

THE PREMIER MUST STAND FIRM

The statement that there is a movement afoot among English-speaking members of the United Party to "assist General Hertzog" in his rapidly-developing difficulty in connection with the Voortrekker Memorial ceremony is interesting, but it would be more impressive if we knew the names of these members and how many they number.

We can readily understand the desire to "assist" the Prime Minister in any determination he may arrive at to ensure that the ceremony shall be in the broadest sense one of great national significance, distinguished by all the impressive ceremonial proper to an occasion of outstanding historical importance. But if, on the other hand, the idea is merely to "assist" him to find a convenient means of escape from a position of serious political disadvantage, into which he is manoeuvred by intimidation, then we must confess that we have no sympathy with it at all.

The mission of all members of the United Party—not the English-speaking section of it alone—is not so much to "assist" the Prime Minister, personally or politically, as to consolidate and implement the overwhelming vote for national unity which was cast at the recent general election. Neither concession nor subterfuge can possibly do anybody any good, and we suggest that the "English-speaking members" who have been hinted at will be well-advised to leave the matter to the decision of General Hertzog, who has, we are sure, a very clear conception of his duty.

If the occasion is not to be a national one, the Governor-General cannot possibly be present. The Prime Minister cannot attend to represent one section of the people only, for the question of the "divisibility" of the Premier is one that cannot be argued. And if it is not to be a national celebration, what justification can there be for the financial and official recognition it is receiving from the State?

Unfortunately it seems most unlikely that wiser counsels will prevail in this connection, for racial feelings are being fanned into flame by a system of mass propaganda which we regard as mischievous in the extreme. But we trust that the Prime Minister will take a firm stand when the time comes for him to make a final decision. He must not succumb to seductive cooings on the one side or submit to brutal intimidation on the other. He has been put into his present position to govern the country, and that is what his supporters will expect him to do. If the people who opposed him in the election—and will continue in all circumstances to oppose him and the ideals for which he stands—persist in their attitude of irreconcilability and

narrow racial exclusiveness, they must be content (as no doubt they will be) with a celebration which is sectional rather than national.

Progress will continue in spite of such a temporary check, but General Hertzog, more than anyone else, must be prepared to pay a high price—in disillusionment.

Written by LEWIS ROSE MACLEOD, of 155 Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, to express the opinion of the "Rand Daily Mail."