


Matters for London



Congo Protestant Council

Minutes - Meeting 33

LEOPOLDVILLE, BELGIAN CONGO

FEBRUARY 21 - 28, 1954

1095. Educational Committee

Voted to accept the report of the Educational Committee with recommendations as follows:

1. It having been called to the attention of the Council that in certain plantation, mining and industrial camps educational facilities have been provided at the companies' expense but under the direction of Catholic missions and without equal facilities for Protestant education, and in view of the fact that the companies assert that such schools are neutral, the Council recommends member missions to seek permission for religious instruction to be given to Protestant children attending these schools, such instruction to be given by a Protestant worker, African or European, who should be given full facilities for doing this work on the school premises and in school hours.

2. In each of the last four years, requests have been made by the Council to the Government to establish lay secondary schools and professional schools under Government control similar to the *Athénées Royaux* for European children and the *A.M.I.* for medical assistants, where following the official programme religious teaching is given by visiting professors supplied by the confessional authorities. In view of the fact that no favorable reply has been received, the 1954 Council requests the General Secretary to present these requests yet again.

Further the Council feels that the projected State University in Ruanda-Urundi does not meet adequately the needs of the Colony for non-confessional education of university standard and urges the Government to reconsider the establishment on Belgian Colonial Territory of a State University similar to those now existing at Liège and Ghent.

3. Voted to adopt and publish a statement prepared by Lt. Commissioner Becquet concerning lay secondary and professional schools and a State University for all Congo students. This statement reads:

En matière d'enseignement, le Conseil Protestant du Congo réaffirme la position qu'il a prise depuis 1950. Etant donné l'impossibilité dans laquelle se trouvent les Missions Protestantes de créer, en nombre suffisant des établissements d'instruction secondaire et professionnel, le Conseil Protestant du Congo recommande avec insistance l'ouverture dans un avenir immédiat d'un certain nombre d'écoles professionnelles et secondaires laïques, sur le modèle des Athénées Royaux et de l'Ecole A.M.I. avec faculté pour les étudiants de suivre un cours de religion catholique ou protestante.

Pour ce qui concerne l'enseignement supérieur et le projet gouvernemental d'ouvrir une université au Ruanda-Urundi, le Conseil Protestant du Congo recommande l'établissement sur le Territoire de la Colonie d'une université d'Etat accessible à tous les étudiants.

4. The General Secretary is asked to make enquiries of an oral and unofficial nature as to the attitude of the Government concerning the duration of holidays for *moniteurs* who hold an *E.A.P.* certificate or a diploma from an *Ecole de Moniteurs*. Further that he circularize the result of such enquiries.

5. That representation be made to the Government to secure that the 25% supplementary subsidy for holders of teaching qualifications be paid for the services of such missionaries when they act as directors of Second Degree Primary Schools.

6. In view of the urgent need of encouraging and coordinating the production of school textbooks, the Council nominated a missionary for each of the main language groups to organize this work and suggests that wherever possible manuscripts in English or French be made available generally.

The missionaries nominated for this work are Miss Catherine Parham for Kiswahili and Rev. J. E. Young for Lingala.

1096. Literature

A letter from Mrs. L. C. Vass was read. She asked to be replaced as Secretary of the Literature Committee.

Mr. Ross Manning gave a report on literature. He emphasized the need for production and the need for distribution of literature.

1097. Report of the Lingala Secretary

Voted to accept with appreciation and gratitude the report of Mr. S. F. Westberg.

Voted that Mr. S. F. Westberg proceed with negotiations with the British and Foreign Bible Society concerning the translation and format of the Lingala Old Testament.

1098. Lingala Periodical

It was reported to the Council that LECO Board of Directors had decided to take steps to find a Christian journalist to serve as Editor for the projected Lingala periodical. The Executive Committee of LECO is authorized to act on this matter during the year.

Voted to adopt the report of the Literature Committee concerning the Lingala periodical, as follows:

1. It shall be a Christian newspaper giving Christian interpretation of and attitude toward current and local events.

2. There shall be included in each issue some presentation of our distinctive message.
3. There shall be included also a woman's section to take the place of the *Lingala Congo Hearth*.
4. The paper shall be Christian in its emphasis and appeal but not "narrowly" so in range and content. In a country where the power of the Roman Catholic Church is enormous, the utmost discretion has to be exercised; and while defense of the Protestant position is inevitable, the journal should be "Christian" rather than "Protestant" in its outlook, gathering news of church and general interest from all sources and directed to raising ethical and social standards everywhere.
5. There shall be an editorial board composed of the General Secretary of the Congo Protestant Council, the General Manager of LECO, the Press Manager of LECO, and representatives of local missions.
6. We favor the soliciting of advertisements to help defray costs of publication.

1099. French Periodical

Voted to accept the recommendation of the Literature Committee concerning a French periodical as follows:

We recommend that we do not propose any new French periodical until there has been opportunity to consult with Mr. Trevor Shaw and those who are planning the editing of French periodicals from French West Africa. If we can cooperate in this, it should meet our needs.

1100. Colportage

Voted to accept the report of the Literature Committee