

7th March 1952.

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80/11/26/23
St. Andrew's College.
Grahamstown. South Africa.



Dear Mr. Donaldson,

Thank you for your letter of 28th February which I have read with very great interest. Indeed I am shamelessly inquisitive to know just what is the treasure trove ("the considerable volume of printed matter") to which you refer.

I am also grateful to you for your kindly reference to "Coming of Age", for that book had its first beginnings inside my own head: and indeed at that time J.H.H. and I saw a lot of each other. But are you right in saying that when MacMillan found him so reticent J.H.H. was not then "concerned with official pronouncements"? Was that not the period when he was Administrator of the Transvaal?

I think I could perhaps give you a certain amount of information you might find useful about your subject, but I am faced with a real difficulty. You perhaps know that Alan Paton, author of "Cry the Beloved Country" (which read, if you have not already done so) is also engaged in writing a full length biography of J.H.H.? He has referred to me a good deal about the latter's time at Oxford, where we were contemporaries, and met a good deal over the "Coming of Age" period. It would obviously not be fair to him for me to supply you with information, for, I gather, a rather shorter work, which just because it is likely to be shorter is also probably going to be published before Alan Paton's book appears. My first obligation is therefore clearly to him.

However, he is the fairest-minded of men, and if he feels that his book will not suffer by the prior publication of yours, he will, I know, give me authority to pass on to you such information about the two not unimportant periods in J.H.H.'s career of which I have also told him a few things. So I am sending your letter on to him and as soon as I get his reply I shall be writing again.

been able to tell

And, anyway, good luck to your effort.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Ronald Currey.