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1. I rise to discharge my duty in obedience to your call and, in doing so, I wish to acknowledge, at the very outset, that the first part of my duty this afternoon, and indeed the most pleasant, is to express my very real appreciation to the Principal and the Members of the Staff of this institution of the signal honour they have done me in inviting me to address you on the occasion of your Speech Day.

2.. Never been a school teacher before.

3. My inspiring consolation lies in the hope and expectation that you will extend to me throughout my address to you a liberal measure of your kindness and indulgence such, at least, as will sustain me in the consciousness of my shortcomings which, perhaps, disable me from rising equal to the responsibilities of this great occasion.

4. I have selected for my subject this afternoon a topic which calls for a great deal of self-analysis, self-criticism and reflexive thinking and have given the following title to it:-

AM I THE BEST THAT I CAN BE?"

I have decided on this subject for my address for a variety of reasons but, perhaps, the most important of them being: First, I wish to lay some special stress on the need for suffering and determination as I suspect that a new kind of materialism has overtaken our youth - both White and Black alike - a materialism which has given birth to Tsotsis, Ducktails and similar variations. It is the type of materialism which makes us coddle with comforts and are even willing to use all our intellectual resources in the service of one end - material success - and are prepared to lay down our lives for higher wages, and not towards higher ideals.

The/...

The second reason for my choice of this subject is a realisation that the passion for freedom is running high; but there is regrettably an apparent unawareness that, like everything else, freedom is won from within and is not given from without. The first battle towards freedom is against one's own self.

The country that we love is not a geographical area but a spiritual possession. Until we prepare ourselves and identify ourselves with it through mind, heart and wisdom, love and service our country is bound to be in its present position.

I wish to lay similar stress on the fact that the forces we have to contend against are more within our borders, within our own selves.

Even as students at this institution, has it not exercised your minds that in the seventh decade of the Twentieth Century after the birth of Christ men and women everywhere should be what they are, that they should be victims of bitter disenchantment? They seek peace and find war. They strive for abundance and suffer want. They endeavour to recapture vanished land marks and the half-forgotten hopes of lost faiths and, in the process, tend to lose all sense of values and all awareness of the meaning in their lives and, at times, renounce the world and retire from its disappointments to commune with God.

Those who are still of the world, and yet above the battle are tempted to mutter with Hamlet:

"The time is out joint;

O, cursed spite, that even I was
born to set it right."

We/...

We are at one of the most decisive moments in the life of mankind. At no other period of human history were so many people bearing such impossible burdens or suffering such agonising persecution and anguish of heart. We are living in a world in which tragedy is universal.

There is a startling relaxing of traditions, of restraints and of established law and order. Ideas which until yesterday were regarded as inseparable from social decency and justice, which were able to direct and discipline conduct for centuries, are swept away.

A blind impulse to destroy seems to have taken possession of mankind and, if there is no check to it, we are heading for final extinction of man and are on the course to an era of intellectual darkness.

But, in the midst of all this chaos where do you and I stand? Are you, as the illustration on the Board enquires:

"Steering towards success,
or drifting towards defeat?"

It seems to me that in the social reconstruction and awakening that has to come, you as students more than us who are already receding to the background will have to remember certain basic facts.

The first is:

- (a) That periods of creation have been periods of great suffering.
- (b) That the pace towards a new equilibrium is set by our courage and wisdom.
- (c) That human roots go deeper than the fibres of race or nationality.
- (d) That although it is taking centuries of fumbling and effort to learn that life in oneself and others is sacred, every individual person has his own radiance his/...

his peculiar glamour, if only our eye is sensitive enough to behold it.

and finally (e) that if we are true patriots, our attachment will not be local, racial or national, but human. It will be a love of liberty for all, of independence, of peace and social happiness.

I return to the question posed in the illustration on the Board.

"Where will you be ten years hence? Are you steering towards success or drifting towards defeat?"

On the 9th February, 1965 the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development stated in the House of Assembly that between 1956 and 1963, inclusive, 295,634 Africans passed Standard VI.

The Standard VI results in 1964 were:-

	<u>ENTRANTS.</u>	<u>PASSES.</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE PASSES.</u>
Republic	62,314	52,468	84%
Transkei	10,781	5,645	52%
	<hr/> 73,095	<hr/> 58,113	<hr/> 136%

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE :

In 1964, 10,112 Africans from schools in the Republic and Transkei entered for the Junior Certificate examination.

Distinctions	43	or	0.4 %
First Class pass	1,124	"	11.1%
Second Class pass	3,660	"	36.2%
Third Class pass	2,690	"	26.6%
Failed	2,595	"	25.7%

In 1962 and 1963 the combined passes for the Matriculation Exemption and Senior Certificate were 647 and 725, respectively.

DEGREES/...

DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS awarded.

The following is a summary of tables contained in the 1964 Report of the Department of Education, Arts and Science. It reflects the degrees and diplomas that were awarded in 1963 by the S.A. Universities (including the University of S.A. but excluding Non-Whites University Colleges).

	<u>Whites.</u>	<u>Coloureds.</u>	<u>Asians.</u>	<u>Africans.</u>
Doctorates	142	2	1	-
Master's degrees	372	-	5	5
Honours degrees	703	4	10	14
Bachelors degrees	4,300	52	130	98
	<hr/> 5,517	<hr/> 58	<hr/> 146	<hr/> 117

According to the "Report from South Africa" for January, 1963 there was then a total of about 3,000 African graduates from S.A. University and University Colleges.

The following numbers of degrees were awarded in 1965 at the Non-whites University Colleges.

