



DEPARTEMENT VAN NASIONALE OPVOEDING  
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

191. T. 7 (95)  
OAI  
H. B. Thom.

Telegr. VOLKSOPVOEDING

Tel. 2-9971 Bylyn  
Ext.

Navrae  
Enquiries

Verw.  
Ref.

VANDERSTELGEBOU  
VAN DER STEL BLDG

Privaatsak X122  
Private Bag

PRETORIA

0001

CATE'S AND THE UNIVERSITIES

(English pp. 4-11)

BY PROFESSOR H.B. THOM,  
CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL

(Address, Diploma Ceremony, Natal College for  
Advanced Technical Education, City Hall, Durban,  
4 June 1977, 10 a.m.)

Meneer die President

Meneer die Direkteur  
*Dames en here dosente*  
Dames en here studente

Dames en here besoekers

Graag betuig ek vreugde oor die feit dat ek hierdie mooi  
geleentheid kan bywoon. Ek bring groete en beste wense oor  
van die Adviserende Raad op Universiteite aan die Natalse  
Kollege vir Gevorderde Tegniese Onderwys.

Ek wens die Direkteur en sy onderwyspersoneel geluk met die  
werk wat hulle weer eens met wenslae verrig het, en met die  
resultate van hulle inspanning wat ons vandag aanskou.

2/.....

Ek wens die Direkteur en sy administratiewe personeel geluk met hulle suksesvolle hantering van die administrasie van die Kollege, en veral met die reëling van hierdie treffende funksie.

Ek wens die studente, wat vandag diplomas ontvang, van harte geluk met die geslaagde afloop van hulle studies, en met die onderskeiding wat hulle nou te beurt val. Saam met hulle, hulle ouers en vriende, deel ons in hulle vreugde. Mag hulle in hulle verdere loopbaan suksesvol wees en veel voldoening daarin vind.

Gepaardgaande met hierdie woorde van gelukwensing, wil ek - en baie ander saam met my - ook 'n woord van hartlike waardering uitspreek teenoor die Natalse Kollege vir Gevorderde Tegniese Onderwys vir die bydrae wat hy reeds gemaak het - en nog steeds maak - tot die ontwikkeling en vooruitgang van ons land en sy mense. Iedereen weet dat opgeleide, goed-toegeruste mannekrag vir enige land onontbeerlik is, en dat veral Suid-Afrika dié mannekrag nodig het. Die Kollege het sy kwota van manne en vroue reeds ruimskoots gelewer, en hy lewer ook vandag weer groepe gekwalifiseerde jongmense op 'n verskeidenheid van terreine.

By 'n geleentheid soos hierdie dink 'n mens onwillekeurig aan vraagstukke van die onderwys, insonderheid die tersiêre onderwys. Laat my toe om kortliks stil te staan by een hiervan, 'n vraagstuk wat vandag aktueel geword het en dringende aandag vereis, t.w. die kwessie van die verhouding en samewerking tussen Kolleges vir Gevorderde Tegniese Onderwys en universiteite.

Ons weet vandag dat die onderwys as één groot geheel gesien moet

word. Ofskoon die onderwys op vier vlakke geskied, t.w. die pre-primêre vlak, die primêre vlak, die sekondêre vlak en die tersiêre vlak, beteken dit nie dat hier van vier losstaande vlakke sprake is wat apart van mekaar en geskei van mekaar bestaan nie. Die posisie is in werklikheid dat die vier vlakke organies met mekaar ineen loop; dat die een op logiese, heel natuurlike wyse uit die ander voortvloei; dat die een, sielkundig en pedagogies, net so belangrik is soos die ander; en dat alvier saam die één, groot geheel van ons onderwys uitmaak.

Maar wat sien ons in die praktyk in ons eie land, en ook in baie ander lande? Ek verstout my om te sê dat ons in die verlede, in plaas van die eenheid van die onderwys raak te sien en dit uit te lewe, dit eerder gaan versnipper, gaan kompartementeer het. Ons het die vier vlakke grotendeels van mekaar gaan losmaak en hulle apart versorg, amper asof hulle niks met mekaar te doen het nie.

Ons het selfs verder gegaan: tot 'n sekere mate het ons op elke vlak nogeens gaan kompartementeer, iets wat met name op die tersiêre vlak gebeur het. Die verskillende tipes inrigtings op hierdie vlak het met hulle eie werk voortgegaan, met weinig noemenswaardige voeling met mekaar, asof die een die ander nie nodig het nie; en oënskynlik met weinig bekommernis rakende die noodsaaklikheid van samewerking in nasionale belang.

