

THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR BULLETIN'S RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE WIEHAHN COMMISSION
REGARDING WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

1. The Workmen's Compensation Amendment Act, No. 28 of 1977, eliminated provisions which, in the principal Act, had differentiated between African workers on the one hand and white, coloured and Asian workers on the other. The provision of equal compensation for all workers was a most welcome change of direction.
2. One of the main problems is administrative and concerns the matter of unclaimed moneys due to workmen for their dependants. The Report of the Controller and Auditor-General for the financial year 1974-75 (R.P. 84/1975) shows an accumulated amount of R2 706 897 in this respect. Government Gazette No. 5585 of 10 June 1977 contains lists which run to 92 pages of names and addresses of people to whom money is due. Although some amounts are small, others run to four figures. Perhaps the only feasible method of trying to overcome this problem would be to knit Section 31 of the Factories Act more tightly together with the Workmen's Compensation Act and to provide for cross-referencing in the case of all serious accidents between the Divisional Inspector of Labour in the area and the local Workmen's Compensation Committees, whose functions should be expanded accordingly. In cases where workers have been hospitalised or treated as out-patients for a long period the hospital or clinic could be required to report to the local Workmen's Compensation Committee shortly before the patient was discharged to enable an official to inform the worker concerned of the money due to him.
3. Employers should also be required to record full

details of the name and present address of an injured employee in visitor registers and, further, to record the the home address of acontract worker whose normal place of residence differs from that which he occupies merely for the duration of his service contract.