

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY Dr P.ka I Seme

Mr Speaker, delegates ladies and gentleman: This is the 21st General Annual Conference of the African National Congress. Those of us who had the honour to attend the first Convention on the 8th January 1912 here in Bloemfontein, can see in this conference in its unbroken succession, the determination of these African tribesmen to stand together through thick and thin and become one nation.

It behoves leaders of that nation to come together as we have done today, in this place in order to consult one another as to the best ways and means of leading that nation to success and at the same time to weigh and to consider all those obstacles and even mountains which stand in the way of our progress as a nation and as individuals in this country. The Rev John L Dube has written a book in the Zulu language and has given it this title: "Isita somuntu nguye uqobolwakhe" which being interpreted means that, "the enemy of the black man is the black man himself". The behaviour of the expelled leaders of this congress yesterday at this conference makes us think that they believe that the African National Congress cannot exist unless they were returned to office. Your unanimous vote, Sir is clear challenge to such deception and impertinence, Vive la Congress!

The business of this Annual Conference has been chiefly concerned with reviewing and confirmation of the important resolution which were passed at the last Special Conference which met in January last here at Bloemfontein. This Conference has been summoned under those resolutions as well as by the notice given at the last Annual Conference. As for instance today we hereby summon the next Annual Conference to meet at Bloemfontein during the New Year Holidays in 1934.

Under those resolutions, Sir, this African National Congress has become the new Parliament and the official medium of expression for all Africans. It is now towards this Sanctuary of Freedom that all African tribes and chiefs must turn their faces and pray for their salvation and for the salvation of their people. There is no other way by which our people may be saved except by following the mandate of the African National Congress. It is our duty to make that Congress as strong as possible. There can be but one Constitution for the Congress and only one leader of this House. And since you have elected me I tell you that I depend upon your cooperation. The unfaithful leaders having now been expelled there is bound to be greater progress made in the work of organising the Congress than before.

It is not necessary that I should in this place review the past history and battles which our people have fought and won through the African National Congress, but I can say without fear of exaggeration that in these Provinces, our people have had no other champion for fighting their cause except this Congress. The Congress has caused your protest against the

Native Land Act of 1913 to be registered amongst the records of the Union Parliament and carried them further across the Seas to Great Britain and throughout the whole world. The world is watching South with a feeling of great disappointment in her eyes because the Union Parliament refuses to fall into line with other civilised nations of the world and become too the Sanctuary of Freedom and justice, for all men and women in this country irrespective of colour or creed.

To be continued.....

Source

ILanga Lase Natal May 12, 1933