Maar ek bepaal my by Kolleges vir G.T.O. en universiteite. Albei werk op die tersiêre vlak; albei werk met jongmense wat gematrikuleerd of van vergelykbare standaard is; albei beoog om in die dringende behoefte aan geskikte mannekrag te voorsien;

albei trag met erns om die land te dien. - Maar in die proses vra hulle hulle nie veel na hulle ware wese, na hulle diepe raison d'être, af nie. Hulle gee hulle nie ernstig daarvan rekenskap dat die een meer prakties georiënteer is, die ander meer akademies, teoreties; en dat hulle onderskeidelik vir jongmense met die betreffende aanleg en bekwaamheid voorsiening moet maak nie. Dit, in breë trekke, was in ons land lank die geval - en laat ons maar eerlik wees, dit is in aansienlike mate tot vandag toe nog die geval.

Hierdie toestand van sake is, uit die teoreties opvoedkundige oogpunt gesien, ongelukkig en ongesond; maar ook uit die oogpunt van ons praktiese landsbelange is dit ongewens en wesenlik skadelik. Toe op gesag van die Staatspresident in 1968 'n Kommissie van Ondersoek na die Universiteitswese aangestel is, het dit voor die hand gelê dat die Kommissie ook aan hierdie kwessie aandag sou wy. Die Kommissie, onder die voorsitterskap van <sup>wyle</sup> regter Van Wyk de Vries en daarom weldra bekend as die Van Wyk de Vries-Kommissie, het dan ook nie in gebreke gebly nie.

Let us refer briefly to the main report of this Commission. - I say "main report", because there are also two interim reports, but we are now dealing with matters covered by the main report.

This report is of utmost importance in connection with tertiary education in this country; I am sure that in the course of time it will be seen as an authoritative source regarding the history of education, and more specifically as a corner stone of a new dispensation.

With reference to the rigid demarcation which had developed regarding the function of the universities and the CATE's, the Commission came to the conclusion "that this rigidity should be broken down in the interests of higher education and that it should gradually be replaced by flexible co-operation and interaction, with the paramount aim of training every boy and girl to his or her full potential".

The Commission recommended that universities and CATE's situated in close proximity, take action by means of standing joint committees in order to achieve especially four aims: a successful <sup>n</sup>chanelling of young people to the institutions for which they are best suited; the creation of a means of transition for students from one institution to another, with a reciprocal granting of credits and recognition of qualifications; the raising of the standard of practical scientific training at the CATE's and the resultant enhancing of the prestige and status of CATE's awards; and finally constant consultation on the best education for every young man and woman so that a waste of trained high-grade manpower, resulting from the absence of bridges between the universities and the CATE's, will be prevented.

The spirit evinced by these recommendations is again clearly shown when the Commission touches on the matter of the siting of new CATE's. It states unequivocally: "one of the most important considerations in establishing a CATE would be the proximity of a university to co-operate with the CATE".

The Commission's views are abundantly clear: It regards both universities and CATE's as essential in the field of tertiary

education; and it stresses the necessity that, in the interests of all concerned, they co-operate closely.

It is gratifying to know that the Cabinet strongly endorses these views. The Minister of National Education <sup>has</sup> in no uncertain terms ~~has~~ advocated co-operation between universities and CATE's, and has praised steps already taken by some institutions in this direction. I can also say that plans for co-operation which have come before my Council, have without exception been favourably received; we have done our best to achieve what the Commission had in mind.

It was a happy circumstance that the Colleges for Advanced Technical Education - or most of them at least - had, by the time the Commission completed its main report, already been in existence for ~~some time~~ <sup>a few years</sup>. They were brought into being by the Advanced Technical Education Act (No.40 of 1967), i.e. in the year before the Commission was appointed and six years before the appearance of the main report.

By the act of 1967 technical education entered a new phase: the colleges became fully-fledged tertiary education institutions; under their own Councils, administering their own budgets, they became influential institutions; and by the time the Commission reported, some were ready to assume greater responsibilities, inter alia <sup>the</sup> joint training of students with the universities.

This does not mean to say that co-operation immediately got off the ground: a good deal of preparatory work had to be done; there were differences in educational thinking; and some institutions found themselves hide-bound by a traditional lack

of co-operation and perhaps also a degree of unwillingness and prejudice. However, although progress was slow in some other centres, here in Natal the position was different: both in the University and the College - and especially with the respective responsible heads, the Vice-Chancellor and the Director - one found not only a willingness but actually a keenness to join hands.

From a small - but sound - beginning in 1907, due to the insight and public spirit of Dr. Sam Campbell, the College grew steadily: it started as the Durban Technical Institute; then became the Durban Technical College; then the Natal Technical College; and finally, after the Act of 1967, the Natal College for Advanced Technical Education. In the meantime student enrolment had grown rapidly and the number of departments had increased beyond expectation, which conclusively proves that the College was supplying a real need. It had reached maturity; it had graduated to become a partner of the University.

