

ENVIRONMENT - 1995

NOV. - DEC,

# Water pollution levels cleared

(56) Star 1/11/95

BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Studies conducted by a team of Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) researchers has shown that nobody living on the Witwatersrand has yet been exposed to dangerous radioactive pollution levels from contaminated mine water.

But the studies warn that exposure to pollution will increase as populations move closer to mines in the future, and experts say that sulphate pollution in water is a growing and more immediate threat.

The Zoology Department at RAU, on behalf of the Water

Research Commission, investigated the incidence of radioactive uranium and radium in areas affected by run-off from mine dumps and slime dams.

It was found that traces of pollution in drinking water on the Witwatersrand was well within the recognised acceptable limits for human consumption.

Furthermore, the concentration of radioactive pollution in the ground water and agricultural produce was of a lower magnitude than concentrations found in many first world countries such as Japan, Germany and America.

It was also found that no

large-scale agricultural projects on the Witwatersrand were irrigated with radioactive polluted water.

But researchers said the current run-off from mine areas entering rivers and streams was unacceptable, and warned that town planners and developers should ensure radioactive pollution remained well within prescribed limits once housing schemes and agricultural production moved closer to mine areas.

Dr Phillip Kempster, principal specialist scientist for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, said results of a recent study by the DWAF showed

points of increased radioactivity on the West Rand.

"There are one or two areas near mine dumps where there are elevated levels of radioactivity. Although that water does not directly become drinking water, it does eventually flow into the Vaal river system," he said.

Kempster added that the DWAF was concerned about levels of sulphate pollution from mine dumps, saying radiation was "only one of the forms of pollution in water".

He said sulphate salts, iron and other trace metals all leached from mine dumps into water sources.

# Saldanha project may go ahead

Star (BR) 1/11/95

By ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — There is a "real chance" that the R4,7 billion Saldanha steel project will still go ahead, Iscor executive chairman Hans Smith said here yesterday.

"We will take a decision on our participation in the project at the end of November. The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) has indicated it will come back to us and bring the project back to our required rate of return," Smith said after Iscor's annual general meeting.

Iscor withdrew from further participation in the project at the end of September.

It cited inordinate delays experienced in the issuing of the necessary site rezoning permits, which had resulted in progress on the project being held up by almost a year, as the reason for the decision to withdraw from the project.

Iscor said at the time it would "consider the investment merits of a restructured project, or any portion thereof" after the re-evaluation of the project by the IDC, its then joint partner in the venture.

The IDC then decided to re-evaluate the project with a view to achieving a more acceptable capital cost, investment return and risk profile for Iscor.

Smith said yesterday he was impressed by the positive attitude of the IDC, which he said had been negotiating with the central and

Western Cape governments.

"There is a 50 percent chance of Iscor coming back and a real chance of the project going ahead," Smith said.

He said that Iscor was committed to leaving the R750 million of the R1,3 billion the company raised via a rights issue untouched until it had heard from the IDC.

Only about 50 of the company's 155 000 shareholders attended the meeting yesterday, which was completed in less than 10 minutes.

The meeting was the last to be held under the chairmanship of Marius de Waal, who is retiring. However, De Waal said he would continue to hold the position of chairman of Transnet until the end of the year and of Siemens "for a while still". He is also a director of BMW South Africa and the South African Reserve Bank.

De Waal's retirement has resulted in Smith, formerly the managing director, becoming the executive chairman. This is in line with the restructuring of Iscor and reduction of senior management from 10 to six people over the past two years.

Ben Alberts has become the managing director of Iscor Mining; Kevin Robertson the managing director of Iscor Steel; Louis van Niekerk the executive director finance; Neels Howatt the general manager human resources and public relations; and Awie Greyling the general manager legal and administrative services.



**CHANGING OF THE GUARD** Iscor managing director Hans Smith (left) bids farewell to chairman Marius de Waal after the company's annual general meeting in Pretoria yesterday. Smith has now become executive chairman of Iscor, in line with Iscor's restructuring and reduction of senior management

PHOTO JOHN WOODROOF

# Saldanha project may go ahead

By Roy Cokayne

Pretoria — There is a "real chance" that the R4,7 billion Saldanha steel project will still go ahead, Iscor executive chairman Hans Smith said here yesterday.

"We will take a decision on our participation in the project at the end of November. The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) has indicated it will come back to us and bring the project back to our required rate of return," Smith said after Iscor's annual general meeting.

Iscor withdrew from further participation in the project at the end of September.

It cited inordinate delays experienced in the issuing of the necessary site rezoning permits, which had resulted in progress on the project being held up by almost a year, as the reason for the decision to withdraw from the project.

Iscor said at the time it would "consider the investment merits of a restructured project, or any portion thereof" after the re-valuation of the project by the IDC, its then joint partner in the venture.

The IDC then decided to re-evaluate the project with a view to achieving a more acceptable capital cost, investment return and risk profile for Iscor.

Smith said yesterday he was impressed by the positive attitude of the IDC, which he said had been negotiating with the central and

Western Cape governments.

"There is a 50 percent chance of Iscor coming back and a real chance of the project going ahead," Smith said.

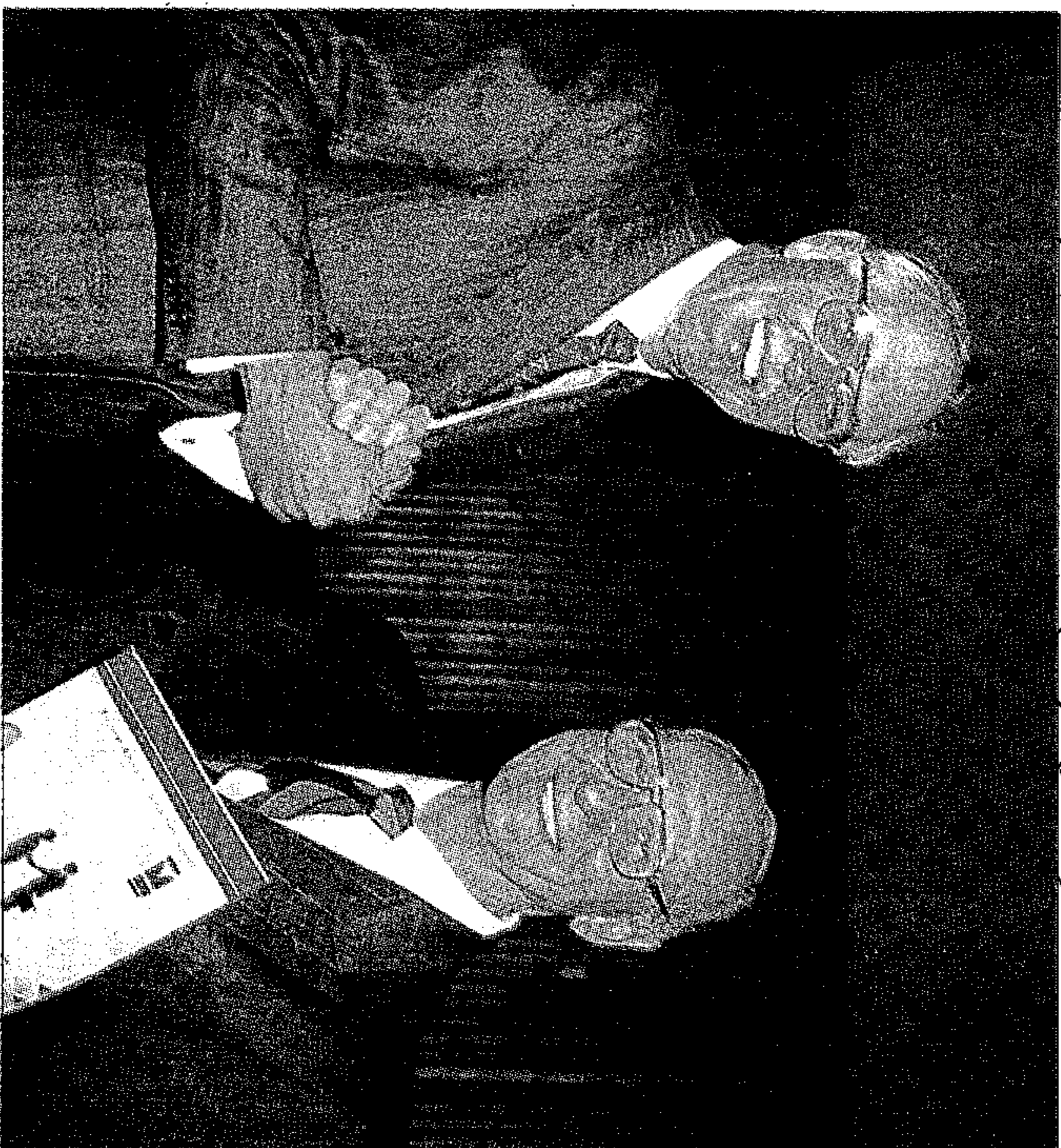
He said that Iscor was committed to leaving the R750 million of the R1,3 billion the company raised via a rights issue untouched until it had heard from the IDC.

Only about 50 of the company's 155 000 shareholders attended the meeting yesterday, which was completed in less than 10 minutes.

The meeting was the last to be held under the chairmanship of Marius de Waal, who is retiring. However, De Waal said he would continue to hold the position of chairman of Transnet until the end of the year and of Siemens "for a while still". He is also a director of BMW South Africa and the South African Reserve Bank.

De Waal's retirement has resulted in Smith, formerly the managing director, becoming the executive chairman. This is in line with the restructuring of Iscor and reduction of senior management from 10 to six people over the past two years.

Ben Alberts has become the managing director of Iscor Mining; Kevin Robertson the managing director of Iscor Steel; Louis van Niekerk the executive director finance; Neels Howatt the general manager human resources and public relations; and Awie Greyling the general manager legal and administrative services.



**CHANGING OF THE GUARD** Iscor managing director Hans Smith (left) bids farewell to chairman Marius de Waal after the company's annual general meeting in Pretoria yesterday. Smith has now become executive chairman of Iscor, in line with Iscor's restructuring and reduction of senior management

PHOTO: JOHN WOODROOF

(56)  
MGT 27/10-2/11/95

# Anger over collapse of toxic waste inquiry

**Eddie Koch**

**A**N official inquiry into South Africa's toxic waste scandal has effectively collapsed because the magistrate appointed by the Minister of Environment and Tourism Dawie de Villiers to run the one-man probe does not have enough power to force reluctant witnesses to give evidence.

Environment Affairs spokesman Bertus Cilliers this week confirmed that magistrate Jan Venter was unable to conduct the probe into the way private consultants working for the department were able to issue permits for the import of some 500 tons of highly toxic cupric arsenate into the country because some of the key people involved in the controversy were not willing to testify.

"The minister has referred the matter back to Cabinet with a request for the inquiry to be converted into a formal commission. Magistrate Venter has reported that some people don't want to give evidence and he does not have the powers to subpoena them," said Cilliers.

Cabinet last month took a decision not to appoint a full commission into the scandal in order to save costs. A move that aroused the anger of environmental groups who feared an informal inquiry would not get to the bottom of one of the biggest environmental scandals facing De Villiers' ministry.

Two months ago a ship loaded with cupric arsenate from Finland was forced to turn back before it could dock in Durban after activists from Earthlife Africa exposed the shipment. The cargo had been stored in a warehouse in Finland because it was so toxic that few other countries in the world wanted to handle it.

It later emerged that private consultants employed by the Department of Environment Affairs — some of them with links to the business sector — had been able to issue permits for the waste to be imported into south Africa on official departmental letterheads. The consultants also failed to fulfil all the requirements of the Basel Convention which regulates the international movement of hazardous waste.

Earthlife Africa also uncovered evidence to show that the same consultants had been involved in plans to bring in another large cargo of hazardous material that is being stored in Russia.

Venter's inquiry was supposed to uncover how these irregularities occurred and the effective collapse of his probe vindicates groups like Earthlife Africa who argued that evidence of irregular movements of toxic waste materials into the country requires the appointment of a formal commission of inquiry that allows full involvement of non-government organisations and public interest groups.

# Environment experts sought

## ■ SCIENCE WRITER

Nominations for membership of the Council for the Environment, which advises environment minister Dawie de Villiers, are being invited.

The term of office of the council expired this week and it has been decided that an interim council will be appointed to hold office until new environmental legislation can be tabled in 1997.

The interim council will consist of 18 members

of whom nine will be appointed by the premiers of the provinces and nine by the Cabinet after considering nominations from the public.

Nominees should be people who have distinguished themselves in research, financial, educational, managerial and scientific fields, and who possess special qualifications in relation to the environment, coastal and marine systems, terrestrial and freshwater systems, waste and pollution,

environmental economics, environmental education, environmental management and environmental law.

Nominations should be submitted by not later than November 6, and should include an appropriate motivation and a curriculum vitae.

They must be posted or faxed to Frieda de Coning, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Private Bag X447, Pretoria 0001. Fax (012) 322-9231.

(56) Star 2/11/95

## Residents will have say regarding waste

(56) *SM 2/11/95*

■ BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Kader Asmal has committed himself to public participation in solving Gauteng's hazardous waste crisis.

"I am not the captive of any particular commercial or sectoral interest," Asmal said at the opening in Springs of an exhibition by Peacock Bay Environmental Services this week.

Peacock Bay entertained residents at the start of a three-day public information exercise regarding a proposed hazardous waste incinerator in the area.

Residents living near the existing EnviroServ hazardous waste site in Holfontein bombarded Asmal with questions. They will be directly affected by Peacock Bay's envisaged

incinerator, also on the Holfontein site.

But Asmal insisted no decisions would be made on allowing the incineration plan to go ahead until "all the information is on the table. Unless it has the support of the people, it won't work," he said.

After the closure on December 31 of Waste-tech's Margolis site in Germiston, 70 000 tons of industrial hazardous waste per annum will have to be accommodated at EnviroServ's Holfontein site, Asmal said.

"There is an inevitable tension between the perceived rights of individuals and those of the broad national or public interest.

"Such tensions must of necessity be resolved through a genuine and effective process of public participation," he said.

*Pollution suddenly gets worse - two big generation plants shut immediately*

# They all say 'Eskom, you're a star'

BY ANITA ALLEN  
SCIENCE WRITER

(51) (510) (535) Star 2/11/95

Bouquetts are being handed out to Eskom for its decision to close two of its six 600-Megawatt units at Duvha Power Station near Witbank, where emissions suddenly rose to 10 times registered levels.

Duvha, which is Eskom's powerhouse and supplies the cheapest electricity on the grid, was retro-fitted with bag filters on three of its units in 1992 at a cost of R96-million. At the time it was a world first with the biggest bag filters yet installed anywhere. The promise was that the bag filters would operate at 99,9% efficiency, reducing emissions far below existing pollution regulations.

Unfortunately, earlier this year it was noticed that the fabric of the filters, which operate as giant vacuum cleaners, was beginning to perish. At first it was thought that this was normal wear and tear, but in the past few weeks the rate of failure accelerated and Eskom realised it had a major problem.

Complaints from the public followed as white clouds of "smoke" billowed from the stacks, and there was a warning from the office of the Chief Air Pollution Control Officer that something had to be done.

At Friday's executive committee meeting of Eskom's generation division, a unanimous decision was taken to close the two units.

"There was a dramatic rate of change and we were pumping out toothpaste. So we decided we had to close down the units," Brian Statham, Eskom's executive director, generation, said.

The exercise in self-regulation has been praised by Martin Lloyd, Chief Air Pollution Control Officer of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

(DEA&T) as an example to industries countrywide.

Lloyd said the Air Pollution Act allowed his office to close polluters operating in excess of their registered, allowable emissions. However, the act stated that a reasonable period had to be allowed for abnormal problems to be corrected.

"The fact that Eskom has voluntarily closed down its units is excellent, and shows how seriously it considers air pollution," Martin said. "It's a breakthrough in self-regulation and responsible care, and Eskom should be congratulated."

Lloyd's division was transferred from the Department of Health to the DEA & T in April, and has only six officers to monitor air pollution countrywide, whereas a work study has shown at least 32 officers are required.

## Warning

Pieter Odendaal, deputy-director air pollution control, who is responsible for power stations, said the division operated by crisis management. He wrote to Eskom two weeks ago warning that immediate steps had to be taken to rectify the situation at Duvha.

A bouquet for Eskom was also handed out by Rodney Meyer, chairman of the Air Pollution Liaison Committee (Apolcom) of Mpumalanga.

"Eskom must be commended for their prompt action. It is definitely an example to all other industries," Meyer said.

Apolcom consists of more than 30 representatives of industries, including Eskom, and the town councils of Witbank and Middelburg. It meets bi-monthly to respond to complaints, shares experiences and discuss problems of mutual interest. It also runs an air quality monitoring station funded by the DEA & T. Eskom has monitored air

quality in the region since the early 1980s to determine the impact of its power stations and other sources.

In the 12 months from July 1994 to July 1995, concentrations of SO<sub>2</sub> (sulphur dioxide), NO<sub>x</sub> (nitrogen oxides), O<sub>3</sub> (ozone) and Fine Particulate Matter (FPM) have generally fallen well below the DEA & T guidelines. Occasional high hourly concentrations of SO<sub>2</sub> have been recorded throughout the year, primarily from Duvha, but have not exceeded the guideline.

In the 12-month period there has been a significant reduction in both SO<sub>2</sub> and FPM, due mainly to improved emission control strategies, including fitting of bag filters.

"The failure of the fabric means that Eskom will have to re-examine its policy of fitting with bag filters," Statham said.

Fabric filter economics are centred on bag replacement costs.

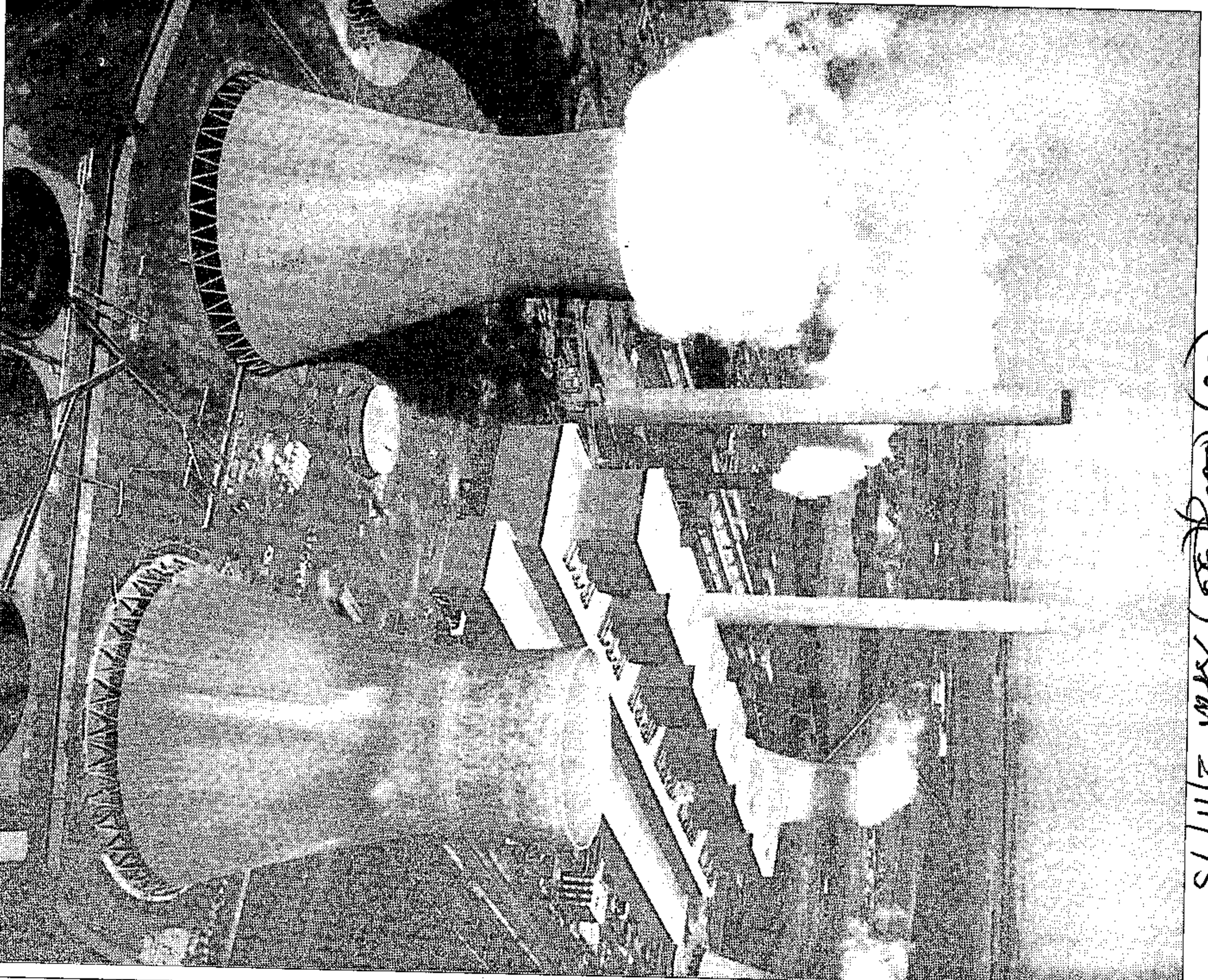
At a cost of R12-million for one set of bags a unit, the premature failure of the fabric could mean a return to less efficient and "dirtier" technologies.

This would mean that downward trends in air pollution over the Witbank/Middelburg region, which is on premier tourism routes, may not be maintained.

Closing the two Duvha units will cost Eskom about R8-million to R10-million and it also means that for the time being the giant utility will have to switch to more expensive electricity sources from other power stations.

Eskom, in conjunction with the bag filter supplier, is investigating solutions. This includes the possibility of fitting more expensive bag filters; these can only be supplied by March.

If a solution to the problem is not found, the costs could be passed on to consumers, according to Statham.



Power failure ... two 600Mw units at Eskom's Duvha power station have been closed down following the failure of bag filters and resulting excess emissions.



## SALDANHA STEEL

# Last ditch bid to salvage mill

AM 3/11/95

(56)

**Other options** — including a search for possible British partners — are being investigated in a bid to keep the multibillion rand Saldanha Bay steel project alive. Industrial Development Corp chairman Christo Wiese confirms that the IDC made certain proposals to the Western Cape cabinet last week.

Administrative secretary to Western Cape Agriculture, Planning & Tourism Ministry Armand le Roux says: "Several alternatives were presented to the cabinet by Wiese and IDC CE Carel van der Merwe last Wednesday. The cabinet will attempt to reach a decision on these issues before the end of November." And Iscor, though it has pulled out of the R4,7bn combined Corex iron and steel plant project, is still interested "in looking at feasible alternatives," according to Iscor MD Hans Smith.

Smith says "while the bottom line issue at Saldanha Bay is a proper return on our investment, we would again be interested, should the IDC make good proposals."

Saldanha Steel executive chairman Bernard Smith says he is "not in any position to comment" on the alternative options now being looked at.

Voest Alpine SA MD Helmut Ulrich says his company has been asked to table revised quotations before the end of the week, to reduce the budgeted capital costs. "The environmental investigation (Steyn) has delayed implementation and added both to the cost and risk of the project."

Ulrich says the ideal position would obviously be to launch a project of this scope into a global market upturn. But, he adds, even if the Saldanha project does not come off now, the benefits of adding value to millions of tons of iron ore currently exported to the Far East should force a reconsideration later.

Apart from the findings of the Steyn commission which recommended the plant be moved inland, one of the main drawbacks to the project is understood to be the construction of Iscor's state-of-the-art Corex iron plant which had a lead time of 36 months.

It was felt the long lead time would coincide with the expected cyclical downturn in the global steel market closing the "window of opportunity" which needed to exist to successfully launch the steel plant.

Industry sources say Iscor is apparently happy to participate in the steel making operations at the plant and if the "Corex equa-

tion" is taken out of the project several other options for the manufacture of iron present themselves.

While Corex is an iron making process developed by Iscor using low grade coal as

would take about three years to complete and it would be a feasible energy source for the iron plant, provided gas can be delivered at a cost of not more than US\$2,50/gigajoule (a unit of heating value). This would leave government to make up its mind what to do with the Moss gas refinery — transforming it into a liquid condensate (or crude oil) refinery could be an option.

Complex policy decisions — also involving Moss gas — therefore have to be made, before a new Saldanha Steel project can be announced. But, with a steel plant needing 27 months for completion, a Corex plant three years and the gas pipeline a similar period, global market trends are vital in such a decision. And, with more scrap-steel-based minimills coming off international drawing boards, opportunity may be fading fast. ■



a fuel base, new proposals on the table include the use of gas as an energy source.

Options include:

- Building a gas pipeline from Mossel Bay, at a projected cost of about R500m. This would allow for the erection of a gas-fired iron-making plant at Saldanha Bay, which would be 40% cheaper to build than the Corex plant;
- Siting the iron plant at Sishen and the steel plant at Saldanha;
- Getting British or other overseas partners to take the place of Iscor;
- Importing coal from Richards Bay to fuel the Corex plant at Saldanha. The plant would also require about 1,8 Mt of Sishen iron ore a year, coupled with 340 000 tpa of iron pellets imported from Brazil;
- Building only the steel plant at Saldanha, using imported scrap steel (which is the global norm), until the various iron plant options are finalised; and
- Extending the Portnet wharfage facilities at Saldanha Bay at a projected cost of R260m-R500m, with the costs depending on the option followed and the volumes of coal and pellets to be imported. The projected thin strip steel coil exports will remain at about 1,25 Mt/year.

Some industry circles are upset over the costly delays caused by the Steyn investigation, which might scupper a proposed steel plant they describe "as clean as an ice cream factory."

Additional costs would be imposed by moving the steel plant inland — if coupled with the iron making plant, "imported" coal and pellets would also have to be transported to the site and the steel then re-exported.

A R500m Moss gas pipeline to Saldanha

# Asbestos threat from powerhouse

(56) ST(M) 5/11/95

By DENISE McHUGH  
and EUGENE GODDARD

**CAPE TOWN** could face a major health hazard if the asbestos-laden Salt River Power Station is dismantled using outdated methods sanctioned by current legislation.

A warning on using unsafe techniques has been given by Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Bantu Holomisa.

Wreckers, the company contracted by Eskom to do the job, plans to demolish the station using techniques that have been slammed by the minister.

Reacting to South Africa's growing asbestos problem, Mr Holomisa said: "The dubious practice, by demolition companies under the thin veil of present government guidelines, of using hundreds of thousands of litres of water to temporarily dampen asbestos prior to removal and burial must stop.

"It is essential to change the Occupational Safety Act to outlaw current procedures, and legislate the use of non-toxic chemicals as soon as possible."

Chemicals that are mandatory in First World countries for deactivating the power station's estimated 5 000 tons of asbestos,



**ASBESTOS ALERT ...** The dismantling of Salt River power station could pose health threats throughout the Peninsula Picture: DANIEL CHRISTEN

would cost about R1,5-million.

Wreckers director John Breslan initially claimed that "using chemicals is not that efficient, water will do the trick". But he added that the company would not do anything that could "pose

a threat to people or the environment".

He said the station was being sealed and "this will ensure that no asbestos enters the environment". Surrounding drains would also be sealed with cement to "prevent asbestos from leaking into Salt River".

But a Department of Sea Fisheries spokesman, Dr Lynn Jackson, said: "Some asbestos particles are expected to leak into Salt River." The amount of asbestos per cubic litre of water would be monitored, and "legal limits are expected to be adhered to".

Discussions to determine the monitoring procedure are still to be finalised.

Current plans to dampen the asbestos require millions of litres of water which can never be used again. As a toxic sludge, the contaminated water is double bagged and dumped at a toxic waste site.

Environmental consultant Jeff Batt expressed concern about scrap metal from the plant which is intended for distribution throughout the Cape.

"Wetting asbestos with water only deactivates it as long as it remains wet. When the water evaporates the asbestos returns to being a life-threatening substance," he said.

# Red tape stalls Table Mountain plan

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

THE Western Cape government says it is still waiting for an official order to impose a moratorium on land deals in the Cape Peninsula's protected nature area.

This is in spite of an announcement by Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers in mid-September that he had "approached" both the national and Western Cape governments "with a view to declaring a moratorium on future development, rezoning, transfer of state land and mining activities" in the 300km<sup>2</sup> conservation zone.

Spokesmen for the Western Cape Finance and Environment ministry and the Cape Metropolitan Council confirmed that no instructions had been issued yet.

The national cabinet had also not considered Table Mountain's legislative future or a state-backed ban on developments in the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment, cabinet secretary Professor Jakes Gerwel said on Friday.

The apparent lack of official action over the plea for a moratorium has alarmed local National Parks Board officials, who fear "a run on the bank" while

(56) ST (M) 5/11/98  
plans are worked out for NPB custodianship of the peninsula mountain chain.

"We're extremely worried about new contracts in the proposed national park area which might undermine the new management authority," said one senior NPB staffer, who asked not to be named.

The NPB, tasked with taking over the CPPNE until it gains overall authority over the area, will discuss this process on Friday.

"The sooner we get our teeth into this problem, the better," NPB chief Robbie Robinson said from Pretoria this week.

Environment Affairs director-general Colin Cameron said it was still unclear how the NPB's future role in the Peninsula would be worked out.

"The question of how it is to be legislated is still wide open. Do we draft new laws for Table Mountain, or amend the National Parks Act?"

"This is extremely difficult terrain involving a myriad of private and official interests. It's like undoing an omelette."

The Cape Peninsula Conservation Managers Forum has also written to Dr de Villiers to find out about progress towards a development moratorium.

# Animals killed for

# apartheid

Dateline: MAPUTO

**T**HE endless bush of Mozambique screams with silence. It stands stripped of wildlife thanks to three decades of war and thanks to what is emerging as a vast, systematic slaughter of animals, encouraged by the armed forces of apartheid-era South Africa.

A new judicial inquiry in South Africa reveals that military and intelligence units trafficked in poached ivory and rhino-horn to finance civil wars the regime fanned in Mozambique, Angola and Namibia during the 1970s and 1980s.

Although South Africa has long boasted of leadership in conservation, the evidence suggests some in the white-minority establishment cared nothing about slaughtering elephants and rhinoceroses by the thousands in neighbouring nations.

South Africa kept the wars alive to destabilise hostile black-ruled neighbours. The chaos allowed armed factions on all sides to decimate wildlife for food, personal profit and war-funds.

In Mozambique alone, half a dozen armies used everything from assault rifles to aircraft to slaughter animals. Under the

cover of civil war, 90 percent of Mozambique's elephants were butchered.

"Helicopters were used to absolutely decimate wildlife," conservationist Paul Dutton said. "With a helicopter gunship, you could annihilate a whole river of hippos." Their teeth would be carved for decorations in Asia.

Peace returned to Mozambique three years ago and officials rejoice that some surviving elephants have emerged from hiding. But, the legacy of war grips the countryside, where one can travel for hours and see nothing larger than a bird.

White rhinoceroses, reintroduced to Mozambique in the 1960s, became extinct locally during the war. Only a handful of rare black rhinos are left. The elephant population fell from 66 500 in 1974 to an estimated 7 000 in 1989.

Environmentalists long accused the South African military of playing a big role in elephant- and rhino-poaching. This entailed them killing animals or getting allies to do it and arranging for tusks and horns

to be transported out of war zones and sold.

"This was an open secret," said Allan Thornton, chairman of the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency. "Trafficking during the apartheid era was a formal or informal policy, at least on the part of some elements in the government."

In 1988, the South African army cleared itself of wrongdoing in an internal inquiry. That remains the official verdict until a new, independent commission appointed by President Nelson Mandela's government issues its report early next year.

Mr Justice Mark Kumleben's inquiry heard recently four weeks of testimony, mostly from ex-military and intelligence men. Some of the evidence alleges:

■ South Africa set up a front company in 1977 to fly weapons to Angolan rebels and fly out poached ivory to pay for them. A general claimed the traffic stopped in 1979 — a year South Africa issued permits to import 3 911 elephants tusks and 700 rhino horns from Angola. But, traders testified that South Africa's army kept moving ivory

*Wildlife 'slaughtered to fund wars...'*

ARR. 6/11/95 (57)

ry out of Angola throughout the 1980s. Similar networks existed in Mozambique.

■ South African commandos in Namibia would cross the Zambezi River into Zambia in speedboats at night and return before dawn. One soldier said that the raiding parties would leave base with empty wooden crates. On their return, the crates held elephants tusks and rhino horns.

■ Environmental groups investigating wildlife trafficking discovered that some dealers were members of the South African military, according to a confidential report in 1989 prepared by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

South Africa was not alone in poaching in Mozambique. Of the six armies that fought there from the 1960s until a ceasefire in 1992, possibly only the Portuguese abstained from poaching.

Mr Dutton, a wildlife consultant and former game-ranger who has worked in Mozambique since before independence, described finding a huge pile of bones at one national park near what was once a military camp.

"A total wipe-out for meat," he said. "The only thing left in the whole park were some small antelope and a couple of hippos. It had been the only area in Mozambique where there had been giraffes. There's none now."

The wars in southern Africa, meanwhile, wound down with the end of the Cold War and South Africa's crawl away from apartheid. Mr Mandela was elected South Africa's first black president in April 1994 and pledged more neighbourly relations.

Judge Kumleben said at the start of his inquiry he hoped to separate fact from speculation on South Africa's smuggling — and to recommend steps to stop it from happening again.

But, the issues of who poached what remains sensitive, at least in Mozambique, where two local armies, Rhodesian and Zimbabwean fighters also participated in the brutal slaughter during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle.

Bartolomeo Sotuo, Mozambique's director for wildlife, needs money from South Africa to restore his parks. He also needs the goodwill of his government and former rebels, now at peace, for whatever funds he can get from a limited supply.

# Battle over Blouvillei

(51) ARG 6/11/95

ANDREA WEISS  
Municipal Reporter

**B**OTANISTS have joined the call for a renewed environmental impact assessment to be done at the Century City site near Milnerton because they believe a survey of the 192 ha site, done "over a few hours" in a morning, is inadequate.

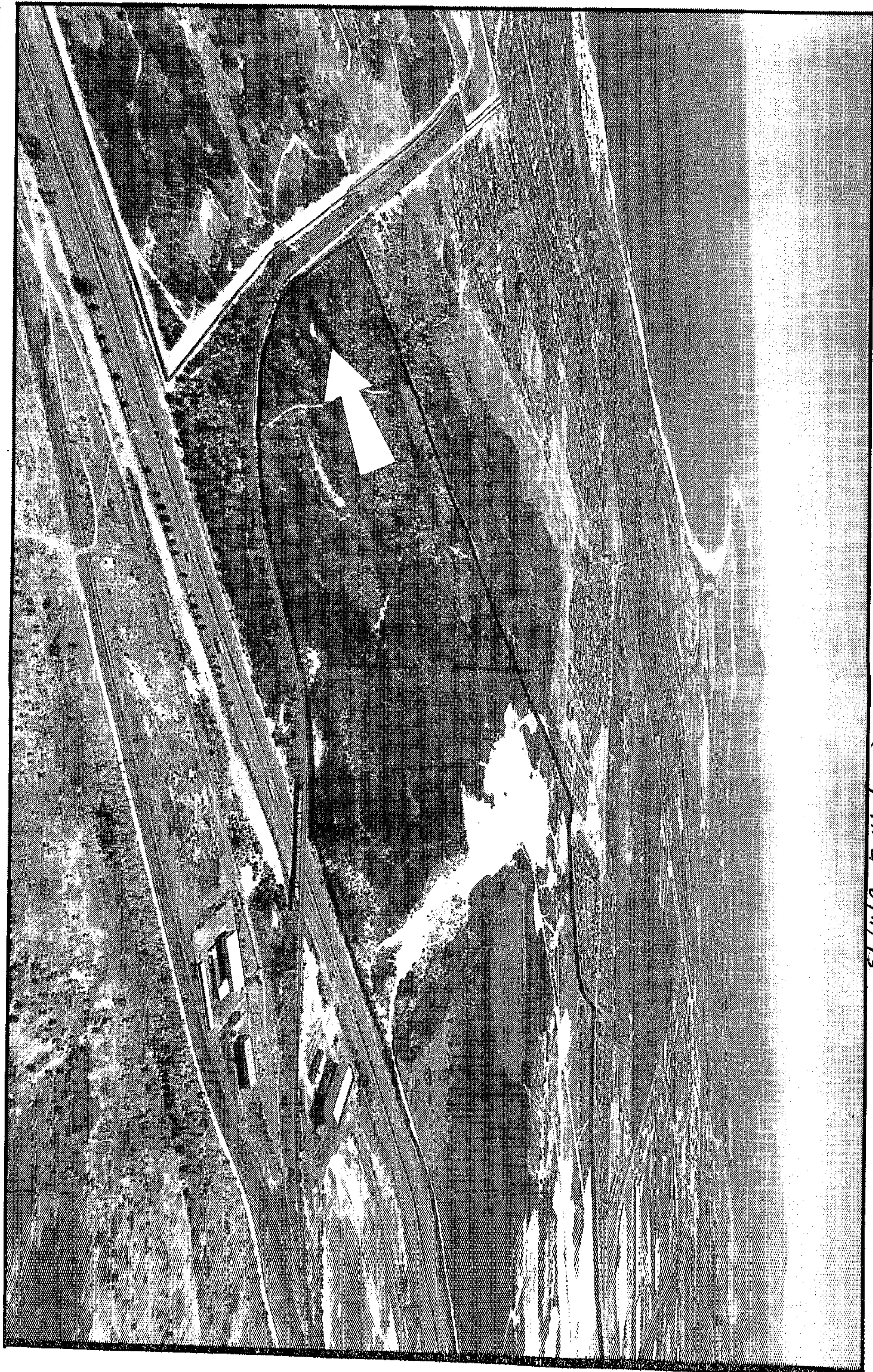
Developers of the proposed huge pleasureland plan to relocate Blouvillei, with its birdlife, to an artificially-created wetland on a corner of the site, to enable them to use the existing vleei site for the development.

The Botanical Society and Cape Nature Conservation have both expressed concern that even though the site is heavily infested with Port Jackson, it may contain rare Sand Plain fynbos and wetland vegetation.

In a letter to Monex managing director Martin Wragge, Lee Jones of the Search and Rescue project, which is funded by the World Wide Fund for Nature, said she believed the botanical assessment was inadequate.

The four-paragraph botanical report, compiled following a visit on the morning of September 29, did not comment on soil type or vegetation type and did not explain the benefits of a spring and autumn vegetation survey, Ms Jones said.

"Since it is quite possible, and in fact likely that one or more of a number of threatened plant species may occur on the site, it is requested that a professional vegetation survey be conducted and a professional report be furnished for perusal by all affected parties," she said. Letters have also been sent to provincial Minister



**PROPOSED MOVE:** The arrow shows the sight where developers plan to relocate the Blouvillei wetland, but botanists believe the impact assessment is inadequate.

of Agriculture, Planning and Tourism Lampie Fick by other interested groups, including the Cape Bird Club, the Tygerberg Bird Club, the Wildlife Society, the Friends of Rietvlei, the SA Ornithological Society,

and a community group called the Buck's Dam Conservation Committee (Buck's Dam is the name by which Blouvillei is known to residents of the nearby area of Sanddrift). In addition, the Buck's

Dam Conservation Committee has been circulating a petition calling for Blouvillei to be conserved as a nature area. Mr Fick's press secretary Armant le Roux said the minister had been get-

ting "a lot of letters", all of which had been passed on to the provincial planning department. Mr Fick is the provincial minister who will make the decision whether to rezone the land from

housing to mixed-use, which would allow the theme park development to proceed. Also in a letter to Mr Fick, Mr Wragge of Monex says he believes it would be "unreasonable to steri-

lise the entire site while deliberating the future of small but important portion of it". Mr Wragge said the Blouvillei area represents only about five percent the total surface area.

# Alarm over high incidence of game poisonings

The misuse of agricultural pesticides is mainly to blame for a growing death toll among wildlife, claims conservationist

By PATRICK WADULA

Star 8/11/95

(56)

**A**larm is growing at the ever-increasing outbreaks of wildlife poisoning in South Africa.

At a Sasol Symposium on Wildlife Rehabilitation, Dr Neil Fourie told conservationists that although the use and misuse of agricultural pesticides were often blamed for the decline in the numbers of certain species, surprisingly little information had been published on confirmed cases of poisoning.

He said history had revealed that 95% of poisonings of wildlife examined by the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI), were deliberately caused.

He told of 49 cases of guinea fowls that had been maliciously poisoned by maize impregnated with pesticides.

Pigeons, doves and waterbirds were also poisoned by this bait put out by poachers.

He stressed the importance of educating farmers on better controls of these highly toxic chemicals.

The 24 confirmed poisonings of vultures and other raptors from more than 40 suspected cases were attributed to the indiscriminate use of strychnine as a pesticide.

"In our experience, acute poisoning of game animals seldom occurs when pesticides are used as specified by the manufacturers," he said.

Between April 1987 and April 1995, 370 suspected incidents of poisoning of wildlife were reported to the institute.

Fourie said 12 different organophosphate pesticides were incriminated in poisoning of wildlife in the last seven years.

Carbofuran and aldicarb were found to be the most important carbamate pesticides which caused 14 incidents of poisoning during the same period.

The institute also diagnosed fairly uncommon poisonings such as arsenical poisoning in eland.

Chronic fluorosis in buffalo near Warmbaths was put down to the high levels of fluoride in the drinking water and copper poisoning of game in the Lowveld.

"Game kept under unnatural circumstances are often prone to unusual poisonings," said Dr Fourie.

He gave examples of incidents on two farms in the eastern Free State, where 11 white rhinos, eight eland, nine zebra and four nyala died from an ionophore antibiotic accidentally added to game cubes.

Data derived from specimens submitted to the OVI laboratory for examination, indicated that the Synthetic Organic Pesticides (SOP) were the commonest cause of poisoning.

Dr Fourie said toxicological examinations were expensive because they required highly qualified personnel and sophisticated instruments to do the analysis.

"However, owing to the current economic situation, unless sources of funding could be found, this service would be difficult to maintain."

NATASHA PINCUS



**Greener pastures ... banking whiz Kevin de Villiers is back punting a clean environment theme as a director of waste disposal company Enviroserv.**

# New Enviroserv boss confident

The Holfontein dumpsite has been constructed to meet international standards, and was carefully selected to be close to markets and far from residential areas,

(56) Star 8/11/95

**By ANITA ALLEN**  
Science Writer

**W**hat's a banking whiz kid doing in the waste disposal business, was the question uppermost in my mind as I drove to the interview with Kevin de Villiers yesterday.

The former Allied Bank chief executive earlier this year won a five-year legal battle in which he played David to Absa Bank's Goliath. In the process he was cleared of some pretty awful charges.

Today he heads up the Arcay Group, which offers merchant banking services and corporate communications. However, it's his recent appointment as a director of Enviroserv, the waste disposal company which runs Holfontein, the only hazardous waste site in Gauteng, that has led to our paths crossing.

The erstwhile giant slayer is smaller, trimmer and much more

boyish than any of the pictures in his files at The Star. He also smiles quite readily which, one is led to believe from the same files, he never did in his professional banker's role. There's also an unexpected underlying shyness, which has to be the most disarming characteristic in any man.

A new era in Enviroserv's history has begun, he says, in which openness and transparency with the media and the public will be the watchwords. He hands over a press release announcing the formation of the company's Environmental Action Committee, which he will chair.

"The EAC will meet weekly and review Enviroserv's procedures on a continuing basis. It will make and carry out recommendations, communicate with the public and ensure that we are beyond reproach on all matters concerning the environment," the statement by Enviroserv chairman Heinz Heuser says.

Enviroserv has been propelled to becoming Gauteng's leading waste disposal company, following the closure of the hazardous dumpsite of its only competitor, Waste-tech. A recent break in the wall of one of its toxic waste disposal cells at Holfontein, near Springs, led to speculation in the media that Enviroserv was having trouble handling the increased volumes of waste.

De Villiers acknowledges that there is increased pressure on the Holfontein site, but is adamant that Enviroserv is well-equipped to meet the challenge. Capacity at the Holfontein site has been increased with the addition of a new cell, which will be operational by the end of this month.

He emphasises that the Holfontein dumpsite has been constructed to meet international standards. It was carefully selected close to markets, far from residential areas, above the water table and with lots of clay

to prevent leaching.

"It's the best built site in southern Africa and uses the most current technology," De Villiers says, adding: "The site can handle all of Gauteng's industrial waste with ease for decades to come."

The EAC has been charged with ensuring that all the procedures followed by Enviroserv for the disposal of waste are kept in line with international standards. As chairman of the EAC, he will ensure that in future Enviroserv will co-operate with all interested and affected parties and will become more sensitive to the concerns of the public.

This applies not only to the Holfontein site, but to all the waste disposal sites the company manages in Soweto, Tembisa and Daveyton.

"The company hopes to be listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in the near future and we welcome the additional scrutiny this will entail," De Villiers says.

# New plan for Saldanha Steel

□ R4,5-billion mill 'virtually certain to go ahead' (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100) (101) (102) (103) (104) (105) (106) (107) (108) (109) (110) (111) (112) (113) (114) (115) (116) (117) (118) (119) (120) (121) (122) (123) (124) (125) (126) (127) (128) (129) (130) (131) (132) (133) (134) (135) (136) (137) (138) (139) (140) (141) (142) (143) (144) (145) (146) (147) (148) (149) (150) (151) (152) (153) (154) (155) (156) (157) (158) (159) (160) (161) (162) (163) (164) (165) (166) (167) (168) (169) (170) (171) (172) (173) (174) (175) (176) (177) (178) (179) (180) (181) (182) (183) (184) (185) (186) (187) (188) (189) (190) (191) (192) (193) (194) (195) (196) (197) (198) (199) (200) (201) (202) (203) (204) (205) (206) (207) (208) (209) (210) (211) (212) (213) (214) (215) (216) (217) (218) (219) (220) (221) (222) (223) (224) (225) (226) (227) (228) (229) (230) (231) (232) (233) (234) (235) (236) (237) (238) (239) (240) (241) (242) (243) (244) (245) (246) (247) (248) (249) (250) (251) (252) (253) (254) (255) (256) (257) (258) (259) (260) (261) (262) (263) (264) (265) (266) (267) (268) (269) (270) (271) (272) (273) (274) (275) (276) (277) (278) (279) (280) (281) (282) (283) (284) (285) (286) (287) (288) (289) (290) (291) (292) (293) (294) (295) (296) (297) (298) (299) (300) (301) (302) (303) (304) (305) (306) (307) (308) (309) (310) (311) (312) (313) (314) (315) (316) (317) (318) (319) (320) (321) (322) (323) (324) (325) (326) (327) (328) (329) (330) (331) (332) (333) (334) (335) (336) (337) (338) (339) (340) (341) (342) (343) (344) (345) (346) (347) (348) (349) (350) (351) (352) (353) (354) (355) (356) (357) (358) (359) (360) (361) (362) (363) (364) (365) (366) (367) (368) (369) (370) (371) (372) (373) (374) (375) (376) (377) (378) (379) (380) (381) (382) (383) (384) (385) (386) (387) (388) (389) (390) (391) (392) (393) (394) (395) (396) (397) (398) (399) (400) (401) (402) (403) (404) (405) (406) (407) (408) (409) (410) (411) (412) (413) (414) (415) (416) (417) (418) (419) (420) (421) (422) (423) (424) (425) (426) (427) (428) (429) (430) (431) (432) (433) (434) (435) (436) (437) (438) (439) (440) (441) (442) (443) (444) (445) (446) (447) (448) (449) (450) (451) (452) (453) (454) (455) (456) (457) (458) (459) (460) (461) (462) (463) (464) (465) (466) (467) (468) (469) (470) (471) (472) (473) (474) (475) (476) (477) (478) (479) (480) (481) (482) (483) (484) (485) (486) (487) (488) (489) (490) (491) (492) (493) (494) (495) (496) (497) (498) (499) (500) (501) (502) (503) (504) (505) (506) (507) (508) (509) (510) (511) (512) (513) (514) (515) (516) (517) (518) (519) (520) (521) (522) (523) (524) (525) (526) (527) (528) (529) (530) (531) (532) (533) (534) (535) (536) (537) (538) (539) (540) (541) (542) (543) (544) (545) (546) (547) (548) (549) (550) (551) (552) (553) (554) (555) (556) (557) (558) (559) (560) (561) (562) (563) (564) (565) (566) (567) (568) (569) (570) (571) (572) (573) (574) (575) (576) (577) (578) (579) (580) (581) (582) (583) (584) (585) (586) (587) (588) (589) (590) (591) (592) (593) (594) (595) (596) (597) (598) (599) (600) (601) (602) (603) (604) (605) (606) (607) (608) (609) (610) (611) (612) (613) (614) (615) (616) (617) (618) (619) (620) (621) (622) (623) (624) (625) (626) (627) (628) (629) (630) (631) (632) (633) (634) (635) (636) (637) (638) (639) (640) (641) (642) (643) (644) (645) (646) (647) (648) (649) (650) (651) (652) (653) (654) (655) (656) (657) (658) (659) (660) (661) (662) (663) (664) (665) (666) (667) (668) (669) (670) (671) (672) (673) (674) (675) (676) (677) (678) (679) (680) (681) (682) (683) (684) (685) (686) (687) (688) (689) (690) (691) (692) (693) (694) (695) (696) (697) (698) (699) (700) (701) (702) (703) (704) (705) (706) (707) (708) (709) (710) (711) (712) (713) (714) (715) (716) (717) (718) (719) (720) (721) (722) (723) (724) (725) (726) (727) (728) (729) (730) (731) (732) (733) (734) (735) (736) (737) (738) (739) (740) (741) (742) (743) (744) (745) (746) (747) (748) (749) (750) (751) (752) (753) (754) (755) (756) (757) (758) (759) (760) (761) (762) (763) (764) (765) (766) (767) (768) (769) (770) (771) (772) (773) (774) (775) (776) (777) (778) (779) (780) (781) (782) (783) (784) (785) (786) (787) (788) (789) (790) (791) (792) (793) (794) (795) (796) (797) (798) (799) (800) (801) (802) (803) (804) (805) (806) (807) (808) (809) (810) (811) (812) (813) (814) (815) (816) (817) (818) (819) (820) (821) (822) (823) (824) (825) (826) (827) (828) (829) (830) (831) (832) (833) (834) (835) (836) (837) (838) (839) (840) (841) (842) (843) (844) (845) (846) (847) (848) (849) (850) (851) (852) (853) (854) (855) (856) (857) (858) (859) (860) (861) (862) (863) (864) (865) (866) (867) (868) (869) (870) (871) (872) (873) (874) (875) (876) (877) (878) (879) (880) (881) (882) (883) (884) (885) (886) (887) (888) (889) (890) (891) (892) (893) (894) (895) (896) (897) (898) (899) (900) (901) (902) (903) (904) (905) (906) (907) (908) (909) (910) (911) (912) (913) (914) (915) (916) (917) (918) (919) (920) (921) (922) (923) (924) (925) (926) (927) (928) (929) (930) (931) (932) (933) (934) (935) (936) (937) (938) (939) (940) (941) (942) (943) (944) (945) (946) (947) (948) (949) (950) (951) (952) (953) (954) (955) (956) (957) (958) (959) (960) (961) (962) (963) (964) (965) (966) (967) (968) (969) (970) (971) (972) (973) (974) (975) (976) (977) (978) (979) (980) (981) (982) (983) (984) (985) (986) (987) (988) (989) (990) (991) (992) (993) (994) (995) (996) (997) (998) (999) (1000)

HUGH ROBERTON, Political Editor

SALDANHA Steel is virtually certain to go ahead with its R4,5 billion steel mill at Saldanha, senior industry sources say.

