

23 Lynton Road,  
KLOOF,  
Natal.

5th April, 1963.

Dear Leo,

We hope to leave here on April 15, arrive at Somerset East on April 16, stay with Don Graib and get his medical advice on the biography, and arrive in Cape Town on 19th.

Now our Natal Congress starts on Friday, May 3, and I must be back for this. If it is necessary, however, I shall return to Cape Town after Congress is over. Meanwhile I have made arrangements that either John Cope or Rene de Villiers sends you the first forty-three chapters of the biography and I am hoping that you will be able to read them before I arrive. Dorrie is busy typing Chapter XLIV, and I am busy writing Chapter XLV, which will be the last chapter but one. The last chapter will be in the nature of a postscript, and will be written in Cape Town after you have read the book. I do hope that you are able to read the biography before I come as that will expedite our business.

Where do you think we shall be working? If it will be at your home, do you think that you will be able to find a room (with a bathroom, if possible) at some hotel near you? We do not expect to stay with you.

I am looking forward immensely to working with you on the editing, and if ten or eleven days is not enough, then I must just come back again. I am not prepared to spoil such a tremendous labour for the sake of saving a few days on it. I would have liked to talk to you before you start reading, but, after all, you are so experienced that I hope the lack of a preliminary talk will not matter.

At the risk of insulting your intelligence, I make a few remarks.

- (1) I think a biography should be primarily a story; secondly (certainly in this case) a history; and lastly, and also leastly, (if there is such a word) a mine of information. You may therefore be able to suggest some ruthless cuts.

- (2) I estimate that the book is between 250,000 and 300,000 words. If this is too long, then again the question of cutting must be considered.
- (3) The most difficult part of Hofmeyr's life to deal with was when he was in the Treasury. I do not want this to spoil the book. On the other hand I do not want to shirk a biographer's duty.
- (4) I have not written one single word about Hofmeyr in the Senate. Do you think this matters?
- (5) My personal knowledge of Parliament is confined to half a dozen visits to the Gallery. Do you think this ignorance is apparent?
- (6) Do you think the whole of the MS will have to be retyped for the printers?
- (7) I shall be bringing down with me some final alterations, additions, etc.

I cannot tell you what a relief it is to be writing the last chapter but one. I am now in October 1948, and it is quite unbelievable to be dealing with material that I sometimes despaired of ever reaching. I am greatly looking forward to working with you, and hope that you will be able to turn this book from a second-rate effort to a triumph of the biographer's art.

We both send love to you and Nell.

Yours ever,

P.S. Could you reply to this, either by letter or telegram, immediately. We are a bit worried about the accommodation during the Parliamentary session.