

Students agree to

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share rooms as college reopens

STUDENTS at the University College, Nairobi, who were sent home on December 15 because of their "strike" in protest against shared accommodation, were re-admitted yesterday, after signing forms agreeing to share accommodation and to obey the College's rules and regulations.

The Principal, Dr. Porter, said that of the 862 students who were sent home, only 21 had not signed the forms seeking re-admission. Some students boycotted the reopening ceremony in protest against the suspension of the president of their union, Mr. Nagenda. Dr. Porter said his suspension was not because of his being union president.

The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education, Mr. James Njoroge, on behalf of his Minister, told students that sharing of rooms, even if it could not be taken as a sacrifice, should be accepted as a necessary measure towards fulfilling one of the College's aims — to train as many people as practically possible within "our meagre resources".

Moreover, sharing rooms was not peculiar to University College, Nairobi. It was done in many other parts of the world, and in fact, in some universities it was the rule rather than the exception.

SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP

When the three East African States established the University of East Africa and its constituent colleges they did so chiefly to ensure that the spirit of friendship and comradeship would be fostered and "I can assure you that sharing of rooms being classmates and collegemates can and does bring about lasting friendship."

Mr. Njoroge said he did not say that there were no advantages in living alone, but so were there many disadvantages. For example, in case of an emergency caused by illness, a room-mate could often save the life of his friend.

He pointed out that the practice of sharing rooms might continue, in some degree, for as long as the shortage of manpower remained as it was today.

He warned that education was very expensive and the Government was doing all it could to provide the best education for all, but it was greatly handicapped financially.

It cost the Government over £100 a year to maintain a student in a normal secondary school. But if they compared this with the over £900 a year spent by the Government to maintain each Government-sponsored student in the College, "you will realise how greatly privileged you are to be here at the expense of other areas of our educational sections."

The Government and the University College were doing their best to provide enough accommodation for all. If their efforts were not realised soon enough to satisfy the students' needs, the students were asked to bear with the authorities and co-operate for the well-being of the College. He asked them to be aware of African Socialism, adding that the University was autonomous.

Members of the public, he said had very high expectations of University students, and these should not at any cost be marred. They should struggle to show they were worthy of