It is understood the provincial cabinet is poised to approve a new compromise plan today which has been scrutinised by members of the Ramsar Convention secretariat, the world's leading wetlands protection agency.

Members of the secretariat have been in the Saldanha area for several days at the invitation of the provincial government to give advice on the project.

The Ramsar Convention, to which South Africa is a signatory, is an international agreement to protect wetlands and a permanent secretariat is maintained in Geneva to monitor compliance.

Industry sources say the new compromise plan was drawn up with "significant input" from the Ramsar officials and is to be presented to the provincial cabinet today.

It is expected to be given unanimous approval and a press conference is scheduled to be held immediately after the cabinet meeting.

Industry sources say the new plan is acceptable to the Industrial Development Corporation and Iscor, who were to have been the principal partners in an earlier plan for a steel mill at Saldanha.

Iskor said it was withdrawing from the earlier scheme because of agitation against it by environmental groups and the high costs of alternative proposals.

Ramsar Convention officials are understood to have been asked to delay their return to Switzerland and to be available for comment when the cabinet's decision is announced.

According to industry sources, the agreement on the huge steel mill includes some of the most stringent environmental controls in the world.

Ramsar Convention advisers are said to have proposed the drastic revision of planning procedures and regulations at Saldanha and "extremely rigorous" controls over the use of water.

The provincial cabinet, it is believed, has also agreed to introduce new legislation that would impose huge penalties on Saldanha Steel for any breaches of the tightened regulations.



## Saldanha steel mill plans back on track

(56) ~~12/11/95~~  
Edward West

BD 9/11/95

CAPE TOWN — The R4,7bn steel mill mooted for Saldanha Bay appeared to be back on track yesterday after Western Cape's provincial executive gave the green light for a compromise plan to move the plant.

Provincial agriculture, planning and tourism MEC Lampie Fick said the project could go ahead 2km inland from the site proposed previously, with a string of environmental conditions attached.

The move was welcomed by Saldanha Steel's main remaining shareholder, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which said the new site was viable.

The project was derailed in September after the IDC's Saldanha partner, Iscor, pulled out, citing delays stemming from an environmental inquiry set up by Environment Affairs and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers.

The Steyn board of inquiry later ruled that an investigation be launch-

Continued on Page 2

## Saldanha

(56) ~~12/11/95~~  
Continued from Page 1

BD 9/11/95  
ed into moving it 10km inland.

Fick said the new site did not circumvent the board's findings. Had the Steyn findings been forced through, the delay would have killed the project. The IDC had needed a decision by the end of November on whether to go ahead with the project.

De Villiers supported the provincial government's decision, Fick said.

Iscor refused to comment yesterday, but Saldanha Steel CE Bernard Smith said the IDC and Iscor were negotiating to bring Iscor back into the fold and he was confident of a solution.

Fick said the decision followed negotiations with the IDC, the World-wide Fund for Nature, the Habitat Council, the Parks Board, Ramsar Convention representatives and the environment affairs department.

Conditions attached to the approval included ensuring that the plant was at least 50% air-cooled, given water shortages in the region.

The Western Cape government would also ask central government to consider a tax concession for industrial development using sea water as an alternative, he said.

An environmental monitoring committee would also be established before construction started, and any expansion of the mill would be subject to provincial cabinet approval.

---

## MANAGEMENT

---

### Safety group sets its sights on environment

~~2~~ (56) BD 9/10/95  
THE National Occupational Safety Association, which developed a widely used safety and health programme, has extended the scope of its system to include the field of industrial environmental management.

The move will enable SA firms using the system to identify business opportunities flowing from effective environmental management, marketing GM Roland van Gogh says. These opportunities included a reduction in waste and the possibility of enter-

ing export markets in environmentally conscious industrialised countries.

"With new environmental legislation just around the corner it is important for business to stop viewing environmental regulation as an impediment to effective business activity. With a proper environmental management system, it will soon become obvious that there can be many beneficial spin-offs from operating in an environmentally friendly manner," Van Gogh says.

The system would encompass the setting of environmental targets, training and auditing.

It would also put firms on the road to meeting requirements of the ISO 14 001 system, which sets out requirements for environmental management systems.

---

**Thirsty trees to go** (56)

AP 9/11/95  
EXOTIC eucalyptus, pine and black wattle trees would be chopped down to encourage greater water flow in drought areas, African Eye News Service reported yesterday.

The decision by Sappi to clear non-indigenous trees — they can each consume up to 200L of water a day — was taken after increasing criticism of the forestry industry in drought-stricken regions.

# Steel mill plant gets go-ahead

*Massive boost in jobs and investment for Saldanha*

APPROVAL of the rezoning application for the controversial Saldanha Steel project on an alternative site four kilometres from the Langebaan lagoon clears the way for multi-million rand investments, jobs and development that will boost the West Coast communities and the province as a whole. Frantic efforts to find a compromise appear to have paid off.

**Political Correspondent MICHAEL MORRIS reports.**

WHEN Iscor announced its withdrawal from the R4,5 billion steel project earlier this year, some environmentalists regarded it as a victory, but the West Coast community was in despair.

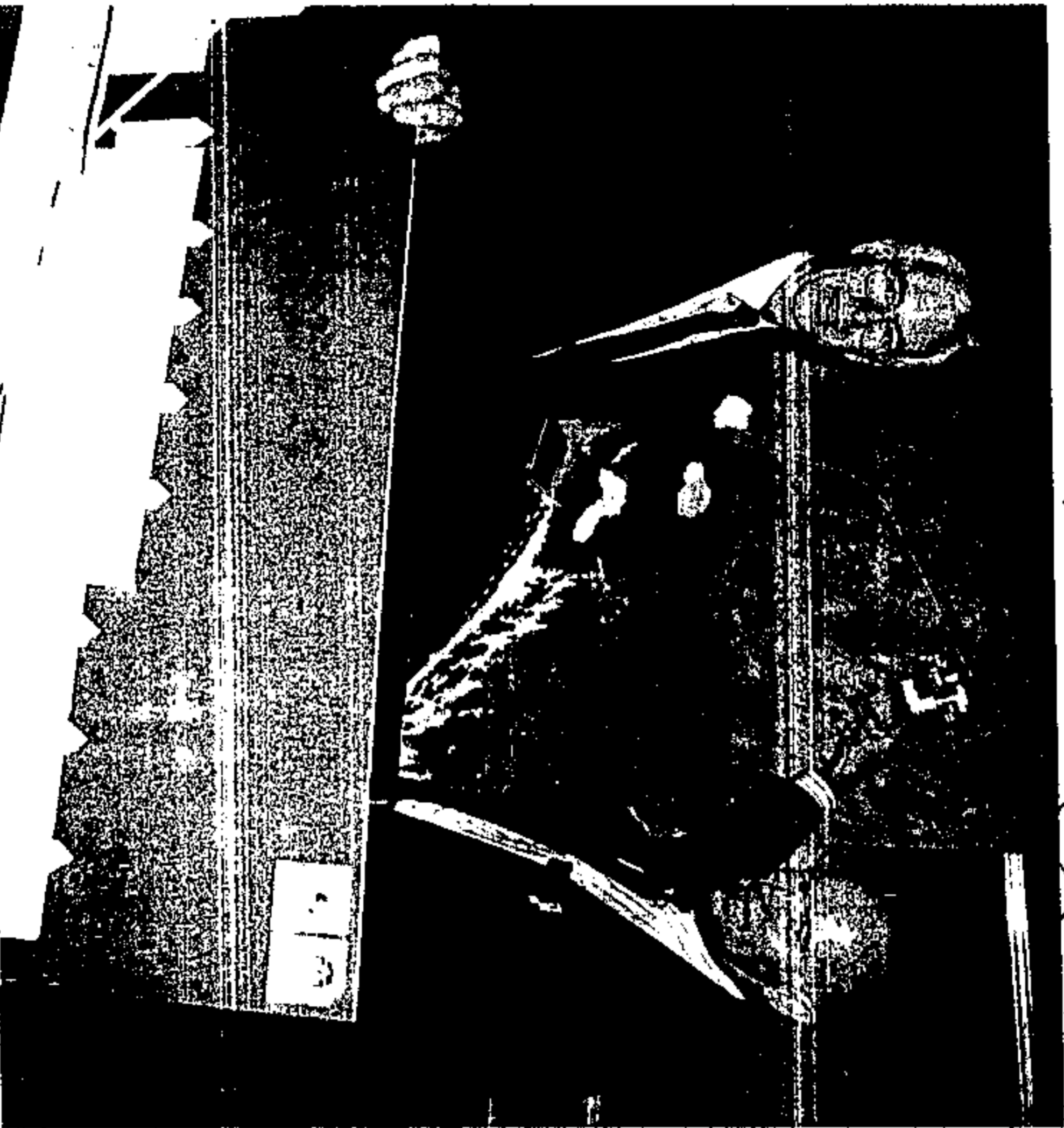
So was the provincial government.

Planning Minister Lampie Fick feared at the time that the loss of business confidence in the province would have devastating ramifications.

After all, the project is the biggest single private sector investment in the history of the

ARU 9/11/95

(56)



**APPROVED SITE:** Western Cape Minister of Planning Lampie Fick and Ramsar Convention technical advisor Mike Smart flank a relief plan showing the new proposed site for the Saldanha Steel project at Langebaan.

ston, though Saldanha Steel executive Bernard Smith said yesterday he was confident they were "in" on the project.

And the Department of Water Affairs has still to approve Saldanha Steel's permit — and much rests on the department following the provincial government's advice that the project use air cooling as far as possible to avoid exploiting ecologically vital water sources in the area.

But all concerned are confident the compromise will hold.

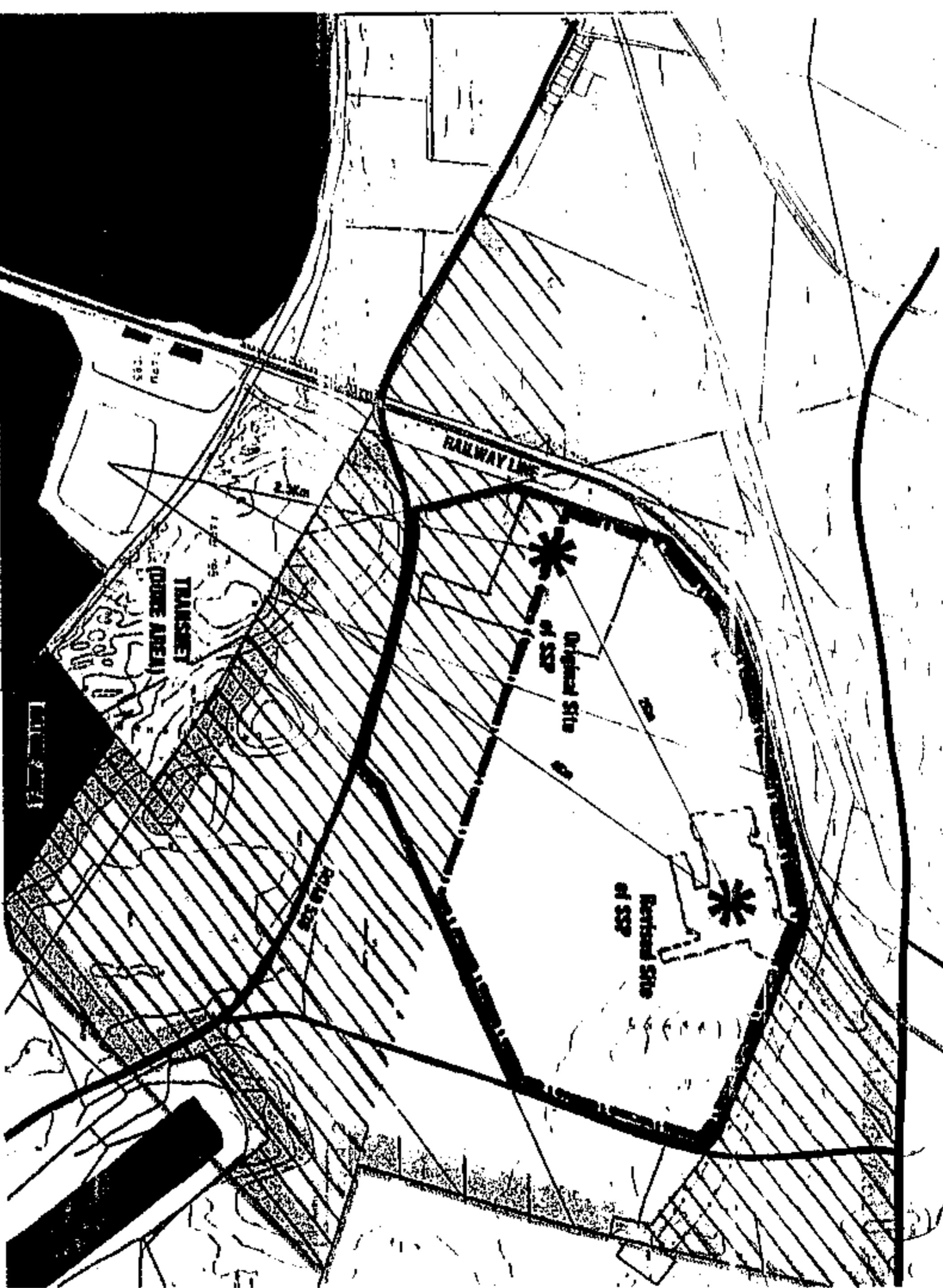
draft environmental management plan for approval by the Western Cape cabinet.

● The approval is not considered a precedent for extending the general cargo quay at the port or any related secondary industries.

● Any expansion of the steel mill must have provincial cabinet approval.

would be subjected to "regular environmental audit and monitoring" by the environmental monitoring committee.

Mr Fick said that in view of the shortage of water within the region and the potential demand for it by future developments, the regional government would suggest that tax concessions be considered for future industrial developments, using sea water as an alternative.



**NEW SITE:** This shows the original site of the steel plant, and the new proposed site, two kilometres further inland. The red lines indicate the area of the approved rezoning for the plant, while the thin purple line encloses the area covered by the original rezoning application. The area within the broad lilac bands was originally proposed for heavy industry in the regional structure plan, but it has been recommended that the areas cross-hatched with green lines exclude heavy industry.

al plant in a low rainfall area and that it could effect the water system of the whole area. These points make a very big difference in our assessment.

Mr Smith said Saldanha Steel would use air cooling throughout if necessary — or else a combination of air cooling, plus water from a salt water aquifer — at a capital cost of about R57 million, plus running costs.

Mr Fick said there had been a pressing need for a compromise because Iscor had indicated it needed an answer by the end of November before deciding whether to look elsewhere in the world for a site.

World Wildlife SA specialist consultant Allan Heydorn, said of the new proposed site: "We are satisfied that the best possible solution and compromise has been found."

**JUST RAGED!**

# Siemens' latest,

Picture: ROY WIGLEY, The Argus

a compromise appear to have paid off.

Political  
Correspondent  
**MICHAEL MORRIS**  
reports.

**W**HEN Iscor announced its withdrawal from the R4,5 billion steel project earlier this year, some environmentalists regarded it as a victory, but the West Coast community was in despair.

So was the provincial government.

Planning Minister Lampie Fick feared at the time that the loss of business confidence in the province would have devastating ramifications.

After all, the project is the biggest single private sector investment in the history of the Western Cape.

But intense negotiations between all the key players — Iscor, the Industrial Development Corporation, Saldanha Steel, the World Wildlife Fund, government officials and representatives of the Ramsar (international wetlands) Convention secretariat — achieved common cause on a new site, just two kilometres from the original site and four from the shore of the lagoon.

Scores of details have yet to be tied up.

Iscor and the IDC have to formally declare their inclu-

**APPROVED SITE:** Western Cape Minister of Planning Lampie Fick and Ramsar Convention technical advisor Mike Smart flank a relief plan showing the new proposed site for the Saldanha Steel project at Langebaan.

sion, though Saldanha Steel executive Bernard Smith said yesterday he was confident they were "in" on the project.

And the Department of Water Affairs has still to approve Saldanha Steel's permit — and much rests on the department following the provincial government's advice that the project use air cooling as far as possible to avoid exploiting ecologically vital water sources in the area.

But all concerned are confident the compromise will hold.

National Environment Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers — who holds responsibility for the ultimate approval of the project — has also welcomed the compromise deal.

At the heart of the Western Cape cabinet's approval of the rezoning yesterday is a list of tough conditions that must be followed.

Among the key conditions are that;

- An environmental monitoring committee be established and empowered before construction starts;

- Saldanha Steel draws up a

draft environmental management plan for approval by the Western Cape cabinet;

- The approval is not considered a precedent for extending the general cargo quay at the port or any related secondary industries;

- Any expansion of the steel mill must have provincial cabinet approval;

- No hazardous waste materials containing high concentrations of heavy metal elements may be stored or disposed of on the site, but must be dumped at an appropriate, licensed site inland; and

- The visual impact of the structure must be "softened by design".

The provincial government has also undertaken to draw up new legislation to provide for "substantial penalties" for contraventions of development conditions, and a new structure plan for the area to guide later development and protect the environment.

Mr Fick announced he would "initiate a total environmental and tourism" development plan. All future development

would be subjected to "regular environmental audit and monitoring" by the environmental monitoring committee.

Water usage is a key concern.

Mr Fick said that in view of the shortage of water within the region and the potential demand for it by future developments, the regional government would suggest that tax concessions be considered for future industrial developments, using sea water as an alternative.

He said it had not been easy balancing the requirements of industrial development with the protection of the environment.

The cabinet had found it difficult to "please all stakeholders", but believed it had achieved a "responsible arrangement".

The development would undoubtedly be a "tremendous economic stimulus with far-reaching benefits" to the province.

Settling the water issue was crucial, said Environment and Finance Minister Kobus Meiring, not least because the Saldanha Steel project would naturally attract other developments.

Help was provided by Ramsar officials Mike Smart, a senior policy advisor and Tom Kabii, technical officer for Africa.

The Ramsar Convention, to which South Africa is a signatory, is an international agreement to protect wetlands and a permanent secretariat is maintained in Geneva.

Mr Smart said Ramsar officials were not empowered to enforce any terms of the convention, but could highlight issues and remind signatories of their obligations.

There were three main reasons why Ramsar was happier with the compromise proposal.

Mr Smart said: "Firstly, the fact that the site is higher means the problem of smoke emissions is reduced. Secondly, the proposal for green corridors on each side of the plant means there is less likely to be pollution into the wetland area. And thirdly, the question of using air cooling instead of water cooling systems is very important. Our chief concern was that this was a major industri-



**SALDANHA EXECUTIVE:** Saldanha Steel executive Bernard Smith at the conference at which approval of an alternative site for the controversial plant was announced.

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

# Debate over St Lucia to resume at ANC party level and in new cabinet

The debate over the future of Lake St Lucia has resumed with two simultaneous initiatives: a decision to form a cabinet subcommittee to decide on all outstanding issues relating to St Lucia and an initiative by ANC parliamentarians to formulate the party's official policy on the issue.

At a meeting of the cabinet committee on economic affairs on October 25, it was decided that the six-

man cabinet subcommittee should consist of the Minister of Environment Affairs and Tourism acting as convenor, and the ministers of Water Affairs and Forestry; Mineral and Energy Affairs; Land Affairs; Housing; and Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

The decision of the cabinet economic committee has yet to be officially announced, but has been con-

firmed to The Star by two sources.

Distinct from this government process, the ANC policy formulation exercise is being conducted by the Land and Agricultural Policy Centre. It involves a complete re-assessment of land-use options, including mining, on the shores of Lake St Lucia and its surroundings.

The ANC policy process culminated in a two-day workshop at the

offices of the Natal Parks Board in the town of St Lucia, which ended yesterday. It was attended by representatives of the ANC, Richards Bay Minerals, the Natal Parks Board, KwaZulu Natal provincial government and rural communities.

Opening the workshop, KwaZulu Natal economics and tourism MEC Jacob Zuma, who is also the ANC's national chairman, said min-

ing the eastern shores of the St Lucia estuary was an option to generate funds needed to provide basic needs in the area.

Zuma said he had started a new planning process for the area that would end within six months.

After this, key projects must begin. A team to work with, and develop partnerships with all sectors of the Zululand community, will be ap-

pointed within this time frame.

Zuma said KwaZulu Natal needed to spend R20-billion in the next 25 years to remove backlogs in basic needs and all possible options for the development of the Zululand region had to be looked at.

"We will make a critical mistake if we think we only have polarised options to consider for the future of this region. Neither mining nor

tourism alone will be able to effectively meet the needs of communities in this region," Zuma said.

Poverty alleviation, economic growth and the future development of Zululand could be achieved only through a comprehensive and integrated development strategy, he said, and the war against poverty could not be won unless all available instruments were used.



Whatever the outcome of the ANC policy formulation process, the final decisions on St Lucia lie with the Cabinet. In that body, the anti-mining lobby has some strong allies.

Minister of Water Affairs Kader Asmal has made no secret of his anti-mining stance, which he again repeated to The Star this week.

A source close to Minister of Land Affairs Derek Hanekom said yesterday Hanekom was also not in favour of mining and would fight against it among the ANC and in the Cabinet.

subcommittee  
9/11/95

Oil warning by

# Health Minister

56 Star 9/11/95

Cape Town - Much of the cooking oil used at fast-food outlets, corner stores and restaurants is "unacceptable for human consumption, or even poisonous", research shows.

Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma said the problem was "serious and widespread" and warned that outlets would be closely monitored under new, tougher health regulations aimed at curbing the risk of serious diseases caused by eating food cooked in over-used oil.

The ministry said over-used oils could cause a build-up of chemical impurities "which may contribute to hardening of arteries, and lead to liver and kidney damage or even cancer". - Political Staff.

# Engleesh as she was wrote - matric style

OWN CORRESPONDENT  
Pretoria

Matric pupils who sat down to write their English exams yesterday were amazed by poorly typed question papers containing spelling mistakes and omissions.

Principals and invigilators at city schools were shocked at the exam papers for the two English Senior Certificate examinations.

In addition to the spelling mistakes contained in the Higher Grade and Standard Grade language papers, pupils were expected to work from poorly reproduced papers.

A principal at one city school said this was the second time the Gauteng Department of Education

had sent out poor-quality papers. "If the department continually sends us this kind of question paper in poorly spelt English, the standard and quality of education is questionable," the principal said.

He said the department sent the papers to schools wrapped in sealed plastic bags which were not opened prior to the examinations.

Invigilators were instructed to unwrap them in front of the students in the examination hall and spend 10 minutes giving instructions to the students before they wrote the paper, the principal said.

He said invigilators who opened yesterday's exam papers found a sheet of paper listing all the mistakes in the English Second-Language

Higher Grade paper. A complete sentence was missing from the question paper and invigilators were asked either to read the sentence to students or to chalk it on a blackboard where pupils could read it.

There were errors such as "Kruger, Nation Park" instead of "Kruger National Park," "efficiency" instead of "efficiency" and "form" instead of "from".

Students said they would blame the Gauteng Department of Education if they failed the subject.

A spokesman for Pretoria N3 district director Andrew Pienaar, said students would not be penalised if unclear pictures or wrongly spelt words influenced them to answer questions incorrectly.

# Rail services back to normal

27 Star 9/11/95

The 24-hour Metro Rail strike which stranded more than a million commuters yesterday in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal, was called off at midnight and all services were back to normal today.

The wildcat strike by the South African Footplate Staff Association (Safsa) was called to protest against three members facing an internal inquiry into last year's Mariannhill train accident near Durban.

A Metro Rail spokesman said the inquiry was continuing in Durban today. The three men were acquitted on culpable homicide charges on September 19 but Metro is insisting on an internal disciplinary hearing. - Staff Reporters.

Star 9/11/95

# Compromise site for construction of Saldanha steel mill

Star 9/11/95

~~Star~~

~~Star~~

56

By AMITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

The Western Cape government's approval for the construction of a R4,5-billion steel mill at Saldanha Bay on an alternate site to the original proposal, has been welcomed by Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers.

The approval was announced by Western Cape agriculture, planning and tourism MEC Lampe Fick, who indicated that in a compromise plan the project site had been moved 2km east of the site originally requested.

Fick said the new site had been sanctioned by the Ramsar Wetland Secretariat and the World Wildlife Fund of SA. It was also the main recommendation of the board of investment appointed by De Villiers and chaired by Judge Jan Strydom.

"On November 2, the Cabinet decided that every reasonable effort should be made to find a suitable location to ensure that the project continues," De Villiers said yesterday. "This objective has now been achieved. This proves that acceptable reconciliation is possible be-

tween industrial development on the one hand and the conservation of a sensitive ecological system on the other."

De Villiers also expressed his appreciation that Saldanha Steel had agreed to proclaim a green belt between the proposed factory and the sea, and paid tribute to the co-operative spirit among organisations and institutions that had resulted in an acceptable solution.

"The whole debate surrounding the establishment of the Saldanha steel mill was a positive indication

that through wide consultation and by obtaining expert advice, an acceptable compromise can be reached between sustainable development and the conservation of the natural environment," De Villiers said.

The compromise plan has been scrutinised by members of the Ramsar Convention secretariat, the world's leading wetlands protection agency, who visited the Saldanha area to give advice on the project.

The Ramsar Convention, to which South Africa is a signatory, is an international agreement to pro-

tect wetlands, and a permanent secretariat is maintained in Geneva to monitor compliance.

A statement from Fick indicated that the agreement on the huge steel mill has some of the most stringent environmental controls yet applied in the world, including "extremely rigorous" controls over the use of water.

The provincial cabinet, has also agreed to introduce new legislation to impose huge penalties on Saldanha Steel for any breaches of regulations.



# Steel project gets green light

FROM REUTER

Cape Town — The Western Cape government yesterday bypassed a central government inquiry and gave an environmental green light for the stalled R4,7 billion Saldanha Steel project.

Lampie Fick, the Western Cape minister of agriculture, planning and tourism, said the mini steel-mill pro-

ject could go ahead 2km further inland than originally planned and 4km from the Saldanha Bay shoreline.

A list of environmental protection measures would have to be met and Fick would recommend to Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal that the plant be at least 50 percent air-cooled to reduce the burden on scarce water resources.

CT(BR) 9/11/95 (56) (2899)

# Steel plant to go ahead

ET 9/11/95 (51) ~~1234~~

MELANIE GOSLING

THE controversial R4,7-billion Saldanha Steel project has been given the green light provided it moves 2km further inland — a move which has been met with shock by environmental groups and "disappointment" by the National Parks Board.

And Iscor now looks set to come back into the project.

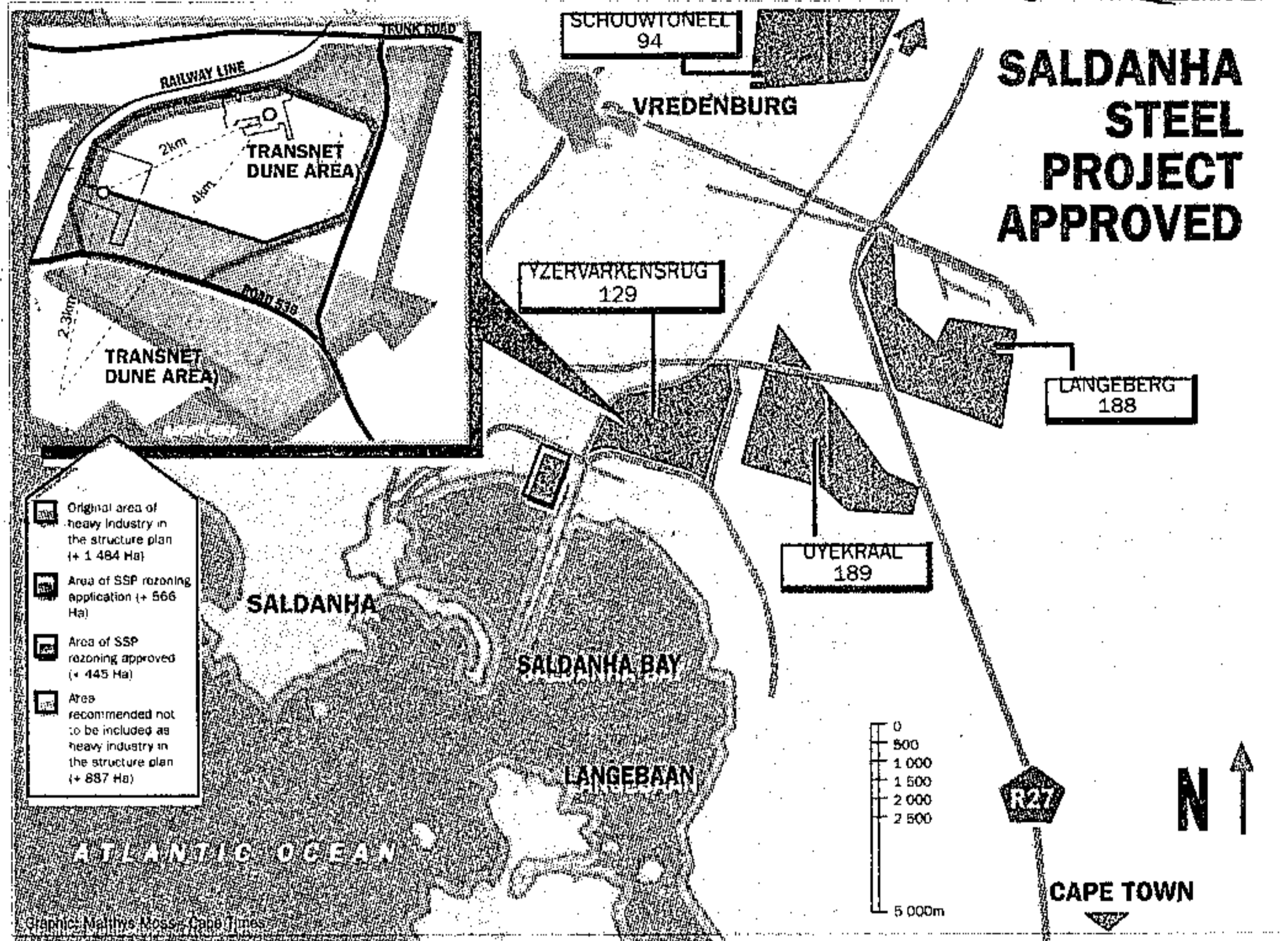
The Steyn Board of Inquiry recommended that the steel plant be moved 10km inland to the Langeberg site, or that other inland sites be considered.

Western Cape Minister of Agriculture Planning and Tourism Mr Lampie Fick announced yesterday that the provincial cabinet had approved the rezoning from agriculture to heavy industry of 445ha of the 566ha Yzervarkensrug site — the original area proposed by Saldanha Steel for the project.

However, the steel mill would have to move a further 2km inland within the site, he said, making the steel mill 4km from the shore of Saldanha Bay.

The rezoning would mean the creation of a green belt of about 2km between the shore and the industrial area.

Mr Fick said other inland sites had not been considered as recommended by the Steyn



Inquiry because this would have meant "further delays and increased costs and the project would have been lost".

After Iscor had pulled out of the project in September because of delays over rezoning permits, the Western Cape cabinet had "unanimously decided to make every effort to revive and retain the proposed devel-

opment".

Chairman Mr Hansie Smith said last night: "I'm absolutely delighted that a decision has been taken. For the first time now we know where we can build a steel plant.

"We've been in discussions with the Independent Development Trust and I'm confident we'll be able to put something

on the table before the end of November."

The approval was subject to several conditions, which include:

- An environmental monitoring committee to be established before construction starts;

- A draft environmental

● Continued on Page 3

# Saldanha

56 (124)

● Front Page 1

CT 9/11/95

management plan to be drawn up by Saldanha Steel for approval by the province;

- Any further expansion of the steel mill will require provincial approval;

- No hazardous waste to be stored or dumped on site;

- The visual impact to be softened by design;

- Approval of the application does not bind any authority to approval of the proposed extension of the cargo quay in Saldanha nor any related secondary industries.

Mr Fick said he had recommended to the Department of Water Affairs that they give preference to air cooling when they considered water applications for the plant.

He had also initiated a "total environmental and tourism development plan" for the Saldanha-Langebaan-Vredenburg area, and said the existing structure plan for this region was being reviewed.

While Environment Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers welcomed the move yesterday, National Parks Board head Dr Robbie Robinson said he was "obviously disappointed" the mill had not been sited further inland.

"What I would have really liked was to see it in Sishen. But the 2km inland is a concession from the developers which is pleasing."

Earthlife Africa spokeswoman Ms Liz McDaid said they were "outraged and disappointed".

"Why did we have the Steyn Inquiry if their recommendations are not taken seriously?" she asked.

Wildlife Society spokeswoman Ms Marlene Laros said they were "discouraged" that the recommendations of the Steyn Inquiry had been ignored and said the money and time spent on the inquiry appeared to have been wasted: "The development-at-all-costs attitude still prevails and environmental concerns are not perceived to be bread-and-butter issues."

World Wide Fund for Nature spokesman Dr Alan Heydorn, however, said his organisation was "satisfied that the best possible solution and compromise" had been found.

Ramsar Convention representative Mr Mike Smarte said they had reservations about putting a large industrial site so close to a Ramsar wetland of international importance, "but this is the best compromise which could be achieved in the real world".

# Iscor holds fire on Saldanha project

Mungo Soggot

20 10/11/95

ISCOR would hold fire on its possible return to the Saldanha Steel project, the group said yesterday, despite the Western Cape provincial government's decision to clear the plant's construction.

The steel producer — which pulled out of the R4,7bn scheme in September — said it would await the outcome of a feasibility study into the project being undertaken by the Industrial Development Corporation.

But an Iscor spokesman said the group was pleased there was agreement on the plant's siting.

(56) ~~(56)~~  
The Western Cape government said on Wednesday that the scheme could go ahead, though on a site 2km from its proposed location and with environmental conditions attached.

The decision came despite the recommendations put forward by the environmental Steyn board of inquiry that another site 10km inland be examined.

Judge Jan Steyn refused yesterday to be drawn on the latest twist in the Saldanha Steel saga.

"We did our job," he said.

"The decision was up to the authorities and they must proceed with it further."

# Local Mac leads the pack

MTG (B/M) 10-16/11/95 (56)

The McDonald's trademark battle flares up as local MacDonald's opens.

**Karen Harverson** reports

**P**IPPING United States McDonald's at the post — the South African version, MacDonald's, opened its doors in central Johannesburg this week, just 24 hours before the grand launch of its American rival in Randburg.

The store, situated on the corner of Commissioner and Kruis, is owned by George Charalambous, a franchisee of 10 Chicken Licken stores, part of the fast food chain owned by George Sombonos.

Charalambous is also owner of Daxprop which, together with Joburgers, owned by Sombonos, applied to have McDonald's trademark expunged from the registrar on the basis of non-use.

The two Georges won the court case against US McDonald's in October this year, but the case has since gone on appeal and will be heard in the Appellate Court next year.

Charalambous is also the owner of MacDonalds in Durban which has been operating since 1978, a key factor in the case against US McDonald's, which had not established good will in the country as it had never operated here.

**S**peaking at the opening, Charalambous' attorney Sean Ryan said that this second MacDonald's store was just part of his client's "orderly" expansion plans. "He is proceeding with his own plans to set up a chain of MacDonald's."

sure what the action will entail.

He defended Charalambous against accusations that the opening was deliberately flying in the face of the US McDonald's planned launch later this week. "We opened first in Durban and this shop has opened first in Johannesburg, so who is following whom?"

He said that even if US McDonald's wins the appeal case, it is unlikely that Charalambous could be sued for infringement as he is entitled to concurrent registration of the trademark because his shop had been trading under the trademarks and was entitled to protection in terms of the 1993 Act which allows use of a well known trademark before September 1991.

Ryan said the 80m<sup>2</sup> store would have opened earlier but was delayed pending the outcome of the court case. He says the site is ideal to attract both black and white sectors of the population, "unlike US McDonald's which is setting up in a white suburb with a drive-through restaurant which caters for white people."

Ryan said McDonald's has intimated that court action will be taken against Charalambous as a result of the store opening but says he is not



**Burger business: Spot the real Big Mac — it's MacDonald's not McDonald's. MacDonald's opened its doors to Jo'burgers just hours before US McDonald's launched its first franchise in South Africa**

PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH MOTAU

## 'Witchhunt against professor'

(56) FRLG 10/11/95

JOHANNESBURG. — University elitists are conducting a witchhunt against the University of the Witwatersrand's deputy vice-chancellor, the Student Representative Council has said.

The council was responding to claims by eight faculty deans and staff members that Malegapuru Makgoba had misrepresented his professional qualifications.

The Wits executive council earlier agreed that an independent tribunal should investigate the allegations.

The SRC said the tribunal would be costly and the money should be spent on more worthwhile pursuits.

"The abuse of university resources cannot be tolerated, particularly where the university has on countless occasions claimed not to have sufficient funds to support the large number of financially deserving students and pay increments to university staff," the SRC said in a statement.

Students should also have a say in the hiring of vice-chancellors and university officials. The council's decision was undermining students' and workers' rights to give their input.

The SRC said the council's claims were not an "innocent discovery" but a "lengthy, well-orchestrated and programmed vendetta" against Professor Makgoba. — Sapa.

**MICHAEL MORRIS**  
Political Correspondent

TOP officials of the internationally respected Ramsar Convention have been accused of "breaching trust" and negating environmentalists' efforts through their part in the controversial Saldanha Steel project go-ahead.

The strongly worded accusation by Andy Gubb of the Western Cape branch of the Wildlife Society comes as a fresh row over the steel mill project escalates.

The Wildlife Society is among environmental groups that have slammed this week's compromise on the

■ The Western Cape branch of the Wildlife Society has slammed top Ramsar officials for their role in negotiating the compromise agreement to allow the Saldanha Steel project to go ahead on a new site.

project, claiming in part that it ignores the findings and recommendations of the Steyn Commission.

This view has been rejected by provincial Planning Minister Lampie Fick.

A key role in the negotiations on the new site was played by top Ramsar Convention officials, policy adviser Mike Smart and technical officer for Africa Tom Kabii.

The Ramsar Convention, to

ARG 11/11/95  
which South Africa is a signatory, is an international agreement to protect wetlands. A permanent secretariat is maintained in Geneva to monitor compliance.

Earlier this week, Mr Smart said of the compromise: "Our feeling is that this is the best compromise site that could be achieved in the real world, where development for people is important, but where maintaining the ecological character of the wetland is also important."

However, Mr Gubb responded: "The Ramsar officials have breached an important trust by negotiating with parties who stand to gain economically or politically, while not contacting any people-based South African NGOs or community-based organisations."

He added that while the South African government was a signatory to the Ramsar Convention, "there is no doubt that the burden of protecting the country's wetlands falls on the environmental NGOs and people on the ground who play a watchdog role".

"In breaching trust, Ramsar officials have all but negated that role.

"The Ramsar officials have seen fit to come into an emergent democracy and negotiate directly with those who have vested interests, without even contacting people or organisations at grass-roots level."

On the rezoning application, Mr Gubb concluded that "Isacor has effectively pointed a gun at decision-makers who were all too ready to surrender".

# Anger Over Saldanha Compromise

(56) (95) (1994)  
Ramsar accused of 'breaching trust'

## Drop in '94 benefit pay-outs helps UIF

A FINANCIAL crisis faced by the Unemployment Insurance Fund in recent years appears to be a thing of the past.

Department of Labour director-general S M Pietyana said although the fund had a large shortfall at the end of 1993, its financial deterioration had been stemmed.

"This mainly came about as a result of a steady decrease in benefit payments during 1994," Mr Pietyana said in reply to a question before parliament's joint standing committee on public accounts.

"Since the beginning of this year the fund's monthly expenditure has broken even with its monthly income and it is expected that this trend will continue for the rest of the financial year."

Deputy director-general Jogie Kastner told the committee the fund's reserves stood at R250 million. The estimated surplus would be R30 million by the end of this financial year. There was strong pressure from the employer side for the state to increase its contribution to the fund. The state contributed R7 million a year. — Sapa.

## Symposium about abuse of cooking oil

BLOEMFONTEIN. — Cooking oil, its frequent re-use and the dangers of continual use will be the subject of a national symposium in Bloemfontein on December 7.

It will be the country's first national symposium focusing on the abuse of cooking oil. Delegates from government, producers of cooking oil and end-users such as fast-food outlets are expected to attend.

There will be several prominent speakers from South Africa and abroad.

A German university has granted DM150 000 (R384 000) for further research of dirty and poisonous cooking oil. Research by Lodewyk Kock and Alfie Botha at the University of the Free State has led to legislation prohibiting the sale of used cooking oil.

Professor Kock said there was a great deal of ignorance among the public and owners of fast-food operations about the use of cooking oil. An elementary testing kit is available. — Sapa.



# Sudwala Caves on the market

(56) ST 12/11/95  
By SHARON HAMMOND

THE Sudwala Caves, one of South Africa's biggest tourist attractions, have been put up for sale.

The sale has ignited heated debate in the quiet Sudwala valley, with residents aghast at rumours that Sol Kerzner may be tempted to add an underground fantasy world to his casino empire.

The Mpumalanga government wants to establish the caves as a world heritage site, but the Mpumalanga Parks Board has yet to decide whether it can afford the R7,5-million price tag.

Specialists have criticised the caves, saying neglect and mismanagement have resulted in their marked deterioration over the past few years.

"The caves are showing signs of usage. Since 1963, one of two walkways has been improved but there's more graffiti and more damage," said Wal Gamble, a spokesman for the Cave Research Organisation of South Africa.

"With hindsight, those who developed the caves didn't do it right."

Every year almost 120 000 people visit the 240 million-year-old caves in the Makelekele mountains in Mpumalanga's Lowveld.

The caves' owner, Phillip Owen, said the caves generated a net profit of R1-million a year.

But large groups of tourists increased the risk of litter, graffiti, and of formations being broken, Mr Gamble said.

The former Transvaal had passed legislation protecting caves and that law was valid unless the Mpumalanga gov-

ernment changed it, he said.

Although damage was inevitable once caves were opened to the public, it could be limited.

Not all the pathways in the Sudwala Caves were cemented and huge amounts of dust generated by tourists were settling on the sensitive stalactites and stalagmites, Mr Gamble said.

Lighting in the caves had to be improved because the existing light and heat created algae and lichen, which were alien to the cave environment.

Mr Owen bought the 100ha property in 1965 for R60 000 and estimated that he spent R4-million upgrading it.

"I'm tired of people," said Mr Owen. "Some say I'm stupid to sell the caves for anything less than R15-million, but I want to concentrate on my game farm at Gravelotte."

A Mpumalanga Parks Board spokesman, Lisa Lombaard, said buying the caves was "high on the agenda".

The parks board had only an interim board at the moment, but once the MEC for the environment had appointed a permanent board, a decision on the caves would be made.

The MEC for the environment, David Mkhwanazi, said the caves had great significance for the Swazi people and other South Africans.

The caves are said to be named after a man called Sudwala, who guarded the entrance when 600 Swazis and their cattle hid from King Mswati between 1811 and 1840.

They are the oldest dolomite caves in the world.

## Call for 'green' council

Bonile Ngqiyaza

BD 13/11/95

(56)

TIME could have been saved and costs curbed if the parties involved in the Saldanha Bay steel mill project had from the outset agreed on the principle of negotiation, Environmental Affairs Deputy Minister Bantu Holomisa said at the weekend.

The proposal to move the project 4km inland was a "reasonably sensible proposition" which interested parties could have used as a basis for discussion. "If all the interested parties had from the beginning taken our advice to negotiate and reach compromises, the Industrial Development Corporation would still be within the time frame they had set and could have avoided any escalation of costs."

It showed more than ever the urgent need to establish — in line with UN recommendations on sustainable development—a presidential council which would co-ordinate any such attempts in future. The council would, through prioritising and co-ordinating environmental issues, ensure that such matters featured high on the agenda of the country, he said.

# Shock Vaal Triangle air pollution

Continuous sampling stations must be set up by local authorities

(56)

Star 13/11/95

BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Air pollution in the Vaal triangle is more than three times the level stipulated by a new ruling in the United Kingdom that allows Londoners, once renowned for breathing pea-soup smog, to enjoy the strictest air pollution laws in the world.

Evidence linking up to 10 000 deaths annually in the UK to heart and respiratory disease caused by tiny particles in the air called particulates resulted in a safety standard of a maximum of 50 micrograms of particulates per cubic metre of air over 24 hours.

In South Africa, this 24-hour standard is 150 micrograms and, according to the results of a recent Mintek study, is exceeded in the Vaal triangle often during the year.

Furthermore, the annual South

African standard of 50 micrograms is almost consistently exceeded during winter in Sasolburg, Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark.

Mintek's study points to coal smoke from domestic coal fires as the single largest source of this particulate pollution, causing a marked deterioration of air quality over winter months when wood and coal are combusted for heating.

While proportions of combusted domestic coal are very small compared with that consumed by power stations or the synthetic fuel industry, the contribution of domestic coal smoke occurring at ground level had the greatest impact on poor urban air quality.

The Mintek study spanned one year, during which time samples of respirable airborne particles were collected over week-long periods at three sampling stations in Vereenig-

ing, Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg.

It was found that Vereeniging had the worst air quality, followed by Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg.

Domestic coal combustion and arc-furnace dust contribute to pollution in Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark while power station fly-ash contributes to pollution in Sasolburg.

The study concluded that domestic coal combustion was the largest contributor to air pollution over the Vaal triangle, followed by soil dust, secondary ammonium sulphate, iron arc-furnace dust and power station fly-ash.

