

The National Liaison Committee Meeting on Legal Education

THE aim of this committee is the furtherance of legal education in South Africa. This committee consists of representatives of the Law Society, the General Council of the Bar, the Legal Aid Bureau, Justice Training, the universities and technicons, as well as the Department of Justice.

Practical training

The meeting was quite lengthy and a number of matters were discussed. Most prominent on the agenda was the proposed undergraduate LLB degree. It is proposed that this would be a four year course. The aim is to set up *curricula* to be followed by the various universities and technicons.

It is envisaged that this degree will qualify persons for entry into the professions. The quality of legal education will not be compromised, despite the shorter period of academic study. After the LLB degree, and before a person can enter the professions, the idea is that a year of practical training has to be completed. Only on completion of that year will a person be in a position to enter

Pieter Pauw, of the Johannesburg Bar, reports on the meeting of the National Liaison Committee which took place on 20 June 1996.

the profession of his or her choice. The precise content and ambit of the practical training are as yet undecided. The GCB made it very clear that it would insist on any candidate (pupil) advocate completing a period of approximately six months' pupillage and then at the end of the year of practical training.


As yet it is uncertain as to what other practical training could be available.

Structure of the legal profession

Although the meeting dealt with legal education in general, the perennial issue of one legal profession was raised. This was articulated by a representative of the Law Society, as well as a representative of the BLA. Their view was that there should be mobility between professions during the year of practical training. Especially the BLA strongly emphasized the point that there should be one professional examination for en-

try into the professions. The view of the GCB was that it was opposed to this. In general, however, there was no consensus as to the practical requirements for entry into the various professions.

Curricula

Because there was no unanimity as to the contents of the practical training, the meeting was of the view that the deans of the law faculties first had to decide on the *curricula*. It was anticipated that this could perhaps take place before the end of September 1996. There is also a proposed legal forum, which is to be convened later this year by the Department of Justice, where these proposals will be discussed. The consensus of the meeting was that the *curricula* would be dealt with first, whereafter the professions would become involved in setting up a system of practical training. The stance of the Bar has been and still is that it will control the training of candidate (pupil) advocates, the quality thereof and subsequent entry into the advocates' profession. 

National Bursary Fund

THE General Council of the Bar appropriated an amount of R40 000 to the National Bursary Fund for allocation during 1996.

The fund received 16 applications for assistance. Of these, five did not qualify, as there was a possibility of these pupils obtaining funding elsewhere. One applicant withdrew from pupillage and thereafter did not receive any funding. The remaining ten applicants were awarded amounts ranging from R1 480 to R3 200

Report by Marumo Moerane SC of the Durban Bar

with one applicant receiving R1 000. A total amount of R20 000 was awarded, leaving a balance of R20 000 for the next intake of pupils.

The criteria that were used for making the allocations were *need* and *suitability* of a candidate. As in the past year the fund operated on the basis of mini-

mal administration expenses – members of the committee bore their own expenses. In administering the fund we were generously assisted by the secretary of the General Council of the Bar and the administrative officer of the Society of Advocates of Natal with regard to secretarial and other services.

At the time of the allocations, the convenor was on a teaching assignment in America and delegated his functions to Chiman Patel of the Durban Bar. 