**Debate on Vote 17**

**FF Plus: Dr. Boshoff**

**Higher Education and Training**

Honourable House Chair

This huge department is responsible for all formal learning which don’t happen in schools. Practical skills for adults, training for artisans, technicians, and professionals encompass all public colleges and universities. A huge budget of R134 billion is expended on this department. R111 billion voted by parliament and another R23 billion levied from salaries.

Indeed, the mechanism to finance sectoral education and training authorities and the National Skills Fund through a direct levy on all remuneration is an interesting idea – the higher the employment rate, the more funds are available and *vice versa*.

On the other hand, it has emerged that throwing money at problems is not enough. NSFAS, for instance, found it hard to adapt to the much larger scale of its operations, when turned from a loan agency to a grant disbursement institution.

Some universities seem unable to stay out of administration. In a recent study prof. Jonathan Jansen ascribes it, among others, to the flow of billions of rands to institutions where a strong commitment to the academic project, and the distinction between management and governance is not entrenched. Then money adds to the problem, rather than solve it. The answer is a better culture, not less money.

This debate annually regresses into an exchange of blame. The opposition complain about bad audits at Setas, NSFAS and the NSF, bad performance at universities, and the phasing out of Afrikaans as an academic language.

The government then hits back: “The opposition is against transformation and wants to entrench historic privilege. Language is used as a means of exclusion. White people feel oppressed when they don’t oppress.”

Honourable Minister, we should talk with each other, not to each other – or worse – at each other.

Let us get something out of the way: The Freedom Front Plus wants to see designated groups to rise and reach their potential: Young people, black people, female people.

If I could quote from yesterday’s debate: The fact that we promote Afrikaans does not mean we are opposed to other languages. We want to discuss Afrikaans with you; what it means to us; especially if it fades and disappears. I wish I could discuss it with you in isiZulu, but I can’t. English will have to do.

I want to discuss the past with you. History is never objective. The danger is when a partisan narrative is presented as objective history – the only truth. Those with other views are then regarded as enemies, not opponents. I know that because such views were widespread in my community. Learning and accepting a more nuanced reality was traumatic for many.

Real understanding can only be formed if we give and take respect; and if we are prepared to attend to one another’s narrative. Learning from opposing idealism is good for any idealist. Your experience of the Struggle will be educational to me. Maybe, if you hear my lived reality regarding the past, you may be less suspicious about my view on the present.

I wish we could visit the SKA together, like you said yesterday. Roads in the Northern Cape are long, affording enough time for long and thorough discussions.

You see, I prepare to see you in the opposition benches next year and a good understanding with the opposition is good.

I thank you.