As a result of the data obtained during the study, it is now possible for the first time in South Africa to pinpoint exactly which source type is responsible for the poor air quality in the Vaal triangle, said Johann Engelbrecht of Mintek.

Engelbrecht emphasised that un-

less continuous sampling stations were set up by local authorities, it would not be possible to determine whether air quality improved or deteriorated in the future.

"There is a project now starting up where low-smoke coal and electrification in the townships, and the paving of roads, are being looked at. But we will never know if any improvement has been established if we don't continue measuring air quality all the time," he said.

He said Mintek was encouraging industries and local authorities to retain the sampling stations, and interest from both parties was growing.

Engelbrecht said the new UK standard was exceptionally low. He pointed out that South Africa's annual 50 microgram average and the daily 150 microgram standard were derived from US Environmental Protection Agency levels.

# Drought speeds removal of water-guzzling exotics

ARG 13/11/95

(56)

Dateline: NELSPRUIT

**E**XOTIC eucalyptus, pine and black wattle trees are to be chopped down to encourage greater water flow in drought areas.

The decision to clear exotic trees — which can each consume up to 200 litres of water per day — was taken after increasing criticism of the forestry industry in drought-stricken regions such as the Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces.

The clearing of the trees is expected to bolster water flow in riverine regions by at least 30 percent, Department of Water Affairs official William Labuschagne said.

Sappi forestry company executive Johan van Wyk said the company would clear five river valleys

in the two provinces of alien vegetation at the cost of about R5 million.

“A lot of these rivers are clogged up, not only on our land, but also on adjacent rivers,” said Mr Van Wyk.

“By clearing this vegetation we will have a lot more water flow.”

Part of a riverine clearing programme announced by Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Kader Asmal, Sappi's clearing would affect the upper regions of the Elands and Usutu rivers in Mpumalanga, and the Umvoti, Umgeni and Umkomaas rivers in KwaZulu-Natal.

Mr Van Wyk said the cleared trees would go to communities for firewood so they wouldn't have to chop down indigenous trees.

He added that the programme, expected to last for a year, would employ at least 500 people. — Sapa.

# South Africa takes lead on nuke dumping

Dateline: NEW YORK

(56) AR 13/11/95

**S**OUTH Africa has taken the lead at the United Nations in efforts to stop the improper dumping of nuclear waste, warning of "grave implications for the national security of all states."

A draft resolution sponsored by the republic's UN delegation with the support of the entire African group of states speaks of the risk of "radiological warfare."

The resolution, before the General Assembly's main political committee, would have the world body call on all states to "take appropriate measures" to prevent the unauthorised dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes.

The issue is topical in the light of the submission last weekend to UN inspectors in Baghdad of previously undisclosed data about Iraq's radiological weapons programme.

South Africa's resolution addresses the problem of the movement of nuclear waste across international borders and, specifically, "transboundary movements within Africa."

It welcomes current efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency to prepare a convention on safe management of nuclear wastes. — Independent Foreign Service.

# St Lucia estuary mining

All 'options' to be reassessed

Dateline: MARITZBURG

**M**INING the eastern shores of the St Lucia estuary was an option that could generate funds to provide basic needs in the area, according to KwaZulu-Natal economics and tourism MEC Jacob Zuma.

KwaZulu-Natal needed to spend R20 billion in the next 25 years to remove backlogs in basic needs and all possible options for the development of the Zululand region had to be looked at, he said.

Mr Zuma was opening a seminar on the development of St Lucia, at which strip or dredge dune mining at the lake will be reassessed.

"We will make a critical mistake if we think we only have polarised options to consider. Neither mining nor tourism alone will be able to effectively meet the needs of communities in this region."

Mr Zuma said he had started a new planning process for the area, which would be completed within six months.

"After this, key projects must begin. A

team, to work and develop partnerships with all sectors of the Zululand community, will be appointed within this time frame."

Poverty alleviation, economic growth and the future development of Zululand could be achieved only through a comprehensive and integrated development strategy, he added.

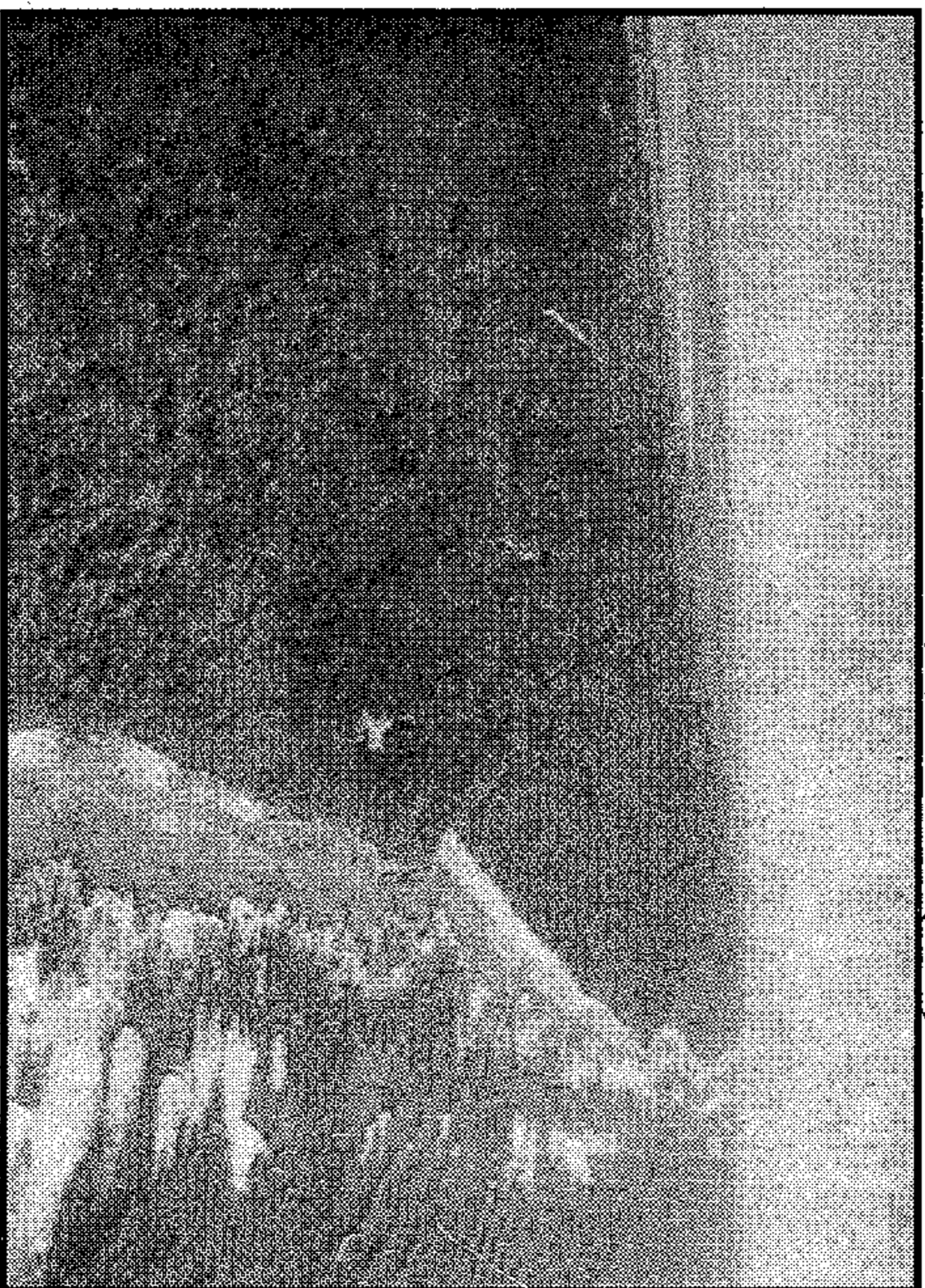
In the Zululand region alone, more than R6 billion a year would be needed every year for the next 20 years.

"Our current rate of public investment is nowhere near the millions we require," Mr Zuma said.

He noted the government did not have the resources needed and these funds would not be available unless massive economic growth were generated.

Pointing to the Dukuduku forest as a classic example of how poverty destroyed precious national assets, Mr Zuma said: "We want to wage and win a war against poverty."

He said the war could not be won unless all available instruments were used and decisions had to be taken, no matter how unpopular they were. — Sapa.



ARL 13/11/95

(56)

□ **MINING** the eastern shores of the St Lucia estuary, pictured on the top left, is being considered as an option to generate funds for the area.

# Apartheid blamed for cave damage

ST(M)19/11/95 (56)

**THE apartheid policy, which enforced separate entrances for different races has been blamed for deterioration of the Cango Caves.**

Different races had to enter Van Zyl's Hall through two separate entrances and the draught from this led to a drying out of that part of the caves, said Professor Johan Grobbelaar.

Prof Grobbelaar, head of the University of the Orange Free State's department of botany and genetics, told Blitsnuus, the campus newspaper, this was one of the problems that experts from the department of geology and the National Museum would address after a tender was awarded to the university by the Municipality of Oudtshoorn.

The tender is for a scientific study of the caves with a view to a management plan after the National Monuments Committee objected to the poor management and deterioration of the caves.

Prof Grobbelaar said the caves still looked good, but they had been damaged. A build-up of carbon dioxide

— from the breath of visitors — had had a negative effect on the stalactites and stalagmites. The continuous lighting of the caves and the growth of algae on formations had caused a green concentration.

Injudicious use of the caves, as was the case when technicians damaged formations to build a stage for a passion play, gave cause for concern, as such damage could not be restored in a lifetime.

Prof Grobbelaar and his team of Professor Valdon Smith and Dr Johan du Preez (botany), Dr Hermann Praekelt (geology) and James Brink (National Museum) start work at the beginning of December. They hope to present a management plan to the municipality by the end of next year.

Prof Grobbelaar said caves would be checked at different times of the year to monitor the effect on summer and winter plant growth.

University students would be involved in the research as the "hands on" exposure would be invaluable experience. He hoped the scientific recommendations would have "teeth" and would be enforceable. — Sapa

# Bid to cut nature reserves red tape

(56) ST 19/11/95

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

THE Western Cape's nature conservation department is vying for greater independence in a bid to loosen itself from red tape and to run reserves profitably.

On Wednesday, the provincial cabinet will receive Cape Nature Conservation's (CNC) proposal for a statutory board, deputy director Niel van Wyk confirmed.

If approved, this will allow the nature conservation authorities to enter joint ventures with the private sector, raise money independently and invest profits in conservation and tourist facilities.

This may, however, lead to conservation and business pursuits being stressed at the expense of environmental management, says the Department of Environment Affairs.

CNC says the Natal Parks Board is a provincial conservation success story.

"It has been operating since 1947 and was generally acknowledged in the old South Africa as the best provincial nature conservation organisation," CNC says.

However, a senior environmental affairs source said law enforcement, impact assessments, pollution control, toxic waste disposal and mine rehabilitation could suffer if provinces were granted greater conservation autonomy.

"These less attractive — but vital aspects — of environmental management may be neglected," he said.

The desire for greater autonomy was, however, understandable if provincial departments wanted to be freed from red tape.

"Treasury prescriptions are ponderous, and the offi-

cial tender system makes it very difficult to run businesses effectively," the source said.

Citing the constitution, CNC says it should be allowed to take over the executive function of the four national parks in the Western Cape, and to manage indigenous forests and inshore marine and fresh water resources.

CNC runs 66 provincial reserves, four wilderness areas, nine marine reserves and more than 600 000ha of mountain catchments.

It is largely responsible for preserving the fynbos biome, the smallest but most species-rich of the world's six plant kingdoms.

Its 1994/95 budget totalled R40 million. In 1993, CNC issued about 35 000 perlemoen permits and another 60 000 for rock lobster.



COMPANIES have started adding environmental information to their financial reports — an indication that they are beginning to take such matters seriously.

This is the conclusion of a recent study on environmental reporting practices by SA listed companies conducted by the University of Pretoria's School of Accounting over two years among 168 companies.

With growing awareness comes the question of how to balance sustained environmental protection with economic growth.

The Saldanha Steel project, St Lucia mining and the proposed waterfront development project at Zoo Lake in Johannesburg are cases in point. While they have enormous economic potential, the green lobby suggests the damage to the environment will not, in the long run, be worth it.

Karin Ireton, assistant director of the Industrial Environmental Forum of Southern Africa, says sustainable development is about marrying environmental protection with sound development.

"We must grow, but in a way that creates wealth on a sustainable basis for all our people, and this means balancing short-term expedience with long-term resource management," she says.

Ken Bromfield, chairman of waste removal company Waste-Tech agrees, adding that an "increasing population and demand for jobs, services and products means that certain sacrifices need to be made."

Peter Adams, media relations officer at Eskom, says sustainable economic growth will not be possible without environmental management.

# A growing touch of green now graces SA's financial reports

(56)  
ST (97) 19/11/95

By THABO KOBOKOANE

"The environment is the basic capital from which growth occurs, and damage to our resources base will have a negative impact on future growth," he says.

John Scotcher, divisional environmental manager at Sappi Forests, says environmental impact assessments help companies make more informed decisions, thereby increasing environmental and financial performance.

Equally important to business is competitiveness. Ms Ireton says good environmental management will improve competitiveness, particularly among companies trying to secure international markets.

Mr Bromfield remarks that environmental impact studies involve additional costs and hence decrease competitiveness in the short term, but should slow degradation in the long term.

"The difficulty is that the prospective venture is revealed to the public and competition prematurely, removing the competitive edge that a company may have had," he says.

Ms Ireton says the one area of environmental management where South Africa lags behind the rest of the world is in effective accounting for environmental costs to companies and to society.

It has been estimated that the impact of environmental damage on gross domestic product is 10%, or R40-billion.

However, says Ms Ireton, companies that identify risks and assess potential damage to the environment can then save costs by taking preventative measures.

Dr Alex Weaver, manager of environmental services at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, says corporate competitiveness depends on companies' markets.

"Many countries are starting to demand some form of environment certification and compliance with, for example, ISO 14000 will improve a company's competitiveness."

Companies are usually required to carry out eco-audits, which measure the ability of an entity to produce goods and services after accounting for environmental costs.

The Pretoria University study says reporting by SA

companies is usually styled in general, narrative terms highlighting their environmental policies and objectives.

"Independent attestation is small but increasing and, although generally very little disclosure is made, it may probably be concluded that environmental awareness is slowly manifesting itself in SA reporting practice," the study says.

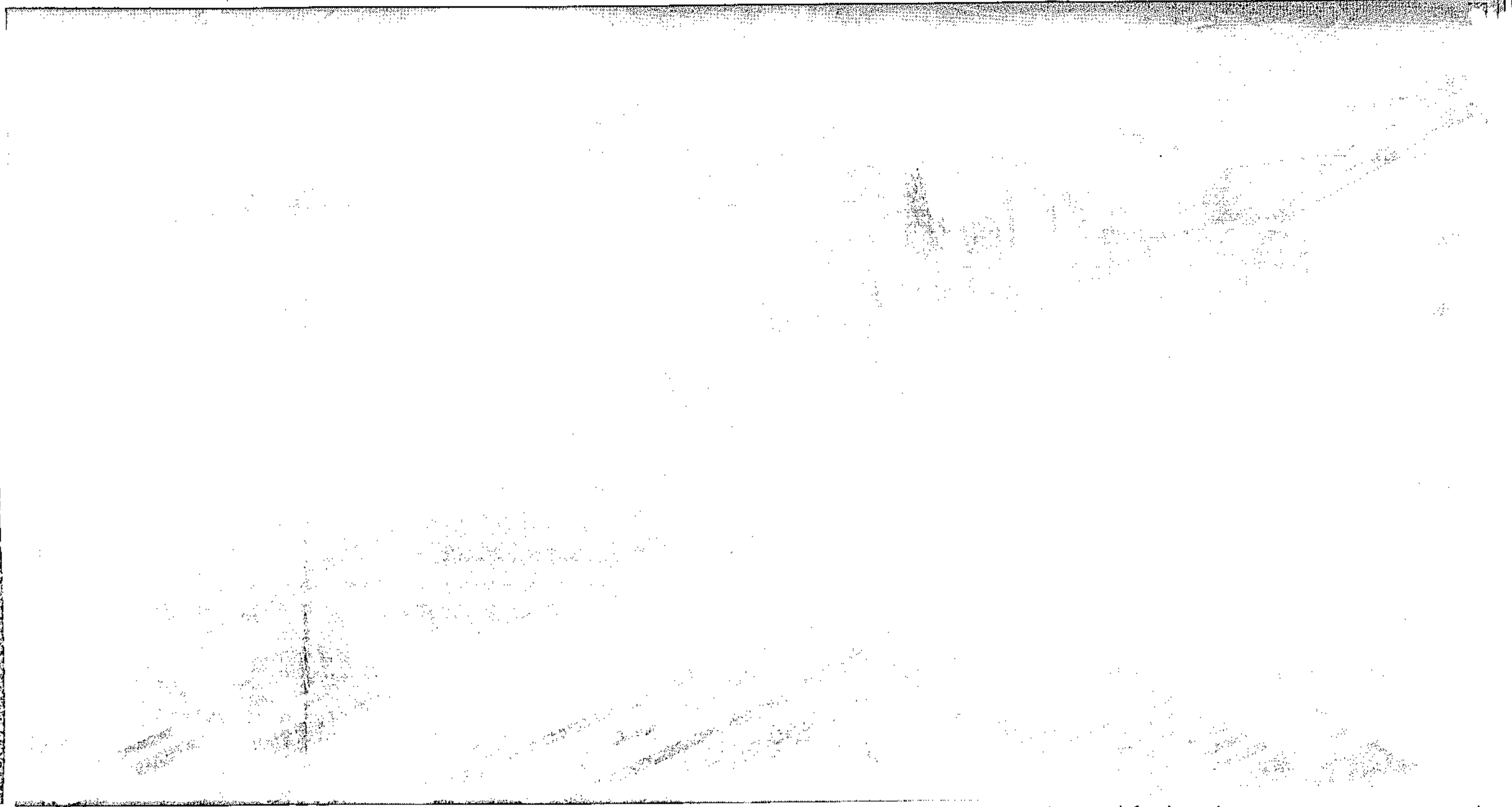
"It is significant to note that more companies are prepared to perform an environmental audit, and to appoint independent auditors to attest to this."

The only legislation in South Africa on environmental impact studies is a requirement in the Minerals Act of 1991, amended in 1992. But how effective can legislation be?

Ms Ireton says it would not change things significantly because many big businesses already conduct environmental studies voluntarily.

"Where it would have an effect is on small- and medium-size businesses which do not yet have experience in this area. We must therefore ensure that whatever legislation gets enacted is practical."

Dan Archer, head of the



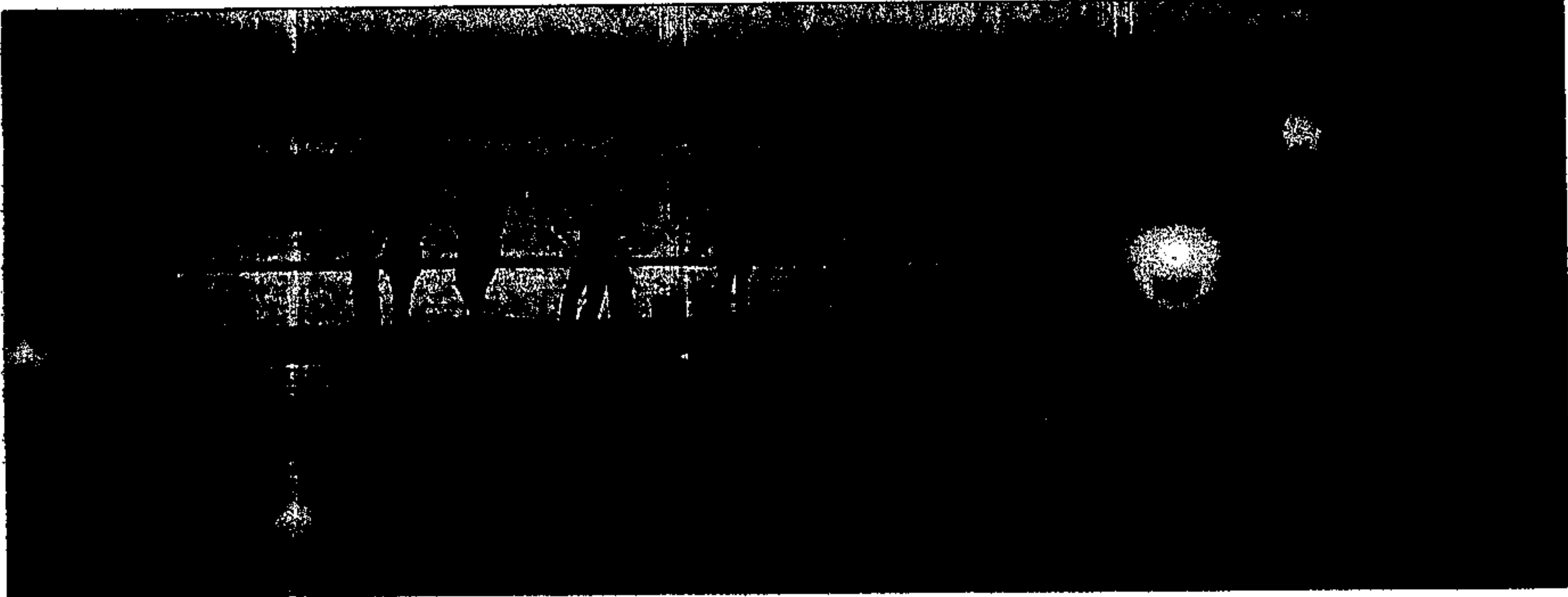
**SMOKE SIGNALS:** Big business is learning the need to balance short-term business expedience with the need for long-term resource management

Institute of Natural Resources at Natal University, suggests a mixture of both legislation and self-regulation.

"There is no point in having legislation without adequate resources to police it," he says. "There are only six air inspectors in South Africa."

Dr. Scotcher says the answer is legislation and market instruments. "Industry needs to plan ahead to meet the demands of legislation.

"Government should increase the application of market instruments to achieve environmental objectives instead of relying on punitive legislation."



HARD AT WORK: Tourism earns more per hectare than any other form of land use, say conservationists

Picture: NATAL PARKS BOARD

ADRIAN Gardiner, owner of South Africa's biggest private conservation wildlife reserve, used to hunt animals. Now he is spearheading one of the country's most ambitious conservation projects.

Over the past five years he has been reintroducing wildlife and flora which have long disappeared from the Eastern Cape, where his Shamwari wildlife reserve on 13 000ha of former farmland is located.

It was opened to tourists three years ago and extended this summer to accommodate a growing number of visitors to the reserve.

White rhino, black rhino, giraffe, zebra, lions and elephants saved from culling have all been brought in along with a large variety of antelope species. Mr Gardiner's total investment stands at R20-million.

This year internally generated revenues will cover operating expenses for the first time but for the project to be self-financing, Mr Gardiner says, it needs

# Conservation game makes business sense

ST 19/11/95

(5b)

Conservation and big business, traditional rivals for precious land, have become partners. Local communities and wildlife are the winners, writes SCHEHERAZADE DANESHKU.

70 beds instead of the current 48. The value of animals has doubled in the past five years to R5-million.

"He'll never get his money back in his lifetime," says one of the rangers. "But then he regards his project as his legacy — his contribution to the future."

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world to still have elephant, rhino, lion, leopard and buffalo and to allow them to be hunted. About 5 000

hunters, most of them from the US, visit South Africa every year and spend an average of R25 000 a trip.

Perhaps the most hard-headed approach to conservation is taken by the Conservation Corporation, which operates four luxury wildlife reserves in South Africa and counts the direct investments arm of bankers Hambros, the Getty family trusts and the AECI pension fund, part of the Anglo-American corporation, among its 40

shareholders.

Its buys up degraded land, usually used for cattle farming or crops, rehabilitates it, restocks it with animals and charges tourists high prices for superb accommodation and wildlife viewing.

For director Howard Geach the economic logic is simple — the gross returns per hectare from wildlife tourism are higher than any other land use. "Very roughly, you can expect returns of R60 to R80 a hectare a year from land

under cattle, R250 from dry land cropping and R700 to R1 000 from tourism," says Mr Geach.

At Phinda, the ConsCorp reserve which best embraces its approach, the company has raised funds for development projects for local communities, including a R650 000 clinic, pre-schooling programmes and water and sanitation projects.

Les Carlisle, Phinda's regional development manager is the first to admit that the main motivation for these projects is not altruism but basic survival. He describes it as a "brutally commercial approach to conservation" which involves "addressing your biggest threat" to ease the hostility of the lo-

cal communities to the conservation authorities.

The approach is fast gaining ground in South Africa. Southern Sun, the country's largest hotel operator, this year entered the wildlife lodge industry with its Sun Game Lodge division; it espouses community involvement as paramount to success.

"If we don't involve the local communities, they will eat the animals and rob the tourists," says Mr Carlisle. "They are starving subsistence farmers. We've taken white-owned cattle farms, filled them with animals, created a lot of employment and we want to integrate those communities with the park." — *Financial Times*.

# Parks board officials told to adapt or die

BD 20/11/95 (56)

Theo Rawana

PHALABORWA — The National Parks Board was undergoing transformation and white officials had either to adapt or to go the way of the dinosaur, new chairman Enos Mabuza said at the weekend.

Mabuza was speaking after unveiling the Elephant statue at the Goldfields Environmental centre at the Letaba Camp, Kruger National Park.

He said old employees who had the experience were sorely needed by the board. Their experience

was invaluable, but they should adapt or go if they resisted change.

"As a private citizen I used to feel I was entering a Volkstaat when using the parks, because I was the only black person. All that has to change now," he said.

He said he was personally opposed to a Northern Province government plan to build a highway through the park into Mozambique, although the new board had not yet discussed the issue.

He said the recently-appointed board had met only twice and had not had time to discuss the major issues facing it.

# 10 000 to move for mine

By Russel Molefe

## Environmental organisations raise objections to plans for mining strip

**M**ORE THAN 10 000 people around the Madimbo Corridor, a unique strip of land which forms the border between the former Venda homeland and Zimbabwe, face removal because of plans to mine the area.

Duo Corporate Developers, owned by Mr Richard Bluett and Pepsi-Cola chairman Mr Khehla Mthembu, was granted a permit by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs to mine the corridor, which has been unexplored for many years.

The company is in partnership with one of Australia's largest diamond mining companies, Moonstrone Diamond Corporation.

Environmental organisations, including the National Parks Board (NPB), have raised objections to the planned mining of the land on environmental grounds. The company also has no plans to resettle the people living on the corridor.

The permit has so far been temporarily revoked after the NPB indicated it intended to appeal against the granting of the permit to the company.

The NPB also contended that the company did not submit an environmental rehabilitation programme to the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs as required by law. Spokesman for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mrs Elise

Botha told *Sowetan* that the NPB had been given until November 29 to submit documents detailing why the company should not be granted the rights for mining in the corridor.

Botha said the department's director-general would make a ruling as soon as the NPB submitted its arguments.

Bluett and Mthembu could not be reached for comment yesterday as they were said to be "out of town until next week". Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Mr Dawie de Villiers, has objected to the mining of the area.

(56) Sowetan 20/11/95

# Steel mill part of equation

(56) (56) ~~56~~  
BY MAGGIE ROWLEY

CT (BR) 22/11/95

Cape Town — The Saldanha Steel mill has already been factored into residential property values on the Cape's West Coast and no further major effect is expected immediately, says Errol Finkelstein, chief executive of Seeff Holdings.

He says Saldanha Steel owns land suitable for residential development and has budgeted to develop employee housing.

"There is so much residential property available in the Saldanha-Vredenberg corridor that the anticipated demand for new homes will easily be absorbed by sellers who have been holding on to their stands for a long time, on the one hand, and the subsidised housing planned by Saldanha Steel on the other."

Finkelstein said the mill would

affect the property market after construction had been completed and the peripheral businesses and supply industries created to serve the mill had been established.

"This is only likely to happen two to three years down the line."

"The ripple effect of the mill ... on the overall infrastructure of the area, coupled with the impact of Namakwa Sands and the proposed increase in oil importation activity, will all eventually contribute to alleviating the current depressed state of the area."

Finkelstein warned against wild speculation, pointing out that there were "still literally thousands of unsold erven" between Langebaan and Laaiplek.

He expected the commercial district of Vredenburg to be influenced first by the construction of the mill.

## Mpumalanga parks arm their rangers (56)

23/1/92

BADPLAAS — Field rangers in Mpumalanga game reserves no longer had to face the onslaught of organised poaching with only knobkerries. They were being better equipped, the parks board said this week.

Following closely on the heels of the Kruger National Park and Natal Parks Board, the board was providing rangers with paramilitary training and semiautomatic firearms to ward off the ever-increasing threat of lucrative game poaching, African Eye News Service reported.

“Unless game reserve owners take deci-

sive measures to counter the threat of sophisticated game poaching syndicates, conservationists stand a good chance of losing the battle,” Billy Swanepoel, a senior warden at a private game reserve, said at the passing-out parade of 17 new field rangers.

Mpumalanga parks training manager Clive Poultney said more work was needed to improve security on game reserves previously managed by the Transvaal Provincial Administration.

Subsistence poaching in the region, however, appeared to be on the decline. — Sapa.

# 'World-class' eco report a winner for Umgeni Water

(56) Star 23/11/95

By ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

This year's award for the best environmental report by a South African company has been given to Umgeni Water, the parastatal organisation responsible for the provision and treatment of water to the greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg metropolitan areas.

The award, a floating trophy from the World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa (WWF), was handed over last night at a gala function in Johannesburg.

The reports of two other companies, Eskom, and HL&H Timber Products (last year's winner) were commended.

"Umgeni Water's environmental report is truly of a world-class standard," WWF chief executive Dr John Hanks said upon presenting the award.

"The quality of the information provided on the organisation's current environmental impacts, and on what the organisation is doing to manage those impacts, is exemplary."

The award was made for the first time last year and aims to encourage businesses to report, voluntarily and transparently, on their environmental performance.

About 6 300 entry forms were sent out this year, but only 10 companies responded. Of these only Eskom, HL&H and Umgeni issue environmental reports as a document separate from financial reports. Other entries this year were from Samancor, Safmarine-Rennies Holdings, Impala Platinum, Polyfin, Anglo Alpha, AECI and Shamwari Game Reserves.

"We were disappointed that more companies are not issuing reports on their environmental performance," Hanks said. "We hope that the award will raise senior management's awareness about this important trend, and encourage them to report on their performance in the future."

One of the judges, Tami Sekutu, chief director of community water supply at the Department of Water Affairs and Tourism, said Umgeni's report was "stunning". What impressed him was that it was printed on recycled paper and that the content was excellent.

"This was not only in terms of the clarity of language, but also because of the activities Umgeni is involved in for their staff and the community it serves," Sekutu said. He particularly liked the fact that Umgeni

had set up environmental notice boards on its premises to educate and keep staff informed.

In addition to Hanks and Sekutu, other judges this year were Tebogo Phadu, the ANC's national RDP co-ordinator, Nigel Bruce, editor of the Financial Times, and Dr John Kilani, environmental officer of the Chamber of Mines.

They judged completeness (whether the report covered the full spectrum of the organisation's environmental performance, both good and bad), whether claims were objective and substantiated, specific facts and figures showing top-level commitment, and details on how affected parties had been consulted.

"Voluntary disclosure of environmental performance has been recognised worldwide as an important ingredient in regaining public credibility," the WWF said.

"The environmental reports also provide a channel for communicating with interested parties and an opportunity to demonstrate what steps are being taken to manage the organisation's environmental impacts.

The award aimed to encourage quality of information rather than expensive "green gloss", WWF said.



# New campaign launched to protect migratory animals and other species

Underlining its claim to world leadership in conservation, South Africa is the first Bonn Convention signatory to put out a special poster (56)

Star 23/11/95

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

The slogan of the public awareness campaign highlighting the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, launched at the National Zoo in Pretoria yesterday, is "Join us for a moving experience".

Otherwise known as the Bonn Convention, after the city where it was concluded, South Africa is one of 47 signatories. But, unlike other international agreements, this one's success will be in direct proportion to the number of citizens who actively support its aims and objectives.

"Migration is a universal phenomenon, where animals periodically move from one area to another, but the conservation of migratory

species depends on protection of their habitats and this can't be left only to authorities and conservationists. Many of the habitats lie on farms and private land. So, everyone who owns land must become aware and that is why we have embarked on a process of sensitising people," says Dr Colin Cameron, director-general of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

The Bonn Convention deals with migratory species of all types on land, sea and in the air - elephants, dolphins, whales, bats, birds and even butterflies. The phenomenon is still little understood, but it can be for biological purposes, to find suitable locations to breed and to feed at specific times of the year. The migration can be within a country, or between countries or across continents.

But in each case, it involves protecting habitats along the route and destinations at both ends.

All this requires special collaborations and partnerships, which is the ultimate function of the Bonn Convention. Developed in the 1970s, it came into force in 1983. South Africa became a signatory in 1991. As a country which lies at the end of migration routes of many species, it plays a vitally important role in their conservation.

Two complementary international treaties, also administered by the DEA&T, are the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (Cites) and the Ramsar Convention, dealing with the protection of wetlands.

To underline South Africa's claim as a world leader in the field of

wildlife conservation, the DEA&T has released a poster and an eight-page newsletter, *Migratoria*, which are available free of charge.

The newsletter looks at South Africa's crucial role in the convention, some of its international wildlife travellers, known migratory routes and some of the most endangered species.

Douglas Hykle, programme coordinator for the Bonn Convention secretariat, says: "South Africa can play a leadership role in the convention. Of the 47 member countries, it is the first contracting party to issue a poster and newsletter, which sets a standard. Hopefully, they can be distributed to all participating countries."

■ Inquiries to Wanda Langenhoven (012) 310-3439.

## Appeal over waste site ruling

BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Waste management company Waste-tech has launched an appeal against the Kempton Park-Tembisa MSS that might end in a R12-million lawsuit against the municipality if the company is refused permission to open its Chloorkop site to hazardous waste.

A Townships Board hearing is considering an appeal against the MSS's refusal to rezone the site for hazardous waste disposal.

The board will pass a recommendation to Gauteng MEC for development planning, works and environment Sicelo Shiceka for a final decision by next March.

But while the company has so far ignored the final recourse available - legal action against the MSS to com-

pensate the R12-million spent in constructing the site - this might be the only way to recover losses should permission to open be refused.

Waste-tech managing director Ken Bromfield said no decision had been taken, but the company would certainly look at legal action.

Waste-tech began construction of the site after the Kempton Park Town Council had given it consent use for the land. But in 1993 it was discovered that the municipality had erroneously zoned the land for agricultural activities only.

The rezoning application then requested by the municipality was vehemently opposed by residents backed by the ANC, Earth-life Africa and the Midrand and Sandton councils. It was finally refused by the new

Kempton Park MSS in September this year.

While legal action against the MSS would not produce a rezoning approval, it would reimburse the company its losses.

Another Waste-tech spokesman said that should a court agree the company had a case, it would be able to claim the costs of purchasing the land, building the site and a loss of profits that had escalated with interest to about R12-million.

Bromfield said it would take between two and three years to find an alternative hazardous waste site and the company would be disadvantaged severely in that time.

The company's Margolis hazardous waste site in Germiston is due to close by the end of the year.

(56) Star 24/11/95

## Environmental management system planned

Staff Reporter

(56) ARG 24/11/95

MOVES are afoot to implement a national environmental management system under the auspices of the National Occupational Safety Association (Nosa), which would see companies integrating environmental responsibility into safety and management systems.

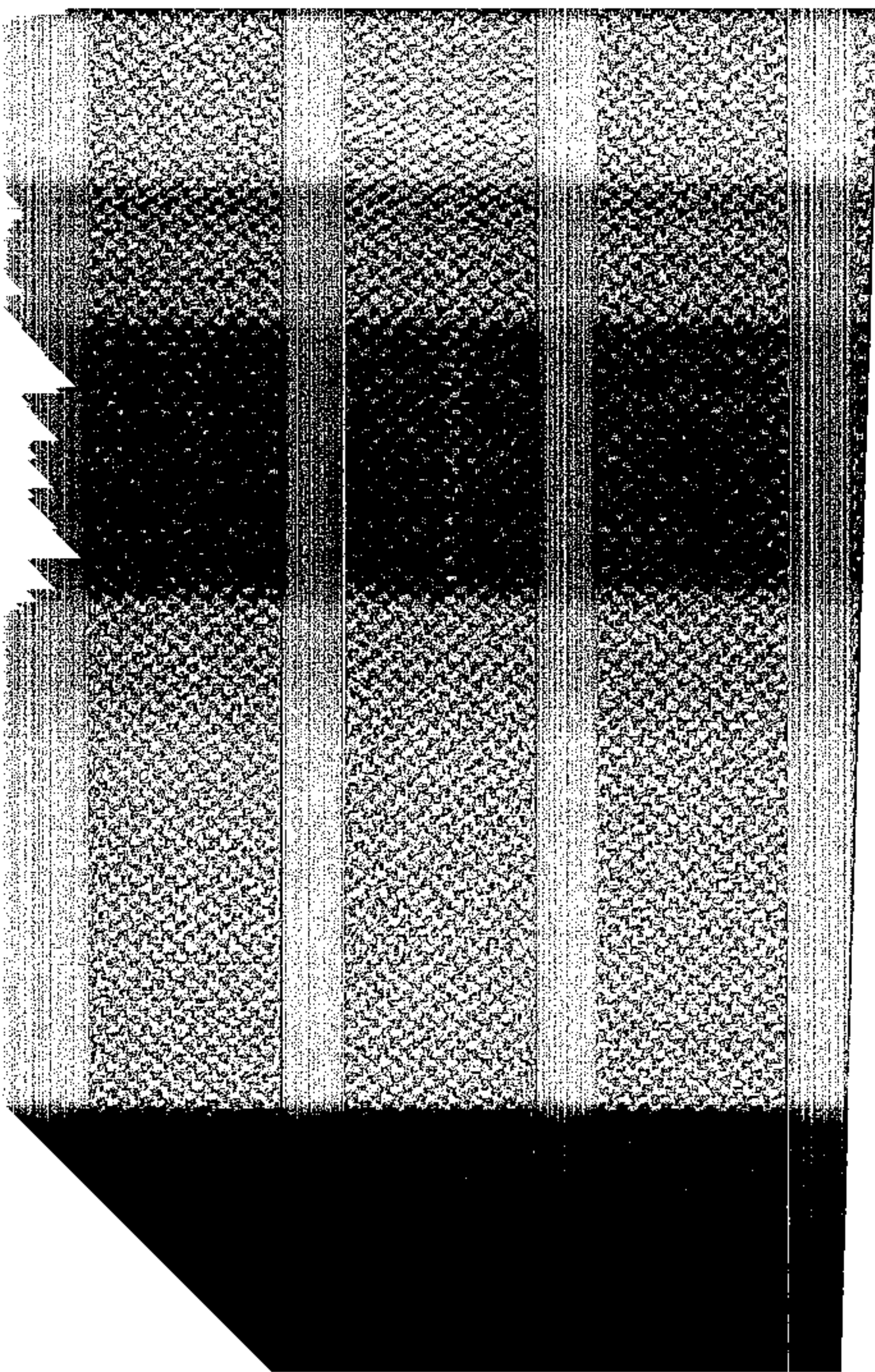
Nosa representative Nicky Robins told delegates at a Nosa seminar at the Caltex Refinery in Milnerton recently that it was imperative for companies trading in international markets to become knowledgeable of and comply with environmental requirements.

Ms Robins said basic requirements for Nosa's Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) management system would be taken from the existing five-star grading system for which companies were rated on safety, protection and stock-loss in the workplace.

The SHE system would be adapted to meet companies' specific needs.

Among draft guidelines established by Nosa for environmental auditing are that:

- Management must have procedures for environment impact assessment and the consequences of its activities;
- All staff must be informed of environmental objectives and targets;
- All "environment incidents" must be reported and investigated; and
- An organised emergency plan must be in place, and suit the company's needs.



CLEANING UP: Christine Armstrong, whose company offers a quick fix for spoiled beaches

Picture: TERRY SHEAN

## Spillages licked <sup>(56)</sup> by moss ST(OT) 26/11/95

A CANADIAN peat moss that absorbs hydrocarbons is revolutionising the cleaning up of oil slicks and industrial spillages around the country, writes JEREMY WOODS.

Peat Sorb is a natural sphagnum peat moss, bulk imported from Canada, with a 90% water content reduced to 5% after refining and processing.

"In this state Peat Sorb repels water, but absorbs up to 14 times its own weight in hydrocarbons and related substances," says Christine Armstrong, a director of Peat Sorb SA in Cape Town.

"A critical factor for Peat Sorb is that once oil has been encapsulated it does not leak out and risk polluting underground water sources.

"After hydrocarbons have been absorbed by the peat and dumped in a landfill, the peat combines with oxygen, moisture and heat to trigger active enzymes that break down, or eat, the hydrocarbons."

Then comes a "miracle of nature".

"When all the hydrocarbons have gone, the peat reverts back to its original chemical structure of being water absorbent, thereby enhancing a landfill."

Peat Sorb is currently being used by the State Fuel Farm in Saldanha as well as oil companies Total and BP and a number of industrial chemical and oil carriers.

# Cabinet to decide mountain's future

ST(M)26/11/95 (56)

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

TABLE Mountain's future as a national park hinges on a crucial Western Cape cabinet decision which is expected to be made within the next 10 days.

As the responsible authority for the world-famous mountain chain and its magnificent shoreline, the province's political leaders must decide if they are willing to hand their powers to the National Parks Board.

This is the final political hurdle which must be crossed before Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers can proclaim the Peninsula's protected area a national park.

Major players in the mountain chain saga closed ranks this week, declining to divulge any information about a flurry of behind-the-scenes activity which may finally clinch NPB custodi-

anship of the Western Cape's premier tourist destination and an important national environmental asset.

However, a top-ranking Environmental Affairs official told Metro that Dr de Villiers wants to see the National Parks Board taking responsibility for the Cape Peninsula protected area "as soon as possible".

He will be acting in terms of the central recommendation by the Huntley Committee, which said the NPB should take over the mountain's management.

Speaking from Pretoria on Wednesday, environmental management chief director Sydney Gerber said: "The Western Cape province is the responsible management authority. It's up to the provincial cabinet to decide if it will hand over this responsibility to the parks board. That's the crux of the matter."

Mr Meiring declined to comment, except to say that he would be seeking provincial cabinet approval on December 6 "for a suggested way forward".

Mr Gerber said Dr de Villiers first wanted to ensure maximum local support for any future plans.

"Parks board chief executive Robbie Robinson has told me that the parks board is ready to take over in the Cape Peninsula, even as soon as January 1," Mr Gerber said.

The parks board, eager to reassure nervous locals that it "will not run Table Mountain from Skukuza", has told Dr de Villiers it wants the mountain park to be run by a broadly-representative management committee.

This was confirmed by Dr Robinson, who says he is in close contact with Dr de Villiers about latest developments.

# Battle rages for rich Madimbo

solomon 27/11/95

(56) (210) (450)

By Russel Molefe

**K**HEHLA MTHEMBU and his partner in Duo Corporate Developers, Richard Bluett, have brought the future of more than 10 000 people and the unique Madimbo corridor to the centre of a fierce environmental debate.

Madimbo, which forms a border between the former Venda homeland and Zimbabwe and is very rich in archeological treasures, was used exclusively by the then South African Defence Force for many years.

The company's interest in exploring the territory for diamonds sparked off a protracted battle between environmentalists and miners, which will only be ended by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

The Department granted Duo Corporate Developers the right to prospect for diamonds, but environmentalists cried foul and argued that this would mean removing more than 10 000 people and damaging the area beyond rehabilitation.

Mthembu believes high-quality diamonds are in abundance in the area, and that mining could bring jobs and economic prosperity to the impoverished Northern Province.

He maintained that a full environmental impact study was conducted by experts and submitted to the province's Department of Environment and Tourism.

Mthembu was asked whether the thousands of people nearby, among them some who were forcefully removed in the 1970s and resettled around Matshakatini, would be happy to be removed from their ancestral land.

He replied: "We have done proper consultation with the communities concerned. The people there have given the thumbs up." However, he declined to be drawn into further discussing the plan to mine the area.

If the Wildlife Society did not blow the whistle on the planned mining of the area, Mthembu's company would have gone ahead as it was already granted the necessary permit.

Several other environmental organisations joined the Society in opposing the plan. Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers and the Northern Province government have also voiced their opposition.

Some argue that mining will force 10 000 inhabitants off their land



**Khehla Mthembu ... believes mining could bring jobs and economic prosperity to the impoverished Northern Province.**

Duo Corporate Developers' permit was temporarily revoked after the National Parks Board appealed against it on environmental grounds.

The director-general of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs is expected to make a final ruling after studying submissions by environmental organisations.

The Northern Province used to have mines in several areas such as Phalaborwa and Messina, which were closed when they ran out of minerals, resulting in thousands of people losing their jobs.

The sight of the environment which surrounds those mines is pathetic today. In some areas, attempting to establish a vegetable garden is like trying to squeeze blood out of a rock.

It was for this reason that the standing committee on environment and tourism in the Northern Province argued that mining in the province was not a sustainable development.

Committee member Mr Joe Maswanganyi also said ecotourism emerged as a favourable development in the area during the commit-

tee's deliberations. He claimed people near the Madimbo corridor favour ecotourism too.

Maswanganyi said the area was rich with the remains of the Stone Age (14th century) and the Iron Age (the 17th century), which date back to the movement of the Venda-speaking people.

"We cannot afford to destroy these treasures unless we want to destroy the heritage of our people and invite trouble from coming generations," he said.

"Ecotourism will also bring cash to the province because hotels and resorts may be built there and the area is suited for guided hikes as well. We must not learn the hard way like other countries, where mining has polluted rivers and land beyond rehabilitation."

He pointed out that there were more than 500 kinds of endangered species of animals and birds in the area, and if they were destroyed, "they were destroyed forever".

The Northern Province government will again commission archeologists to conduct further studies in the area, Maswanganyi said.

# Urbanisation: Holomisa says much can be done

Environment Reporter

**S**OUTH African cities are among the most inefficient and wasteful urban environments in the world, says Deputy Environmental Affairs Minister Bantu Holomisa.

In a keynote address to the Clean Air conference in Durban last week, he said Africa's urbanisation rate was the highest in the world — estimated to be doubling every 14 years — and South Africa was no exception.

An estimated 28 million of this country's 42,8 million people already lived in urban areas, and by the year 2000 about two-thirds of the population would live in its cities.

"Cities generate and accumulate wealth, and are the main centres for education, new job opportunities, greater economic opportunities, health care and cultural opportunities," Mr Holomisa said.

"But they are also immense and wasteful consumers of nat-

ARG 27/11/95  
ural resources, requiring enormous quantities of water, energy, food and raw materials, much of which is not used sustainably.

"In general, cities generate massive amounts of pollution which contaminate air, water and soil far beyond their boundaries, while also endangering and reducing the quality of life of their own inhabitants."

There had to be remedial action to counter the effects and causes of pollution.

"This can be done through legislation, implementation of legislation and education.

"We have entered a new era of democracy where new policies must accommodate everybody.

"We have, by starting with Connep (Consultative Conference for National Environmental Policy), entered into an inclusive environmental policy development process. This process is aimed at drawing up a Green Paper on environmental

(56)  
policy, followed by a White Paper which will culminate in a national policy and accompanying legislation.

"It will consequently take time for the new policy to take shape.

"However, the degree to which the private sector, environmental non-government organisations as well as government bodies — especially the provinces — participate in a partnership with my department, will to a large extent determine the success and development time frame of this new policy direction."

It was also critical for citizens to acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding of political processes, to enable them to make informed choices and decisions about environmental issues.

"This is where environmental education can be a powerful tool to help people who had few opportunities in the past to participate in the decision-making process," Mr Holomisa said.

DURBAN — KwaZulu-Natal conservationists had agreed to share their expertise with international wildlife experts in an attempt to save the northern white rhino, of which fewer than 40 survived worldwide, a Natal Parks Board official said yesterday.

The northern white rhino, a close relative of southern Africa's white rhino, was decimated by poaching activity.

The Natal Parks Board would spearhead efforts to bolster the population by hosting an African rhino specialists' conference in February, said board official Martin Brooks.

A team of internation-

## SA experts to help in bid to save northern rhinos

(56) BD 28/11/95  
al rhino experts would visit populations of southern African white rhino, which had been rescued from extinction largely by the efforts of SA conservationists earlier this century.

The southern African rhino numbers close on 7 000, from fewer than 30 in 1895.