	<u>DEGREES</u>	<u>DIPLOMAS.</u>
University of the Western Cape (Coloureds)	17	36
University College for Indians	25	23
University College of Port Hare	19	36
University College of the North (Africans)	20	34
University College of Zululand (Africans)	10	17

GLOOMY SIDE OF THE PICTURE :

According to the Annual Report of the Commissioner of the S.A. Police for the year ended 30th June, 1964 those convicted in 1963 - 1964 were:-

<u>Whites.</u>	<u>Coloureds.</u>	<u>Asians.</u>	<u>Africans.</u>
42,762	98,506	8,832	240,426

For/...

For the year ended 30/6/64 the daily average prison population was:-

<u>Whites.</u>	<u>Coloureds.</u>	<u>Asians.</u>	<u>Africans.</u>
2,985	11,423	422	55,521

Those sentenced to death and executed in 1963 were:-

<u>Whites.</u>	<u>Coloureds.</u>	<u>Asians.</u>	<u>Africans.</u>
4	7	-	109

In 1964:

5	14	-	66
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Where shall we find you ten years hence? You, not your mother, your father or your teacher, have to make the choice, the decision.

Are you diligently striving towards being among the few that graced our academic statistics, or are doomed to be derelict, as it were, steering the backwaters of civilisation?

The road to success is long, weary and arduous.

It has often been said, with truth, that the function of an educational institution is to prepare its students to take their rightful place in society. It must provide them with the knowledge and skill necessary to make them efficient citizens.

But a teacher can only perform the function of an airman by taking survey of hostile positions, determining the points of relative strength and weakness and signalling the lines of attack.

After all it is you, the students, who are the gunner who have fix your batteries, take your aim and actively work at the machines.

Carlyle/...

Carlyle defined a cultured person as he who perceives perfection, and strives to make it prevail.

It is you, not your neighbour, who has to perceive such perfection. It is you who must decide on your goal and work actively and diligently towards the attainment of your ideal.

Labour or repose, it has been said, you may take which you please. You can never have both. Comfort first can never be the maxim of any student.

As the poet Milton expresses the same thought in Lycidas:

"Fame is the spur

..... labourious days."

You, two, can be a Tsotsi, a Ducktail. The choice is your own; you now have the opportunity to raise yourself to the level of those who are now your envy and inspiration.

Poor financial means, your disagreeable environment ought not to deter you from a clear perception of your goal for did Shakespeare not say in similar circumstances:-

"The strawberry grows underneath a.....
and wholesome berries thrive and
ripen best neighboured by fruit
of baser quality."

If you are genuinely of the belief you cannot make the grade, you can be of service to the community by helping improve the lot of those who might otherwise have been born of flower to "blush unseen and waste its sweetness in desert air."

Do/....

Do not be discouraged by the alterations in the superstructure.

Royal reader - Windsor Reader, etc.

Derive solace and inspiration from Keats who in the " Ode to the Nightingale" wrote:-

"Thou was not born for death
O' immortal bird "

The aspirations, the passion for liberty and independence, the ideals and hopes that burn within you now burnt also in the hearts of your forebearers, and no hungry generation can obliterate them.

The world has become anonymous, and the individual is lost in it. In our educational institutions, instead of being trained to develop our powers and raise our intelligence, we are moulded into approved patterns, stuffed with information, and taught to produce correct responses to the stimuli of patriotism, racialism and religion.

We behave like performing animals, animated dolls. The soul gets anaesthetised and we have faces without features.

Most of us live lives without attaching ourselves to any higher purpose. We live from day to day, and disappear like bubbles on a fountain.

It seems to me that you of the younger generation have the opportunity to meet a new challenge if society is to emerge from the endless series of anxieties, conflicts and frustrations in which we are caught.

It seems to me that there is a revolution which is entirely different , which must take place. This revolution

has/...

has to begin with a radical transformation in the mind itself. Such a transformation can be brought about only through right education and the correct equation of values. It must bring about the total development of the human personality. It is a revolution that must take place in the whole of the mind, and not merely in thought for thought, after all, is only a result and not the source. There must be radical transformation in the source and not mere modification of the result.

At present we are not bringing about a vital change, uprooting the old ways of thought and freeing the mind from traditions and habits.

As students we have to unlearn the habit of allowing our thoughts to originate from conclusions of past generations.

Learning implies the love of understanding and the love of doing a thing for itself. It is not the mere cultivation of memory or the accumulation of knowledge, but the capacity to think clearly and sanely without illusion, to start from facts and not beliefs.

This is where you should be ten years hence, and if you are there, and I hope you will be, you will have helped the course of your community, your people, your country to reach the lofty destiny in the commonwealth of nations.

I should like to conclude by making the observation that you of the younger generation are your society's hostages to posterity. Make certain that you are properly equipped to be able to shape the lofty destiny of your people.

You are each a standard bearer of the honour, the aspirations, the ideals and the hope of your people. Your failure will not be the individual failure of each of you,

but/...

but the collective failure of your people. Be on guard not to betray the honour, the heritage and the trust of your people.

Permit me, Mr. M.C. to tail -off my address by quoting from our renowned poet, Herbert Dhlomo who, in his "The Valley of a Thousand Hills", wrote:-

"Creator who created sights so fair,
Create again:
But leave out pain,
A World of Love and Truth,
divinely fair.
For pain and sin our weary eyes have seen.

.....

Create therefore again,
O Lord, but let now reign
The Beauty that this day my eyes
have seen."

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RAVN/PS.
31/10/70.

Copy of a summary of the
address delivered by RAV. NGCOBO
at Isibonelo High School, KwaMashu
on the occasion of the school's
Speech & Page-Giving Day.

*With the Compliments
of
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