry available to those who have suffered from drought and flood in rural areas. The people on the land have nowhere to turn to, and I believe that the South African Government must be made aware of the political implications that this whole situation holds out for the country at large. Rural poverty is not simply a rural problem; mass

poverty is ... 6/

poverty is a problem of the State and should become the concern of every South African, whoever he or she may be. We ask the Administrator to convey these thoughts together with the gratitude we have expressed for that which has already been done.

I believe that we must move away from the political restrictions which take away even a man's boot strings which he could have used to pull himself up out of the poverty which has been encapsulating him. In the recommendations of the Buthelezi Commission, we have pointed to the direction in which this can be done in the region of Natal/KwaZulu. The continued separation of race in this Province for ideological purposes can only result in an ever-downward spiral of hope and goodwill. It is most befitting that our Administrator opened this year's Session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. His presence here is in keeping with the spirit of the Buthelezi Commission, and it is only political acrobatics that keep the KwaZulu Government and the Natal Provincial Administration pointed in different directions. We are all of us travelling the same Natal/KwaZulu road into the future, to experience there the same destiny with each other.

The Natal Provincial Administration still performs many tasks for us here in KwaZulu. As Natalians we in KwaZulu appreciate the services that are rendered by the Natal Provincial Administration. I believe that it is only by specific intention and concerted effort that the South African Government has maintained the artificial chasms which exist between Black and White in this Province. I do not believe that the people of Natal, whether they be White or Black can envisage the permanence of a KwaZulu fragmented into so many bits and pieces of land. I believe that given the opportunity, White Natalians would reject the dictates of apartheid for this Province. While it is yet possible for some of our White brothers and sisters to have their cake and eat it, they will support the status quo. The day must, however, come when Whites cannot have their cake and eat it; and they will then have to pay the terrible price that ideological apartheid demands of them. I do not believe that they will be prepared to pay that price when ... 7/

price when that day comes, and when that day comes the wisdom contained in the Buthelezi Commission's recommendations will be recognised. I only hope and pray that by then it will not be too late. Time waits for no man, and neither will time wait for apartheid. We have urgent things to attend to in laying the foundations for the future, and I believe that the Buthelezi Commission findings will yet be proved to be prophetic.

I find it to be quite extraordinary that it is so easy for something like the Nkomati Accord to actualise, while we here cannot even sit together in this Province as two Administrations within what is one Region to talk about some aspects of the Buthelezi Commission's recommendations. That is why while I have applauded the NKOMATI Accord, I have hastened to warn White South Africa not to be too euphoric about it, because while it is plausible, charity should indeed begin at home as the saying goes. It will in fact make it so much easier for President Machel with whom we in KwaZulu share a border, if a just society was established within the borders of South Africa. The Nkomati Accord will only be meaningful to the Frontline States and the OAU when the political conduct of white South Africa towards us as men of colour is normalised.

I do not believe that righteousness will flow like a river overnight in South Africa. I believe that we need starting points to start with. I do believe that in the resolution of South Africa's problems that the Natal-KwaZulu Region is a starting point. I am a realist and I do not expect that whites will have to love us first before this happens. If we were to wait until whites begin to love blacks and blacks to love whites we would have to wait until the coming of the Armageddon. I do believe that we should start by sweeping our own back-yard in the field of human relationships first before we are carried away by possibilities of multiplying the Nkomati Accord in the Sub-Continent of Southern Africa. There is no way in which President Machel and his fellow Presidents in Southern Africa and in the rest of Africa can be proud of Mocambique's relationship with South Africa unless black human dignity within South Africa is

recognised. ... 8/

recognised. That is why there was not a single representative of an independent African State at Nkomati, when the Accord was signed. The applause by black Heads of State was no more than the public recognition by them that President Machel's decision was a Hobson's choice as he found himself in a cleft stick, because of the SADF incursions into Mocambique and the economic realities facing his Country.

All the talk we hear in South Africa on the Nkomati Accord is negated by many things which are taken for granted in South Africa. Let me take a current issue, such as the increase in pension allowances in this year's budget. Last Wednesday the Honourable Minister Mr. Horwood did the right thing in increasing old age pensions for all population groups. But this good act is soured by the fact that in 1984 this is still done on the basis of disparities. So that White old age pensioners will get an extra R14 a month raising their pensions to R166 and Coloured and Asian old pensioners will get an extra R10 this raising their pensions to R103, whereas African old age pensioners will get only R8 a month this raising old age pensions paid to Africans to R65. Special bonuses to be paid for all population groups in May will be R36 for white pensioners, R29 for Coloured and Asian pensioners and only R22 for African pensioners. It becomes very difficult to accept any talk of reform being in the air just now, when the human dignity of South Africa's Citizens is still considered by the government to be based on this sliding scale, on the basis of the pigmentation of the skin and the texture of their hairs.

We have also applauded Sir, the decision made by the Minister of Finance in raising education spending by 23 per cent over the 1983/84 level to R4 200 million in 1984/1985 financial year. We know that even such generous infusions of finance into education will not easily bridge the gap which at present exists in the expenditure per head for white and black children, which at present stands at approximately R1 000 per head for a white child and only about R80 for a black child. But it is nevertheless comforting to know that for the first time expenditure on education is more than the rise of 21,3 per cent

in the expenditure ... 9/

in the expenditure for defence over the amount voted for 1983/84 to R3,755 million. We conclude that while the gaps of discrimination are still yawning at us through these disparities, it seems as if the penny is finally beginning to drop as far as decisions on priorities are concerned.

I want to state also that we would like Your honour to thank your government for having given us almost all the funds we had proposed for our current budget. We do so only because we are aware of the ravages of the economic recession and the problems created by drought and floods. We know for example that these amounts will not enable us to pay all the old people in KwaZulu, who qualify for old age pensions, something for which we are blamed without any justification. We can only cut our coat according to the cloth at our disposal. I believe that while we are all extremely concerned about the urgency of fundamental political changes in South Africa, that it would ease the atmosphere and remove tensions, if we were to eliminate these glaring disparities in expenditure per head for education and for old age pensioners. As long as they exist how can we deny that we are a racist society? We have never here expected the government to undo the damage of so many generations with a stroke of a pen. But if these first things were tackled the government would find allies who would indeed tell the world that fundamental changes in South Africa are unfolding. We cannot be expected to applaud without these reservations any increases which do not eliminate these iniquitous disparities because they in fact imply that our human dignity as Africans is worth less than that of our fellow country men of white, Coloured and Indian extraction. These things create such bitterness as I cannot describe in words and wide chasms that are the bane to the unity of all South Africa's citizens, regardless of race colour or creed.

On behalf of myself, His Majesty the Zulu King, on behalf of Members of the Legislative Assembly and on behalf of the people of KwaZulu, I once again thank the Honourable Mr. J.C.G. Botha for being with us today and for sharing with us in the opening of this Session of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. Thanks for bringing Mrs Botha with you to grace the occasion.