Lessons learned during the campaign to save the southern African white rhino might help save the northern variety, Brooks said.

Thirty of the estimat-

ed 40 surviving northern white rhino are being kept in Garamba National Park in Zaire. The Zairean government recently agreed to help establish alternative populations in Africa.

The Natal Parks Board recently hosted an international conference on sea turtles at Sodwana Bay.

Delegates were taken on night excursions to sea turtle nesting beaches to practise handling, measuring and tagging them. — Sapa.



# Sustainable living stressed

(56) 60 28/11/95  
HAZYVIEW — African countries should harness all their forces in a movement toward equity and sustainable living, Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal said yesterday.

Opening the Food and Agricultural Organisation's African forestry conference in Hazyview, Mpumalanga, he said the challenges faced by Africa were enormous.

"Water scarcity, deforestation, poverty, hunger (and) lack of education still dominate our countries. We should harness all our forces in a creative and co-operative movement towards equity, the fulfilment of basic human needs and sustainable living.

"I hope that the work of this commission on forestry and wildlife will

contribute towards taking us down that path."

Asmal said Africa should focus on local beneficiation of natural resources rather than exporting raw materials and buying back finished goods from developed countries.

Forty-five member nations and observer countries are attending the five-day working session, being held to formulate African forestry policy and to review and co-ordinate its implementation at regional level.

The African delegates will discuss sustainable forestry management and investment in forestry in Africa.

Progress reports on the state of forestry on the continent will also be tabled. — Sapa.

# Nature of cableway debate changes

BD 28/11/95 (56)

Heather Parker

A FULL two years have passed since the Cape Town City Council decided it was time to rethink the operation of the Table Mountain cableway. The council's successors — and the city's ratepayers — have had plenty of cause to regret that decision.

Specifically, they have regretted it to the tune of nearly R2m.

In terms of its lease with the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC), the council has the right every 10 years to review the contract and appropriate the lease with a year's notice. It did so in October 1993.

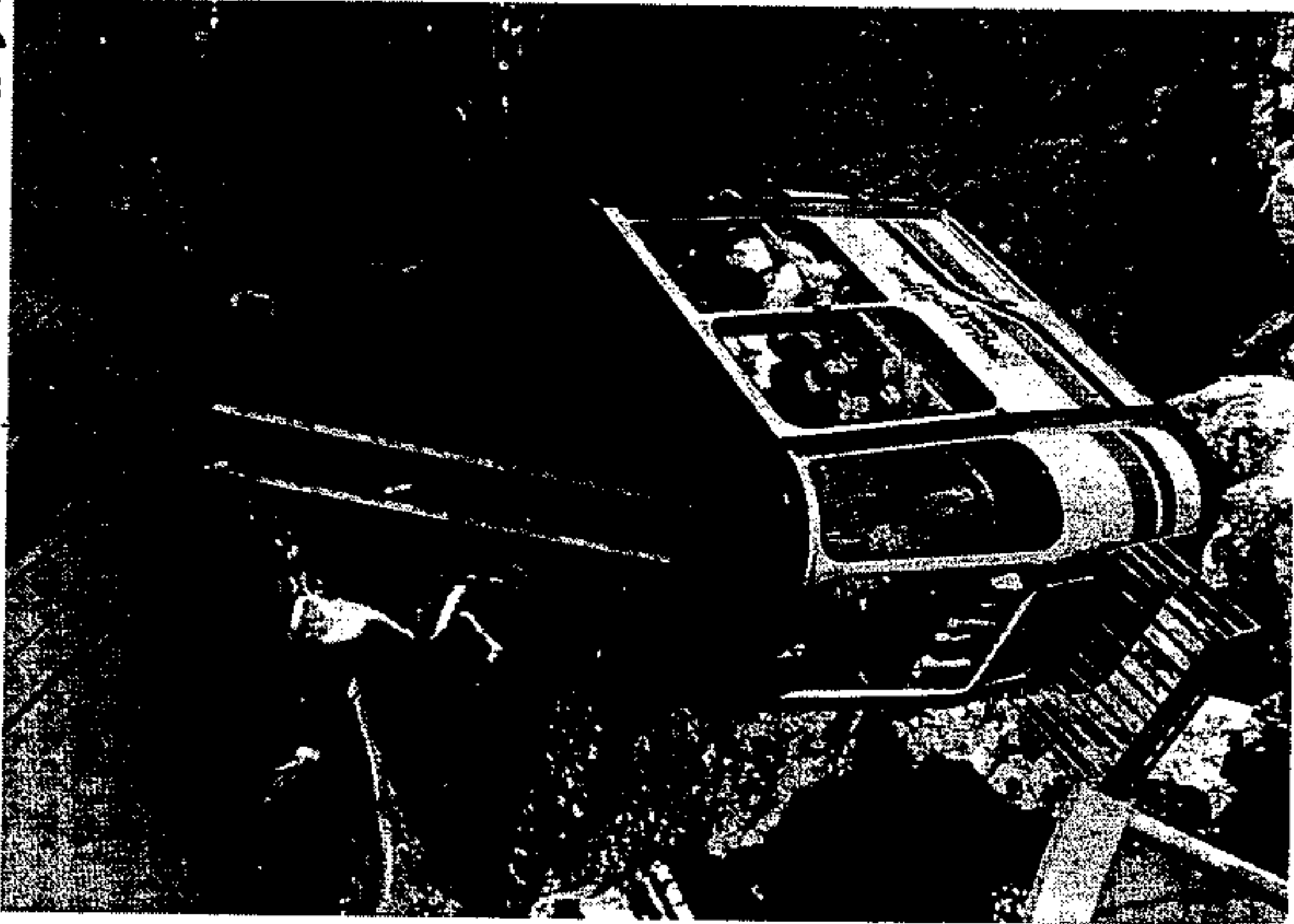
This was not unexpected: the cableway buildings were shabby, the cableway itself was so inefficient that visitors could face queues of more than four hours, and the TMACC was making only a negligible contribution to the maintenance of the mountain.

However, the TMACC, which has operated the cableway since inception, and which owns the associated buildings, did not take the decision lying down. It rejected the initial compensation offer of R10m, and was no more mollified when the council increased it to R13m. While negotiations were still under way, the council made its crucial mistake: it awarded the cablecar lease to a different operator.

The TMACC took the matter to the Supreme Court, which ordered that the TMACC was entitled to stay in place until the dispute was settled. The disappointed new operators of the cableway became entitled to a compensation of around R1,4m. Legal fees were an estimated R500 000.

That was around nine months ago. The council has allocated the money that had been earmarked as compensation to other projects. The TMACC is still firmly in place on the mountain, and negotiations have changed in nature. No longer is the debate over the extent of the compensation owing to the TMACC, it is about the way the TMACC will operate the cableway in the future.

But the exercise has not been wasted. Until the mid-1960s, the TMACC had been paying the city a token R1 a year for the commercial rights to the mountain. After that, it paid 2,5% of ticket sales: the figure now being bandied about is 10%. This will go



A Father Christmas figure on the Table Mountain cable car during a previous Christmas season.

into a special fund dedicated to mountain upkeep, called the Table Mountain Maintenance Trust Fund. Given that it costs the council around R3m a year to maintain and manage the Table Mountain chain, and that the TMACC contribution has recently totalled rather less than R100 000 a year, that will be a welcome change.

It had been part of the council's thinking that the commercial rights to the mountain ought in far

greater measure contribute to the costs of the mountain. On current sales, the ticket percentage alone will generate R600 000.

Another welcome development has been the decision by the TMACC to go ahead with extensive upgrading plans, and to involve environmental groups in its forward planning. A team of environmental consultants has been appointed to ensure a "proper integrated environmental management" process; and they have held a series of open meetings and workshops to provide a forum for concerns to be expressed.

At the end of last month, an open meeting was held to finalise what are considered to be the key environmental issues, and a document has been prepared to invite final comment. Responses are expected to be in by the end of March.

If all goes according to plan, the TMACC will close the cableway in July or August next year, and reopen by December with a new-look operation. Among the proposed improvements to the cableway are:

- a R45m facelift which will more than double capacity;
- the introduction of new cablecars with increased capacity;
- improvements to the upper station and lease area, both of which have changed little in decades;
- interior changes to the lower station, and
- improved traffic flow and parking.

But doubts have been cast on the process by the Khan Commission's recommendations that development on the mountain be frozen until the proposed new mountain management authority is in place. It has been proposed that this should come from the National Parks Board, but there is some dispute.

If it takes any length of time to decide on and set up a new management authority, and the upgrade is frozen for the duration, the inefficiency of the present cableway operation will continue to create a bad impression for Cape Town, argues the TMACC.

According to chairman Louis de Waal, the TMACC is addressing Western Cape leaders and ministers at national level to make a case for allowing the work to continue. De Waal reasons that since the work constitutes an upgrade of existing facilities rather than a new development, it should be exempt from the moratorium.

# 'Two-child family must be promoted'

(56) (33) BD 28/11/95  
Mduzika Harvey

ENVIRONMENTAL issues could not be discussed without reference to the effect of the human population and, as government was nervous about taking a strong position on population issues, it was up to civil society and non-governmental organisations to promote two-child families, said Endangered Wildlife Trust director John Ledger.

Addressing the award ceremony of the Free Market Foundation in Parktown yesterday, Ledger said the public could not turn a blind eye to the burgeoning population of Africa. It was essential to realise there was a problem that had to be addressed.

He said most African states had a population increase of between 2,5% and 3% a year, an effective doubling time of 25 to 30 years.

Ledger said the most densely populated countries on the continent were Rwanda with 3 157 people a 1 000ha and Burundi with 2 337 people a 1 000ha. SA had 334, Zimbabwe 282, and Zambia 120 people a 1 000ha.

He said the environmental affairs department lacked a strong leadership role in dealing with SA's protected areas. It was a priority for the department to re-evaluate its protected areas and identify those which deserved the status of national park.

He said provincial conservation bosses who were trying to defend their own turf needed their heads banged together because they were playing games with SA's heritage.

Although government was engaged in a drawn-out consultative process in an effort to develop a national environmental

policy, there were signs of a weak environment ministry being manipulated by environmental radicals with various agendas, he said.

Ledger called on the public to beware of "super greens" as mobilising international support for local causes could be a dangerous game. Many environmental groups in the northern hemi-

sphere had agendas which did not suit the situation in Africa.

Moves by SA to raise funds overseas for elephant relocation were sending a signal that SA was aligning itself to the animal rights movement rather than to its neighbours, who were looking to SA for leadership in sustainable wildlife management, he said.

# Conservation expert warns on 'greenies'

(56) / 28/11/95

By Patrick Phosa

A leading conservationist has accused the Environmental Affairs ministry of "showing worrying signs of manipulation by green radicals with various agendas".

Citing the handling of toxic waste and the Chloorkop hazardous waste site, Endangered Wildlife Trust director John Ledger said these matters had been blocked by environmental activists with no regard to the needs of industry.

Ledger was speaking in Parktown, Johannesburg, yesterday where he received the 1995 Free Market Foundation Award for his "pragmatic conservation and recognition of the need to integrate conservation with sustainable economic development".

He said examples were the ship on its way to SA being turned back with its cargo of so-called toxic waste and the matter of the Chloorkop hazardous waste site.

"In both cases peeling away the layers of rhetoric and emotion reveals a much less alarming state of affairs," said Ledger.

"Local green activists are highly suspicious of business and this is a hindrance to many of the good things businessmen can offer." He warned local movements against mobilising international support for local causes because that could be "a dangerous game".

# Concern for False Bay beaches

**BARRY STREEK**  
POLITICAL STAFF

(56)

CONCERN about the future of a five-kilometre stretch of unspoilt False Bay beach near Strand has been expressed by the Helderberg Nature Conservation Forum. *CF 28/11/95*

The land is owned by the Somchem and AECI groups and discussions about its development have been held with interested parties.

Mr Mike Peters, who represented the forum at a Somchem workshop on the matter last week, said: "Constant mention was made of so-called 'naughty boys', presumably referring to unscrupulous developers, but nothing straightforward was said. This leaves one with the uneasy feeling that something untoward might be afoot."

Forum chairman Mr Max Elwood said it was imperative that the Council of the Environment's Integrated Environmental Management procedure be followed, as had been done at Saldanha Bay.

"Development should ensure no pollution takes place. It is important that the two sites be developed as one. Between them they comprise five kilometres of unspoilt beaches and the last intact dune system and dune vegetation along the False Bay coastline."

# Conservationist hits at 'green radicals'

OT 28/11/95

(56)

JOHANNESBURG: A leading conservationist yesterday accused the Environmental Affairs Ministry of "showing worrying signs of manipulation by green radicals with various agendas and ambitions".

Citing the handling of toxic waste and the Chloorkop hazardous waste site, Endangered Wildlife Trust director Mr John Ledger said these matters had been blocked by environmental activists with no regard to the real needs of industry in Gauteng.

Mr Ledger was speaking in Parktown here, where he received the 1995 Free Market Foundation Award for his

"pragmatic conservation and recognition of the need to integrate conservation with sustainable economic development".

He said: "Examples are the case of the ship on its way to South Africa being turned back with its cargo of so-called toxic waste and the matter of the Chloorkop hazardous waste site. In both cases peeling away the layers of rhetoric and emotion reveals a much less alarming state of affairs."

Mr Ledger said businessmen were way ahead of the government in developing environmental management systems. — Special Correspondent

# New era begins in SA's game parks

(5th) Star 29/11/95

The challenge for the future is to make nature reserves accessible to all without destroying their pristine appeal, writes Glenda Daniels

you encounter at a game park. We need to see smiles on the street and people greeting each other."

Mabuze also has many plans for creating a broad environmental awareness in South Africa. He says that more people need to be made aware that the earth is fragile, resources are not infinite and rivers and forests are dying because of humankind's mismanagement.

Yet our own survival is dependent on how we nurture what we have, he says. Humanity is doomed if heedlessness continues at the rate it is going, according to Mabuze.

He feels that while there is a growing interest in environmental awareness in South Africa, it is not enough. If you take children to the Botanical Gardens for tours or excursions to game parks,

they learn and spread the word on the environment and its importance. These trips need to be encouraged, he says.

During low peak seasons schools can arrange to go on guided tours at low prices, where topics such as litter, the extinction of certain animals, the culling of elephants, pollution and the felling of indigenous trees are extensively discussed.

But creating an awareness goes beyond schools tours, he says. Part of the schools syllabus should include environmental awareness.

Taxi drivers need to be educated, so that they in turn can educate their passengers not to throw litter out of windows. Drivers should install rubbish bins in their taxis and make it clear that they are there to be used.

"We can learn a lot from a poor country like

Mozambique, where I was amazed to see no litter on the streets. I believe that we should first educate and then clamp down on offenders with fines when they still defy," says Mabuze.

He adds: "We need a culture of cleanliness. And this needs to come from both the top and the bottom. The Government, labour, business, educationalists, family units and the community all need to get involved."

Mabuze likens an awareness of environmental issues to punctuality. "I should be ashamed if I pitched up late for a meeting. Likewise I should be ashamed if I litter."

But he concludes positively: "I am optimistic that we will address all these issues in a pragmatic way," he says as he ushers us out politely because he does not want to be late for his next appointment.



Accessibility and pristine beauty ... National Parks Board chairman Dr Enos Mabuze wants more environmental awareness in South Africa.

In the past South Africa's game parks were mainly the preserve of a white elite. These days the visitors' profile is changing, as are the challenges facing those in charge.

Game parks are becoming more accessible and one important challenge is to maintain their pristine beauty, says National Parks Board chairman, Dr Enos Mabuze, from his spacious Braamfontein office.

Underlying all Mabuze's ideas about conservation, environmental awareness and game parks is the idea of a "partnership" between local communities, schools, tour operators, business (big and small) and even taxi drivers.

An important mandate for the new parks board is to ensure that game parks become profitable. But in this scenario there is no place for gambling halls, swimming pools and tennis courts.

"We want to give people a truly African bush experience," an urbane Mabuze says in his soft but firm voice.

He points out that game parks in the past were criticised for being elitist because of apartheid, but now that transformation of management is taking place, he is determined that this, along with other controversial questions, should change.

Historically a controversial issue surrounding game parks was whether conserving animals was important when there are starving communities living outside the parks.

The new board members are discussing ways to involve local communities. But Mabuze points out that while game parks can play a role in the upliftment and enhancement of the quality of life of local people, it is not the duty of game parks to support them.

Local people can supply goods and services which are useful to attract tourists while simultaneously providing an income.

Parks cannot accept stock farming because, overnight, it would destroy land needed by game for grazing. People have to understand this, he points out.

Nevertheless, he feels that while there are these problems, neighbouring communities should be the first to benefit from national parks. They should be allowed to sell their goods to tourists before anyone else. Non-governmental organisations should help train and then encourage people to sell their goods and services.

"This is how a partnership between communities and parks can develop and be of benefit to all. The world is hungry and thirsty for a truly African experience and people can play this role - they are the real stakeholders in game parks."

Mabuze says the private sector will also have a more enhanced role in the future. Private game parks are more profitable than national parks because of the modus operandi of business.

National parks can learn a few lessons from the private game parks. "We have to make the national game parks sustainable and profitable. We need a vigorous strategy which will bring in foreign exchange. So far, this has not been exploited optimally in South Africa, the way it has in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia."

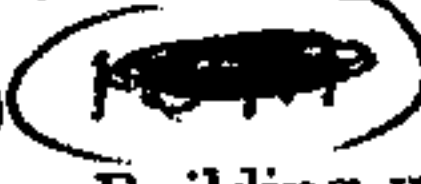
Another new trend emerging is to regard the southern Africa region as linked and unified. "We need to look at the whole region as a package and not as separate entities the way we have been doing thus far. We need to abandon the idea of each to himself or herself."

Mabuze goes further than practical suggestions, because he believes we need to upgrade our services and become a truly friendly nation, "one of smiles", to attract tourism.

"I'm not talking about a facade of friendliness"

# Iscor gets new site for Saldanha Steel

BD 30/11/95

56 

Michael Urquhart

ISCOR has returned to the Saldanha Steel project after securing a new site 2km inland of the controversial Langebaan lagoon site and reducing its total budget by R500m.

The project, for which Iscor had raised R1,3bn in a rights issue, ran into trouble when environmentalists opposed its siting near the sensitive wetlands. The delays and costs for which Iscor had not budgeted prompted the group's withdrawal from the project.

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), an equal partner in the project, had restructured the financial package to include a greater element of gearing to improve the return to shareholders. Initial funding would be supplied by the IDC. Securing a site had allowed the partners to shave certain provisions, cutting R500m off the R5bn budget estimate. However, the extra costs associated with delays, and bigger provisions for training and environmental control put total peak fund-

ing at R6,8bn. Building would begin immediately. The plant would be commissioned in 1998. It would take 12 to 18 months more to reach full capacity of 1,25-million tons of hot-strip steel.

The new site had been rezoned for heavy industrial use, which had required certain environmental standards from Iscor. Iscor chairman Hans Smith said three major environmental groups had indicated they were happy with the new site.

Smith said the move inland would not affect costs greatly as no extra loading facilities would be needed to handle the extra distance. Although the delay would affect the point at which Iscor entered the steel cycle, Smith said there were two views on the cycle, and depending on which one took, the project could enter a rising or declining market. The project would be profitable even in a worst-case scenario.

Equipment had been redesigned to produce thinner gauges and a new machine had been included by planners to improve quality.



# Saldanha Steel project back on track

By Roy Conway

Johannesburg — The R4,5 billion Saldanha Steel project is back on track, with Iscor as a 50 percent partner with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). But delays in the project have cost the group about R540 million.

Iscor's executive chairman, Hans Smith, told a news conference in Johannesburg yesterday that Iscor's directors had approved the

company's participation in a restructured Saldanha Steel project. He said the project would start "this afternoon" and would be commissioned in mid-1998, although it would take 12 to 18 months to get to full capacity.

Smith said an independent audit on the capital cost for the total plant was done, which at this stage confirmed the R4,5 billion budget, previously estimated at about R3,6 billion. He said peak funding

requirements of R4,6 billion, scheduled for June 1997, had risen to R6,8 billion.

Only about 60 percent of the R900 million increase in the capital cost was directly related to the delay in the project, he said.

He said the environmental costs took time to assess, while the original cost estimate for training people to run such a sophisticated plant was too low and had to be increased.

Redesigning and acquiring new equipment to ensure quality had also increased the cost.

Smith said the restructured project had met the requirements of Iscor's "hurdle rate" — basically its minimum conditions — and the company's decision to give the go-ahead again to Saldanha was a commercial, not an emotional one.

"We feel very positive about the project and are pleased to again be part of Saldanha Steel. As I said in

September when we withdrew, Iscor will consider the investment merits of a restructured project, or any part thereof."

"The approval of the site and the firming up of the estimated capital expenditure and operating costs, together with the understanding with the IDC on the financial restructuring, have brought Iscor back to Saldanha Steel as a 50 percent partner," he said.

As the project was now struc-

tured, the returns still fell within the limits set by the shareholders, he said.

"Siting the plant further inland is influenced by the Seyer Commission recommendations but costs less than it would have to move to the alternative sites, and this has helped with final cost estimates."

Smith said the environmental conditions imposed by the Western Cape government could be accommodated within the budget.

Permanently closed

56  
ET (BAR) 30/11/95

# Saldanha mill back on track

1511  
56

**MELANIE GOSLING**

ISCOR's R4,5-billion Saldanha steel mill project is back on track — and the people of the town have welcomed the move, while thanking environmentalists for "opening our eyes" to possible problems.

Chairman of the Saldanha Bay Chamber of Commerce Mr Hennie Griesel said the people of the town were "delighted" at Iscor's return to the project. "We've been fighting for the project for a

long time and we're delighted. We're just sorry that it had to come so late.

"To the environmentalists who opposed the factory, we thank you for your contribution. You certainly opened our eyes to what could happen and forced Iscor to implement stringent environmental conditions on the steel mill so that the development of tourism can also go ahead," Mr Griesel said.

Iscor chairman Mr Hans Smith said yesterday work at the plant was already under

way.

"We ... already have our men drilling on the site to see the underlying soil conditions — which is important for a structure this size. When the rezoning of the site was approved it was the first time we could make an accurate cost calculation because it was the first time we knew where we could build," Mr Smith said.

Iscor would meet all the environmental conditions laid down on the rezoning permit.

● See Page 17

BA CT 30/11/95

# Carbon dioxide waste level: Scientist warns about future

(56)

ART 30/11/95

## Staff Reporter

FORMER Fish Hoek resident and Zimbabwe geology research fellow, Anthony Roberts, says that if carbon dioxide continues to be spewed into the atmosphere the Cape Flats could be under water within the next 50 years.

He said scientists usually disagreed over the time scale of when this would happen, but agreed that the blame lies with the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

"If things continue the way they have been going for the last 10 years, it will need less than a metre in the

rise of the sea before the Fish Hoek car park is flooded at high tide or during freak storm tides," said Dr Roberts. "In fact if the increase continues the Cape Flats will be under water turning the Peninsula into a separate island."

He said Fish Hoek had sunk by about a metre in the last 25 years, relative to the sea, which means that the council is running out of beach.

"A concrete retaining wall was built a few years ago as an extension of Jager Walk to prevent sea water penetrating inland but even this is being buffeted by water."

He said when he was growing up in Fish Hoek, in a house above Jager Walk, the pedestrian subway under the Metro rail line was level with the beach.

"Now a new high-water mark shows the subway to be in the inter-tidal zone. This has serious repercussions for the railway line."

Dr Roberts said that during the past decade the sea-level rise was a symptom of global warming, believed to be the result of fossil carbon re-turned into the atmosphere.

People are annually returning 10 000 000 000 tons of carbon from

coal, oil and gas back into the atmosphere.

"Atmospheric monitoring stations in Hawaii and Colorado show an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. The remainder of the carbon dioxide is dissolved in sea water. Low-lying areas like Bangladesh and Louisiana are having the same problems. Holland is beginning to re-inforce its sea defences."

He said all the major northern hemisphere glaciers were melting because of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, sending tons of ice back into the sea.

# Steel plant with style for Saldanha

□ Architect designs an industrial plant that is functional with flair

By design, it often seems, industrial plants are squat, sullen and soulless. But it is conceivable that they need not be. Political Correspondent **MICHAEL MORRIS** spoke to Hannes Meiring, the architect charged with refashioning the face of Saldanha's controversial steel mill.

**COLOGNE** cathedral, Hannes Meiring offers hopefully, towers over the old German city as an unmistakable landmark, a fine thing by which to find your bearings.

It does not pretend to be anything less, and why should it?

But with what some might regard as an iconoclastic leap of fancy, Hannes Meiring has projected Cologne's — Europe's — grand Gothic motif into his conception of a bold, good-looking steel plant on the exposed veld of Saldanha.

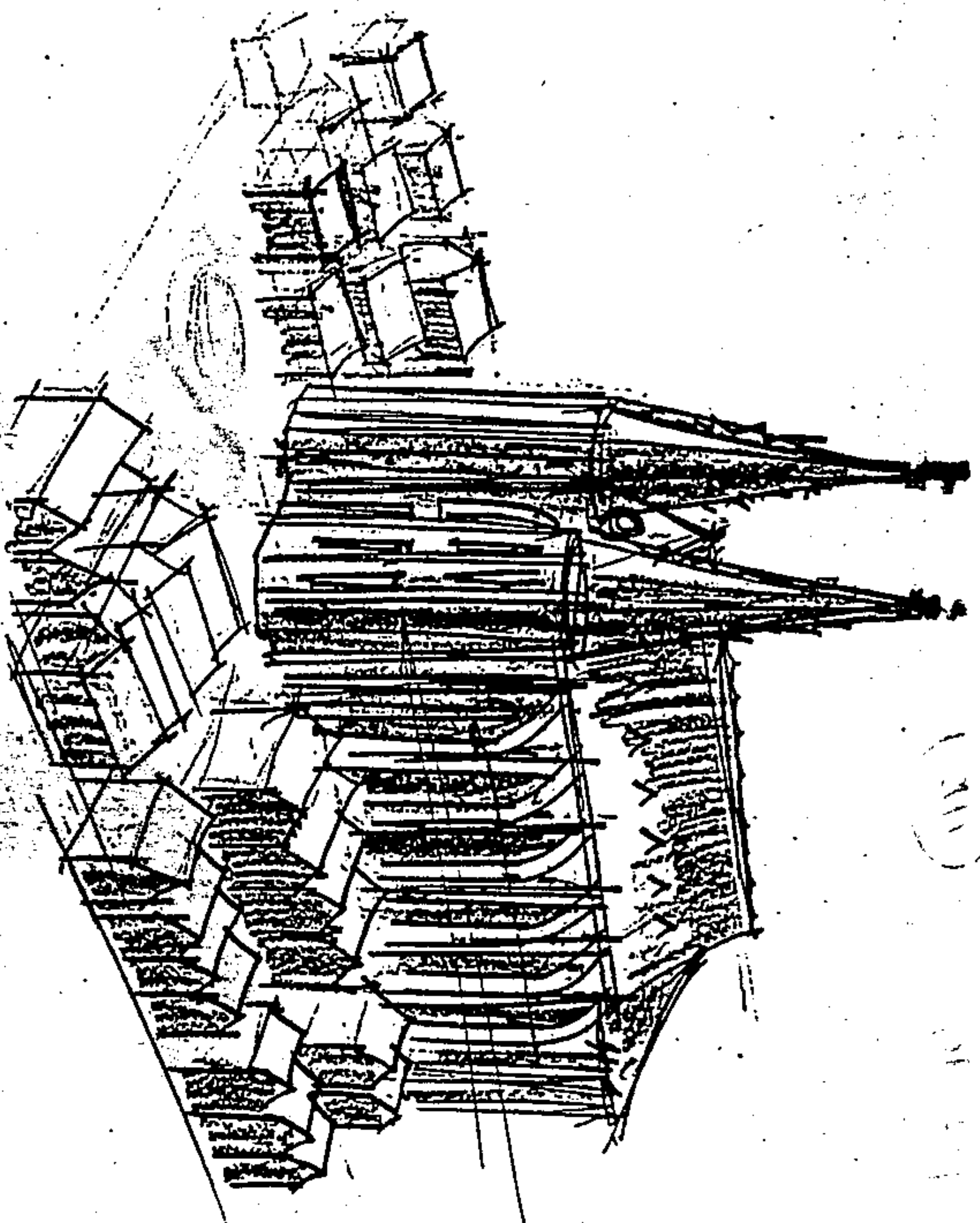
The first design for the plant — not his: it came from an engineer's drawing board — was unapologetically, inelegantly functional, a large hangar-like construction that made no pretence at being anything other than a factory.

But once the environmental controversy intensified — not so much over the design, but the very existence of the thing — Meiring and landscape architect Willem van Riet were brought in to attempt a skillful amelioration.

Both are University of Cape Town graduates: Meiring, a top Pretoria architect, is acclaimed for his work in preserving South Africa's architectural heritage, and Van Riet, a professor of the discipline at Pretoria University, is a leader in rehabilitative landscape planning.

One might have thought they would try to hide the plant, make it seem to sink low into the scrub. Not so.

"Every assessment of the design up to that point projected it negatively. You would find references to the fact that it would be 'virtu-



**GREAT GOTHIC:** This pen-sketch illustrates the dominance of Gothic cathedral design.

ally impossible to see it' from such and such a point, or 'barely visible' from another."

Meiring turned that approach on its head.

"I said: 'Let's make something that attracts attention, that will make people want to draw nearer, let's not be negative about it.'"

And so he mulled over the options.

Incontrovertibly, he believed, the plant — which features a 100 m tower — would be visually intrusive, visible from a long way, likely to become something of a landmark.

(11)

(56) AR 13/12/95

tracts and a... inspires pleasure and accessibility."

Citing the Gothic motif of European cathedrals, he notes that these were erected on a scale which rimuscled the town dwellings around them.

"I do not advocate such an overwhelming design, but I do believe the plant will be seen from a distance and as such should have an impressiveness about it... a timeless quality, harmonious with its surrounds."

How?

The essence of the approach was to unify all elements of the design within a bold, attractive composition.

"The whole building will read as a total unity."

All surfaces will be covered in a cream-coloured cladding, to avoid a clamour of tints and hues, and a consistent style will be used throughout, so that the building has what Meiring describes as a "rhythm".

Eaves and windows will be rounded to soften the overall impact, and all downpipes and gutters will be hidden from view, under cladding.

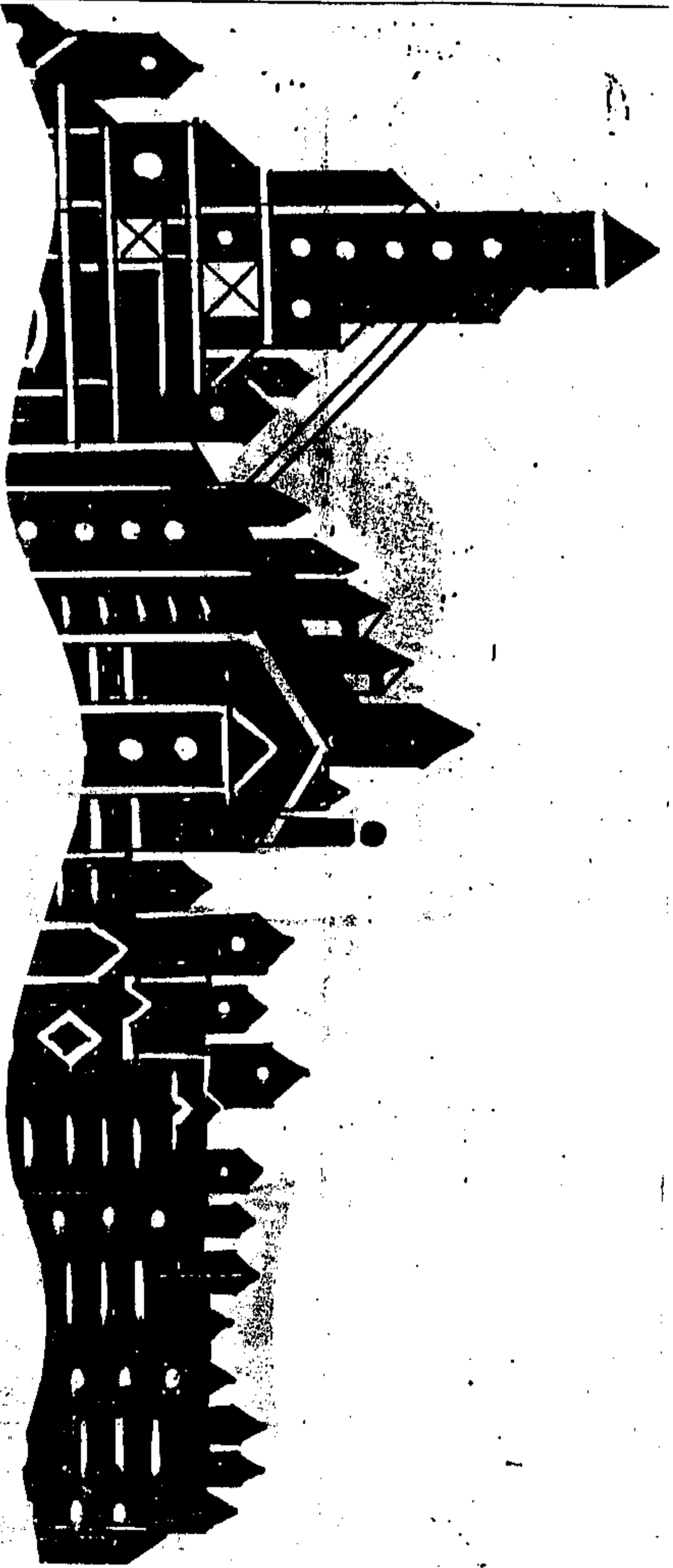
The various elements of the factory will be "fragmented" by design features, so that the whole is not overwhelming.

"Sunlight will provide the decorative element. The play of light and shadow across the composition of planes and angles will make it a beautiful thing to look at."

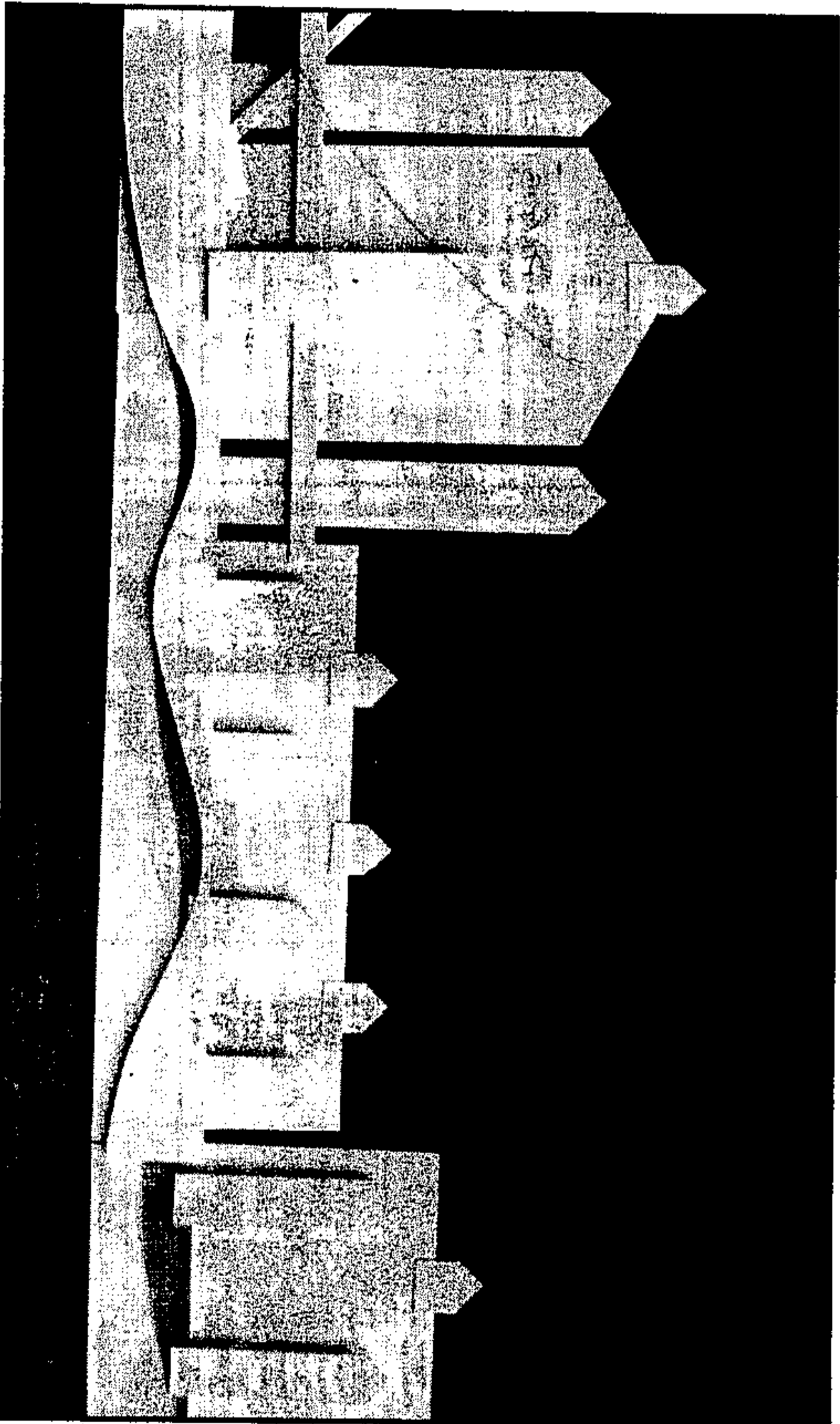
Willem van Riet's landscape design — which will make use of dunes and berms and indigenous vegetation — will be integrated into the overall design.

In the end, as Meiring and Van Riet visualise it, Saldanha will have a factory that works, that is functional, and yet is good to look at.

And, ultimately, they believe the steel plant will establish an inescapable precedent for the aesthetic and architectural development of the Saldanha region, setting down standards for later buildings that won't have to be hidden as much as possible to ensure at least a modicum of acceptability.



**DESIGN UNITY:** The chief elements of the steel plant design, in profile.



**CARDBOARD CONCEPTION:** This stylised model illustrates Hannes Meiring's approach to creating a bold, attractive design for the controversial Saldanha steel mill. The wavy line along the bottom indicates dunnetworks.



# Outcry over the wetlands

□ Ratepayers oppose development plans

ARG 13/12/95

**PETER GOOSEN**  
Staff Reporter

IT'S BACK to the drawing board for entrepreneurs who want to develop a multi-million-rand shopping and office complex on a portion of Dreyersdal Farm in Tokai — one of the most contentious development issues to be raised in Cape Town this year.

The site, on the corner of Main and Vans Roads near the Blue Route shopping centre, is a wetland, also known as Louwsvlei, but part of it has been filled in.

The developers' original plan was to build a 12 000m<sup>2</sup> commercial component on the filled in portion and build 200 homes on another portion of the wetland,

also to be filled in.

The proposal stirred up a huge outcry.

A number of public meetings were held at which the developers, their architects and other consultants put their case, but surrounding residents represented by two ratepayer organisations would not budge.

They made it clear that they considered another major shopping centre unnecessary and a blot on the landscape with attendant traffic, pollution, aesthetic and environmental problems. But, under protest, they said they might be willing to accept a residential development on the filled in section of the wetland.

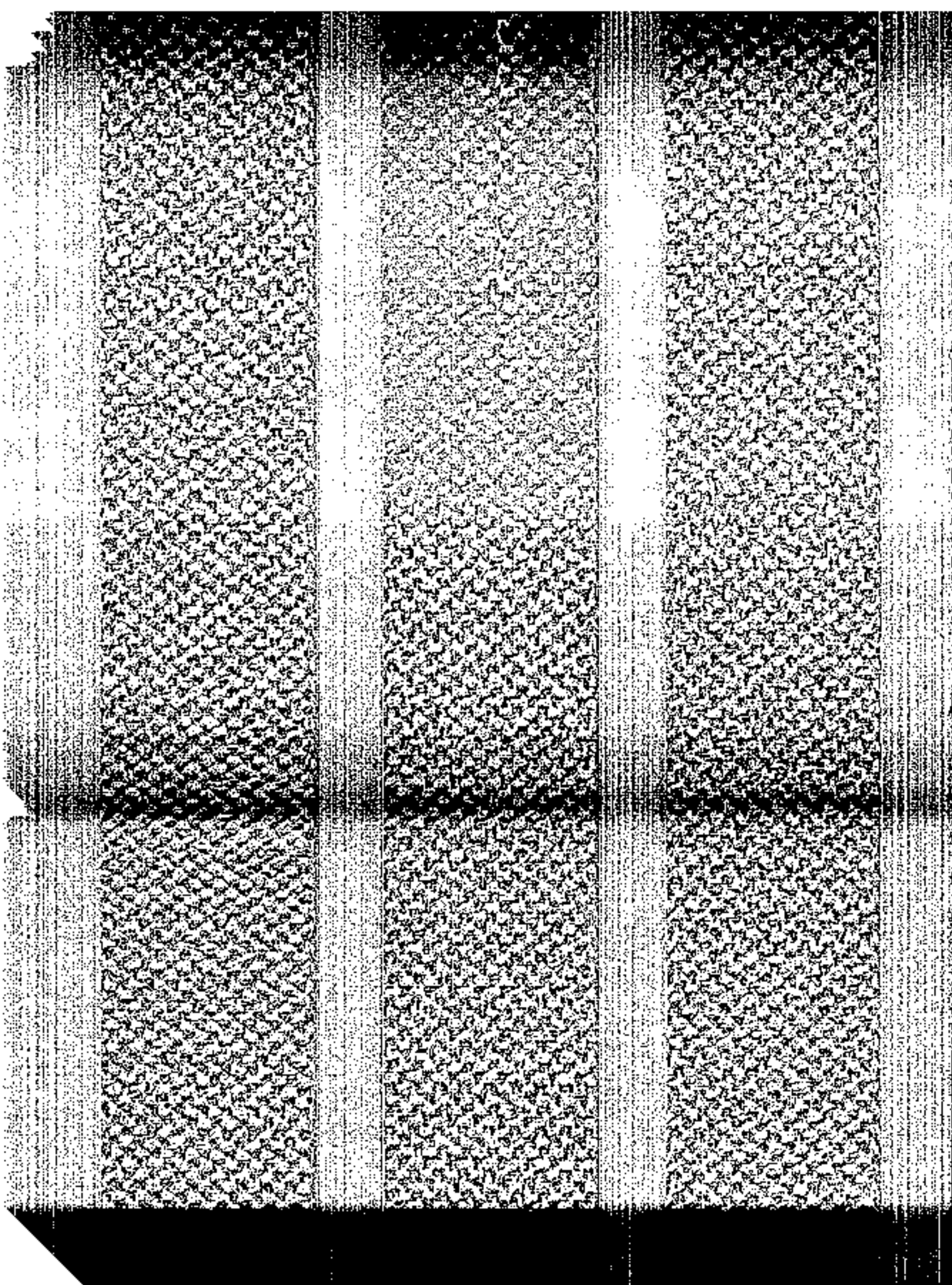
When the application was aired formally for the first time at a meeting of the Cape Town

City Council's urban planning committee last Friday, the development had been changed radically.

The developers had opted for a slightly smaller commercial component on the filled in section of the wetland, no houses, and offered to retain the wetland on the rest of the property in its natural state in perpetuity.

They mentioned plans to build a 3 000m<sup>2</sup> office component at some time in the future.

But, the ratepayers, represented at the meeting by Rob Knapp, chairman of the Kirstenbosch Ratepayers' and Leon Knoop, deputy chairman of the Meadowridge Ratepayers' Association, made it clear that they remained implacably opposed to the development.



**NATURAL BEAUTY:** The southern entrance to Knysna, a town thriving on tourism.

Picture: OBED ZILWA, The Argus.

## Eco-tourism takes on

□ *Knysna in the lead in encouraging its growth*

(56) ARG 13/12/95

**LINDSAY BARNES**  
Staff Reporter

ECO-CONSCIOUS visitors are becoming sought-after in the bustling and beautiful coastal town of Knysna where a new attitude towards tourism is developing.

While most centres are hoping to attract busloads of visitors, a swing away from this trend may soon take hold in this idyllic haven for artists and holidaymakers.

According to Knysna Publicity Association's marketing manager Pat Slabbert this alternative tourism expounds the importance of the quality and not quantity of tourism, and constitutes a general, world-wide swing.

An extreme example of this has taken place on an island in the Philippines, where the number of tourists has been

limited according to the area's capacity. Only 60 visitors are allowed in at any one time, which allows the residents to control the amount of environmental damage that may occur.

"The natural environment is usually the resource on which tourism survives and this restriction ensures that the tourists look after the environment," Ms Slabbert said.

In Knysna, an attempt is being made to marry the needs of visitors with the future of the community.

"We are getting all of the stakeholders involved in deciding what we want and there is so much to bear in mind with regard to tourism," she said.

"Development can be a death knell to tourism if it is not carried out in a manner sympathetic with the atmosphere of the town."

While development could not be halted, it needs to be done in such a way that tourism remains a sustainable resource.

"Many towns reach a peak in tourism and start to die because they killed that thing that attracted tourists to the area in the first place."

However, every group had a right to the environment — such as scuba divers, sailors, hikers and skiers — and a balance had to be struck in the use of land.

"Up until now I don't think municipalities have been in a position to understand the full consequences of this problem. At the same time they have to be careful not to cut their own throats."

In South Africa it would be difficult to limit the number of tourists, however, as the state of the economy and the level of

unemployment was such that communities were screaming for resources and the revenue brought in by tourists.

A solution was to target the eco-conscious tourist, usually found in the upper-income bracket, and to market the town in an effort to attract them.

"It's an interesting marketing challenge and forms an integral part of the development of the whole town," Ms Slabbert said.

Loose discussions had been held on the concept of a vision — as well as an identity — for Knysna, and this would be raised at a public meeting early next year, said Neil Grange, chairman of the Knysna Environmental Forum.

Knysna's identity lies with eco-tourism and the town will have to get an identity together, he believes.

# The bay of political opportunism

(56)

~~(57)~~

M+G 15-21/12/95

The controversial industrial development of Saldanha Bay, near the west coast wetlands, is more about politics than about the environmental impact of a steel mill, writes **Neville Sweijd**

**T**HE decision of Lamplie Fick, Western Cape MEC for Environment and Tourism, to rezone a farm on the Saldanha Bay coast from agricultural to industrial land has given the Saldanha Steel Project the go-ahead — despite a recommendation against this decision by the Steyn Commission of Inquiry. The decision, and the consequent re-emergence of Iscor in the project, does not bode well for the future of development in the province.

Fick has attempted to bulldoze the process through since it became public in April this year. Only the intervention of the National Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Environment managed to slow him by forcing the appointment of the commission. But the fact that the objectors (and the commission) never opposed the development in principle, but only its location, begs the question why he was so determined.