It is a source of satisfaction that relationships between the College and the University have always been healthy and reciprocally stimulating. The two institutions have had, since an early date, reciprocal representation on their governing bodies; and during the last few years they have <sup>even</sup> come a good deal closer to each other by establishing joint Standing Committees to promote the training of students in various fields, notably teacher training and engineering. By the way, I am interested and pleased to find that at this ceremony also teaching diplomas of the University of Natal will be awarded, which

show the results produced by co-operative courses between the University and the College.

We also know that steps are being taken to effect co-operation between the University's Faculty of Science and the departments of Pharmacy and Applied Science of the College. Furthermore, a Liaison Committee has been established at the highest level in order to ensure co-ordination of plans for the future.

I congratulate most sincerely the College and the University on these developments. They have acted with wisdom and insight, and are making a long term investment in the spiritual and material welfare of the country. In addition they have, without setting out to do so, given a striking example to other institutions - and I can see that the example is already catching on!

These developments would not have been possible if the Director of the College (Mr. Pittendrigh) and the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Professor Stock) had not readily taken the initiative. I have had the good fortune of discussing the relevant matters with both of them, and would like to place on record my appreciation of their views and well-directed action. I refer especially to a recent meeting when, at the invitation of my Council, representatives of CATE's and universities met in Pretoria to discuss the possibility of joint training of pharmacists. On this occasion Mr. Pittendrigh made a <sup>most</sup> welcome and very real contribution.

There is no denying the fact that with this kind of co-operation we are acting in the best interests of the country, and that we are on the way to achieving the aforementioned aims of the

Van Wyk de Vries Commission. There is an additional thing: by channelling students to the institution for which they are best suited, we shall reduce the number of failures. This applies, of course, primarily to undergraduate failures at universities, a phenomenon which today poses a serious, costly problem and constitutes a luxury which we cannot afford, especially in a time of financial stringency such we are experiencing at present.

While I advocate <sup>very</sup> strongly the demolishing of compartmentalisation between CATE and university, and while I stress the necessity of co-operation, I must be quite clear and say that I firmly believe in the indispensability of both institutions; they supply allied needs and work for the same long-term ideal, but the needs, though allied, are different, and it is therefore necessary that both institutions develop and flourish. From this it follows that both institutions must, in the light of changing conditions, continually scrutinise the nature and content of their courses, and also continually safeguard and guarantee their standards. It is essential that the public and the state show full confidence in them to do the job for which they exist.

There is one final point which I would like to emphasise. I have noticed that ~~there is a tendency with some men at the CATE's~~ <sup>at some Colleges there is</sup>

*a tendency* to try to obtain for the Colleges the right of granting degrees. *This aim* ~~These men~~ <sup>has certain merits, eg. it will help to</sup> no doubt, have a meritorious aim, viz. to enhance ~~the status of the Colleges~~ <sup>The people concerned also</sup> and they point to examples overseas where ~~where this happened and where~~ <sup>and where</sup> some Colleges <sup>have</sup> actually become

technical universities. However this may be, the fact remains that we have to take into account the circumstances - spiritual

as well as physical - obtaining in this country; and that we must realise that we cannot abruptly break with the logic of a system which is the result of a long and sound development.

Furthermore, if the CATE's were to become degree granting institutions, they would have to expand their scope and in this way move into the province of the universities. To do this would be the surest way to destroy the very reason for their own existence, and to reduce their raison d'être - to which I referred earlier - to a ~~mere~~ mockery. As things stand now, and as far as the foreseeable future is concerned, I can see Colleges co-operating with universities; I can see reciprocal recognition of credits and qualifications and Colleges in this way taking part in the training for degrees, but the actual granting of degrees will have to be a function of the universities. However, as the Romans said, quot homines, tot sententiae, so many men, so many minds; and if times and conditions change, and responsible people later on think otherwise, then it would be up to them to do what they consider best.

In closing, let me say how pleased I am that I am able to attend this function and to take part in the proceedings. My contribution is a modest one, but I am glad that you have given me this opportunity of laying before you certain observations which, in the field of tertiary education, are to us today of vital importance.

Mr. President, Mr. Director, on behalf of my Council I express appreciation of, and gratitude for, the work of your College. The Colleges play an important role in the education of the

youth of our country. By linking up with the universities they will enlarge and enhance that role; and this applies especially to the Natal College for Advanced Technical Education. You have made an excellent start; I wish you success and happiness in all your future endeavours.

H. B. THOM

4th June 1977