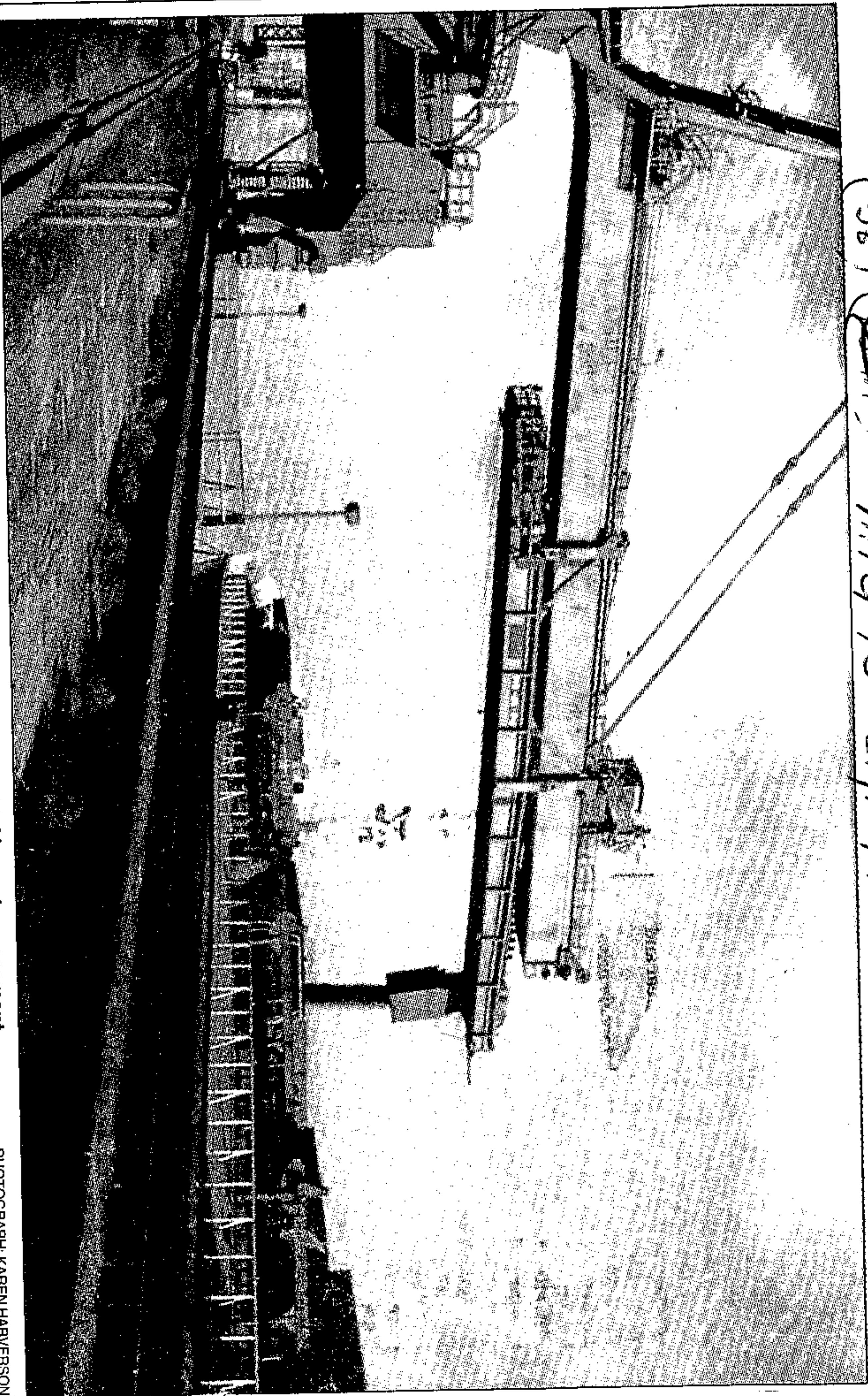
The answer is clearly political. The National Party is desperate to achieve above-average economic growth in its only province and this project represents the cornerstone of "the biggest single industrial development this country has ever seen". The prize is worth the risk of storming on eminent experts and their arguments in the scramble to get this heartland up and running for the next general election.

The claim that the Steyn Commission's recommendation to move the plant inland is being fulfilled by building it on another part of the same farm renders some 3 000 pages of evidence to the commission redundant. The "compromise" was secretly negotiated with selected parties, ignoring the broad-ranging chorus of objectors who gave evidence in good faith to the three-month-long commission.

If Fick had announced that he was rejecting the commission's recommendation, he would have needed to explain why.

Iscor, still in alliance with remnants of the old regime and wanting a refuge from African National Congress-controlled regional governments, threatened complete withdrawal from the project if government did not bend. Iscor could not afford to move because its approach (ordering equipment, developing its chosen site and hired staff) committed it to that specific site. Moving inland would have meant new plans, another environmental impact assessment (EIA) and several cancelled contracts.

The Campaign for Saldanha is in fact in a worse position than when we started. It



Saldanha Bay harbour: The cargo quay is the subject of a separate environmental impact assessment

PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN HARVEY

appears that Iscor plans to employ a different technology to the one assessed in the original EIA, using scrap (and its complement of heavy metals) instead of iron ore. Now, we have no idea of what the environmental impact of the new technology will be.

Anglo-Alpha's cement factory (on the farm adjacent to the Saldanha Steel Project) and the extension of the cargo quay in the harbour, both contingent on the steel project's going ahead, are the subject of separate EIAs — despite being part of a single industrial complex. There are several other plants planned for the same development whose EIAs are yet to be commissioned. This reveals the strategy of compartmentalising EIAs in order to minimise the cumulative environmental impact of the development.

Another strategy is to neutralise objectors by co-opting them into this process. As in the case of the Saldanha Steel Project EIA, commitments are called for, duly noted and then relegated to an appendix in the final report.

This approach is particularly frightening in the face of the recent Industrial Development Corporation announcement that it wants to turn the Saldanha Region into the Ruhr Val-

ley of South Africa. It is not the environmentalists who are pitting conservation against development; it is, in fact, the industrialists and government who refuse to accept the responsibility of finding middle ground.

The World Wide Fund for Nature and National Parks Board gave the Steyn Commission evidence in opposition to the siting of the steel mill. Although the commission found in their favour, these organisations later sided with Fick's decision.

**O**ne is left wondering about the effectiveness of these institutions' ability to protect even their own interests and can only assume that their capitulation had to do with relationships and personalities. This issue has caused ructions in the Parks Board which is undergoing its own transformation. Its outgoing chief, Naas Steenkamp, is an NP appointee who served on the Gencor board with Bernard Smith (chairman of the Saldanha Steel Project and erstwhile director of Mossgas).

The CSIR, which is conducting the EIAs, has gone so far as to state that a broader strategic environmental assessment is appropriate for Saldanha so that planning for the region can

follow a more thought-through path.

The CSIR is effectively protesting against the process that it has been co-opted into. This plea is made in the Portnet EIA in which the study of the effects of the cargo quay extension has been isolated from that of the effects of the oil storage facility in the harbour.

The Saldanha commission enthusiastically awaits this development. Gradually they have opted to select what they want to believe, listen only to those who supported the project and pulled the class/race card on anyone who threatened their position. Ultimately what they will get is short-term gain which will result in long-term problems.

Clearly, the only way to prevent degradation of the environment, conserve natural assets and promote biodiversity, is to raise the standard of living and develop infrastructure so that the urgently needed sustainable development can be properly managed. The political opportunism which has been manifested in Saldanha is an example of the antithesis of this principle.

Neville Sweijd is a member of the Campaign for Saldanha



# Wetlands battle looms

□ Scarborough dispute 'could affect entire southern Peninsula'

(56) ARG 15/12/95

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

A TENSE legal battle is looming in Scarborough over the subdivision and sale of a property bordering the Cape of Good of Good Hope Nature Reserve and which includes an important wetland area.

The owner of Erf 766, Fred Badenhorst of Constantia, believes he has existing subdivision rights to the property dating from 1921, and six sections are being marketed by a local estate agent.

The local council last year changed the zoning of the property from rural to single residential, without advertising for objections.

Mr Badenhorst infuriated conservation-minded Scarborough residents by using a mechanical digger to gouge a big trench in the wetland section of the property, apparently to create a pond to encourage birdlife.

The Friends of Scarborough group initiated a fund-raising campaign to

raise money for a legal challenge, and late yesterday were consulting lawyers about bringing an urgent Supreme Court application for an interdict against Mr Badenhorst.

Terry Corr, leader of the Friends' group, said residents were "basically up in arms about this" and were supporting the appeal for funds.

"Money is coming in thick and fast," he said.

But, Scarborough resident and botany professor Richard Cowling said he had evidence from the Deeds Office, dated May 1923, that the 1921 subdivision had been cancelled, and he was hoping that an out-of-court settlement could be reached.

Professor Cowling, director of the University of Cape Town's Institute for Plant Conservation and a member of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) management advisory council, said the wetland area on the property was important.

"It's probably one of the biggest wetland areas in the southern Peninsula.

"The boundary of the Cape of Good Hope nature reserve went right through the middle of the wetland, which is a pity.

"And in the old days, they mucked it up by building a berm along the margin and trying to drain the system, but it's still functioning as a wetland."

The change in zoning and the marketing of the plots had come as "a massive surprise" to residents, Professor Cowling said.

"What is very disturbing is that this issue has implications for large sections of the Peninsula.

"Mr Badenhorst is arguing that he's acting on sub-division rights that date back to a general plan for the Scarborough area for 1921. The fact that this erf happens to be in a wetland is just by-the-by, and he's acting on what he believes are his legitimate rights.

"The crucial thing is whether rights granted during the early rounds of planning for Cape Town — and Hout Bay is a classic example — carry through in the face of subsequent conservation legislation like the Environment Conservation Act. "Another area that has a similar problem is the Noordhoek wetlands, and this could actually be an interesting test case."

Previously, when Erf 766 was still zoned rural, a section had been ploughed. This had caused the local extinction of an erica species, Professor Cowling said.

"I've been back since to look for it and it's gone. It was an endemic erica (occurring naturally only in this area) for which I think there are only three or four populations remaining in the world. Fortunately they're all in the Cape of Good Hope nature reserve.

"And I recently discovered a little wetland vygie which is an incredibly localised endemic. It's just hanging on, and is enormously vulnerable."

The wetland provided a service for the Scarborough community because it "polished" the seepage from the village's septic tanks before this entered the Schusters River.

"Another potential problem is that because the reserve boundary is so incredibly artificial, you're not sure what kind of impacts are occurring here that might affect the bigger Schuster's River wetland."

There are a number of other problems associated with developing that

property, Professor Cowling said.

"For example, the medical officer of health is unlikely to allow people to put septic tanks in because of the high water table."

Professor Cowling said they had legal advice that the local council could invoke a section of the Environment Conservation Act to stop development on the wetland portion of the site.

But, Scarborough town clerk Edward Thresher said the council had been advised by its lawyers not to attempt to intervene in terms of this Act.

The provincial authorities had tried to invoke this section of the Act in dealing with developments in George and Knynsa and had "got their fingers burnt".

"It would have to be proven that this is a wetland system before you can go to court ...

"You can't willy-nilly trespass on people's land to determine what is happening," Mr Thresher said.

At the council's request, the mechanical digger had been removed from the wetland, and Mr Badenhorst had indicated he would either not continue with plans for the pond or would wait until there had been some mutually accepted decision on it, Mr Thresher said.

"In the meantime, though, he will continue to take out alien vegetation from the property and will chip this and use it as mulch.

"All the natural stuff will remain."

Mr Thresher said it appeared that Mr Badenhorst wanted to sub-divide on the section of Erf 766 where the six plots were marketed and keep the wetland section "for nature, on his own terms". It's not for me to plead his case," he added.

Referring to the subdivision dispute, Mr Thresher said the local council's hands were "extremely tied", as it appeared there had been a statutory sub-division.

The council had ruled that the zoning be changed from rural to single residential because there had been problems with animals kept on the property.

"The legalities of this would have to be formalised," Mr Thresher said.

"Naturally the council is conservation-minded, and we are pushing for the status of a conservation village."

● At the time of going to Press, Mr Badenhorst could not be contacted.

# Algae causes Muizenberg's brown water

□ *No indication of sewage in the surf*

ARG 15/12/95

(56)

Staff Reporter

THE "brown water" along the Muizenberg coast is in the spotlight again and city engineer Arthur Clayton, who is also chairman of the False Bay Water Quality Committee, has repeated the assurance that it is not an indication of sewage in the surf.

It's all the fault of *anaulus australis*, a unicellular algae that occurs worldwide in surf zones associated with sandy beaches and strong onshore winds, he says. The algae bloom peaks in January and February.

"The algae is unsightly but completely harmless. It is in fact beneficial to the environment in that it provides a food source for fish and other marine life and also mops up a lot of nutrients arising from land-based sources," said Mr Clayton.

He added that regular monitoring indicated that the False Bay water quality generally complied with stringent international standards.

What about the stuff you drink?

Commenting on recent reports and advertisements that referred to the quality of Cape Town's water, the council said in a statement that Cape Town's raw water supplies were drawn from largely unpolluted sandstone mountain catchments.

The average aluminium content was only 0,15 milligrams a litre and drinking water contributed only 4 percent to the dietary intake of aluminium.

Pesticides were mostly not detected and were far below accepted guideline values. Chlorine was controlled to be usually less than 0,5 milligrams a litre and was necessary to en-

sure that the water remained free of harmful bacteria.

The trihalomethane (chloroform and related compounds) was less than the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organisation guidelines.

Preventative measures taken in the early 1930s had ensured that lead was not a problem in Cape Town. Small amounts of copper and zinc were found in tap water arising from domestic pipes and fittings and these two metals were essential dietary trace elements.

In short, the statement said, the city had one of the better supplies of drinking water in the world.

If consumers wish to clean it up still further, they should remember that the activated carbon found in filters provides a good medium for the growth of bacteria and that residual aluminium is not easily removed.

## Danish aid for environment

(56) ARG 16/12/93  
JOHANNESBURG. — South Africa's Mpumalanga and Gauteng provinces will receive R13 million in Danish aid to train staff for environmental projects, a Gauteng official said.

The Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development (Danced) will also help fund the development of a national environment policy, as well as a clear policy on the Biodiversity Convention recently ratified by South Africa.

"There is a shortage of environmental skills ... Danced is going to be funding the training needs in Gauteng and Mpumalanga," said Chris Warner, director of environment affairs. —  
Reuter.

# Minister halts land transfer after protests

ST(M) 17/12/95 (56)

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

**LAND** Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom has stopped a transfer of state land at Simon's Town following appeals by objectors who want Froggy Farm and Boulders incorporated in a new Peninsula national park.

His intervention has delighted pro-National Parks Board lobbyists who want all land deals in and around the Peninsula nature area frozen until a single conservation management authority is installed.

Mr Hanekom told Metro he would probably refer the matter back to his depart-

ment following a "flood" of objections.

This is the first time a cabinet minister has stepped in to impose a moratorium on land-related contracts in the 29 000 ha protected area which will be run as a contractual park by the National Parks Board.

The Western Cape cabinet last week gave its conditional approval for NPB stewardship of the nature area, while Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers has fully endorsed the parks board's new role in the Peninsula.

Land Ministry spokeswoman Sarita Venter said on Friday Mr Hanekom would raise the issue of the morato-

rium with Dr de Villiers and Water and Forestry Affairs Minister Kader Asmal.

Objectors to the land being transferred to the Simon's Town Metropolitan Substructure included the Red Hill Landowners Conservation Group, the Friends of Simon's Town Coastline, the Simon's Town Flora Conservation Group and the Cape Peninsula Conservation Managers Forum.

"I'm overjoyed," Red Hill Landowners Conservation Group member Alida Croudice said on Friday.

"At last a precedent is being set by a minister who says he will put the environment first, and is prepared to reconsider a decision to ensure an orderly transition to NPB management," she said.

# Billionaire takes on SA timber giant over wetlands

By RACHEL  
WATERHOUSE

ST 17/12/95

A FIGHT for control of rare resources in southern Mozambique is pitching the South African timber giant Sappi against a US billionaire with important political connections.

The battleground is Matutuine district on the coast, bordering South Africa and famed for resorts such as the Maputo Elephant Reserve.

While Sappi has plans to cover a large chunk of Matutuine with a eucalyptus forest for making paper in South Africa, Louisiana businessman James Blanchard III wants to turn the area into a private game reserve.

The idea for the forestry project began in 1987 during the civil war, when Matutuine was under the control of Renamo rebels.

Keen to counter Renamo by giving South African private interests a stake in the area, the Frelimo government provisionally approved a 32 000ha forestry project involving Sappi and Mozambican parastatals.

But the war prevented the project from going ahead and Sappi is now keen to restart it, saying it promising jobs and multi-million rand profits for Mozambique.

But scientists recognise Matutuine's swamp forests and wetlands as deserving international protection. Last year Sappi was asked to fund an environmental impact assessment on the area.

The Natal University institute it contracted concluded that eucalyptus trees would use too much water and destroy the area's rare ecology.

This would contravene the international convention signed in Rio de Janeiro to protect biodiversity (signed by Mozambique), ruin the beauty of the zone and end plans to restore its neglected elephant reserve.

Mozambique now sees a chance to combine conservation and tourism.

The World Bank has financed studies on the possibility of a "transfrontier conservation area" linking Maputo Elephant Reserve to Tembe Reserve in South Africa. Mr Blanchard buys into that idea.

He was among Renamo's key US backers during the civil war. Now he has spent about R3,65-million on a proposal for a R3-billion project to turn 200 000ha into a "world-class tourist resort".

James Perrot, the Maputo representative of Blanchard Mozambique Enterprises, says: "Now Frelimo is no longer Marxist, Blanchard is ready to invest in Mozambique."

# Job cheer as alien vegetation gets chop

(56)  
ARG 18/12/95

## Boost for tourism as bodies link up in Natal

Dateline: DURBAN

**K**WAZULU-NATAL'S three conservation bodies probably will merge next year to centralise policy and boost tourism.

They are the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation, Natal Parks Board and the conservation arm of the Natal Provincial Administration.

KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation chief Nick Steele said they hoped to complete the amalgamation by March or April.

"It will be beneficial to tourism in KwaZulu-Natal because there will be one central policy which will be best managed by pooled resources and knowledge. "There is a great diversity of eco-systems in this province which would be best served by one, good strong conservation body," he said.

Natal Parks Board spokesman David Hibbs said the merger would improve chances of increasing the less than 10 percent of KwaZulu-Natal land currently under conservation.

"We will be in a stronger position as one conservation body to work towards the acquisition of more land."  
— Reuter.

**R**OSIE Tsepo of the Goniwe Park shack settlement at Villiersdorp was hot, tired and sweaty — but she wasn't complaining.

The 29-year-old unmarried mother of a 10-year-old had just returned from a day in the mountains where she'd used a long-handled panga to hack out rapidly expanding stands of invasive trees like hakea, pines and black wattle.

Her task is part of the innovative Fynbos Water Conservation Project — a R25 million initiative funded by the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office at the instigation of Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal to remove water-guzzling alien vegetation from the country's important water catchments.

In the Western Cape the project is being managed by Cape Nature Conservation, in consultation with the Western Cape RDP office and the Rural Foundation, and R13,5 million is being spent on eradication programmes in the Limietberg, Hottentots Holland and Outeniqua nature reserves.

The project is just two months old, and already 1 153 previously unemployed people from communities living close to Du Toit's Kloof pass, Stettynskloof near Worcester, Grabouw, Jonkershoek, Villiersdorp, Kleinmond, Oudtshoorn, Mossel Bay and George have been trained and started working in the mountains.

"Eventually, we could be employing as many as 2 500 people," said Western Cape project manager Christo Marais of Cape Nature Conservation.

"This is the biggest environmental conservation project ever tackled in the Western Cape, as far as I know.

"Logistically, it's a massive exercise. We've never been confronted with something this size — and there have been some nights when I couldn't sleep, just thinking about it."

The funds must be spent before the end of the financial year in March, and there is pressure from environmentalists and politicians who are extremely keen to have the project succeed.

"We've spent just over R2 million so far — we've got another R11,5 million to go!" Mr Marais said during a press visit to Villiersdorp last week.

It's hard work in the mountains, made tougher by the scorching Boland sun which beats down on the workers.

For her pains, Ms Tsepo gets R30 a day, and she's been equipped with a smart yellow sun hat, yellow tee-shirt, overalls, boots, gloves, safety equipment, a water bottle and small backpack. She also had training before setting out.

This is her first steady income since arriving in the area from Mount Fletcher in the Transkei three years ago.

Does she understand what the project is about? "Yes — I'm working so that there will be more water," she responded.

One of her colleagues is 26-year-old Mavis Bhukaza, who has a nine-year-old child. She's also been jobless since moving to Villiersdorp from Stutteheim four years ago.

"I really want to work and this is the only work I can get," she said.

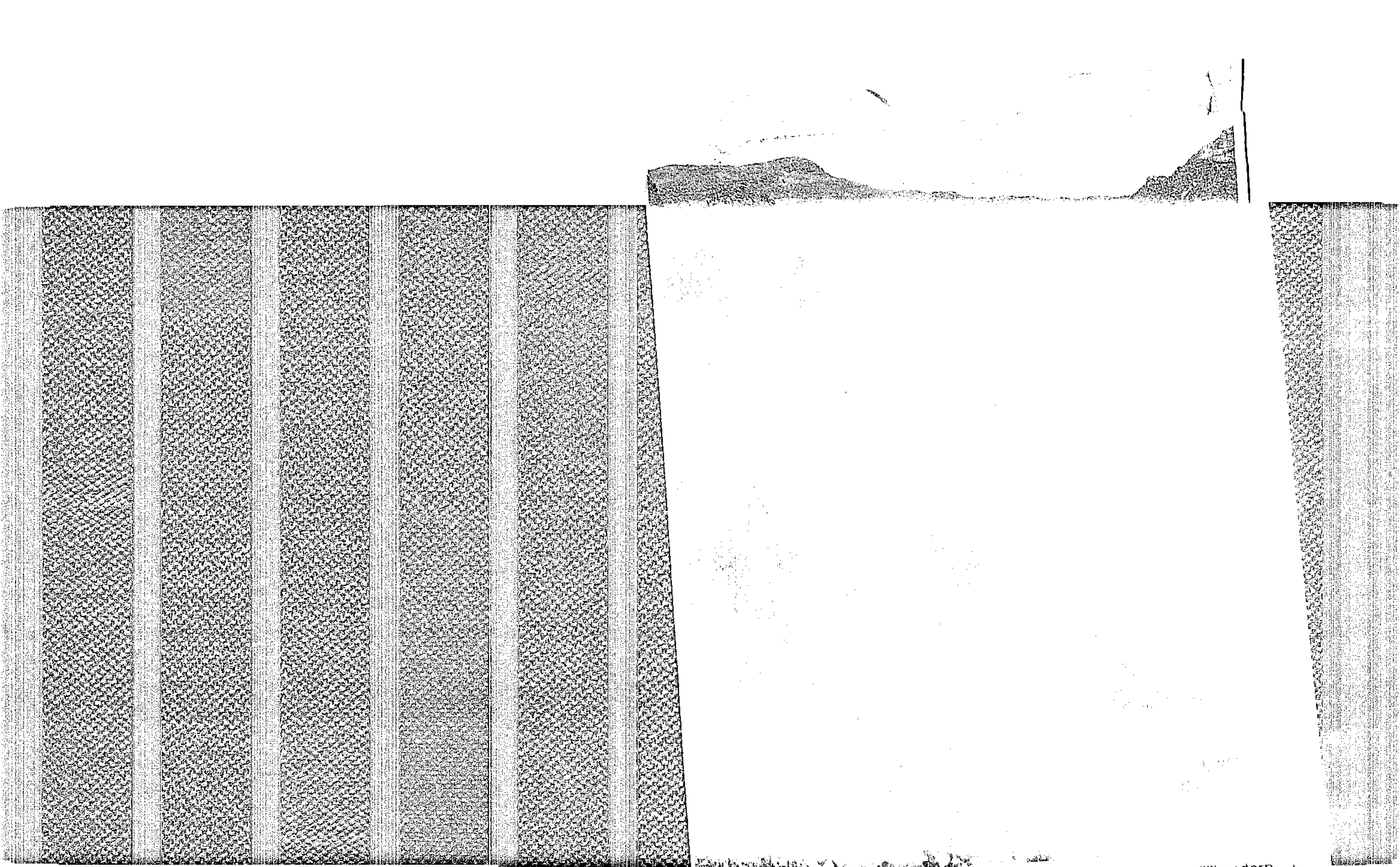
At Villiersdorp, as at some other centres, Cape Nature Conservation has established day-care centres for working mothers like Ms Bhukaza and Ms Tsepo.

Vuyana Bonga, 35, originally from Idutywa in Transkei, has been living in Goniwe Park for the past five years. Most of the time, he's been unemployed, although he has had odd labouring jobs.

"It's hard work but it's alright. I don't have any other work."

He also understands the project's objective: "Those trees — they drink a lot of water."

The project is not without hiccups.



□ **THE GOAL:** Indigenous mountain fynbos, like this example in Villiersdorp nature reserve, uses considerably less water than alien invasive plants such as hakea and pine trees — visible here as the dark green patch in the centre of the kloof in the background.

Pictures: JOHN YELD, The Argus.

Some 63 Cape Nature Conservation employees have been seconded to the project, including 45 labourers who have been acting as unpaid supervisors.

"They're also from disadvantaged communities, although they have a full-time job, and we feel they should also get something from the project," Mr Marais said.

However, some of the workers think the R30-a-day pay isn't enough.

"But we've compared our rate with the neighbouring farms. If we push up our rates too much we will draw people from other jobs, which we don't want to do," Mr Marais said.

"We're looking at introducing a piece work system, so that they have the potential to earn more, and also at setting tasks for a full team, with bonuses payable for more work.

"We would like to wean the workers from the need for constant supervision, to

the point of us being able to set a week's or even a month's work and say 'Go for it!'. But this is a difficult thing to achieve and it's something we have to be very careful with."

Three independent auditors have been appointed to check on the work and to ensure funds are being spent effectively.

Cape Nature Conservation spokesman Dieter Odendaal said one of the most important spin-offs of the project was that communities could now learn at first-hand that conservation measures could be to their direct benefit.

"In the past, we tried to convince people of the importance of conservation, but never had the funds to run pilot projects of this nature to demonstrate conservation benefits," he said.

Another spin-off was that entrepreneurs and businesses became involved.

# No warning about risks — company slammed

ENVIRONMENTALISTS have hit out at an "arrogant" AECI for failing to inform neighbouring communities like Macassar about possible risks from the 15 000-ton sulphur stockpile, and for not having a proper contingency plan to deal with emergencies.

They also expressed concern at the effect of the sulphurous acid, formed by the interaction between the burning sulphur and the huge amount of water dropped on it, on water courses and the aquifer (underground water supply) in the area.

The environmental performance of chemical and other facilities like AECI's plant which were adjacent to residential areas should be audited externally, they said.

Chemical engineers have confirmed that sulphur dioxide — formed by the burning sulphur — can be highly damaging to health in large concentrations.

Jim Petrie of the University of Cape Town's chemical engineering department said he was not familiar with the details of AECI's sulphur stock but that it would have oxidised during the fire to form sulphur dioxide.

"And sulphur dioxide is an incredible irritant. It is definitely not carcinogenic

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



(cancer-forming) but if inhaled in large quantities it can cause your lungs a hell of a problem," Dr Petrie said.

"The risks to human health are really dictated by concentrations at ground level — and that's not a trivial question to answer."

Marlene Laros, the Wildlife Society's Western Cape branch conservation ecologist, and Liz McDaid of the environmental organisation Earthlife Africa spent much of yesterday at the scene.

Ms Laros said it had been "worrying" that people had reported smelling burning sulphur from about 6pm on Saturday and the two deaths had occurred about 9am, but that Macassar residents had only been evacuated in mass from about 1am.

"So clearly the contingency plans weren't in place."

Other major concerns were how leachate — water seeping through the sulphur into the ground — had been controlled in the past and how the sulphurous acid would be monitored and controlled in future.

"We weren't able to get close enough to see whether there are proper facilities there for drainage or whether there's been any borehole monitoring of underground water quality.

"I believe they are going to sink boreholes because AECI is looking at decommissioning production there, so all that needs to be discussed," Ms Laros said.

Ms McDaid said the fire had been "a major crisis".

"AECI didn't appear to have enough people on hand to deal with the risk, and the Macassar residents didn't have a clue about what the risk was."

The chemical manufacturer had been "arrogant" in stockpiling sulphur in such quantities without any kind of contingency plans and in allowing the Macassar community to carry the risk.

"They've been using water to put it out which may be the correct action as far as

the fire is concerned, but now there are fairly large amounts of sulphurous acid that will either run into water courses or sink into the aquifer.

"So one has to ask who will take responsibility for that?" Ms McDaid said.

"And if they are decommissioning the plant, what are they going to do with that huge stockpile of sulphur and how will they prevent it catching fire again?"

There had been a "botch-up" in communications, Ms McDaid continued.

"It was fairly obvious there was no contingency plan — people were left without food, for example."

Ms Laros said she had been told that at least 167 people had been admitted to Hottentots Holland Hospital, and they had visited the school and civic centre, which were used as emergency centres.

"People there were very angry at the lack of a clear message for them.

"All they wanted to do was to get back because they were very concerned about possible looting, but there was no message to them about whether it was safe to return."

"People were also frustrated, and there seemed to be a lack of communication between the fire departments and people managing the emergency centres."

&  
YOUR  
EARTH

*The innovative Fynbos Water Conservation Project is a R25 million initiative funded by the national Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office to remove water-guzzling alien vegetation from the country's important water catchments, and it's in full swing in the Western Cape.*

*Environment Reporter JOHN YELD went to check on progress in the Villersdorp mountains.*



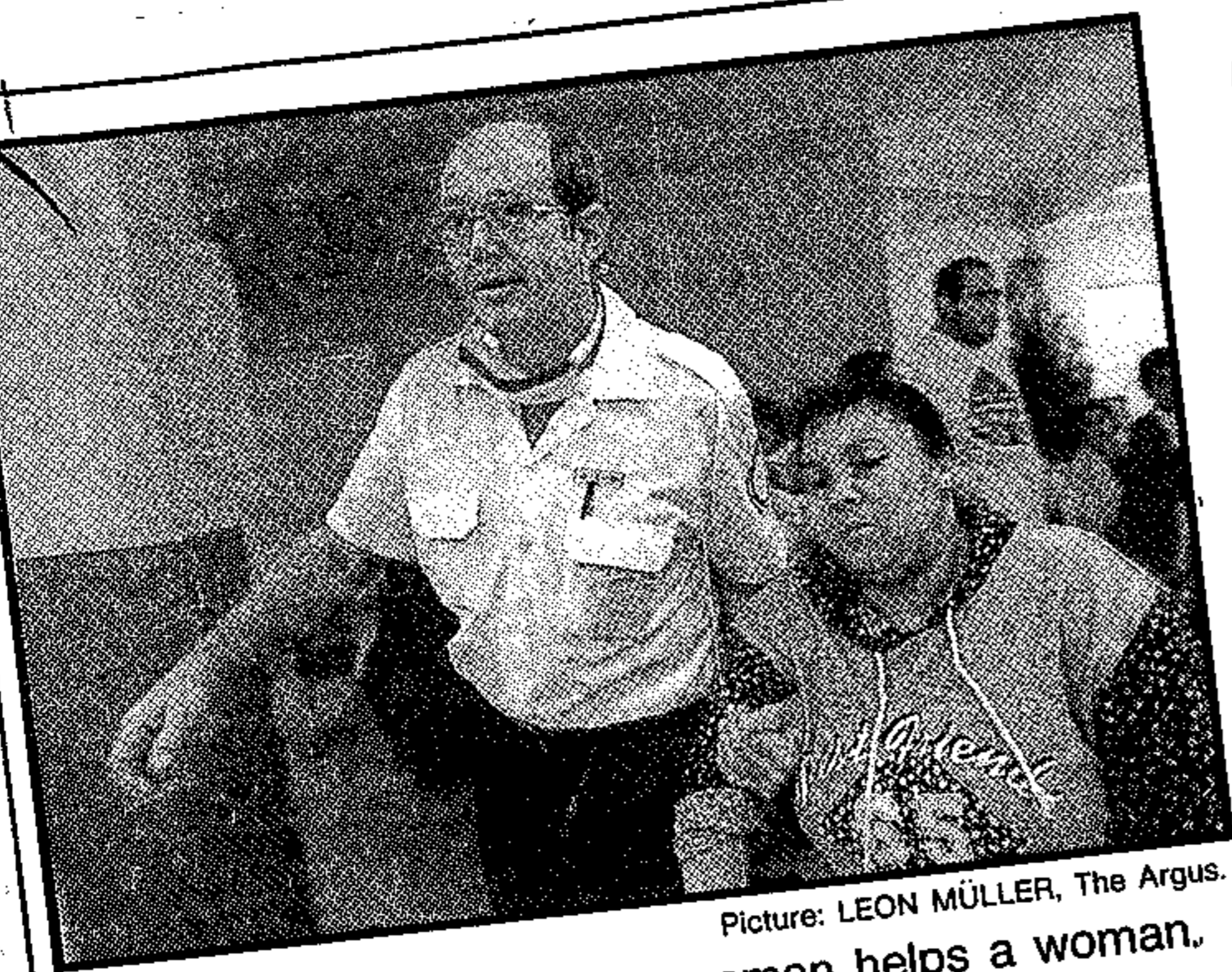
□ **RECONSTRUCTING THE MOUNTAINSIDE:** Workers taking part in the RDP-funded Fynbos Water Conservation Project hack out young invasive pine trees in the mountains above Villersdorp. They are among the 1 153 previously unemployed people who have already started work in the Western Cape sector of the project.



(56) (A/B)

AR 18/12/95

# Choking crowd halts wedding fest



Picture: LEON MÜLLER, The Argus.

**FIRST AID:** An ambulanceman helps a woman.

## Heroes with burning eyes just kept right on helping

Staff Reporter

AMBULANCE staff emerged as heroes in the fire drama in Somerset West, driving through dense vapour and smoke which descended on Macassar where hundreds of residents were overcome by sulphur fumes.

Medics Shireen Hudson and Willie Niewoudt of the Somerset West Ambulance Services were manning one of the first ambulances which reached Macassar.

For Miss Hudson and Mr Niewoudt it was, at first, just another night on duty. But soon the chaos and the gas-enveloped nightmare drove the pair to breaking point.

They were heading for a house where a resident was having severe breathing problems when the fumes they were driving through thickened and conditions became unbearable.

They had almost reached the house when it became a matter of: "Turn around or become pa-

tients themselves".

But it was too much for Miss Hudson. She burst into tears when Mr Niewoudt turned the ambulance around just metres before they could reach their patient.

"Our eyes and throats were burning. We could not breathe and visibility was poor but the people who relied on us were more important," said Miss Hudson.

"We knew we could die in the smoke but that fear in us was completely overshadowed by our duty.

"But when we physically couldn't go any further and were forced to turn around, leaving desperate people behind it was too much to handle. I had to find an escape valve.

"That's when I could not stop the tears," said Miss Hudson.

They drove until they were out of the smoke, treated themselves with oxygen and then returned to the area, again risking their own lives.

Staff Reporter

FOR newlyweds Randal and Vanessa Petersen, the sounds of wedding bells and party music were abruptly replaced by howling sirens and coughing gas victims evacuated from a choking hell.

The wedding celebrations were in full swing at the Somerset West Community Hall late on Saturday night.

Then suddenly, as if out of nowhere, the evacuees poured in out of the dark.

Emergency vehicles and traffic patrol cars with flashing lights escorted a convoy of police lorries packed with people — evacuated from Macassar — to the hall.

Men and women, old and young, gasped and sneezed as they burst through the door of the hall while Mr and Mrs Petersen and their surprised guests huddled to one side.

The hall which the Petersens hired for their wedding reception was one of the first shelters used to accommodate victims of the Somerset West gas drama, in which tons of choking sulphur dioxide fumes descended on nearby Macassar after a fire ignited a chemical dump.

"Eventually we squeezed into a corner of the hall and sat on a blanket. Vanessa was still in her wedding dress. We had been looking forward to danc-

ing the night away, but now it looked like we were in the wrong hall," said Mr Petersen.

The new Mrs Petersen said her wedding day would surely be a "day to remember".

"I'm not worried about our thousands of uninvited guests. We too could not return to our new home in Macassar.

"What concerned me was just how long we would be stuck in the hall before we could go on honeymoon," said Mrs Petersen.

Meanwhile more and more people had streamed into the hall, which was filling fast.

Wedding guests — and even the groom — had to queue with a long row of people at the toilets.

Everywhere people were sitting in small groups on the floor where, not long before, wedding guests had been dancing happily, unaware of the drama in Macassar.

One of the Petersens' guests had not lost his sense of humour. He said he knew the reception would be a "gas" but he did not expect this to be literally true.

Mr Petersen said he did not mind the invasion.

"In times of trouble, my wife and I are happy to help — even on our wedding day," he said while hundreds of evacuees, many in pyjamas and wrapped in blankets, mingled with his guests.

# Terrified community scrambles to escape

Staff Reporter

DAVID September, like hundreds of others, ran into his home and sealed it off by closing all windows and doors to escape the big "burning fog".

But soon he joined neighbours who grabbed a blanket or two and with just the clothes they wore, took to the street, running around aimlessly, hoping for a breeze, hoping for a lift out of the area — and eventually hoping for an ambulance to take them out of hell.

"The gas was just starting and there was still fresh air inside our home," said Mr September.

"We thought nothing of it. We had closed all the windows, watched television and prepared food.

"The smell would blow over, I thought.

"But every time I looked out of the door there was more fog, more smoke and the gas started to seep into the house.

"Eventually, my eyes felt like hot coals and my throat was aching.

"It's a scary feeling when you run outside for help and it's worse.

"I found the whole world outside there in Da Vinci Street, also looking for fresh air. You think you are going to die," said Mr September.

The rumour of a deadly gas which could kill within minutes, spread through the neighbourhood.

Soon visions of heaps of people lying unconscious in their homes or in the streets became a real fear.

"We did not know enough about the disaster — we feared the worse," said Mr September.

"All hell broke loose," he said.

It was darker than usual outside. There were no stars, the streetlights dim in the fog.

A minibus which had been parked for the night revved up in the driveway and pulled into the street.

## Nissen helped restore restore calm in the chaos

ANDREA WEISS, Staff Reporter

CHRIS Nissen, leader of the African National Congress in the Western Cape, worked through Saturday night at Macassar, helping to restore calm as thousands of panic-stricken residents evacuated their homes.

Western Cape health minister Ebrahim Rasool was also at the scene during the night.

Mr Nissen said Macassar residents had arrived at his home late on Saturday to tell him about the disaster.

From home, he went directly to Tygerberg Hospital where about 10 people were being treated after inhaling sulphur dioxide fumes.

He then went on to Macassar where he put together a community co-ordinating committee which helped the police to move people to different evacuation centres.

Mr Nissen was full of praise for all the emergency services. "They handled it very well."

18/12/95

People scrambled from everywhere and piled in. Inside was a crowd of worried faces and red eyes.

Left behind were many more groups of anxious people who had no transport, standing on street corners with blankets wrapped around them.

Scores of police cars and emergency vehicles with sirens and flashing lights sped up and down streets, warning people to get out of the area.

Garden gates were left open. Dogs ran around in panic after their owners had left in a hurry.

Another minibus stopped. Again people piled in, crying and shouting. The sliding door was still open but the taxi pulled off. A baby's bottle filled with milk fell out of the minibus and was crunched under one of the rear wheels.

"We did not know whether we would see our homes again, whether we would see another day again," said Mr September, who was one of the last to be picked up by an emergency vehicle.

WIFE'S AGONY AS FUMES KILL HUSBAND

# 3 die in gas

# cloud horror

THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS evacuated Maccassar to escape the sulphur gas cloud from a blaze at AECI's storage dump in Somerset West on Saturday. Two brothers died separately in the chaos. **MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

THE anguished wife of one of the men who died in the AECI gas cloud on Saturday night was rushing her husband to hospital when she stalled the car in panic and then watched in horror as he died.

Brothers Mr Andrew Williams, 54, and Mr Ronnie Williams, 47 — both of Strand and both asthma sufferers — died when the sulphur gas cloud from the chemical blaze at AECI's sulphur storage dump near Somerset West enveloped Maccassar, forcing the entire town of 2,500 to evacuate.

A third person is also believed to have died from gas poisoning.

The brothers were on their way to separate weddings in Maccassar when they were overcome by the fumes.

Mrs Sandra Williams said yesterday she had been driving her husband, Andrew, to a wedding reception in the Sonchem hall.

"It was about 9pm. We could see the smoke and smell it," she said. "We had just passed the security guard when Andrew said his chest was closing. He told me to drive to the doctor. I did, but there was no one there.

"I was rushing to get to the hospital because he was panicking and anxious and couldn't breathe. On Figrove bridge I stalled and flooded the car and couldn't start it.

"I didn't know what to do. I got out and luckily a motorist who stopped was someone I knew. I told him to get an ambulance. "When I went back to the car,

ET 18/12/95

(56)

(56)

Andrew's head had fallen forward on to the dashboard. I felt his neck and his wrist, but there was no pulse. He was already dead."

Mrs Williams waited at the roadside alone in the dark until her niece and her husband came to fetch her. "They took my husband

father came around for a bit and then passed out again. The ambulance took half-an-hour to come and when it arrived he was dead."

Mr Arthur Williams, brother of Andrew and Ronnie, said he was at a wedding in Strand when he was told Ronnie had had a serious asthma attack. He and his wife, Mary, a nursing sister at Hottentots Holland Hospital, drove to the hospital and were told Ronnie had died.

"We were waiting for his body to arrive and there were lots of other people arriving with hankies and lappies over their faces. We heard that my other brother, Andrew, had also died. We could not believe it. Two brothers dying in the same hour."



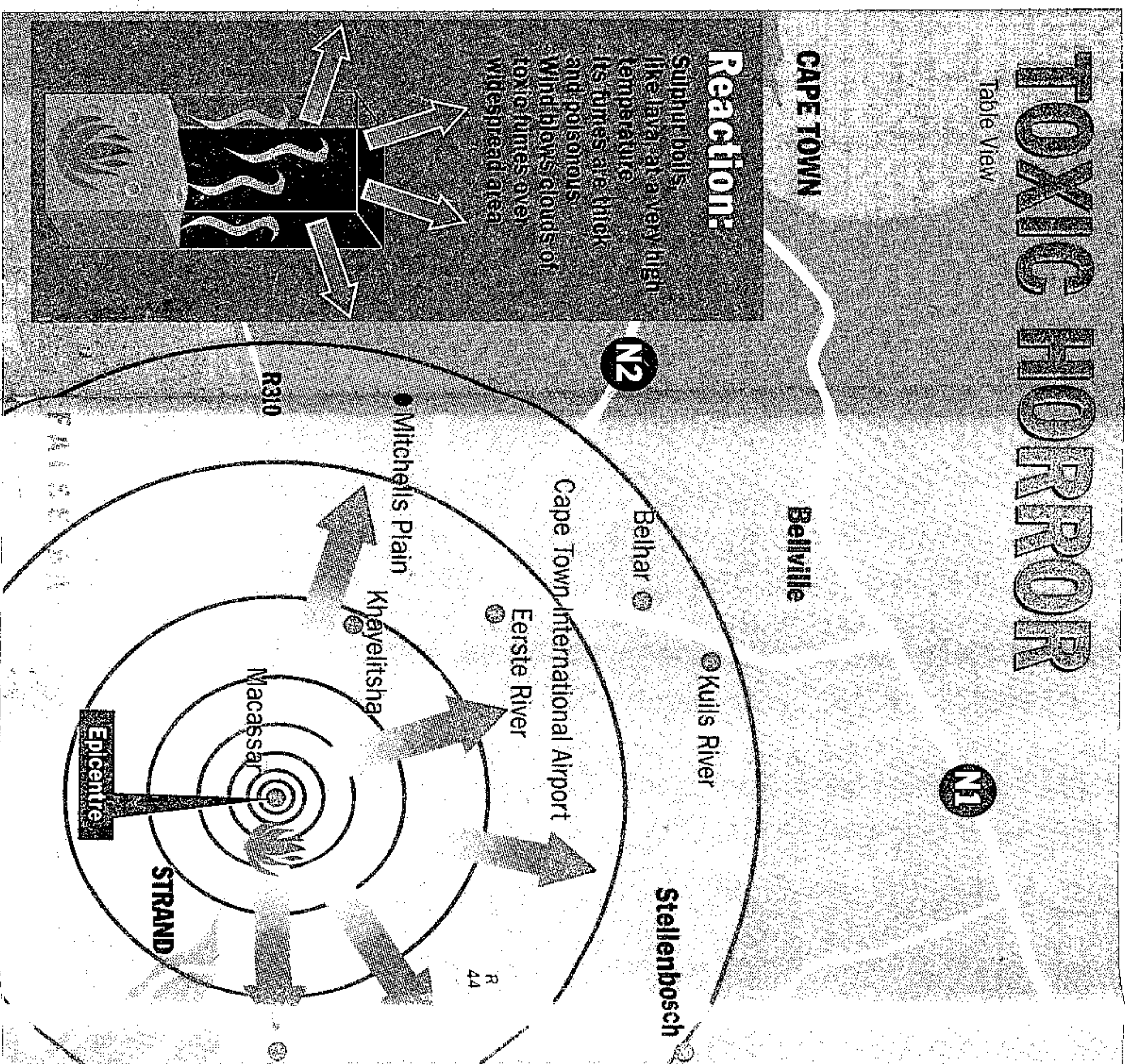
**OVERCOME IN TAXI:** Mr Ronnie Williams

out of the car and tried to resuscitate him, but it was too late."

Mrs Deidre Bouwers said her father, taxi-owner Mr Ronnie Williams, was driving wedding guests to a reception in Mervyn Park, Maccassar, when the sulphur gas enveloped the vehicle. "His chest started to close. He stopped the taxi and passed out. The other people helped him onto the grass, but the gas was very strong so they took him into a house. They phoned an ambulance and my

## TOXIC HORROR

Table View



# Healthcare to



## *Fallout from sulphur blaze ruins crops*

ARG 18/12/95 (45) (56)

**JOSEPH ARANES**  
Staff Reporter

FARMERS in the Somerset West/Stellenbosch area are faced with huge financial losses after the cloud of sulphur from the disastrous chemical fire burnt their crops.

As today's rain followed the fire, farmers were inspecting the damage the sulphur fumes and acid rain had caused to their crops. Chemical giant AECI now faces massive damage claims from furious farmers.

The blaze at AECI's storage dump in Somerset West dispersed thick clouds of acrid sulphur over the farming area destroying vegetable and fruit crops.

When mixed with the rain that followed the fire, the sulphur changed to form sulphurous acid that burnt the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruined vegetable crops in the area.

A number of farmers were horrified today when they saw the extent of the damage after inspecting their farms.

Rust-en-Vrede owner Brian Pickering said he could not believe what he saw — all his lettuce, spring onions and cocktail tomatoes were burnt.

"Everything was just wiped out in a single go. It looks as if somebody threw

Pictures: LEON MÜLLER

(56) (45)  
**Stepped-up bid  
to sell sulphur  
stockpile likely**

JOHN YELD, Environment Reporter  
and Reuter

EFFORTS to sell the remaining sulphur stockpiled at AECI's Somerset West plant will probably be accelerated.

This follows the devastating fire at the weekend which resulted in the death of two brothers, the hospitalisation of more than 150 people and the evacuation of about 2 500 Maccassar residents.

The stockpile of about 15 000 tons of sulphur at AECI's plant in Somerset-West is technically owned by the Department of Trade and Industry, but the chemical manufacturer has accepted full responsibility for the day-to-day management of the storage site.

About half the sulphur, part of the apartheid government's strategic stockpiles of minerals and oil during the sanctions era, has already been disposed of.

The presence of the remainder was the subject of continuing discussions with the government, AECI managing-director Boet Coetzee said today.

The sulphur — one of three stockpiles around the country — was mentioned during hearings by the parliamentary joint standing committee on public accounts last month, when it was disclosed that some of it was contaminated.

But committee chairman Ken Andrew said today that he could not recall anything during discussions about the sulphur that had given cause for concern on environmental grounds.

"Quite frankly, our discussions are essentially about money matters and assets that might be lying around," said Mr Andrew.

"Nothing sticks in my mind other than that they're running those procurements down, that some of the sulphur was contaminated, and that they were trying to find a buyer."

Mr Coetzee said that although the sulphur was owned by the state, his company accepted responsibility for the day-to-day management of the stockpile.

"This (state ownership) doesn't absolve us from the custodian role."

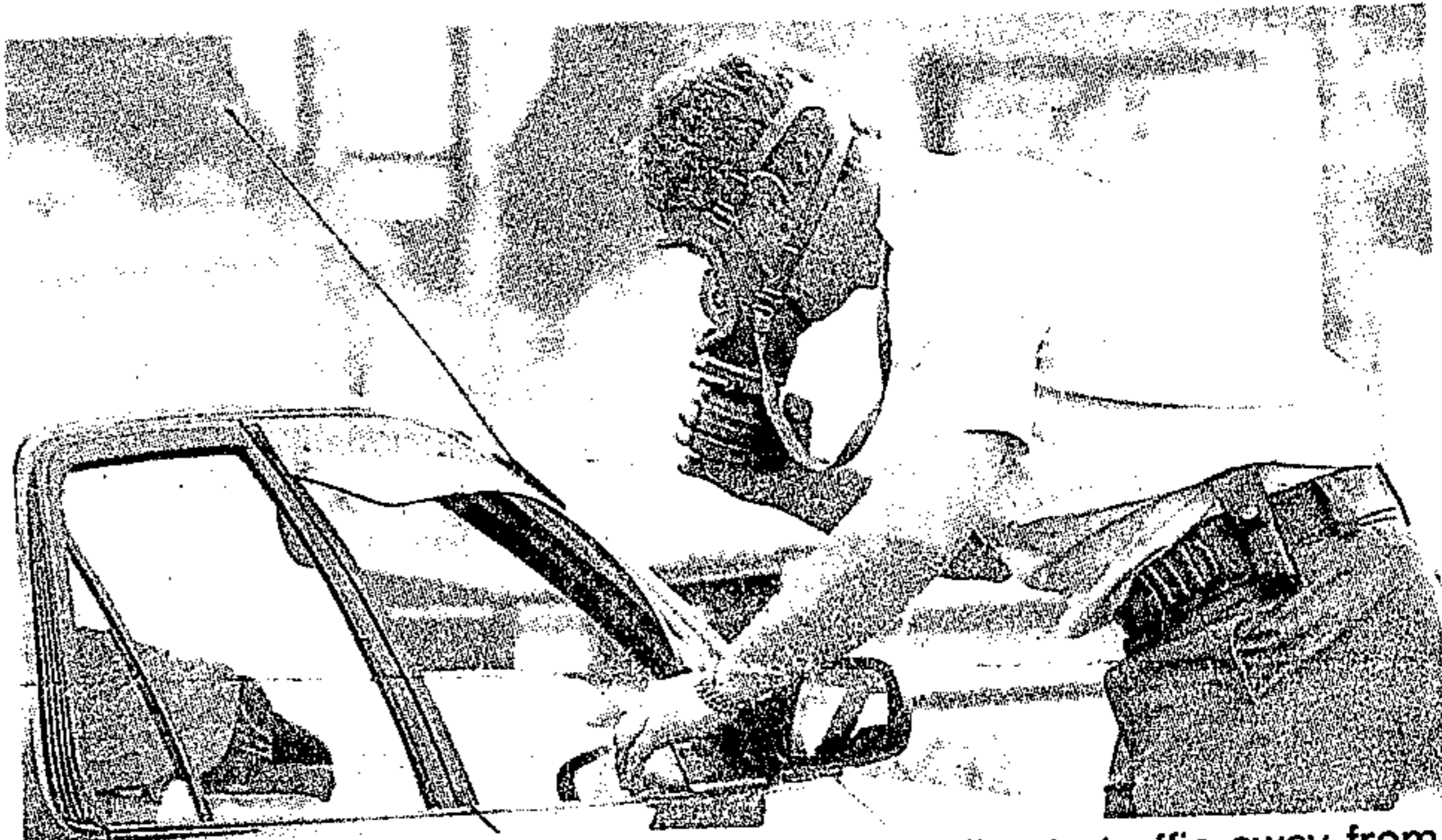
AECI had been involved in regular discussions with the government about the sulphur for "quite a while".

"This is a continuing process with them," Mr Coetzee said.

The amount of sulphur in the stockpile had been reduced by about half.

"We've been working hard at reducing it. It's not as though anyone has been delinquent.

"And I guess you can expect this process (of removing the sulphur) to accelerate now."



**GAS JOB:** A policeman wearing a gas mask directs traffic away from the N2 which was closed to prevent motorists driving into the gas.

BD18/12/95

## Chemical inferno claims three lives

Amanda Vermeulen

(56) (183)

SOMERSET WEST — A chemical fire near Somerset West claimed the lives of three people, forced thousands to flee their homes and caused traffic on the N2 to be diverted yesterday.

SA Police Service liaison officer Captain Wicus Holtzhausen said the fire began in a stretch of open land owned by chemical group AECI and spread to a nearby sulphur pit, the size of two rugby fields, between the highway and the sea.

Deaths and injuries were the result of gas inhalation. Many people were taken to hospital.

About 2 500 people living in the adjacent township, Maccassar, were evacuated. They were first taken to a shopping centre and later moved to schools in the area. Two helicopters were being used to fight the blaze.

Holtzhausen said no property was damaged. The cause of the fire would be investigated.

# Fire safety measures inadequate says AECI

OWN CORRESPONDENT  
Star 18/12/95

Cape Town - A joint committee has been formed and an independent commission of inquiry is to be held after a raging chemical fire caused havoc in Somerset West at the weekend.

The resolution to hold an inquiry was taken after more than 20 Macassar community representatives, an AECI delegation, high-profile police officers and provincial ministers held a three-hour meeting in the Somerset West town last night.

Two Strand brothers died and scores of residents from Macassar and surrounding areas, were treated in hospitals for gas inhalation after a fire raged at the AECI chemical dump in Somerset West on Saturday.

The committee - comprising Macassar town councillors, community leaders and AECI officials - agreed that they would address immediate problems such as medical accounts, hospitalisation, suggestions that food might be poisoned by the fumes as well as thefts from Macassar houses after residents had left.

The commission of inquiry is to investigate the cause of the fire and how to implement an action plan to safeguard Macassar and nearby communities should a similar tragedy occur in the future.

AECI, the company that stockpiled the sulphur on behalf of the Government, has acknowledged that safety measures were inadequate.

AECI managing director Boet Coetzee said more than 2 000 pamphlets were being distributed in the communities today detailing counter-measures in dealing with food affected by the sulphur dioxide.

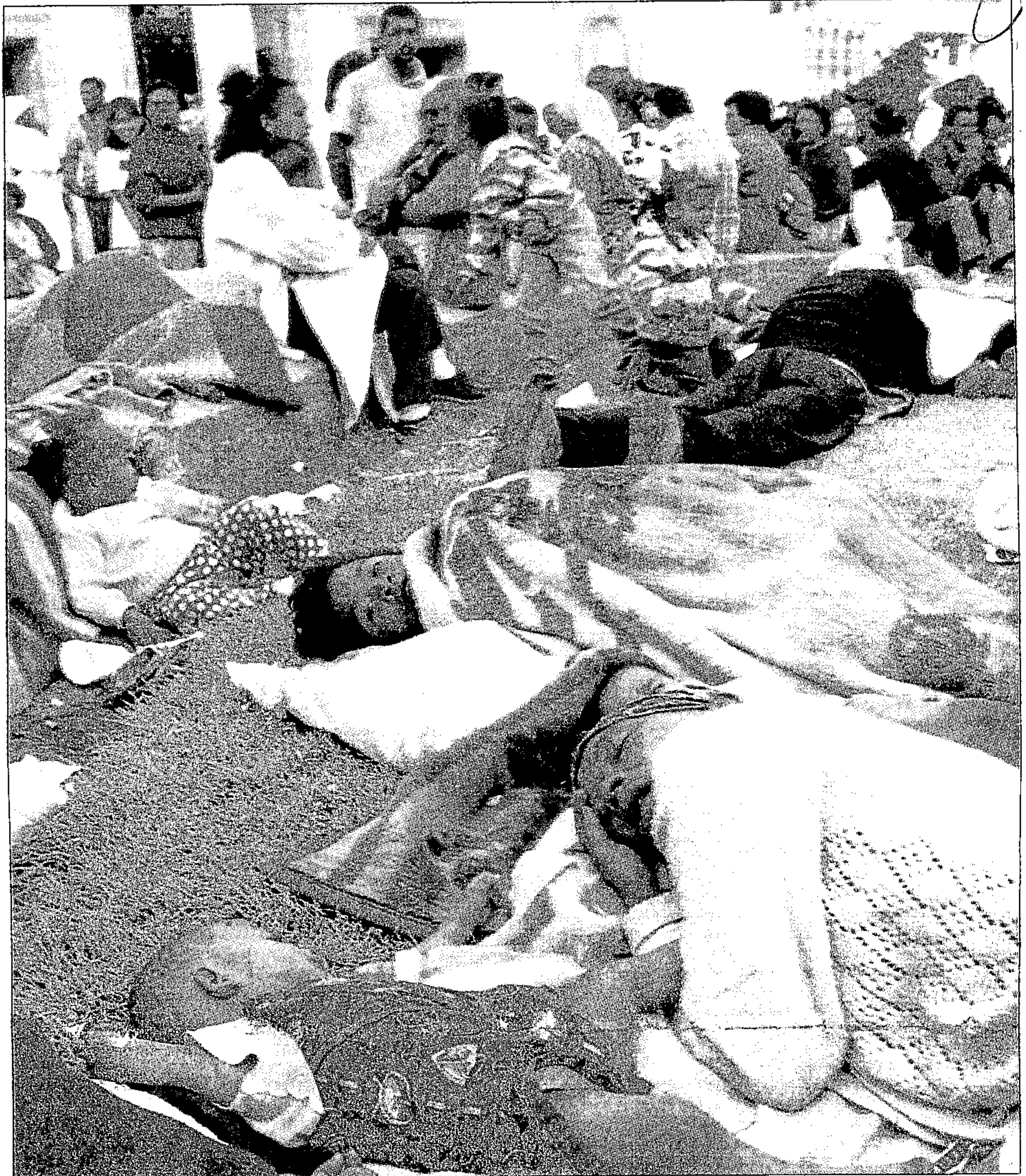
A local pharmacist said: "Excessive amounts of sulphur dioxide can cause acute bronchitis and be fatal when inhaled by asthmatics.

"When it is taken into the digestive system, it can cause gastric problems such as bleeding, vomiting and diarrhoea."

AECI managing director of operations services, Boet Coetzee, regretted the fire but added that AECI believed its precautions against fire reaching the sulphur, which included 30m fire breaks, had been adequate.

Coetzee said the company had not allowed for the possibility that a 70km/h south-easter would drive burning grass to the stockpile.

AECI spokesman, Jean Nel, said the heap of raw sulphur, between 10 000 and 15 000 tons was a "strategic stockpile" set up by the previous government when sanctions became a threat three decades ago.



First-aid station ... people take refuge outside the city hall in Somerset West, near Cape Town, after thousands were evacuated during Saturday night because of poisonous gas leaking from the blazing AECI chemical plant near the Macassar township.

## Wife's helpless anguish as her husband suffocates in cloud of deadly fumes

Cape Town - The anguished wife of one of the men who died in the AECI gas cloud on Saturday night was rushing her husband to hospital when she stalled the car in

her panic and watched in horror as he died next to her.

He was one of two brothers who died as the sulphur gas cloud from the chemical blaze at

AECI's sulphur storage dump near Somerset West enveloped Macassar. Andrew Williams (54) and Ronnie Williams (47), both of The Strand and both asthma suf-

ferers, were on their way to separate weddings in Macassar when they were overcome by the fumes.

Sandra Williams said she had been driving her husband Andrew to a wedding reception.

"We could see the smoke and smell it. We had just passed the security guard when Andrew said his chest was closing in. He told me to turn around and drive to the doctor. I did but there was no one there. I was rushing to get to the hospital because he was panicking and anxious and couldn't breathe. On Firgrove bridge I stalled and then I flooded the car and couldn't start it again. I saw that Andrew's head had fallen on to the dashboard.

"I felt his neck and his wrist but there was no pulse. He was already dead," Mrs Williams said. - Own Correspondent.



Looming danger ... a huge cloud of smoke and sulphur vapour hangs over Macassar.

(297) (58)  
**Danes give out R13 million**

GAUTENG'S and Mpumalanga's departments of environment affairs have received a R13 million boost for capacity building from the Danish government.

These are two of four environmental projects of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism which will be sponsored by the Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development.

The other projects are support for developing a new national environmental policy for South Africa and the development of an official policy for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

South Africa ratified this convention on November 2, and is now required to develop a strategy to implement it.

*Sewetan 18/12/95*



# Broader access to ~~marine resources~~ marine resources

CT 11/2/95 (56)

**ANTHONY JOHNSON**

DISADVANTAGED communities — and not just a few big privileged companies — would in future have access to South Africa's lucrative marine resources, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs Mr Bantu Holomisa said last night.

The minister announced a new marine policy was rapidly taking shape that would result in a major shake-up of the fishing industry.

Opening the first fully international fisheries exhibition in South Africa, he told representatives from 29 exhibiting countries it had to be accepted South Africa's marine resources "belong to all and not just a privileged few".

"More and more people from disadvantaged communities are staking their claims to the country's lucrative marine resources and making their voices heard," he said.

A fisheries policy development committee formed in October last year had been investigating ways to ensure a fair distribution of profits gained from marine resources.

Mr Holomisa said many aspects of the policy would be debated in coming months but a number of principles were beyond debate:

- The policy had to further the objectives of the RDP, particularly job creation.



**NEW POLICY:** Deputy Minister Mr Bantu Holomisa

- All South Africans, and not just a privileged few, should benefit from the country's marine resources.


- Management decisions would have to depend on the best possible scientific advice.

- It was essential the management process be marked by transparency, accountability and broad participation.

Mr Holomisa said while the government was committed to broadening access rights, the guiding principle of sustainable yield would never be compromised.

## Iscor shares not boosted by decision on Saldanha

Michael Urquhart

NO 11/2/95 (56)   
ISCOR's announcement it would be rejoining the stalled Saldanha steel project had not boosted the group's share price, as the poor steel price and the general negative sentiment towards commodity stocks had offset the positive news, analysts said.

They said investor sentiment on the counter was shaky after the "posturing" about the project.

Iscor first decided to go ahead with the project at a budgeted cost of R3,6bn, then pulled out citing delays due to environmentalists' pressure. Then came revelations that certain unforeseen costs had seen the total rise to R5bn. Iscor then re-entered after the Industrial Development Corporation managed to restructure the financial package to bring the budgeted cost down to R4,5bn.

The steel producer had been generating bad publicity with its marketing joint venture with large trading firm MacSteel International. An analyst said until this was cleared up, the share was unlikely to show any upward movement.

Another analyst pinned the malaise in Iscor's share price — which peaked at 475c in March, and which closed yesterday 1c down at 329c — strictly on the poorer steel market. He said people had expected Iscor to return to Saldanha and this had been discounted already.

The poorer steel market was the main factor driving the price. The share had little upside potential until the price showed a sign of increase.

# Taiwanese consul acts on sea pollution protest

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

FISHING boats from the Republic of China (Taiwan) have been told by their consular officials to stop polluting False Bay, after an appeal by the Dolphin Action and Protection Group.

The vessels have been using Simon's Town harbour for repairs and there have been complaints by local skippers to the action group that the Taiwanese sailors were dumping plastic and other waste overboard.

Action group secretary Nan Rice wrote to Taiwanese consul-general Dick Fu recently to draw his attention to the problem.

In her letter, Mrs Rice said they had been getting reports that the Taiwanese fishing vessels were polluting the bay.

"For example, a crew aboard a yacht in Simon's Town saw two Taiwanese vessels waiting entry to the harbour.

"Just after they had been taken in by a tug, they found a heap of packets which con-

(56)  
ARG 2/12/96  
tained squid lures floating on the water. The packets had not been in the water long."

Mrs Rice said she had previously asked the consulate to draw Taiwanese sailors' attention to the fact that South Africa was a signatory to Annex Five of Marpol, the international convention to prevent pollution from ships.

"Apart from it being illegal for any vessel entering South Africa's 200 nautical mile economic exclusion zone to dispose of any plastics overboard, numerous local people make a living from fishing in False Bay," Mrs Rice told Mr Fu.

"Marine mammals, some of them endangered species, and many sea birds frequent the area, all of which are prone to entanglement in discarded fishing gear and the swallowing of plastics.

"Such litter can also be a hazard to ski-boats and smaller fishing vessels.

"I have checked that the reception facilities in Simon's

Town dockyard are adequate, so there is no excuse for disposing of plastic garbage into our waters."

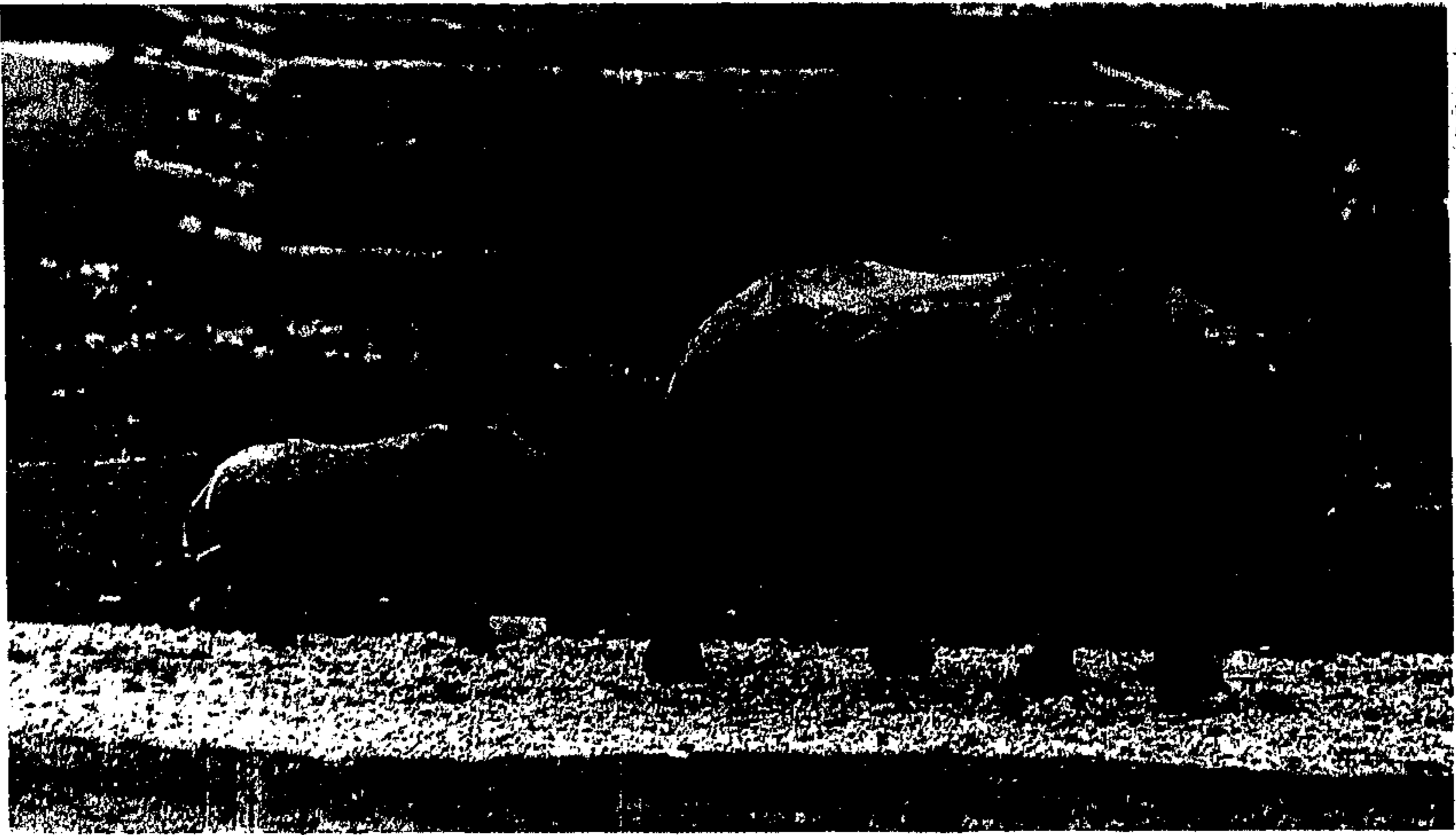
What was required was an extensive educational programme, Mrs Rice said.

In response, the consul-general said Taiwan strongly advocated the protection of marine life and his government appreciated the efforts of Mrs Rice's group to keep the sea clean.

"The good message we would like to convey to you is that, in the matter of environmental co-operation, you can be assured of our full support," he said.

"Following your advice, we sent a letter as matter of urgency to every Chinese vessel in Table Bay harbour and Simon's Town, together with a translation of Annex Five of Marpol, advising them that the dumping of plastics, etc, into the sea is illegal.

"To our encouragement, we received an enthusiastic response from all vessels, giving their full commitment to abide by the law to keep the environment clean."



□ **COMING ATTRACTION:** Rhinos will soon be back on the West Coast.

# Wild on the West Coast as the rhino comes back

ARG 2/12/95 (56)

■ Black rhinos are due to be resettled on the West Coast, where they were wiped out centuries ago.

**DAVID BREIER**  
Staff Reporter

**RHINOS** will soon be roaming free near Cape Town for the first time in about two centuries.

A game fence is being built around the 30 000 ha West Coast National Park at Langebaan to prepare for the return of the rhino.

Park warden Otto von Kaschke said he hoped the fence would be ready in little more than a year, to welcome back the endangered black rhino, whose forbears once roamed the Western Cape.

Early European settlers mercilessly wiped out the Western Cape's big game, which they regarded as a threat to farming. These included the local black rhino, elephants and the Cape lion, now extinct.

But elephants need a much bigger area than the park can provide, and lions may be a bit of a handful. So the park aims to bring back the black rhino, which are easier to manage.

Black rhino are highly endangered because of the demand for rhino horn in the Far East.

At the moment, the park's larger animals are squeezed into a small corner of the reserve near Postberg which is properly fenced. The public is only allowed into this section for two months a year, in spring during the flower viewing season.

But when the whole park is properly fenced, the animals will be re-

leased to roam freely, along with the newly-introduced black rhino. This will give the public a chance to see the animals 365 days a year.

These include eland, mountain zebra, hartebeest, bontebok, springbok, gemsbok and ostriches.

The bulk of the park at present hosts only smaller antelope as well as some ostriches.

Three black rhino were recently re-introduced in the Karoo National Park outside Beaufort West.

Mr Von Kaschke said the West Coast park rhino programme would depend on the availability of rhino from various breeding programmes — possibly the Augrabies National Park, the Karoo park or Vaalbos.

Since rhino have not roamed the West Coast for centuries, wardens have no idea what types of local strandveld bush they prefer to eat — the hook-lipped black rhinos browse leaves, unlike their square-lipped white rhino cousins which graze grass.

So only a very few will be introduced initially to monitor what type of bush they prefer and how many rhinos the park can carry without harming the vegetation.

Some other parts of the Western Cape have renosterveld vegetation, although it is not certain whether this was named after the rhinos that once ate it. Mr Von Kaschke said another theory was that from a distance, renosterveld bush looks like rhinos.

OUT.

access to the

s Word Pro.

standard for Word Processing today

3.1 and by mid December for Windows 95

individual users it's packed with new

filters let you work with files created in other

ere created in Word Pro itself. But

it.

onal press have said about Word Pro

indows Word Processing". Unlike other word

new features seem awkwardly packed

ly integrated, consistent, and logical.

a sight to behold

n Computing) and the new Word Pro is not

erworld, April 24

net. Word Pro enables users to access and share

FTP and WWW servers and fully edit them in

The recent discovery of a major bird-breeding colony at Bloulei — a wetland on the site for the proposed multi-million rand Century City development north of Ysterplaat — raised conservation concerns that planners say will be dealt with by these studies, writes Environment Reporter JOHN YELD.

# Planners' Promises to Birdlovers

ARC 4/12/95 (51)

THE Century City site adjoining the N1 freeway north of Ysterplaat is being planned as a large, mixed-use project which includes intensive urban development, say the developers, Monev Development Company.

But they have also promised that extensive water features on the site will incorporate a wetland environment with habitats for birds, as well as an "appropriate" system of stormwater management and water quality control which may include natural reedbeds and retention areas.

These areas could increase opportunities for ecological diversity on the site, say the developer's planning consultants.

The consultants recently distributed draft terms of reference for studies of the site's geo-technology, hydrology, botanical diversity, freshwater ecology, birdlife, fauna and possible archaeological significance, required for detailed planning.

The draft document has been sent to various interest groups — including the Bricks Dam Conservation Committee, which has initiated a petition calling for Bloulei to be preserved as a bird sanctuary — environmentalists, academics and authorities identified as having an interest in the project.

According to the preamble to their document the project envisages a "large mixed use development including extensive water features integrated with intensive urban development", designed and developed in stages.

The first stage is rezoning approval — not yet granted — and the second the preparation of a general site development plan for the entire property.

"Before this is approved, a range of technical studies are required, as well as a more detailed process of public consultation."

The draft document says two types of water bodies are planned for the site.

"One is a large, permanent water body which will be surrounded by urban development, provide a setting for large buildings and human activities along the wa-

ter's edge, and will allow boating.

"This water body may also include islands and inlets where human activity is restricted and birdlife is encouraged."

The water flow in this area would be maintained by natural inflow as well as surcharges from an exterior source: probably treated water from Milnerton's wastewater treatment works.

"The second type of water body that is envisaged is a wetland, comparable in size and function to the original Bloulei."

"At least three options should be considered: maintaining this wetland as the existing Bloulei site; moving it to the southern end of erf 1609 (the main development site); or moving it on to (adjoining) erf 18001.

"The focus of the study should be on the feasibility of establishing a wetland at these locations ..."

"The study should ultimately present a suggested location, or alternatives, for a wetland on the site based on geo-technical considerations and urban development constraints."

Points outlined in the draft document include:

- The hydrological study must assess a water reticulation system able to cope with stormwater run-off from the adjoining Summer Greens development as well as from the proposed new development.

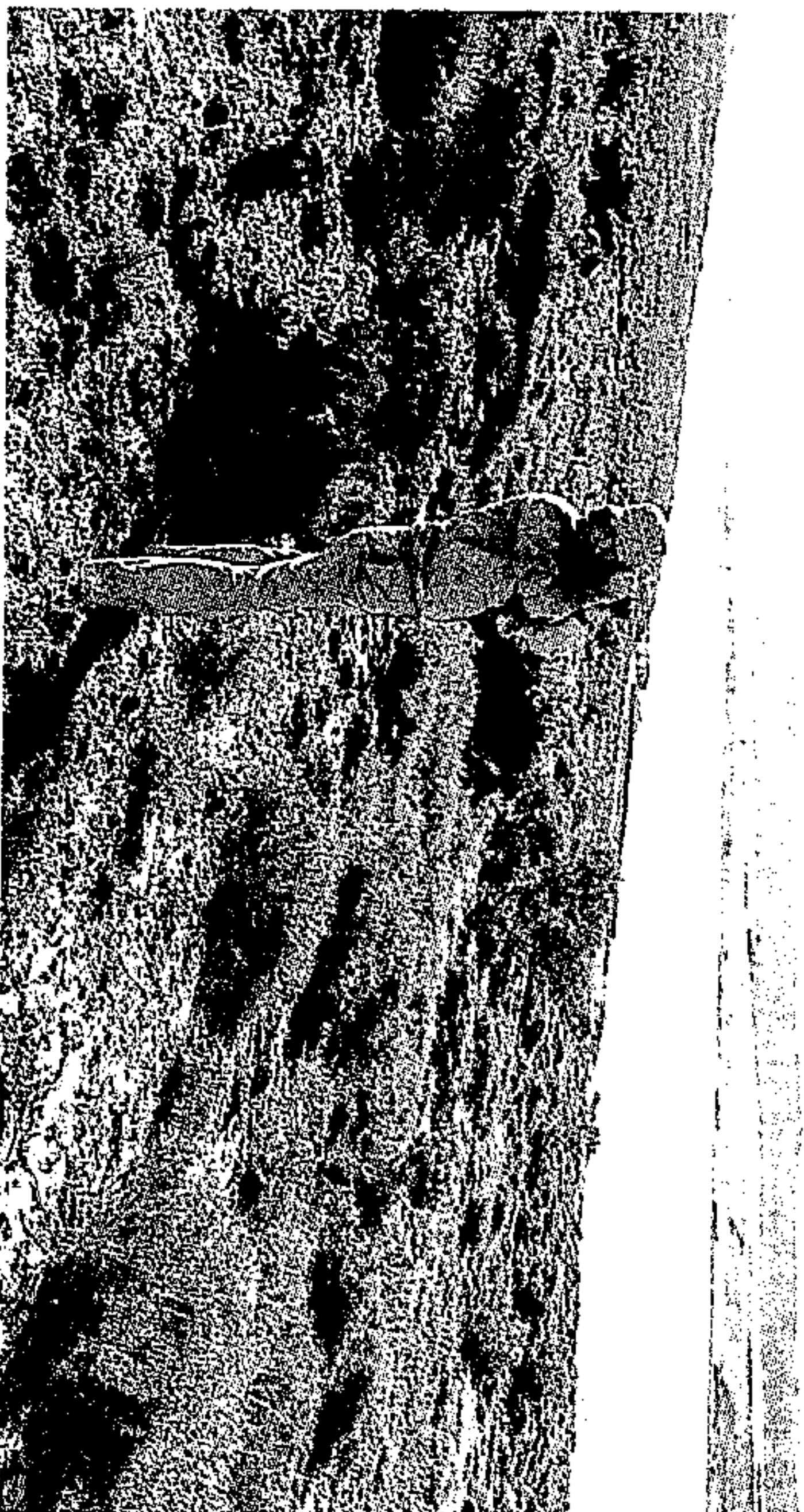
- It must also assess the water reticulation system's ability to cope with sustaining a wetland environment that is attractive for birds and other wetland ecosystems.

- The bird study must suggest how best to incorporate birdlife into the project.

- It must also assess the impact of current and future bird populations on aircraft safety at Ysterplaat air force base, and of aircraft noise on birdlife.

- The existing character of Bloulei as a seasonal seep and the long-term sustainability of this ecosystem needs to be assessed.

- Recommendations must be made about the feasibility of re-creating a wetland ecosystem at an alternative location to Bloulei, within the site, "where potential conflicts between urban development and ecological systems can be minimised".



**ECOLOGICAL JEWEL ... AND A DISASTER:** Lovely Verlorenvlei near Elands Bay on the West Coast is being declared a provincial nature reserve after a conservation battle lasting nearly two decades. Above, Cape Nature Conservation senior researcher Tony Williams looks out over the unspoiled middle section of the vlei. Below, this illegal bridge near the mouth, seen being "repaired" last year, is to be demolished and an ecologically sound structure erected in its place.

Pictures: JOHN YELD, The Argus.

## 'Ecological jewel' to be declared nature reserve

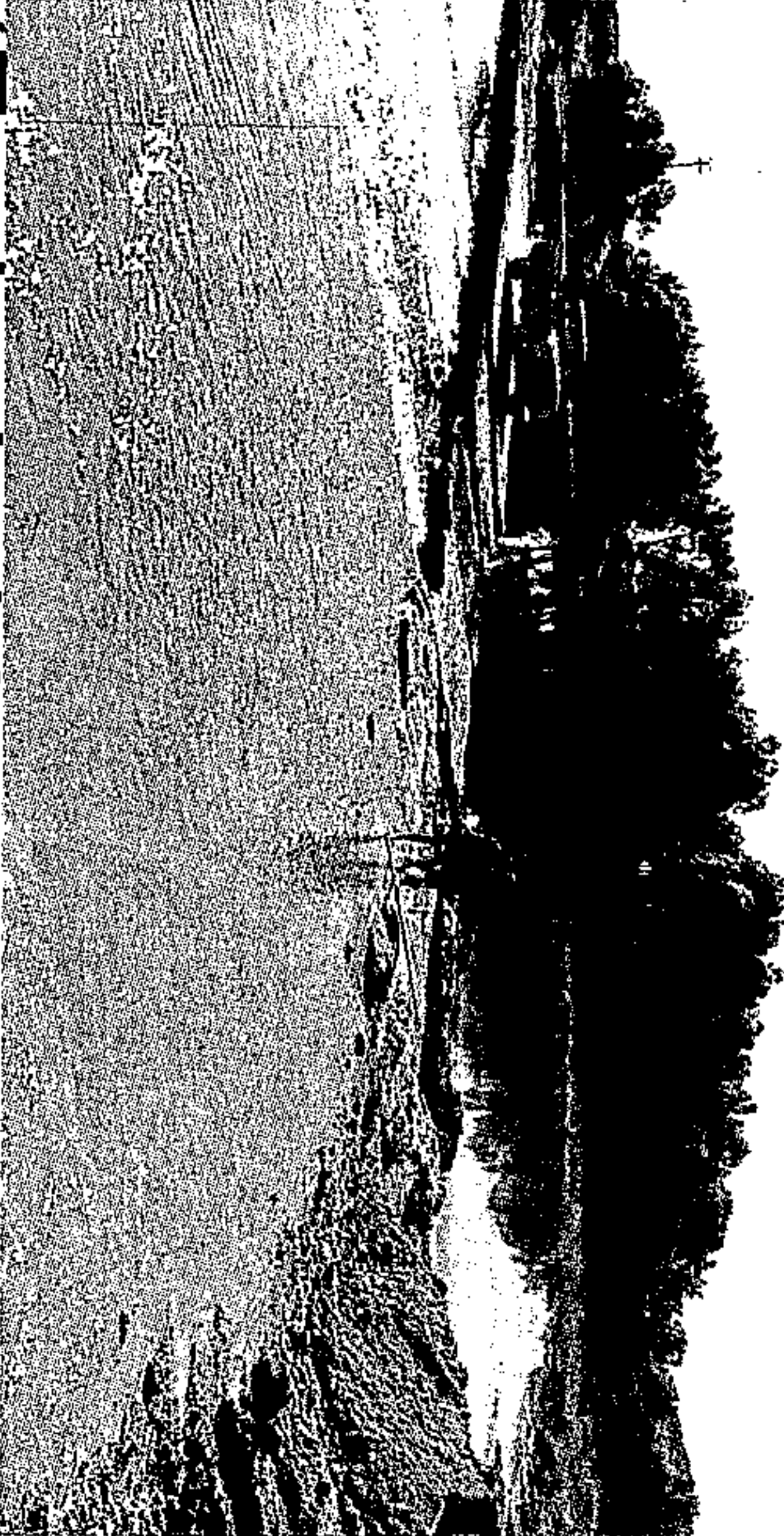
Environment Reporter

LOVELY Verlorenvlei at Elands Bay — frequently described as one of the ecological jewels of the West Coast — is at last to be declared a provincial nature reserve, after a conservation battle lasting nearly two decades.

The borders of the proposed reserve, which will include all existing state land in and around the vlei, are being surveyed and Cape Nature Conservation is negotiating with private landowners on the vlei's banks to have their properties declared private nature reserves.

The move to declare the reserve — announced by Cape Nature Conservation last week — follows the recommendations of the Verlorenvlei task group and approval for the transfer of the state land to the Western Cape regional government by Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom.

"The establishment of the Verlorenvlei nature reserve is the result of almost 20



years of trying to conserve this extraordinary and fascinating area," said Cape Nature Conservation spokesman Guy Palmer.

"It is, however, only the first step towards the successful conservation of Verlorenvlei, which has been degraded after years of non-sustainable and ecologically insensitive land use practices.

"The future of the vlei and the survival of the neighbouring communities go hand-in-hand, and a positive relationship between the vlei and its neighbours is the next step towards achieving a common goal of conservation and progress."

Although Cape Nature Conservation would be responsible for managing the reserve, neighbouring landowners would be involved in compiling a management plan for the area.

Verlorenvlei's status as a Ramsar Convention site — for the protection of wetlands and water birds — was internationally recognised.

Asmal's alien plant war an example to others

**GREEN SCENE**

John Yeld



NORMALLY, chainsaws and environmental protection are about as compatible as crude oil and fresh mountain streams.

Heart-rending images of giant hardwood trees crashing to the floor while chainsaw-wielding workers stroll with impassive faces towards their next centuries-old "victim" are the stuff that grace the covers of reports of green groups the world over.

So there was special satisfaction in watching a clip on SABC news last week about the innovative R25 million reconstruction and development programme (RDP) project of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to remove alien vegetation from this country's vital catchment areas.

There was this Eastern Cape forestry worker, wielding his chainsaw as expertly as any Brazilian logger, sending those moisture-slurping blackwood trees crashing to the ground in Baviaansklouf, where Port Elizabeth gets its water supply.

The ranks of what Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal poetically calls silent invaders who come in the night, stealing our water, were mown down unceremoniously.

It probably wasn't that aspect of the project that caused the casual labourers, pictured plugging up the logs as they fell, to smile so broadly.

Apart from the fun of making an unexpected television appearance, these previously unemployed workers were no doubt delighting in the fact they now had paid employment.

Similar images can soon be seen all over the country as the project gets into full swing in other significant catchment areas, including the Hottentots Holland mountains.

If other government departments were to emulate the innovative thinking that is produced by Professor Asmal's staff, there would be significantly fewer of those disparaging RDP jokes doing the rounds.

On the slopes of Devil's Peak saws have been wielded with similar enthusiasm during the past few months, with the target also alien blackwoods, Port Jackson and rooktraps acacias.

In this instance the motivation is the conservation of Table Mountain's rich plant diversity.

This Botanical Society-motivated project has produced remarkable results in an amazingly short time.

Funds must be found to continue this superb work — and in sufficient quantities to branch out to all the infested areas of the Cape.

## Western Cape water experts appointed

PROMINENT Western Cape experts have been appointed to the new 15-person Water Research Commission. The commission will be chaired by Colin Johnson of the University of Western Cape. Also on the commission are Arthur Clayton, Cape Town city engineer; Bryan Davies of the University of Cape Town; and Albert Rooseboom of the University of Stellenbosch. — Environment Reporter

Lower river promoted

SEVERAL projects to promote the conservation and restoration of the lower Olifants River have been successfully launched in recent months, regional steering committee chairman Fritz Bekker said this week.

A recent meeting heard that a three-day river awareness course devised by the Olifants River Forum to educate interest groups on the river's diversity and vulnerability had proved to be valuable. — Sapa.

4/12/95

04/12/95

## Talks on Table Mountain

(56)  
Municipal Reporter ARG 5/12/95

CAPE Town City Council is about to start negotiations with the National Parks Board, which is set to take over the management of Table Mountain.

The council has been asked to authorise the city's legal adviser and the city engineer to start negotiating two contracts with the NPB.

The council has also been asked to give an annual grant of about R6,5 million

# New broom set to sweep the city clean

□ *Hawker-zones singled out for attention*

(75-311) (56)  
ARG 5/12/95

**PETER GOOSEN**  
Staff Reporter

BEING a litter bug will cost you . R70, to be exact, as the Cape Town City Council gears up to keep the city and environs clean over the festive season.

The campaign to keep Cape Town's beaches and city centre clean during the holiday season is being mounted by the city's cleansing department.

More than R170 000 will be spent on additional labour, more equipment and more refuse containers.

Co-chair of the City Council's engineering services committee, Ian Iversen said casual labour would be employed up to Febru-

ary 9. They will be employed to remove refuse during peak periods in streets and on beaches.

Overtime is being increased by 65 percent to provide essential overlap between day and night shifts and all managers and inspectors will be on duty during Christmas.

New on the Cape Town scene will be a "green machine" a super vacuum cleaner which will operate in the CBD seven days a week. The imported machine has been loaned to the Council as part of an experiment.

A beach trailer has been allocated to help remove kelp and other flotsam from False Bay beaches. An additional 1 200 50-litre garbage bins would be put in place, 600 in the CBD and 600 on the beaches. An additional 12 660-

litre containers will be strategically placed forhawker refuse. A further 15 1 100-litre bins would be placed in high-density hawker areas.

Mr Iversen said hawkers and the unpredictable south-easter were the two worst refuse problems. Every hawker the Council could find had been given a pamphlet pointing out the advantages of keeping their area clean.

To try and counter the effects of the south-easter, 25 trial pedestal bins and 20 specially designed beach bins would be tried out at Camps Bay.

For the city centre a compactor vehicle would be dedicated to a special beat to collect hawker refuse all day and everyday. For a four week period there will be 30 casual workers in the CBD instead of the usual 12.

# Refuse dump

(56) Sameta

Residents of Phola Park want dump next to the township moved

By Vuyelwa Vika

**A** DUMPING SITE in Dimbaza, set aside solely for domestic waste, is being used for industrial waste, sparking off fears in the Phola Park community that this could become a serious health hazard.

The site is only 100 metres from Dimbaza, the residential area of Phola Park, near King William's town.

A health worker at the local clinic said most of their patients were children whose feet and ankles had been "burnt by finely ground iron or steel debris" dumped by a nearby steel manufacturing plant. She said one woman's face had been burnt by the same debris.

An *Ecn-DNA* journalist recently witnessed trucks from nearby industries dumping waste as scores of women and children sifted through the rubbish in search of things to use, sell or eat.

Some people's heads were covered with white dust as the wind blew debris from a tiling company in their direction. Children sneezed and coughed as they breathed in the dust.

Local civic leader Mr Ndoyisile Madolo and township superintendent Mr Boniwe Njamini said the dump posed a health hazard and should be moved.

## Waste pollutes everything

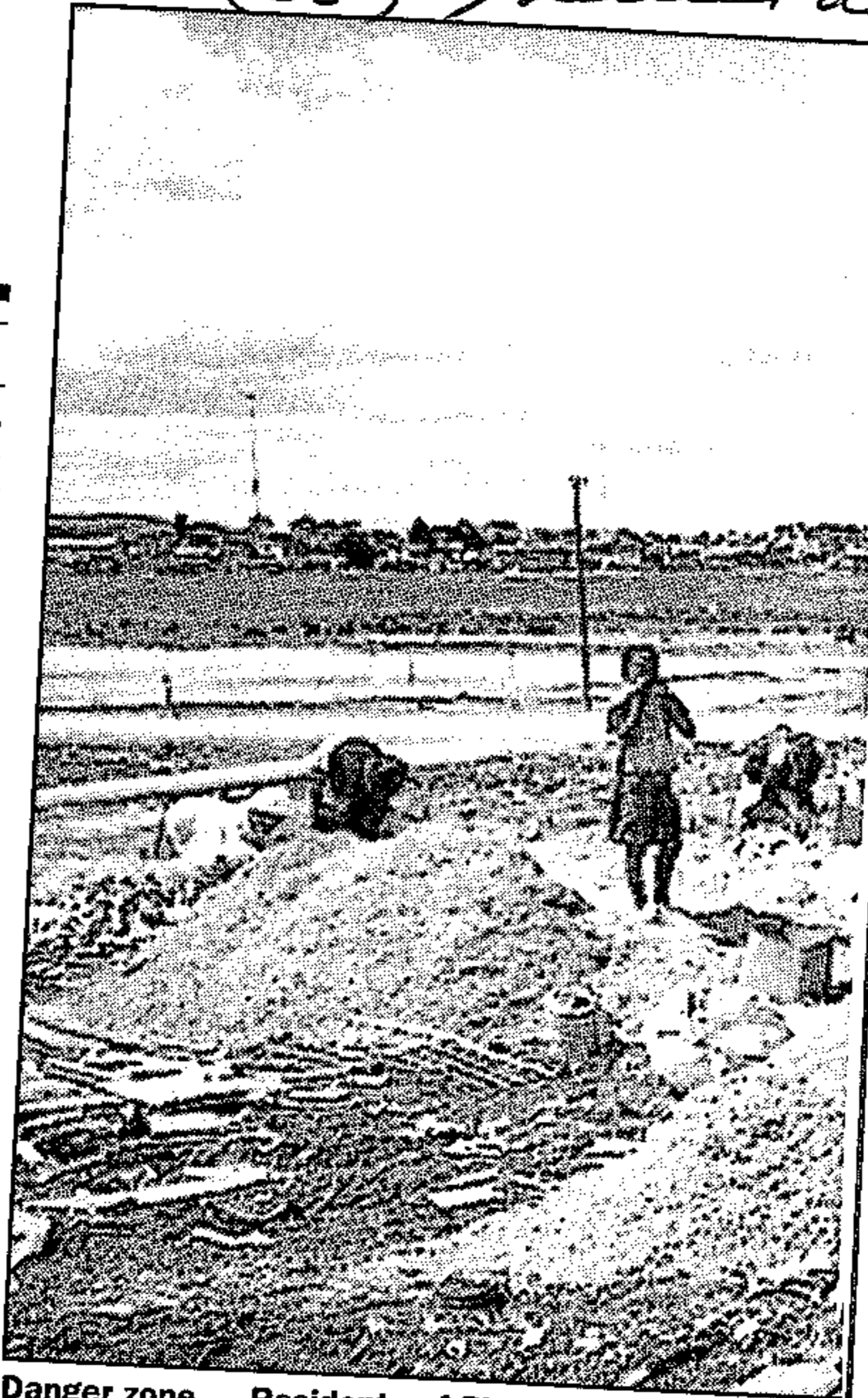
Madolo said: "Some of the waste gets into the dam where we fish, our children swim when it's hot and our livestock - which also feeds at the dump - drinks."

"Don't tell me that fish, milk from the cows and meat from the livestock we slaughter will not have traces of harmful chemicals."

Public Works permanent secretary Mr Linda Salie said his ministry was responsible for the dump but added it was meant for domestic waste only.

He said: "The government is very concerned about the proximity of the dump to people, especially because even industrialists are dumping there. We have appointed consultants to look into the possibility of alternative sites."

Salie said the site should have been



Danger zone ... Residents of Phola Park in Dimbaza and leaders and environmentalists are concerned that the

fenced in, effective controls implemented by the township manager's office and industrialists, who dump their waste at the site, made to pay penalties. All these tasks were now the responsibility of the newly elected municipality, he said.

The factories are owned by the Ciskei Development Bank but senior manager Mr Graham Wright does not feel the bank should be held responsible for the location of the dump, what the industries dump or its effects on the community.

"We own factories there and lease them to industrialists but we are not a local authority. It is the job of the local municipality to see to waste disposal sites," Wright said.

While he conceded that waste from metal, textile, shoe and other industries were dumped at the site, Wright said he "wouldn't have thought that was hazardous or could pose a health risk to the community there".

Ms Sophie Mkololo (60) regularly sifts for woodshavings and planks at the Phola Park dump. She said she

used the wood to paraffin is too costly. She wants the dump houses.

"What you're doing. The worst part is in the evening when they and bad-smelling our houses, forcing us to take our clothes off the way we have to close doors and windows."

Mkololo said the smoke regularly seeps into her house, which has made her four grandchildren asthmatic and ill with bronchitis. This had forced her to take two of them to live with her sister in Mdantsane.

Environment Justice Network spokesman Mr Otto Tokwe said apartheid-style planning put waste disposal sites close to poorer communities ... an injustice to them.

"Those industries were put there to exploit cheap labour in the former homelands. Research has found that the





# US-SA bid to find cheap fuel alternatives

(56) (48) ARG 6/12/95

## □ Experts for pollution workshop

PRETORIA. — Government attempts to curb urban air pollution caused by coal-burning will be discussed at a two-day workshop on low-smoke fuel attended by United States experts next year, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha has announced.

The department will co-operate with its US counterpart to find an alternative for coal — preferred by the poor in winter because it is cheaper and more effective than electric heating.

Mr Botha, in a report on the activities of the sustainable energy committee to the US-South Africa Binational Commission meeting, said the programme included studying low-smoke fuel programmes overseas and several large-scale demonstration projects.

"Luckily, South Africa has spare energy capacity, but if our political emancipation is to be followed through with economic liberation, ways must be found to convey to those who wait for it to transform their lives," Mr Botha said.

In terms of the Reconstruction and

Development Programme, about 2,5 million additional households will have received electricity from Eskom by the year 2000. This amounted to 500 000 connections a year.

However, millions of South Africans in rural areas were too far from urban electrical grids to be connected cost-effectively. While solar power was a solution, its implementation was hampered by a lack of money.

A non-profit subsidiary of the Central Energy Fund, Renewable Energy for South Africa, hopes to provide 2,5 million households with financing for solar panels in the next 20 years at a cost of between R6 billion and R7 billion, Mr Botha said.

The department will initially provide Refsa with R6,1 million over three years in addition to the US Energy Department's \$1,1 million (about R3,96-m) grant via the US Agency for International Development.

The annual use of 12 million tons of traditional fuels like dung, firewood and crop waste by 14 million South Africans still constituted an energy crisis, Mr Botha said. — Sapa.

# Table Mountain to be National Park with strict

MELANIE GOSLING

TABLE MOUNTAIN, Signal Hill and the entire Peninsula mountain chain down to Cape Point is to be declared a National Park, the provincial government announced yesterday — but conservationists worry that stringent conditions could torpedo the move.

Provincial Minister of Finance and Environment Mr Kobus Meiring announced that the Western Cape cabinet had accepted the recommendation of the Huntley Committee that the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment

(CPPNE) be declared a National Park under the control of the National Parks Board.

The move heralds a new era in managing the Peninsula, which environmentalists say is possibly the most threatened important natural area on earth.

It also ends months of wrangling over who would control the Peninsula — particularly between the Parks Board, Cape Nature Conservation and the Cape Metropolitan Council. There will now be a single body regulating land use in the CPPNE in a conservation-driven planning framework.

Possible measures could include controlling access to sensitive areas and requiring high impact users such as horse-riders, rock-climbers, mountain-bikers and hang-gliders to pay to use certain areas.

The name of the park will be decided by a public process. Some which have been suggested are the Table Mountain National Park, the Cape Peninsula National Park and the Good Hope National Park.

However, province's acceptance is subject to five stringent conditions which environmentalists say are "impossible" to fulfill. The vice-chairman of the Hunt-

ley Committee, Professor Richard Cowling, said yesterday: "Province has put impossible conditions on their acceptance of the National Park which are not in the spirit of our recommendations ... We're positive about their acceptance in principle, but the conditions are very worrying."

The conditions are:

- That province makes its assets available on a contractual basis by agreement which must address land, assets, staff, funding arrangements, legal control, law enforcement and management.
- All the local authorities own-

56

ET 7/12/95

ing or managing land within the CPPNE must agree to make their land available for a national park.

● Any draft legislation must be submitted to province for approval.

● A representative liaison council must be established under the provincial environment minister.

● If there is no significant progress in achieving the Huntley Committee recommendations by June 1996, the central government should accept a proposal by the province and the Cape Metropolitan Council to establish a statutory CPPNE management board under

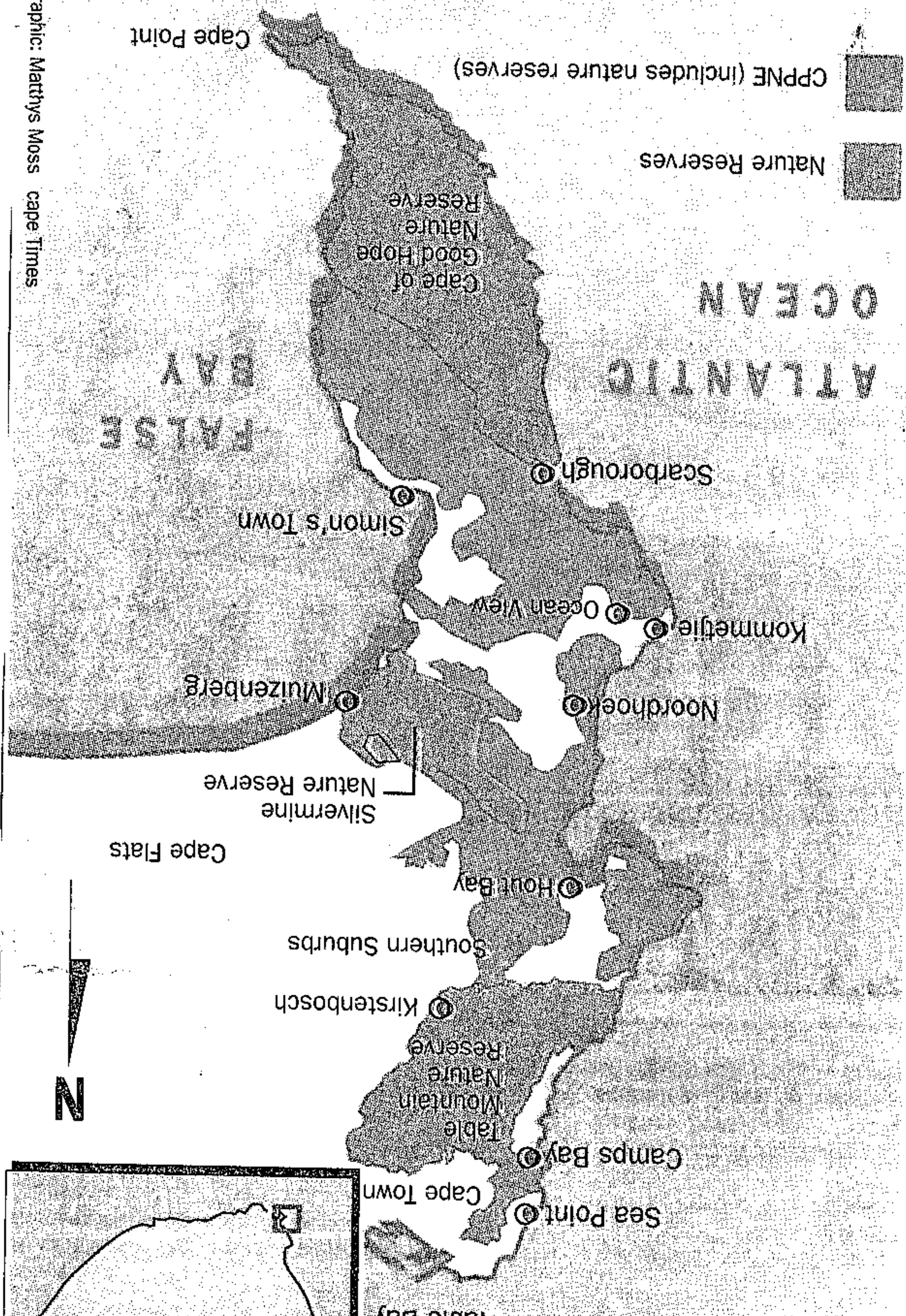
provincial legislation.

Director of conservation for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Dr Ian Macdonald, said yesterday Table Mountain rated as one of the world's "conservation crisis zones" with a high concentration of threatened species.

"Putting the area under one authority will help stop the degradation of the environment and consolidate the position of the Peninsula as the premier tourist spot in the country," he said.

However, while WWF welcomed the move, they viewed the conditions set by the province

## Peninsula National Park



## curjos

with "disquiet".

Dr Macdonald said: "It would be extremely undesirable that this essential step could be blocked by a single small local authority refusing to come into the agreement. ... We are also concerned about the condition which allows the provincial authority to overturn this recommendation within six months. Who is to judge what is significant progress?"

Wildlife Society spokeswoman Ms Marlene Laros also said they were concerned that province's acceptance of the plan rested on agreement by local authorities.

# New deal on cards for Table Mountain chain

□ National park a step closer as cabinet supports Huntley plan

(56) ARG 7/12/95

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

A CAPE Peninsula National Park incorporating the Table Mountain chain and other natural areas is a step closer to reality, following the Western Cape cabinet's support for the recommendations of the Huntley committee.

The committee, chaired by National Botanical Institute chief executive Brian Huntley, recommended to Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers that the National Parks Board be appointed as the mountain chain's responsible management authority.

At its meeting yesterday, the Western Cape cabinet agreed to this recommendation.

But the cabinet has made its support conditional on a liaison committee, to be headed by regional environmental affairs minister Kobus Meiring, to oversee the management of the new national park.

If no significant progress is made towards establishing the park within six months, the cabinet wants a separate statutory management board to be established.

This is the "first choice" option of Cape Nature Conservation, although this organisation has also given the nod to a contractual national park.

The Western Cape cabinet agreed to make its assets available in terms of the National Parks Act, but only if all the local authorities owning land within the existing Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) also agree to such a step.

"Approval is subject to the establishment of a liaison council under the chairmanship of Mr Meiring.

"This would comprise equal representation from the Western Cape government, Cape Town City Council, Cape Metropolitan Council, National Parks Board, and other affected local authorities and government departments and representatives of private landowners, in order to act in an advisory, consultative and monitoring capacity regarding the management of the proposed park," the cabinet decided.

This week, the Cape Town City Council's amenities and health committee endorsed the council's April decision that it should not be the eventual single controlling authority for the Peninsula mountain chain, and that it relinquish control over its properties to some other authority.

● The Western Cape cabinet also agreed in principle that Cape Nature Conservation be constituted as a statutory board, along the lines of the Natal Parks Board.

This will allow it to raise its own capital finance and enter joint ventures, donations and legacies.

# Support for move to protect Peninsula

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

THE Western Cape cabinet's go-ahead for a Cape Peninsula National Park has been welcomed by environmental affairs minister Dawie de Villiers and National Parks Board chief executive Robbie Robinson, and the process is "well under way".

Both Dr De Villiers and Dr Robinson were diplomatic in their responses to conditions set by the Western Cape cabinet for support for the national park, which have raised eyebrows and some concern in environmental circles.

Conditions include a liaison committee to be headed by regional environmental affairs minister Kobus Meiring to oversee the management of the new park, and a six-month time limit in which there had to be significant progress towards establishing the new contractual national park — a major task, given the number of landowners and the complexity of legal negotiations.

The cabinet's decision has also been welcomed because it clears the way for Table Mountain to be declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations.

In his response, Dr De Villiers said the cabinet's decision was "a significant step" which paved the way for the implementation of the Huntley committee's recommendation that the National Parks Board manage the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) as a national park.

"Following several meetings and discussions between me and the relevant authorities, the National Parks Board has developed proposals for the transfer of management which will be further discussed within these authorities ...

"I wish to give the public the assurance that the process is well under way and all interested and affected parties will be involved on a continuous basis in the effort to conserve this precious natural heritage," Dr De Villiers said.

Dr Robinson said he was "personally positive" about the announcement.

Mr Meiring was a former trustee of the National Parks Board and he had high regard for him.

"I look forward to working very closely with him on this highly commendable project ...

"As far as the implications of the various (cabinet) conditions are concerned, these would have to be considered individually by my board and the various authorities presently involved in managing the area, in order to work out an effective management system for the new national park."

The Wildlife Society's Western Cape ecologist, Marlene Laros, said they "applauded" the regional cabinet's decision.

The society had some concern about its conditions, and believed they would inhibit the transition. There had been no provision for public input into the cabinet's proposed liaison committee, and this committee should have an independent leader — not the minister, Ms Laros said.

(56) ARG 8/12/95

# Park go-ahead welcomed

# Boost for peninsula, mountain as national park

(56) Star 8/12/95

By ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

The likelihood of Table Mountain and the peninsula becoming the 17th national park in South Africa is a step closer to reality, with all parties now in support of the idea.

Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Dr Dawie de Villiers yesterday welcomed an announcement by the Western Cape cabinet that, subject to certain conditions, the management of the area should be transferred to the National Parks Board (NPB).

De Villiers said this was a significant step that supported the Huntley committee's recommendations.

The committee, which was con-

stituted earlier this year at the request of De Villiers, was chaired by National Botanical Institute chief executive Brian Huntley, and held exhaustive discussions involving all interested and affected parties.

"After several meetings and discussions between myself and the relevant authorities, the NPB has developed proposals for the transfer of management that will further be discussed with these authorities," De Villiers said. His department would facilitate discussions on the many implementation implications.

"The Cape Peninsula Protected Environment will be managed as a contractual national park and the NPB will therefore consult with all landowners and other role-players

in the process of drawing up agreements and a management plan for the area," De Villiers said.

"Special attention will also be given to proposed development, and changes with regard to land use - a matter which will be addressed by the new management plan."

The Western Cape cabinet has made its support conditional on a liaison committee, to be headed by its Environmental Affairs MEC Kobus Meiring, to oversee the management of the new national park.

"Approval is subject to the establishment of a liaison council under the chairmanship of Mr Meiring and comprising equal representation from the Western Cape government, Cape Town City Council, Cape Met-

ropolitan Council, National Parks Board, and other affected local authorities and government departments and representatives of private landowners, in order to act in an advisory, consultative and monitoring capacity regarding the management of the proposed park," the cabinet decided on Wednesday.

The new contractual national park will not involve transfer of title of land owned by the city council. The council has also accepted in principle a proposal that an annual grant amounting to its net direct operating costs for 1994/95 of about R6,5-million will be made to the park for Table Mountain's management, subject to annual escalation and a review after five years.

# Tough new rules for forestry permit seekers

(56) ~~FORESTRY~~  
BY ANITA ALLEN

Science Writer

Nov 8/12/95  
Stringent procedures for forestry permit applications were announced by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry yesterday.

They include a requirement that applicants publicise their intentions, the obligatory involvement and consultation with interested and affected parties, and environmental impact assessments.

And the extent of assessments will be determined by a review panel comprising a broad range of interests. "The new procedures embody the department's commitment to openness, transparency and accountability in all its activities," the department said.

In an internal move that emphasises the overarching imperative of water issues, the responsibility for the administration of the forest permit system has been transferred from the department's directorate of forestry to the water resources branch.

However, the applications will still be channelled through regional forestry offices, where they will be considered in detail by the regional director, who will make his recommendations to the national water resources manager.

After applying in writing, a date for a site inspection will be set by the regional forestry officer.

He will then be responsible for conveying details in writing for comment from the regional water affairs office; environment and conservation authorities; the provincial departments of agriculture, local government and housing

(or the equivalent); relevant authorities involved with historical, cultural and heritage sites; and any other affected authority and community.

Comments or requests for extensions have to be provided within 30 days, and all parties have the opportunity to be present at the site inspection, or to arrange their own inspection with the applicant.

The applicant is obliged to advertise in the local press, and in one other newspaper that will reach

## Review panel to comprise range of interests

affected parties, as well as to inform all the immediate neighbours.

Assessments will be done by a review panel chaired by the regional director or his delegated official. It can recommend that the permit be granted or refused and whether an environmental impact assessment is required. In this event, the panel will set out the detail of the EIA and whether public participation is required.

The final decision of the water resources manager will be given in writing, and thereafter, the applicant or any of the parties involved may appeal against the decision to the director-general of the Water Affairs Department.

These procedures will not apply to applications for planting less than 10ha, which will be dealt with by the regional director.

# Dust from mine dump to stop

After two years of eating gritty food residents heave a sigh of relief

By Abdul Millazi  
Labour Reporter

**D**IEPMEADOW RESIDENTS who have been engulfed in a cloud of white dust from the nearby mine dump for almost two years can now breathe a sigh of relief - the Durban Deep Gold Mine is doing something about it.

Soweto residents, especially those from Meadowlands, have complained that they cannot open their windows because the dust from the dump gets into their food and dirties their furniture.

One of the residents, Ms Stephina Mamabolo who lives in Zone 9, said residents feared for their health because they believed the dust contained dangerous chemicals.

"The dust affects our eyes. You find that your eyes get dry because of all the dust. I think it will have drastic effects on our health after some time," said Mamabolo.

Another resident, Mr Paul Nkadi-meng, asked why mines did not build dumps near white areas.

"By fixing the problem, they are not doing us a favour. It is their responsibility. We are the people who were inconvenienced and we pay for these houses," said Nkadi-meng.

Durban Deep Mine spokesman Mr

Anton Lubber said the mine inherited the problem when it bought the dump from Rand Lease Vochstruis Fontein in June.

Lubber said the mine now planned to plant vegetation on the dump as a way to reduce the dust problem. This will cost the mine R300 000.

He said the sand contained high acid volumes and would take about a month to neutralise before the ground was ready for the vegetation.

## Dust comes from slides

"We have started depositing slime into the dump, which moistens the surface, but the dust now comes from the slides. We bought the property as a spare dump, which will come in handy as we expect our slime deposits to increase to 80 000 tons a day in the next three years," said Lubber.

The mine currently disposes of 30 000 tons of slime into its dumps a day.

Lubber said the mine formed a joint working committee with the Department of Energy and Mineral Affairs, the Gauteng Department of Health, the Metropolitan Sub-Structure and the Soweto Transitional Local Council in October to monitor the problem.

"Several options were discussed to combat the problem, and planting vegetation around the dump was the only



## Health hazard ... Diepmeadow children playing at a nearby mine dump.

solution we came up with as appropriate," he said.

Lubber said the mine was in the process of putting in a pipeline, which would be used to spray the dump surface while it was being prepared for the vegetation.

"Planting vegetation over the whole dump, which is five hectares, will take about six months to complete," he said. Community Durban Deep Environ-

mental Committee spokesman Mr Khotle Khunou said the Soweto community was "euphoric" about the mine's move to address the dust problem.

## Afflicted for two years

"Residents have been subjected to this discomfort for almost two years, and it has not been easy. Now they feel they can get on with their lives," said Khu-

8/12/95

nou. Congress of South African Trade Unions spokeswoman Ms Nowethu Mpati said the mine should take responsibility for any health hazards caused by the dust.

"Our policy on health and safety is that the employer or company whose operations pose a threat to people's health should shoulder the health costs and compensate persons affected by the hazards," said Mpati.

## Sappi 'will heed ecological report'

~~54~~ (56) ~~57~~  
**Eddie Koch**

**S**OUTH AFRICAN forestry giant Sappi says it will cut back the size of a controversial eucalyptus plantation planned for southern Mozambique in line with suggestions from an independent environmental study. *M+G 8-14/12/95*

Natal University's Institute of Natural Resources, commissioned to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposed forestry, presented its findings to the Mozambican government this week.

The study found the project would bring major social and economic impacts to the depressed region, injecting some R80-million into the local economy, but that rare wetlands and wild game would suffer in parts of the plantation zone.

The major recommendation of the report is to reduce the proposed planted area. This will create a buffer of at least one kilometre between the forest and the Futi River in the west and will withdraw the plantations from coastal lakes in the east.

It also provides for the creation of natural corridors to allow for animal movement and migrations that will be obstructed by the forest.

"We are quite comfortable with the idea of modifying and adapting the original proposal to ameliorate environmental sensitivities," says a Sappi spokesman.

But environmentalists have slammed the entire project, saying it poses a serious threat to a variety of plant and animal species that occur nowhere else in the world.

The forest also clashes with an ambitious tourism scheme to build a large game reserve and network of lodges along Mozambique's southern coastal zone.



# Left with a legacy

(56) Star 9/12/95

The recent demolition of the rocket test facility at Rooi Els concluded SA's brief membership of the nuclear club - with the exception of Koeberg, writes **NICO ZAVERDINOS**

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs (DMEA) admits that there is no clarity on how nuclear policy was previously made, but some assume it was decided at some level of Cabinet by *ad hoc* committees. They are now

"We have provided for the green field option," said Bill Woodcock, Nuclear Fuels Manager of Eskom. "In this process we remove the entire station and re-plough the land. However, it is more likely that we will remove the spent nuclear fuel and encase the rest of the plant in concrete until the radiation has decayed."

According to Mike Kantey of the now defunct Koeberg Alert, there are three types of waste produced by Koeberg.

"Low level waste includes gloves and clothing which might have been contaminated, while medium level waste might include equipment and contaminated water. They are stored in stainless steel drums and concrete blocks respectively above ground at Vaalputs in Namaqualand.

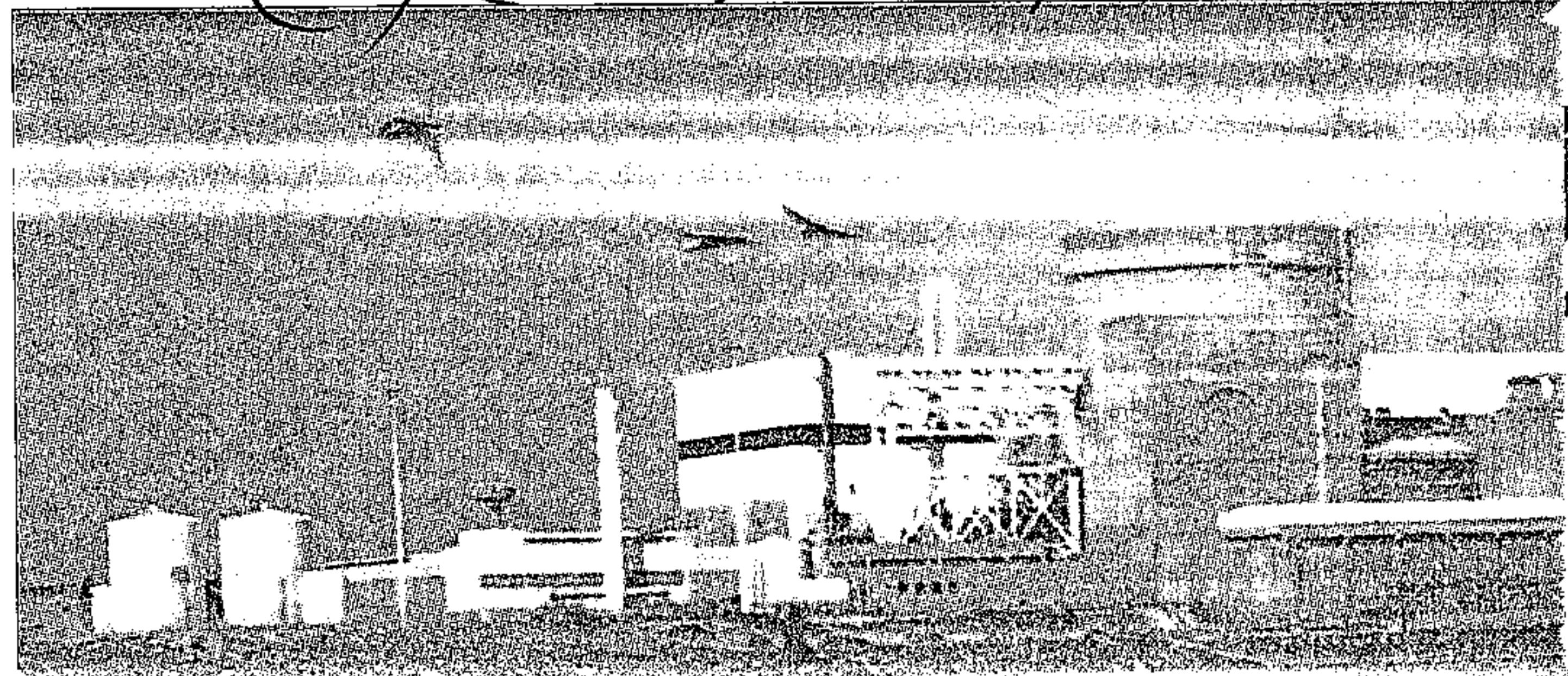
"High level waste, like the core of the reactor, is obviously the most dangerous and is stored on site at Koeberg. Some of this waste, like plutonium 239, has a half-life of up to 24 000 years," he said.

"In 50 years of nuclear energy nobody has ever come up with a viable solution for dealing with high level waste.

"We have built up ten years of spent fuel, plus the two cores in the reactors, which adds up to about 500 tons of spent fuel," said Woodcock.

"So far we have collected R390-million for dealing with this, R150-million of which will go to decommissioning the station."

"Since the demise of the Cold War, nuclear energy has been losing its glitter internationally. The disaster at Chernobyl brought the horror of a nuclear accident from the realm



**DANGER LEVELS:** High level waste such as the core of the reactor, is the most dangerous with a half-life of up to 24 000 years but as yet, there is no viable solution for dealing with high level

of fiction into the world of fact and one physicist claimed in 1982 that a worst-case scenario at Koeberg could kill 350 000 people.

Aside from the usual rumours, there have been no reports of serious incidents at Koeberg. However, last year an internal Eskom report criticised maintenance staff for lack of attention to detail in their work. The staff said they felt that they were under too much production pressure.

There have also been reports that, despite strict checks on permanent staff, casual and contract workers were not subjected to the same control.

In the United States there is only one nuclear power station still being built, said to be opening this year. Construction on Watts Bar One began 23 years ago and cost almost

\$7 billion more than its planned allotment.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which built Watts Bar One, planned to construct 17 reactors in the 1960s. It cancelled eight of them in the 1980s because of the cost factor and today only three are up and running. The TVA has managed to run up a \$26 billion overdraft.

The accumulated costs of nuclear energy have been cited as too high to be profitable.

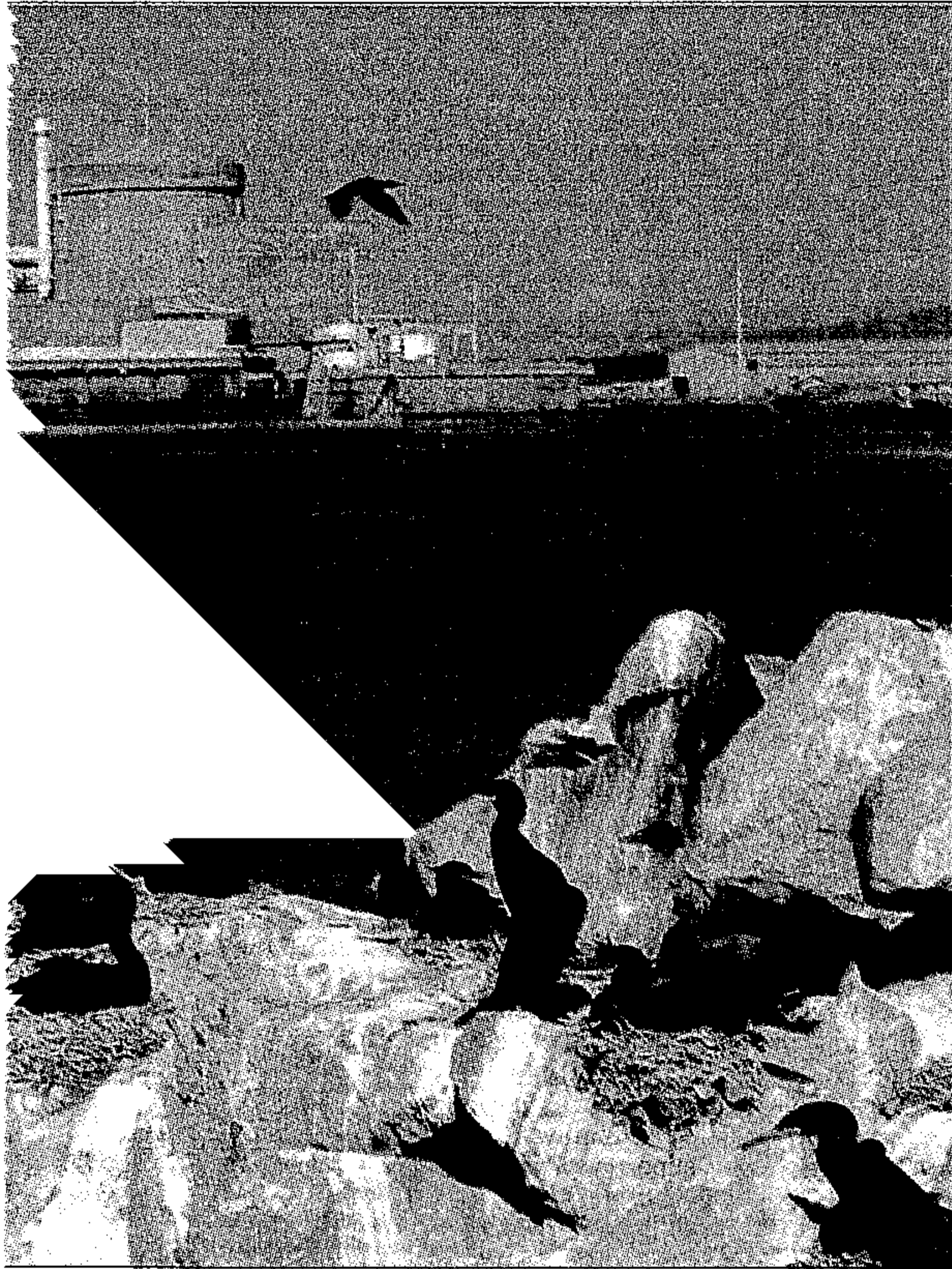
According to Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde of the Science Advisory Unit at the University of Cape Town, the cost per kilowatt hour of nuclear energy compared to that of coal was reported to be three times higher.

This does not include the cost of security, waste disposal and decommissioning. "In 1986 a comparative analysis of Koeberg and

a co  
shov  
der  
"neve  
conc  
said  
Env.  
"to e  
acq  
ther  
T  
nucl  
Sou.  
tion  
V  
latic

# of lethal waste

9/12/95



tored on site at Koeberg (above). Some of this waste, like plutonium 239, has a al waste

l-fired plant in the Eastern Transvaal ed it was simply not cost-efficient," Auf eyde said.

full economic account of Koeberg has been publicly issued, so we can only ude that it is not economically viable," Dr David Fig, director of the Group for onmental Monitoring.

ve believe that it was created politically able the Nationalist Government to re the nuclear materials needed to fur- their nuclear weapons programme."

ie historical relationship between ear energy and nuclear weapons in 1 Africa has also come under examina- n the green paper.

hen the Government finally drafts legis- 1 on nuclear energy, it will no doubt take

both the cost-efficiency of Koeberg, as well as its call for declaring Africa a nuclear weapon-free continent, into account.

The idea is that it can then sell enriched uranium on the international market.

"Impossible," said one scientist at Koeberg who declined to be named.

"The AEC is a white elephant, a millstone round the neck of Koeberg. It consumed R460-million last year, 70% of the DMEA budget, and produces fuel that is outdated.

"They have just spent a small fortune on upgrading their technology to produce fuel that will be ten years out of date when it comes on line.

Fig agreed. "South Africa doesn't need an organisation like the AEC today," he said.

"They're not doing anything we can't get

elsewhere cheaper. They should pull out of Koeberg's fuel cycle completely."

But Dr Karel Fouche, executive general manager of technological development at AEC, maintains that his organisation has a healthy future in South Africa.

"We have had a strategy for the last five years to become a commercially viable enterprise. By the year 2000 we anticipate that most of our income will come from non-nuclear products, but we still see a strong future in uranium production.

"If the AEC continues producing fuel for Koeberg, the station will never operate at its full potential," the scientist said.

"They are using their influence in Government to force us to buy their fuel.

"We can get better fuel on the international market that will provide almost twice as many kilowatt days, and be a third cheaper than the AEC product."

"The likelihood of them commercialising their nuclear technology is incredibly small," said Auf der Heyde.

"One of the reasons the AEC was set up was to provide fuel for the Nationalist government's nuclear weapons programme.

"In this respect they were very successful, but as a commercial enterprise they were a complete failure."

Fouche insists that their budget allocation must be seen in context to their work.

"This financial year we have a budget allocation from the DMEA of R273-million. We also needed over R20-million for the decommissioning of our enrichment plant.

"We will be paying R60-million in interest on loans and R117-million on loan redemptions too.

"There is provision in the budget for our non-commercial operations and this is done in the national interest. We see it as funding for our RDP work.

"The rest of the world will buy the outdated fuel that the AEC produces," the scientist said. "Unless South Africa builds another three reactors, the AEC's nuclear enterprise won't be profitable."

Fouche says that a number of countries have already expressed interest in AEC-produced nuclear fuel.

"But it is now up to the Government to determine to what extent we will be involved in the production of fuel for Koeberg."

"The Government will now have to decide on whether it is willing to subsidise the AEC to possess on indigenous nuclear fuel production facility, or whether it will opt for a more cost-effective approach and import the fuel necessary to run Koeberg," said Auf der Heyde.

Eskom, which operates Koeberg, is remaining open on the issue of nuclear energy. "We believe that we must have a skill and ability in all electricity generation," said Eskom spokesman Peter Adams.

"One day when our coal resources become scarce, then we will have the ability to examine viable alternatives."

# Century City: Residents say 'make impact study first'

AKG 11/12/95

(52)

**A**N INDEPENDENT environmental impact assessment lasting a full year should be done of development proposals for Century City, the R3 billion leisure and residential development being planned on 195 ha at Montague Gardens.

So say Sanddrift residents who have started the Bucks Dam Conservation Committee in an attempt to conserve Blouwelei (also known as Buck's Dam), the former seasonal pan and now permanent water body which stands in the heart of the proposed development.

The conservation committee wants the vlei-area to be preserved intact and incorporated into the development as a bird sanctuary, and are angry that they weren't given an opportunity of handing their petition containing about 1 000 signatures to this effect to regional Agriculture, Planning and Tourism Minister Lampie Fick, who has responsibility for rezoning applications.

As part of the cabinet's approval, the developer must undertake "an adequate and appropriate environmental impact assessment, which shall include public participation, focusing on the wetland system and associated birdlife and vegetation, with a view to incorporating a wetland and bird sanctuary into the development.

The impact assessment must be conducted in accordance with Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) principles, with a view to incorporating a wetland and bird sanctuary into the development. These must be implemented and maintained according to a management plan approved by Cape Nature Conservation.

The developer, Monex, has indicated that it definitely wants to use the vlei and the birds as

*The Western Cape cabinet has given conditional rezoning approval for the huge Century City development north of Ysterplaat and adjoining the N1. But, neighbouring residents of Sanddrift are still deeply concerned about the future of Blouwelei — which they know as Buck's Dam. It is in the centre of the development, and they are disappointed they weren't given an opportunity of handing their petition to regional minister Lampie Fick before the cabinet took its rezoning decision. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD looks at their concerns.*

a tourist attraction in the new development, but various options are on table — including moving the vlei, partly because a major electricity cable was laid through it in the past when it was dry.

The developers have commissioned specialist hydrological and geotechnical studies, and are initiating an environmental impact assessment using specialist reports — including bird studies.

Monex managing director Martin Wragge told a media conference last week he was keen to see work on the site starting by March, but Geoff Underwood, a partner in the developers' planning consultancy, said this might not be possible because of the impact assessment process.

The Bucks Dam conservation committee said in a letter to Mr Underwood's firm that an impact assessment "cannot be done in a few hours", and it asked for an independent study "by a party which has nothing to gain or lose".

"This would involve an extensive study over a period of one year to fully assess the animal and bird life through all the seasons", said committee spokesman Pieter Groenewald. "My knowledge is limited, but

19 years of observation indicates that though the water is stagnant, it is usually clear and supports a large variety of algae, frogs and tadpoles and other water animals." The committee was in favour of a mixed use development — "but feel that with a bit of insight a compromise can be sought."

"Opportunities and advantages are endless for the successful inclusion of the wetland into the theme park. We stress that Blouwelei and its immediate surrounds must not be relocated, but incorporated into the theme park development."

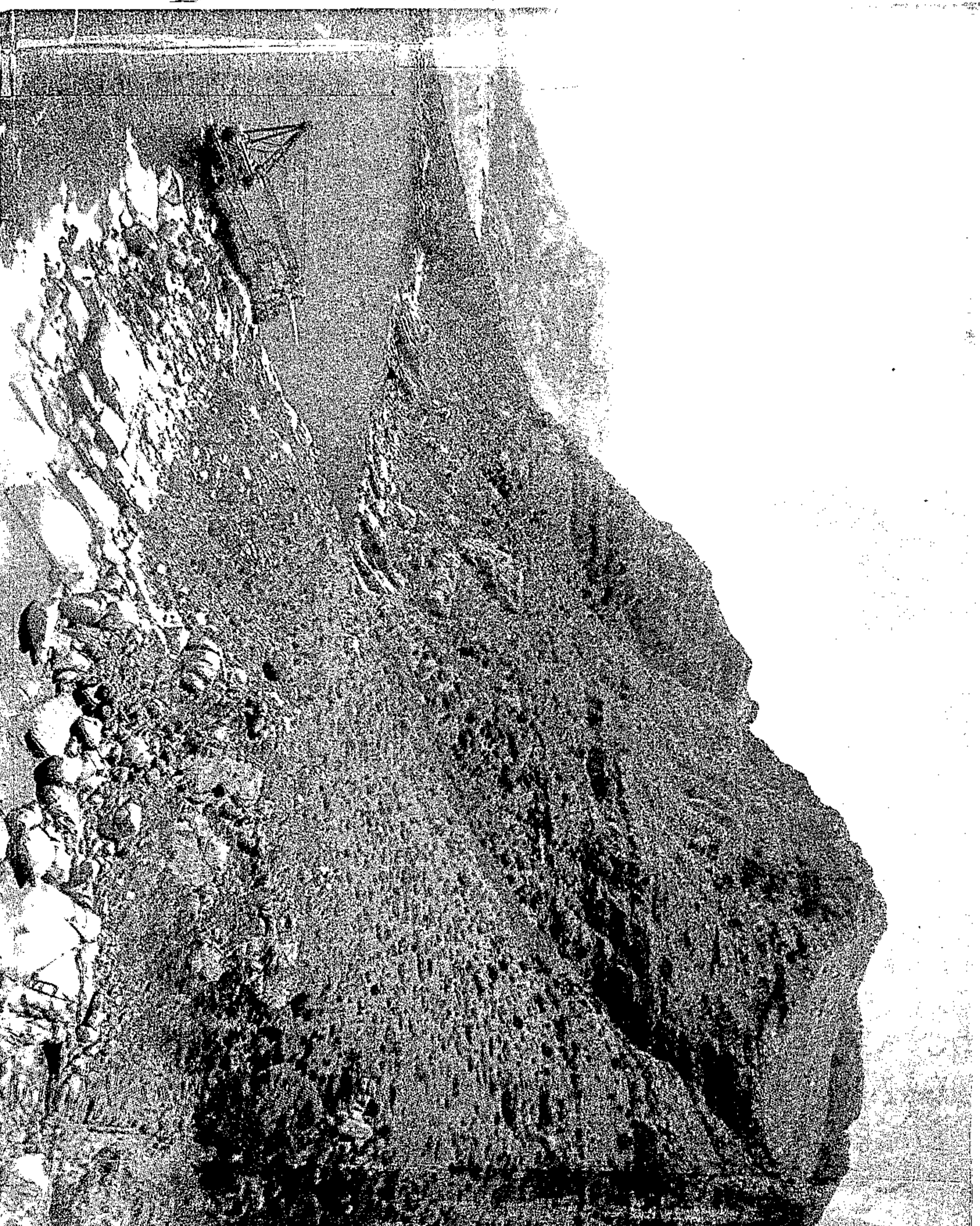
Mr Groenewald said they had asked to present their petition to Mr Fick personally, but had been told he was overseas.

But, the minister had been back for some time and the cabinet had taken its decision without the committee being contacted by his office.

"We feel we were stalled," Mr Groenewald said.

The committee expressed surprise that regional Environmental Affairs Minister Kobus Meiring appeared not to have become involved in the issue, given the nature of the development site.

"We feel it strange he hasn't said anything," Mr Groenewald said.



## SA 'must speak out on whales'

Environment Reporter

**J**APAN'S killing of 440 minke whales in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary this season flies in the face of international whale conservation and the promotion of non-lethal research work — and South Africa should speak out.

So says veteran marine conservationist Nan Rice in a letter to Environmental Affairs minister Dawie de Villiers, asking him to send a letter jointly with the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Japanese ambassador, expressing "strong disapproval" of the killing.

Japan's "scientific" whaling fleet had started its journey into the International Whaling Commission Southern Ocean whale sanctuary on November 1, Mrs Rice said.

"This will be Japan's ninth season of whaling in the Southern Ocean under unilaterally issued scientific permits and its second since the sanctuary was established in 1994.

"Up to 440 minke whales are expected to be taken in the new season."

A this year's International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting in Ireland, South Africa was one of a group of member countries which had read a statement which said the creation of the whale sanctuary was a highly significant step in whale conservation.

The statement, supported by other IWC members emphasised international co-operation in re-

search, monitoring and management.

It also called on countries engaged in scientific whaling to re-direct their research efforts to non-lethal means.

"Now that South Africa is back in the international conservation arena, I consider it should be playing a much more active role in voicing its objections and concerns publicly," Mrs Rice said in her letter.

**PENINSULA JEWEL:** The beautiful scenery of the Karbonkelberg and the Atlantic seaboard between Llandudno and Houf Bay are among the natural gems of the Peninsula whose future seems assured.

Picture: ANDREW INGRAM  
The Argus

# Environmentalists welcome the 'long overdue' fire on Lion's Head

THE fire on Lion's Head has been welcomed by environmentalists who say its vegetation was long overdue for a burn.

There is some difference of opinion among botanists about the effect on the mountain's famous silver trees.

The silver tree is endemic to the Cape (occurring naturally only here), and the Lion's Head population of this beautiful species is one of only four — and probably the biggest — on the Table Mountain chain.

Lion's Head is a mosaic of fynbos, renoster-veld and scrub forest. It needs fire to regenerate, and the south-western slopes haven't been burnt for at least 20 years, and some parts not for 30 years.

Controlled burns were discontinued, largely because of opposition from the public and local politicians to the burning of fire-breaks and the lack of awareness about fire's vital role in fynbos ecology.

The Cape Town City Council chartered two

Russian-manufactured Mi-17 helicopters this season to help combat fires, after another Russian helicopter proved highly efficient last season.

But the helicopters, owned by a company specially set up for the purpose, are standing idle, at the Newlands forest station helipad, while officials attempt to resolve the issue.

They have been grounded by the Department of Transport's civil aviation division, apparently because its Russian counterpart questioned their safety for civilian use.

But there is a suspicion that the letter from the Russian authorities setting out its objections may have been faked.

Environmental scientist Liz Ashton said the fire was "not too bad — except for the silver trees".

Because it was so early in the summer, the seeds of the silver trees, which are dispersed by fire, would be scorched by the hot summer sun and also heavily predated.

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



"It is the wrong time (for a fire)," Ms Ashton said.

"A lot of those trees were planted but this is still a major site... a valuable asset up in smoke."

Although not comparable to the 1986 fire which swept across the face of Table Mountain, started as a result of negligence, the alleged cause of this fire — a broken power cable to the cableway — appeared to be the result of negligence.

"(It) means you haven't maintained your cable properly... it's not good enough."

Parks and forests department botanist James Jackelman said his first reaction to the fire was: "Wow, that's wonderful!"

He had inspected the burnt area yesterday and the fire appeared to have been "very cool" — in botanical terms it passed over the area extremely quickly and did not bake the soil.

"It must have raged through those silver trees incredibly quickly," he said.

"From a biological point of view, it was a wonderful fire and long overdue."

"It is a little bit early in the season but the (silver tree) seeds are just starting to mature. I suspect the majority of them will germinate."

Public misconception about the role of fire in fynbos regeneration and opposition to controlled burning was "a major problem", he said.

"And I'm not exactly sure how to circumvent that," he said.

56) ARG 11/12/95

"We do need to have a public relations exercise to sell the concept of fires and the need for proper compartmental burns, and people have got to get to know the issues about fire-breaks."

This had been achieved successfully with controlled burns above Camps Bay, where householders had been sent comprehensive notices of explanation beforehand, Mr Jackelman said.

"This worked really well, and if anything we had a lot of compliments from people."

Another professional environmentalist agreed that the whole of Lion's Head had been long overdue for a burn.

"Fires are inevitable, and the issue of who should be protecting houses on the edge of these natural areas is really something that needs to be resolved," he said.

"Attitudes have got to change. This (fynbos) is fire-prone vegetation, and if you live next door to it, there should be some legal obligations on your part to take your own fire-protection measures."

# AECI fire devastates crops

(18) (56) (3)

Some farmers face bleak future after clouds of dense, burning sulphur billow over their land

Star 19/12/95

**SAPA**  
Cape Town

Farmers in the Somerset West-Stellenbosch area face large financial losses after a cloud of sulphur from a fire at African Explosives and Chemical Industries burnt their crops.

The blaze at AECI's storage dump in Somerset West dispersed thick clouds of acrid sulphur over the farming area, destroying vegetable and fruit crops.

When mixed with the rain that followed the fire, the sulphur changed to form sulphurous acid that burnt the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruined vegetable crops in the area.

Rust-en-Vrede owner Brian

Pickering said yesterday he could not believe what he saw - all his lettuces, spring onions and cocktail tomatoes were burnt.

"Everything was just wiped out in a single go. It looks as if somebody threw battery acid over the crop - the leaves are all burnt. I really do not know what to do because, if we don't have a cash flow, then we will go bankrupt and all my cash is tied up in the crop.

"We supply Pick 'n Pay and a number of other stores. I had to telephone them this morning explaining my predicament. This is normally our busiest period and the time of year when we make some money. Now I will have to explain to the workers why I can't

pay them."

Johannes Visser of the farm Voorentoe said 80% of his 35ha salad vegetable crops had been wiped out.

"I am still trying to estimate the cost and am speaking to my lawyers so that the chemical company can take responsibility for these losses.

"The young plants just shrivelled up and died. I am running around not knowing what to do."

Gunter Henke, who farms flowers and vegetables, said his loss was about R100 000.

An AECI head office spokesman said the company was consulting its insurance brokers and would then tell farmers their response.

## Asthma deaths postmortem after horror fire

Cape Town - A postmortem would be performed on two brothers who died after the chemical blaze outside Somerset West at the weekend.

Police spokesman Capt Wicus Holtzhausen said the postmortem was planned for yesterday or today, depending on their workload.

Andrew Williams (54) and his brother Ronnie (47) of The Strand were believed to be asthma suffer-

ers. They were on their way to separate weddings in nearby Maassar when they apparently were overcome by sulphur dioxide fumes.

"If the postmortem revealed they had not died of natural causes, it would be up to a magistrate to decide whether anyone could be held responsible," Holtzhausen said.

Cape Town's medical officer of health Dr Michael Popkiss said

stress resulting from the fire could have a more serious long-term effect than the sulphur dioxide.

The trauma of being evacuated from their homes and relocated could be very upsetting to people, Popkiss said.

A spokesman at Somerset West's Hottentots Holland hospital said yesterday that staff had been stretched to the limit treating people suffering from sulphur dioxide inhalation. - Sapa.

N

# 'Killer fire couldn't occur in Gauteng'

(56) Star 19/12/95

By **CHERYL HUNTER**  
City Reporter

The chemical fire at AECI in the Cape which claimed three lives at the weekend is unlikely to happen in Gauteng because of stringent safety procedures in place, AECI spokesman Robbie Vermont said yesterday.

More than 2 000 people were forced to evacuate their homes in Somerset West when a chemical fire, lit by a smouldering veld fire, spread dangerous fumes across the area.

"There are incredible precautions taken at a place like Modderfontein because of the production of explosives in the factory, and we do not have to build fire-breaks to combat gale-force winds," Vermont said.

"We manufacture explosives only in small batches for safety, so if there is an explosion, the effect is limited."

He added that the units in which the explosives were manufactured, called magazines, were also small and "bunkered" so that a blast would move upwards and not sideways.

"We severely limit all activity in the vicinity of the magazines

where small amounts of the explosive are stored and allow large amounts of open space between these structures," he said.

The grass around potentially hazardous areas was kept very short.

"We must remember that the accident occurred during a gale which carried flames across a fire-break - something highly unlikely to happen here," he added.

There was a well-equipped firefighting team based at Modderfontein, which was the only area where the manufacture of explosives took place on a large scale, and other storage points had links to their local fire departments, according to Vermont.

Leon Zeiler, battalion chief for Johannesburg's fire and safety division, confirmed this information and said any company manufacturing or storing lethal chemicals had to build approved storage facilities in the building.

"The plans for such a building are submitted to the fire department who are then involved from the outset," Zeiler said.

► **Acid rain devastates crops**

... Page 8

# Acid rain destroys crops

*Sowetan*  
19/12/95

## Sowetan Correspondent

FARMERS in the Somerset West-Stellenbosch area are faced with huge financial losses after the cloud of sulphur from a disastrous chemical fire burnt their crops.

As Sunday's rain followed the fire, farmers were inspecting the damage the sulphur fumes and acid rain had caused to their crops. Chemical giant AECI now faces massive damages claims from furious farmers.

The blaze at AECI's storage dump in Somerset West dispersed thick clouds of acrid sulphur over the farming area, destroying vegetable and fruit crops.

Mixed with the rain that followed the fire, the sulphur turned into sulphurous acid that burnt the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruined vegetable crops in the area.

A number of farmers were horrified yesterday when they saw the extent of the damage after inspecting their farms.

Rust-en-Vrede owner Brian Pickering said he could not believe what he saw – all his lettuce, spring onions and cocktail tomatoes were burnt.

### Just wiped out

"Everything was just wiped out in one single go. It looks as if somebody threw battery acid over the crop – the leaves are all burnt.

"I really do not know what to do because if we don't have a cash flow we will go bankrupt and all my cash is tied up in the crop.

"We supply Pick 'n Pay and a number of other stores. I had to telephone them this morning to explain my predicament. This is normally our busiest period and the time of the year when we make some money. Now I will have to explain to the workers why I can't pay them."

Johannes Visser of the farm Vorentoe said 80 percent of his 35 hectare salad vegetable crop was wiped out.

"The young plants just shrivelled up and died. I am running around not knowing what to do. This is a very big problem which needs to be resolved very quickly."

Gunter Henke, who farms flowers and vegetables, said his immediate loss was about R100 000.

An AECI spokesman said the company was consulting its insurance brokers about the damage and would inform the farmers later about their response.

# Macassar's hot fury

Somerset 19/12/95

**W**HEN A CLOUD OF POISONOUS gas from a chemical plant fire rolled into a small Western Cape town at the weekend, killing three people and forcing the evacuation of thousands, the African National Congress saw apartheid as the real culprit behind the tragedy.

The fire that caused the disaster began in a field of grass close to the township of Macassar late on Saturday. Wind blew sparks on to the African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI) stockpile near Somerset West, about 40 kilometres from Cape Town.

Stored at the plant were 15 000 tons of sulphur, part of the former apartheid government's stockpile against sanctions.

Almost immediately a cloud of dense, toxic smoke billowed over the area, forcing 2 500 Macassar residents to flee in an assortment of cars, fire engines, police lorries and ambulances.

"We just saw a cloud of smoke coming over our place," said Macassar resident Mr David Ross after he was evacuated. "We at first thought it was just grass burning but then we smelt gas."

"Our eyes and noses were stinging and our chests (were) so tight. We had difficulty breathing".

At least 100 people were treated for smoke inhalation and released later. By Sunday afternoon, the crisis was contained and people were allowed to return home.

Strong winds and quick action by Cape emergency services were credited with saving hundreds of lives, but questions were being asked about why potentially dangerous chemicals were stored so close to residential areas.

ANC Western Cape leader Mr Chris Nissen lost no time in blaming the country's former white-minority government for the disaster.

"One must understand (the location of the chemical plant) against the background of bad apartheid planning, where black people were located next to strategic industries," Nissen said.

South Africa has a legacy of inadequate environmental legislation and, during the apartheid era, government insensitivity towards social concerns translated into poor environmental and industrial safeguards.

But critics of the ANC have accused it of moving too slowly on environmental and industrial safety issues, preferring to blame apartheid for any difficulties.

The AECI plant has been used to manufacture paint, vinyl and plastic for the past four years. Company spokesman Mr Mike Blizzard said the sulphur had been at the plant for the past 10 years as part of the previous govern-

Environmental group Earthlife Africa concludes that the chemical plant had no contingency plans to handle a disaster of these proportions.. (56) (56)

ment's strategic stockpiles.

"The sulphur was part of a stockpile put together by the government over 10 years ago. It was part of a strategic resource in the same way oil was stockpiled," he said.

However, Earthlife Africa slammed AECI for "a lack of any environmental standards or procedures".

Earthlife spokesman Ms Liz McDaid said the environmental group had gone to inspect the area and concluded that AECI had had "no contingency plans" in place to deal with such an emergency.

Residents of Macassar were only warned of the gas after 11pm on Saturday, when the fire had already been burning for about five hours, she said.

"AECI sat back and let Macassar take the risk because of the lack of safety there," she said.

McDaid also took issue with an AECI statement on radio that the gas was an "irritant", saying it was important to "note the toxicity of the gas".

She further said that AECI could have caused environmental damage and possible health hazards by spraying water on the burning sulphur, as this would form sulphurous acid.

Speaking at the town hall of Somerset West, where he had spent the night with family friends, Mr Moses Faviers said the presence of the AECI plant and a neighbouring Somchem installation meant the people of Macassar were living in a dangerous place.

"I think people realise today for the first time how dangerous that place really is," he said.

Mr Neil Sambaba, also an evacuee, wanted to know what would have happened if there was an explosion at either of the plants.

"Such things do not belong near places where people live," he said. "They belong in deserts. We cannot go on living like this."

Grandmother Mrs Katrina Julies said that after a night without sleep, she was still "very



Ambulancemen give an elderly woman oxygen after she was overcome by sulphur fumes in Macassar.

nervous" about what had happened.

When police came to evacuate her, the gas had burnt her chest so badly that she feared she would not make it to the patrol van, she said. "I want to know if the factories can move or if Macassar can move," she added.

Macassar cricket team were playing an end-of-year match when they first noticed the smoke.

Many evacuees reported hearing that up to 35 people had died in the gas cloud - claims which have repeatedly been denied by various authorities, who put the number at three. - *The Independent (London), Cape Times and Sapa.*



# Sham transformation leads to poor standards

(54) 8019/12/95

THE current crisis at Wits University must be seen against the background of the historical failure of the SA school system and the consequent pressures surrounding tertiary education for black students.

Racially structured access to primary and secondary educational opportunities has left South Africans with a legacy of inequality that has worked its way through the system not only in terms of access to tertiary education, but to job opportunities in the marketplace. It has also created an inherently unjust racial imbalance among people qualified to assume positions of leadership and responsibility in various sectors of our community.

We must strive to eliminate these structured imbalances as rapidly as possible, because they underlie and exacerbate the racial tensions that continue to hound our society. In this sense the importance of transformation, a process vigorously supported by certain pressure groups within SA, is enthusiastically endorsed by the DP.

Transformation is not, however, an unproblematic concept. For certain groupings of students and workers, such as the SA Students' Congress (Sasco) and the National Education, Health and Allied Work-

ers' Union (Nehawu), the notion of transformation in our universities — an enabling process aimed at social empowerment and economic upliftment of the historically oppressed — means little more than an immediate transference of racial powers regardless of ability, competence or qualifications.

Other bodies, which should know better, such as the ANC Women's League, embrace such superficial thinking when they characterise the decision to suspend deputy vice-chancellor Prof William Makgoba as being racist, and question the commitment of the university to social justice.

Despite the ravages of apartheid education, one in every three students at the university is black, and Wits has secured a proud national and international reputation for its commitment to nonracial and non-sexist education.

Wits has the country's largest contingent of black post-graduate students — the very lifeblood of a developing economy — and has produced more black doctors, lawyers and teachers than any comparable institution in the country. It has also led the country in getting its students involved in university governance, being the first to grant stu-

## MICHAEL ELLIS

dents representation on its council.

In the broadest and best sense of transformation — a process of change which seeks to ensure social upliftment without comprising educational excellence — Wits has always led the country. Its appointment of Makgoba as deputy vice-chancellor in December 1993 was made in line with that tradition and the desire to further the process of change in tertiary education.

It is ironic that Wits appears to have been singled out for special attention by the ANC and its allies, when there are at least three other universities — historically black and supposedly fully "democratised" and "transformed" — which manifest problems at the highest levels in administration and yet fail to invite ministerial intervention.

At Venda University the vice-chancellor has had his PhD withdrawn by Yale on the grounds that substantial parts of his work was plagiarised. At Fort Hare University — once the pride of black education throughout Africa — the vice-chancellor stands accused of engaging in a "titlerary experiment" which his defenders characterised as "in-

ter-textual play" but which his detractors see as plagiarism. At Transkei University, vice-chancellor Prof D Moleah has resigned after only 10 months in office, citing as his reason the fact that his university council was, in effect, being controlled by Nehawu — an allegation publicly underwritten by his embattled academic staff.

Recent failures indicate that the mere transference of racial power from the white administrators of the former apartheid regime to the black men of the new order — without first routing the process of transformation through the conduits of ability, competence and qualification — cannot succeed. All young South Africans, but more especially young black South Africans, have the right to a first-class education in institutions committed to excellence and transformation, rather than to the second-rate instruction that characterises the world of sham "transformation" advocated by Sasco, Nehawu and their political allies.

All responsible South Africans must now ask themselves what it is they expect from the tertiary education sector. Are they willing to settle for the short-term gains and mediocrity that come from the su-

perficial racial "transformation" of the upper orders of our university administrations, or do they seek the deeper-seated process of change that will flow from a genuine process of transformation that is coupled to excellence?

The "Makgoba Affair" asks questions not only of Wits University, but of each and every South African with an interest in tertiary education. But, perhaps above all, it poses a single unambiguous question for Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu.

He is now asked to choose between the excellence and transformation as safeguarded through the tried and trusted notion of university autonomy as embodied in Wits University on the one hand, and the millenarian notions of "transformation" advocated by Sasco, Nehawu and populist supporters on the other. He will answer not only to this generation of South Africans, but also to their children and their grandchildren.

Africa is littered with the shells of once great universities — from Ibadan to Makerere and from Dakar to Dar es Salaam. The minister should choose wisely. There is no room for error; the price is too high.

□ Ellis is DP education spokesman.

## LETTERS

# Farmers face ruin after acid rain from AECI fire destroys crops

CAPE TOWN — Farmers in the Somerset West-Stellenbosch area face large financial losses after a cloud of sulphur from a fire at AECI on Sunday destroyed vegetable and fruit crops.

Sapa reports that with the rain that followed the fire, sulphurous acid was formed, burning the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruining vegetable crops in the area. Two people died and thousands had to flee their homes.

Rust-en-Vrede owner Brian Pickering, who supplies Pick'n'Pay and other stores, said all his lettuce, spring

onions and cocktail tomatoes were burnt. "It looks as if somebody threw battery acid over the crop," he said. "All my cash is tied up in the crop... and this is normally our busiest period."

Farmer Johannes Visser said 80% of his 35ha of vegetable crops was wiped out. "I am still trying to estimate the cost and am speaking to my lawyers so the chemical company can take responsibility for these losses."

Gunter Henke, who farms flowers and vegetables, said his immediate loss was about R100 000. "That was

just what I paid for the plants and seeds which were destroyed by this acid rain."

An AECI spokesman said the company was consulting its insurance brokers about the damage.

Mungo Soggot and Edward West report AECI spokesman Mike Blizzard said the company's farming specialists and assessors would visit affected farmers in the next few days to discuss possible compensation.

Blizzard said the stockpile of 15 000 tons of sulphur — owned by govern-

ment but managed by AECI — had been established 20 years ago. AECI had believed its safety measures were sufficient. But a veld fire on Saturday night, whipped up by a 70km/h wind, had jumped two firebreaks. AECI would negotiate with government about what to do with the sulphur.

Meanwhile, officials from the labour department, responsible for occupational health and safety, said government lacked the staff and know-how to police industry's storage of potentially lethal substances adequately.

## Chemicals

Continued from Page 1  
5019/12/95

such events had taken place.

The admission emerged as AECI and representatives of the Maccassar community met yesterday to discuss the fall-out from fire.

Blizzard said that it had been agreed at the meeting that AECI would establish a health office in Maccassar manned by doctors specialising in respiratory ailments, that medical bills resulting from the fire be paid by AECI and that an independent board of inquiry be set up to investigate the disaster. Blizzard said AECI managed a similar stockpile at a plant in Natal at its Umbogintwini plant.

An AECI spokesman said it did not have a central inventory of potentially hazardous chemicals, but individual

operating sites did. It would be impractical to have one list of the locations and amount of potentially lethal waste in SA as it was difficult to know where to draw the line. "Just about all chemical substances, no matter how innocuous they may seem, could present a hazard of one kind or another."

AECI said that over the past 18 months it had set up community awareness and emergency response committees at AECI operating sites.

Lukanyo Mnyanda reports a Sasol spokesman said Sasol did not have an open stockpile of sulphur at its Sasolburg chemical operation, and its Natref refinery at Sasolburg, which produced sulphur liquid, had a sophisticated emergency plan. Both Sasol plants in Sasolburg and Secunda had emergency response systems which could warn nearby communities of impending chemical dangers with sirens and radio frequencies.

The department had no records of locations for the storage of hazardous waste and insufficient manpower to police companies. Though new legislation expected next year would increase the companies' responsibilities, they would not be bound to inform government about storage details.

A labour department occupational health and safety spokesman said the new legislation would beef up government's ability to "point fingers" after

Continued on Page 2

# Farmers face ruin after acid rain from AECI fire destroys crops

BD 19/12/95

CAPE TOWN — Farmers in the Somerset West-Stellenbosch area face large financial losses after a cloud of sulphur from a fire at AECI on Sunday destroyed vegetable and fruit crops.

Sapa reports that with the rain that followed the fire, sulphurous acid was formed, burning the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruining vegetable crops in the area. Two people died and thousands had to flee their homes.

Rust-en-Vrede owner Brian Pickering, who supplies Pick'n Pay and other stores, said all his lettuce, spring

onions and cocktail tomatoes were burnt. "It looks as if somebody threw battery acid over the crop," he said. "All my cash is tied up in the crop... and this is normally our busiest period."

Farmer Johannes Visser said 80% of his 35ha of vegetable crops was wiped out. "I am still trying to estimate the cost and am speaking to my lawyers so the chemical company can take responsibility for these losses."

Gunter Henke, who farms flowers and vegetables, said his immediate loss was about R100 000. "That was

just what I paid for the plants and seeds which were destroyed by this acid rain."

An AECI spokesman said the company was consulting its insurance brokers about the damage.

Mungo Soggot and Edward West report AECI spokesman Mike Blizzard said the company's farming specialists and assessors would visit affected farmers in the next few days to discuss possible compensation.

Blizzard said the stockpile of 15 000 tons of sulphur — owned by govern-

ment but managed by AECI — had been established 20 years ago. AECI had believed its safety measures were sufficient. But a veld fire on Saturday night, whipped up by a 70km/h wind, had jumped two firebreaks. AECI would negotiate with government about what to do with the sulphur.

Meanwhile, officials from the labour department, responsible for occupational health and safety, said government lacked the staff and know-how to police industry's storage of potentially lethal substances adequately.

## Chemicals

Continued from Page 1

BD 19/12/95

The admission emerged as AECI and representatives of the Maccassar community met yesterday to discuss the fall-out from fire.

Blizzard said that it had been agreed at the meeting that AECI would establish a health office in Maccassar manned by doctors specialising in respiratory ailments, that medical bills resulting from the fire be paid by AECI and that an independent board of inquiry be set up to investigate the disaster. Blizzard said AECI managed a similar stockpile at a plant in Natal at its Umbogintwini plant.

An AECI spokesman said it did not have a central inventory of potentially hazardous chemicals, but individual

operating sites did. It would be impractical to have one list of the locations and amount of potentially lethal wastes in SA as it was difficult to know where to draw the line. "Just about all chemical substances, no matter how innocuous they may seem, could present a hazard of one kind or another."

AECI said that over the past 18 months it had set up community awareness and emergency response committees at AECI operating sites.

Lukanyo Myranda reports a Sasol spokesman said Sasol did not have an open stockpile of sulphur at its Sasolburg chemical operation, and its Natref refinery at Sasolburg, which produced sulphur liquid, had a sophisticated emergency plan. Both Sasol plants in Sasolburg and Secunda had emergency response systems which could warn nearby communities of impending chemical dangers with sirens and radio frequencies.

The department had no records of locations for the storage of hazardous waste and insufficient manpower to police companies. Though new legislation expected next year would increase the companies' responsibilities, they would not be bound to inform government about storage details.

A labour department occupational health and safety spokesman said the new legislation would beef up government's ability to "point fingers" after

Continued on Page 2



**MAN-MADE OR NATURAL?** Water seeping from the wetland fills a trench on the property, just five days after it was dug — and before it started raining.

# Wetland dispute probe

(56) ARG 19/12/95

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

LAWYERS appointed by conservationists are checking the legality of a 1921 sub-division of a Scarborough property containing a significant wetland, and will apply immediately for a Supreme Court interdict if they consider it invalid.

This follows a weekend agreement between the owner of Erf 766, Fred Badenhorst, and the Friends of Scarborough conservation organisation that no further digging or clearing, other than alien vegetation, will be done on the property until January 30.

Mr Badenhorst raised the ire of the conservationists last week by using a mechanical digger to scoop a trench in the wetland section of the property which adjoins the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

Mr Badenhorst, who has retired to Scarborough, has been told by surveyors the property has existing subdivision rights dating from 1921, and six sections are already being marketed by a local estate agent.

But Scarborough resident and botany professor Richard Cowling said he had evidence from the Deeds Office that this 1921 subdivision had been cancelled.



**THE WETLAND IS HERE:** Scarborough residents consult a map during an on-site protest meeting about a dispute over proposed developments on a property in the village.

"We have asked our lawyers to investigate the legality of the sub-division, and if we find that it's not valid we will ask them to apply for an interdict," Professor Cowling said.

The Scarborough group also believed Mr Badenhorst's activities on the property contravened the Environment Conservation Act and this would be additional grounds for applying for an interdict, Professor Cowling said.

The group will ask the Scarborough local council to pay half any legal fees incurred in

its challenge.

The group called a protest meeting at the site on Sunday and initially suggested its members should symbolically fill the trench.

But this protest action was called off after Professor Cowling and another representative talked to Mr Badenhorst who arrived and threatened to lay trespass charges if any attempt was made to dig.

Scarborough town clerk Edward Thresher asked police to monitor the protest.

Mr Badenhorst agreed to de-

lay further work on the site, other than continuing to clear alien vegetation, until January 30.

Afterwards, he told The Argus he had "no hidden agenda" in his proposed development of the property.

He said he had held informal discussions with both the local council and the ratepayers' association.

"I told them more or less what I had in mind and there were no objections.

"It is my intention to sell off a few plots on about one fifth of the property at the top end, and keep the rest of about four hectares for myself as a private nature reserve. So I started to clear.

"I'm within my rights but now I've got this noose around my neck."

He denied that clearing operations on the property had been indiscriminate.

"We were accused of just going in and destroying the vegetation, but that's not true — there was a qualified horticulturist on site all the time.

"We just cleared the grassy areas and our machine worked around the others where there was 'taaibos' (Rhus species) — we left these intact," he said.

Mr Badenhorst said he didn't want to get involved "in all the hysteria".



**SULPHUR DUMP:** AECI's general manager, operational services, Mr Bertie Humphries (left), guides Western Cape Environment Minister Mr Kobus Meiring around the open sulphur dump yesterday. **PICTURE: ALAN TAYLOR**

# AECI sulphur stock halved after collapse of apartheid

**STAFF REPORTER**

THE consequences of the weekend AECI fire would have been far worse in the heyday of apartheid when twice the amount of sulphur was stored there at the behest of the government.

This emerged at a press conference at the plant yesterday addressed by Western Cape Environmental Minister Mr Kobus Meiring and the managing director of the huge explosives and chemical company, Mr Boet Coetzee.

They confirmed that the government had asked AECI to stockpile the strategic chemical when the world-wide isolation of apartheid began to bite.

CT 20/12/95  
But it is almost seven years since Mr F W de Klerk announced the official death of the ideology, and 19 months since the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela. Why then, the Cape Times asked, was nothing done to reduce the apartheid stockpile?

"It is a bit unfair to say nothing was done," countered Mr Coetzee. "We have reduced it from 30 000 tons to 15 000 tons."

## Probe

However, it would be an issue for a commission of inquiry to take further if necessary, along with all other issues, he said.

Sulphur was first stored at AECI's Somerset West plant about

30 years ago.

Mr Meiring said he was satisfied with the commission set up by the company and saw no need for an independent investigation by the province, as demanded by Western Cape ANC leader Mr Chris Nissen.

Mr Meiring said he was impressed by AECI's handling of the disaster, as outlined to him at a meeting he attended yesterday.

Toxic sulphur dioxide engulfed the adjacent coloured township of Macassar on Saturday night after a veld fire fanned by strong winds ignited an open sulphur storage dump on the plant's outskirts.

The funeral for the Williams brothers, Andrew, 54, and Ronnie, 47, who died in the disaster, is at noon tomorrow.

ARC 20/12/95  
**Farmers  
 put the  
 squeeze  
 on AECI**

56  
 Staff Reporter

FARMERS in the Somerset West-Stellenbosch district, whose crops were damaged by acid rain caused by the fire at a sulphur dump at the AECI plant in Somerset West, want their "several millions of rands" damage claim dealt with swiftly.

The blaze at the storage dump sent thick clouds of acrid sulphur dioxide into the air and when it mixed with the rain that followed the fire the sulphur dioxide formed sulphurous acid that burnt the leaves and fruit of most trees and ruined vegetable crops in the area.

Some of the farmers had their entire crops wiped out and faced financial ruin as all their cash was tied up in their crops.

Earlier this week 13 farmers hired a firm of assessors to calculate their losses and damage and submitted their claims to AECI. The company has also briefed a team of agricultural experts to assess the crop damage and to offer support and advice to the farmers.

Ebbe Rabie of Robins Campbell and Williams firm of insurance loss adjusters said the company was hired by about 13 farmers and got calls from a few others to help prepare and submit claims to AECI.

"We are still formulating claims and are only looking at the damage caused to the plants at this stage and not to the soil. Already it is running into several millions of rands."

He said all the farmers had adopted a very reasonable approach to the situation with regard to claims and all hoped the company would be just as flexible and would speedily compensate them.

One of the farmers most affected by the acid rain, Johannes Visser of Voorentoe farm, who lost 80 percent of his 35 hectare salad vegetable crop, said assessors estimated his damage to be about R600 000.

"I have been in constant contact with AECI and yesterday, with the other farmers, handed in my claim.

"Our biggest worry is how long they are going to take to process it because many of us have workers to pay and very little cash to continue the farming operation."

# AECI assessors look into liability claims

(56)

BD 20/12/95

AECI Ltd said it carried comprehensive public liability insurance for the fire at its plant near Somerset West in the Western Cape and which it was in the process of investigating with assessors.

The fire, which left three people dead, scores injured and forced about 2 500 to flee their homes, began late on Saturday, spewing toxic sulphur dioxide from burning piles of sulphur near the plant.

Nearby farms were also reported to have lost large areas of crops in the incident.

"The AECI group has a comprehensive public liability policy in place with local and overseas liability insurers," the company said.

"Assessors representing the insurance companies are currently involved in investigating the incident in conjunction with the local communities with a view to resolving the issues at hand," it said.

Spokesman Mike Blizzard said he was unable to make a preliminary estimate of claims which may arise, nor how liability for the incident may be apportioned.

AECI said earlier it was responsible only for the maintenance of the sulphur stockpiles, which belong to government.

Meanwhile, Western Cape finance and environment affairs

MEC Kobus Meiring said yesterday he was satisfied that an independent commission set up by AECI and the Macassar community would be sufficient to investigate the blaze.

On Saturday ANC Western Cape leader Chris Nissen called on the provincial legislature to set up an independent investigation into the cause of the fire.

Visiting the factory yesterday, Meiring said he was satisfied that the independent commission would be sufficient. "We need to give AECI and the people of Macassar a chance and I don't see any good in having two investigations," he said.

AECI operations services managing director Boet Coetzee said it was important for the company to establish the facts.

The proposed commission of inquiry into the fire would have a strong mandate that could have serious implications for industry throughout SA.

The interim terms of reference for the inquiry, such as civil defence responsibilities and emergency response systems, were agreed to on Monday by Macassar residents and AECI officials and could have nationwide implications. — Reuter, Sapa.

# AECI assessors look into liability claims

(56) BD 20 / 12/95

AECI Ltd said it carried comprehensive public liability insurance for the fire at its plant near Somerset West in the Western Cape and which it was in the process of investigating with assessors.

The fire, which left three people dead, scores injured and forced about 2 500 to flee their homes, began late on Saturday, spewing toxic sulphur dioxide from burning piles of sulphur near the plant.

Nearby farms were also reported to have lost large areas of crops in the incident.

"The AECI group has a comprehensive public liability policy in place with local and overseas liability insurers," the company said.

"Assessors representing the insurance companies are currently involved in investigating the incident in conjunction with the local communities with a view to resolving the issues at hand," it said.

Spokesman Mike Blizzard said he was unable to make a preliminary estimate of claims which may arise, nor how liability for the incident may be apportioned.

AECI said earlier it was responsible only for the maintenance of the sulphur stockpiles, which belong to government.

Meanwhile, Western Cape finance and environment affairs

MEC Kobus Meiring said yesterday he was satisfied that an independent commission set up by AECI and the Macassar community would be sufficient to investigate the blaze.

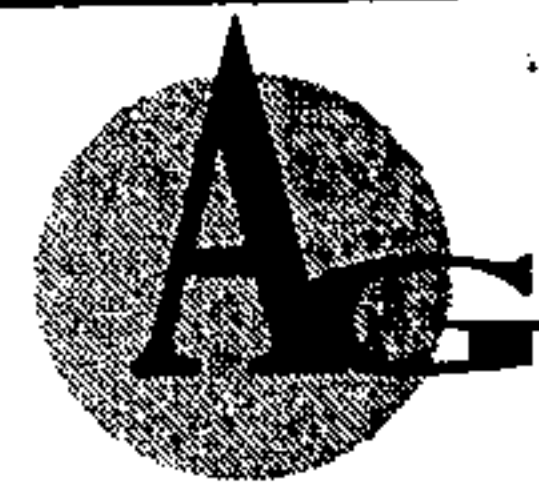
On Saturday ANC Western Cape leader Chris Nissen called on the provincial legislature to set up an independent investigation into the cause of the fire.

Visiting the factory yesterday, Meiring said he was satisfied that the independent commission would be sufficient. "We need to give AECI and the people of Macassar a chance and I don't see any good in having two investigations," he said.

AECI operations services managing director Boet Coetzee said it was important for the company to establish the facts.

The proposed commission of inquiry into the fire would have a strong mandate that could have serious implications for industry throughout SA.

The interim terms of reference for the inquiry, such as civil defence responsibilities and emergency response systems, were agreed to on Monday by Macassar residents and AECI officials and could have nationwide implications. — Reuter, Sapa.



**AMALIA GOLD MINING AND EXPLORATION  
COMPANY LTD**



# Experts to assess sulphur stockpile

BD 21/12/95

CAPE TOWN — Experts had been asked to evaluate the commercial value of the Somerset West sulphur stockpile which caught fire at the weekend, with a view to selling it off, the trade and industry department said yesterday.

Acting director-general Gerrit Breyl said the stockpile belonged to the department but African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI) was responsible for its storage and safety measures.

He said the previous government 27 years ago began storing quantities of sulphur needed in chemical processes but the venture was terminated in 1988.

Edward West reports that damage inflicted on crops in Stellenbosch and Somerset West following a fire at the AECI-managed sulphur dump ran to "several millions of rands", according to first official assessments.

Agricultural insurance loss adjuster Robins Campbell & Williams, which has been hired by 13 farmers to draw up claims against AECI, said the worst-hit crops included lettuce, beetroot, carrots, pepper, strawberries and watermelon.

The company said that other farmers had also called on it for

help, and that it was currently formulating claims for crop rather than soil damage.

AECI said its insurance assessors were also surveying the damage, while agricultural experts from AECI subsidiary Kynoch were visiting affected farms and providing advice. AECI had comprehensive public liability insurance in place with local and overseas insurers. The Johannesburg-based CWB Loss Adjustors was acting for AECI's local and overseas public liability insurers, a spokesman said.

The decision to evaluate the Somerset West stockpile followed recommendations made by the joint operations committee which co-ordinated firefighting during a blaze which left two dead and forced the evacuation of nearby Macassar's 2 500 residents.

Committee spokesman Ferdie Mostert said: "We would obviously discuss the matter with AECI and request that the heap should be isolated by removing any grass in the immediate vicinity."

"Our further suggestion would be that the heap be covered with sand so that it is not as susceptible to the elements as it was at the weekend," he said. — Sapa.

# Contralesa to forge unity with other political leaders

Farouk Ghothia

DURBAN — The Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA (Contralesa) signalled yesterday that it would move further away from the ANC in a bid to forge unity with traditional leaders from other political parties, including the IFP.

Speaking after a meeting attended by Contralesa's national executive committee and its KwaZulu-Natal region, president Phatekile Holomisa said: "Now that liberation has been achieved it is imperative that we assert our independence as Contralesa so that we attract other traditional leaders. It is natural that there will be a parting of ways (with the ANC) here and there."

Holomisa's comments are likely to heighten tensions between Contralesa and the ANC. Holomisa's faction of Contralesa irked the ANC when it boycotted local government elections and chose to hold a rally with IFP-aligned traditional leaders to protest against central government's treatment of traditional leaders.

Holomisa's decision also precipitated divisions within Contralesa, and its KwaZulu-Natal region threatened to break away.

Contralesa KwaZulu-Natal chairman Zibuse Mlaba said the "misunderstanding" had been resolved. There had been a lack of communication and the national executive committee failed to

timeously inform the region about the rally.

Holomisa said Contralesa would continue interacting with IFP-aligned traditional leaders. It was of concern to Contralesa that traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal were divided.

"The only solution is for them to unite," Holomisa said.

Mlaba said the region expected the national executive committee to consult it before holding any meetings with IFP-aligned chiefs.

Holomisa said the issue of Contralesa members holding positions within the ANC would be reviewed once the national constitution was finalised. It was in the interests of traditional leaders to remain in Parliament at this stage to have an input in the constitution-making process.

The task of defining the role of traditional leaders in the constitution could only be left to politicians.

Holomisa repeated his charge that central government was not taking traditional leaders "seriously enough". This was shown by its failure to establish a Council of Traditional Leaders. Contralesa would seek a meeting with President Nelson Mandela to raise its concerns, Holomisa said.

The national executive committee said Victor Sefora — who, claiming to be Contralesa's general secretary, denounced Holomisa on national television — was an "inconsequential dissident".

## Island declared a monument

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Robben Island, arguably the site of one of the world's most famous political prisons, has been declared a national monument.

Making the announcement yesterday, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane said there was potential for the island, which attracts considerable international interest, to become a world heritage site.

The declaration means that all buildings, structures and other elements on the island may not be altered without the permission of the national monuments council. In addition to protecting the island, the declaration also applies to an area one nautical mile from the shore.

Ngubane said the island was unique as a result of its political, historical and environmental heritage.

Robben Island is composed of blue rock, deposited some 800-million years ago. The maximum security prison, which was home to President Nelson Mandela for so long, is built of this blue stone.

Van Riebeeck was the first to use the island as a prison — a troublesome manservant of his became the first prisoner on the island and, apparently, the only person to escape.

# Authorities warn of land claim scams

Kevin O'Grady

THE Commission on Restitution of Land Rights — which has so far received more than 5 000 claims — has warned of "land claim scams" in which people "extort money ... for the handling of claims which can be done free by the commission".

Chief land claims commissioner Joe Seremane said he was also concerned about "reports of threats by some individuals or organisations of land invasions if their claims are not resolved within weeks".

He warned that any land invasions would be an infringement of the Restitution Act and "could be counterproductive to a peaceful and reconciliatory process of restitution".

"It should be remembered that dispossession of land took place over decades of racially based actions and cannot be rectified within weeks to everybody's satisfaction," Seremane said.

Some of the claims received had already reached the negotiation and mediation stage and provisional agreements had been reached on settling others.

Creating the necessary administrative structure to handle large numbers of claims had taken longer than expected and led to the commission's work lagging behind schedule.

"There is, however, no doubt that we have made progress and that we are moving towards full operational capacity," Seremane said.

Attention had been given to a

"fair number" of claims which were regarded as urgent, and official notices of the investigation of at least 200 claims had been published.

Some cases would be submitted to the Land Claims Court as soon as it was fully established early next year.

Of the 5 041 claims already received, 3 065 were from urban areas and 1 976 from rural areas.

The highest number of claims was in KwaZulu-Natal (1 999), followed by Gauteng (1 062) and Western Cape (626).

Seremane said he believed many claims were still outstanding because people did not realise they were entitled to claim for land rights dispossessed under racially based measures of previous governments since June 1913.

# Experts to assess sulphur stockpile

(56) (163) BD 21/12/95  
CAPE TOWN — Experts had been asked to evaluate the commercial value of the Somerset West sulphur stockpile which caught fire at the weekend, with a view to selling it off, the trade and industry department said yesterday.

Acting director-general Gerrit Breyl said the stockpile belonged to the department but African Explosives and Chemical Industries (AECI) was responsible for its storage and safety measures.

He said the previous government 27 years ago began storing quantities of sulphur needed in chemical processes but the venture was terminated in 1988.

Edward West reports that damage inflicted on crops in Stellenbosch and Somerset West following a fire at the AECI-managed sulphur dump ran to "several millions of rands", according to first official assessments.

Agricultural insurance loss adjuster Robins Campbell & Williams, which has been hired by 13 farmers to draw up claims against AECI, said the worst-hit crops included lettuce, beetroot, carrots, pepper, strawberries and watermelon.

The company said that other farmers had also called on it for

help, and that it was currently formulating claims for crop rather than soil damage.

AECI said its insurance assessors were also surveying the damage, while agricultural experts from AECI subsidiary Kynoch were visiting affected farms and providing advice. AECI had comprehensive public liability insurance in place with local and overseas insurers. The Johannesburg-based CWB Loss Adjustors was acting for AECI's local and overseas public liability insurers, a spokesman said.

The decision to evaluate the Somerset West stockpile followed recommendations made by the joint operations committee which co-ordinated firefighting during a blaze which left two dead and forced the evacuation of nearby Macassar's 2 500 residents.

Committee spokesman Ferdie Mostert said: "We would obviously discuss the matter with AECI and request that the heap should be isolated by removing any grass in the immediate vicinity.

"Our further suggestion would be that the heap be covered with sand so that it is not as susceptible to the elements as it was at the weekend," he said. — Sapa.

# Cape Town's waste poses 'severe threat' to growth

□ Warning from task group on 600 000 tons of rubbish generated every year

(56) ARG 21/12/95

JOHN YELD

Environment Reporter

PROBLEMS with handling the estimated 600 000 tons of domestic and commercial waste generated in the Cape metropolitan area each year pose a severe threat to the region's future growth, development and prosperity.

That's the warning from the Integrated Waste Management Task Group, set up under the auspices of the Institute of Waste Management to highlight problems and prepare guidelines and policy suggestions for the Western Cape cabinet.

The group includes representatives from universities and technikons, local government, the Department of Water Affairs, trade unions, environmental organisations and community groups, and consultants and contractors in the waste management business.

Recently, regional ministers of finance and environment, Kobus Meiring, and health, Ebrahim Rasool, and the head of the regional government's environmental affairs department, Niel van Wyk, attended the group's presentation, *Towards an integrated waste management strategy for the Western Cape*.

According to the group, major concerns relating to waste management in the region are:

- Increasing air and water pollution, illegal dumping and littering.
- The increasing difficulty of finding suitable landfill sites.
- The vast disparity in the standard of waste services in different income groups.
- The critical need for education, among both public and industry, regarding waste management, recycling and waste minimisation.
- The critical need for information for effective long-term planning.

The task group said that while high and middle-income areas enjoyed frequent waste collection and street cleaning, in low-income areas regular waste collections could be infrequent or non-existent.

"Without adequate waste collection services, residents are faced with little alternative but to dump waste and litter on the streets or on empty lots.

"To compound matters, it is these communities who often bear the brunt of the problems caused by others who dump their waste illegally because of ignorance, disrespect, or unavoidably high landfill charges."

Because of pollution and other environmental problems, and because of more stringent legislation, several landfill sites in the region had already been closed and others had been ordered to close.

"No new sites which are both hydrologically suitable and socially acceptable have yet been identified ...

"Solid, liquid and airborne waste from households, businesses and industry can all potentially damage the natural environment, and, poorly managed, these wastes represent an insidious contamination risk to valuable land and water resources."

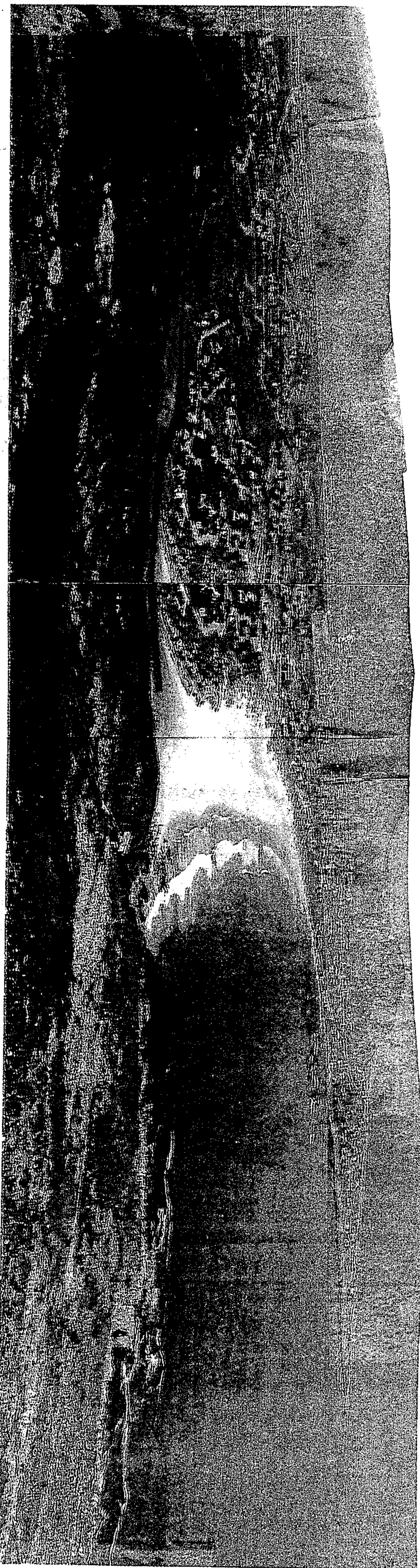
The task group strongly recommended the immediate formation of an advisory committee to the regional environmental affairs minister, "to guide the development of an integrated waste management policy and strategy for the Western Cape".

In response, Mr Meiring said all relevant provincial authorities — environment, education, health, planning and finance — needed to be involved, and he undertook to prepare a memorandum for the first cabinet meeting next year.



Picture: OBED ZILWA

**MOUNTAINS OF RUBBISH:** This pile of rubbish was dumped by striking Ikapa workers on council premises in July. It represents just a small proportion of the domestic waste generated by Cape Town every year and which is becoming an increasing problem.



**WORTH PROTECTING:** From this elevated vantage point on the slopes of Two Sisters peak, the tranquil holiday village of Pringle Bay appears well cared for and ecologically healthy. But a closer-up view would reveal an entirely different picture — of severe environmental degradation through the rapid spread of alien vegetation.

# Call to save Pringle Bay from ruin

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

THE superb natural environment of the Pringle Bay area is being destroyed rapidly and the new local council should develop urgent policies to reverse the trend, says a concerned group of residents and ratepayers.

The group will propose the formation of an organisation — possibly to be called the Friends of Pringle Bay — at the annual meeting of the Prin-

gle Bay Ratepayers' Association on Saturday in an attempt to spur effective conservation action in the seaside village.

"We are on a slippery slope to environmental degradation, and efforts to counter this have been fragmented and not very effective," said Jeff Goy, one of the concerned group.

The group has sent a memorandum about environmental

issues to the ratepayers' association committee, asking for the issue to be debated at the annual meeting. The memorandum

"It is glaringly obvious that the state of the environment — land and sea — around Pringle Bay has deteriorated rapidly in the past 20 years."

Two aspects are of particular concern: the spread of alien

invasive vegetation and the destruction of marine life.

"The spread of invasive vegetation poses a mortal threat to South Africa's major floral kingdom because of the destruction of indigenous plants, the increased fire hazard, and the reduction of water availability."

"The destruction of the marine environment is due to the

stripping of shellfish, over-fishing, and pollution by tankers, passing ships and other vessels.

"We wish to express extreme concern at this destruction, which is continuing unabated."

The proposal is for a new conservation group that can seek advice from experts, cooperate with existing conservation organisations operating in the area, such as the Botanical

Society and Wildlife Society, and help formulate suitable policies in close consultation with the local council and ratepayers' association.

Such policies would have to take account of problems like the spread of invasive cluster pine into the mountains.

Another major problem was the rapid spread of rootkranz trees over private plots and

road verges.

"There has been legislation in place for about 10 years to allow local authorities to clear dense alien vegetation from private properties if the owners refused to do this, because of the fire hazard," Mr Goy said.

"Efforts were made to enforce this legislation for a while, but not recently, and the spread of rootkranz in particular is exponential."

The management of Pringle Bay now fell under the new Hanglip local council, which stretched from Kleinmond to Rooi Els.

"While Pringle Bay unfortunately has only one representative on that council, we are hopeful that we can make a fresh start and work with the new council on an holistic basis, so as to develop a sound environmental policy for the whole area," Mr Goy said.

The meeting is being held on Saturday, December 23, at 9 am in the Pringle Bay Church Hall.

A second meeting will be held on Saturday, December 30, at the same time and place, to discuss the formation of the proposed conservation group, to organise hikes, and to encourage participation in Pringle Bay hacks currently held under the auspices of the ratepayers' association.

# Plan to sell AECI sulphur stockpile

Staff Reporter

(56) ARG 21/12/95

THE Department of Trade and Industry says its now-depleted sulphur store in Somerset West is the only government-owned chemical stockpile in the country.

"There are no other stockpiles of chemicals," said the department's acting director-general, Gerrit Breyl.

Mr Breyl acknowledged his department's ownership of the stockpile — which burned with fatal results at the weekend — but said chemical company AECI "is responsible for storage and safety measures".

He said the department did own a second stockpile — at Umbogintwini near Durban — but had sold it to AECI.

The department had acquired the sulphur from the previous government which "commenced with the storage of quantities of sulphur needed in chemical processes 27 years ago, but the venture was terminated in 1988".

Extending the department's condolences to family and friends of the Williams brothers of Som-

set West, who died when the sulphur caught fire, sending dangerous emissions into the air, Mr Breyl said experts had been requested to evaluate the commercial value of the sulphur with a view to selling it.

Meanwhile at a press conference earlier this week, AECI's top management acknowledged the company's sole responsibility for the safe-keeping of the sulphur.

"As the responsible custodians there is no way we will try to hide behind the fact that the state is the owner of the strategic stockpile."

● For inquiries regarding claims against AECI for medical expenses incurred during and following the fire, call 024 852 1125.

LAND AND SEA TO BECOME A NATIONAL MONUMENT

# Mandela's Robben Island gift

CT 21 | 12 | 95 (56)



ISLAND IN THE NEWS: An aerial view of Robben Island, which was declared a national monument yesterday. The move is expected to pave the way for the island and its surrounding marine area being declared a UN World Heritage Site. PICTURE: ROBBERN ISLAND RECREATION CLUB

**THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL** will have custodianship of Robben Island after the government declared it a national monument yesterday. The declaration effectively torpedoed any possibility of the commercial exploitation of the island. **ANTHONY JOHNSON** reports.

**R**OBBERN ISLAND has been saved from commercial exploitation by a government declaration yesterday making the city landmark a national monument.

The move is expected to pave the way for the island and its surrounding marine area being declared a UN World Heritage Site.

The National Monuments Council (NMC) will have custodianship of the former leper and lunatic colony and long-time prison where President Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison.

Making the announcement, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Dr Ben Ngubane said: "This (declaration) will involve the entire island, together with a stretch of one sea mile surrounding it."

The step effectively torpedoed any proposals to build casinos or hotels for tourists on the island — turning it into an offshore playground that would serve as an extension of the waterfront.

The announcement was made after hasty moves to gain the blessing of Mr Mandela and his two deputy presidents, Mr Thabo Mbeki and Mr F W de Klerk, yesterday morning.

One government official said Mr Mandela had greeted the news by stating: "That is a nice Christmas present."

The leader of a government commission to decide on the future of Robben Island, Mr Ahmed Kathrada, also gave the plan the green light, according to Mr Frans Basson, a spokesman for Dr Ngubane.

The minister said the declaration of Robben Island as a national monument marked the beginning of a process aimed at identifying and recognising heritage sites which were valued by the public.

"Following recommendations from the NMC, I expect legislation to be promulgated for the protection, maintenance and enhancement of the cultural, architectural, aesthetic and historical significance of the island," Dr Ngubane said.

The NMC said last night that the main implication of the declaration was "to retain as much as possible of the island's unique historical, political, architectural and environmental character for future generations".

All alternations or demolitions concerning any structure on the island or any ecological changes can in future be done only with the NMC's approval.

This also applies to all state departments and the provincial government.

However, the NMC pointed out that this did not necessarily preclude any "sympathetic" developments.

A number of proposals for the development of Robben Island have been raised in recent months and in some cases forwarded to Mr Kathrada's committee.

These include the establishment of a peace institute, an open university and a resistance museum.

## Prison

In future, the ship wrecks within the declared area around the island will also be protected and applications for salvage work on any of the vessels can only be done after a permit has been issued by the NMC.

The prison on the island, which housed almost 3 000 of the Nationalist government's political foes during the apartheid era, is due to close at the end of next year.

The smaller of the island's two prisons has already been closed and the section in which Mr Mandela and senior liberation movement figures were held has been empty for some years now.

Dr Ngubane said yesterday the island spans various areas of geological and environmental significance.

Of particular geological interest, he said was the exposed rippled base of the oldest slate quarry in the south — evidence of shallow underwater silt deposit estimated to have occurred some 800 million years ago.

The minister said that a report by Cape Nature Conservation had noted that human influence had had a marked impact on the flora and fauna of the island over the past four centuries.

Dr Ngubane said a priority for his ministry next year would be the development of projects and programmes which highlighted the broad spectrum and value of South African heritage.

## Baby stolen from Tygerberg

LISA TEMPLETON

**A THREE-WEEK-OLD** baby was stolen from his mother's bedside in Tygerberg Hospital yesterday by a woman who posed as a nurse.

Mrs Janetta de Wee, 35, of Eerste Rivier, was in ward G2 with her baby son Farrell for an operation.

A woman wearing a nurse's uniform and carrying official-looking papers entered her room at 4.40pm.

Mrs De Wee said the woman told her a doctor on the third floor needed to see the child.

She described the woman as dark skinned, of average height, plump and fu-

ent in Afrikaans. "I thought she was one of the nurses, but the minute she left the room I knew something was wrong."

Mrs De Wee said she had alerted nursing staff and she and a sister had run down the corridor after the woman, who had already disappeared.

Nursing Sister Regina Boks said a woman fitting the description Mrs De Wee had given had been seen in the baby ward. Mrs De Wee said yesterday: "I just want my baby back."

Anyone with information is asked to contact the police child protection unit on 592-2601 or 083-255-6323.



MRS JANETTA DE WEE: "I just want my baby back."



**LUNG TEST:** Michelle Rabie, 5, was one of scores of Macassar residents who underwent respiratory tests at the temporary trauma centre there yesterday. Conducting the test is Ms Mandy Vorster, a technologist in Groote Schuur's respiratory unit.

PICTURE: ALAN TAYLOR

**BRIDGES**

**Toxic threat to animals over**

THE Somerset West Animal Welfare Society wants to reassure the residents of Macassar and the surrounding areas that the toxic sulphur dioxide fumes caused by the fire at the AECI's Somerset West plant on Saturday, no longer poses a threat to their pets.

Spokeswoman Ms Glynis Coutides said that many concerned pet owners were still calling the welfare society with queries regarding the dangers of fallout.

The Animal Welfare Society has also reminded the public to use good judgment when giving a pet as a gift, as each year the number of pets put down by animal welfare societies increases.

**Acid rain won't push up prices**

VEGETABLE prices are not expected to increase from the "scorching" of fruit and vegetable crops after the acid rain caused by the fire at the AECI plant near Macassar, Pick 'n Pay director Mr David Smith said yesterday.

He was responding to reports yesterday that claimed that fruit and vegetable prices were set to rocket shortly before the Christmas grocery shopping rush.

Mr Smith said that although some farmers may have suffered losses and would not be able to supply them with crops such as lettuce and spinach, they were buying from other areas and no price increases were planned.

**Too early to judge damage**

KWV extension services manager Mr Jan Booysen said yesterday it would take another week before any possible damage to the grape crop by the fire at the AECI plant at the weekend showed up.

Although some fruit and vegetable farmers in the Somerset West and Stellenbosch areas have reported crop damage as a result of the fallout from the fire, Mr Booysen said there were no signs yet that grape crops in the area had been affected.

Staff Reporters, Sapa-Reuter

**Racial barbs slung in post-fire row**

~~56~~ (56) (12) CT 21/12/95

**STAFF REPORTERS**

A RACIAL row has erupted over whether the evacuation and emergency care of Macassar residents was satisfactory.

The head of the Joint Operations Committee, Mr Freddy Mostert, said at the Somerset West municipal offices yesterday morning: "In my own opinion the operation was extremely successfully carried out with very few hitches."

But by the afternoon another press conference was called by community groups in Macassar, where the local mayor, Mr Sidney Kuhn, denied this, saying: "It is unfortunate, but the community felt ousted by the whites."

Mr Kuhn said the community

felt that his council and Macassar's own authorities should have been notified when the disaster occurred instead of Somerset West's.

He said community helpers who were providing coffee to the evacuees and who were quite prepared to do the rest of the catering felt that they were sidelined by Somerset West service organisations, the Lions and Rotarians, who asked them to leave.

People were also aggrieved because not everyone received food parcels which were offered to evacuees by AECI on Saturday night, he said.

However, Mr Kuhn and Mr Mostert were at one in expressing their gratitude for the assistance

rendered by businesses and institutions during the crisis.

Meanwhile, ANC Western Cape leader Mr Chris Nissen has hit back at criticism of his rejection of soup and bread as the only food offered to evacuees.

**'Paternalistic'**

He said many of the residents had shouted abuse at him and other helpers because they had received only soup and bread after several hours, even though they had seen shops in the area delivering tinned and other food to emergency centres.

"I was merely relaying what people felt."

Mr Nissen said his criticism was

not because he was ungrateful.

"Certainly everyone rallied around, and we appreciate it. But it is a very paternalistic white way of thinking that if you criticise, then you are ungrateful."

He said it was the result of a backward, white culture.

"They think if they do something like this for our people it is the simply the best and must be accepted."

"I think that they must understand that we are not just people to be shunted around."

Mr Nissen praised the Muslim community of the Strand who had delivered 20 large pots of hot food.

Macassar's mayor, Mr Sidney Kuhn, came to Mr Nissen's defence at a press conference yesterday.



TOXIC CLOUD VICTIMS TREATED

# Macassar hall turned into trauma centre

ET 21/12/95

(134) (56) (133)

**A SPECIALIST** who heads the respiratory unit at Groote Schuur Hospital has established a trauma centre to assist victims of the AECI blaze. **ANEZ SALIE** reports.

**T**HE community hall at Macassar has been turned into a temporary trauma centre complete with doctors, technologists, a psychologist, a pharmacy, administrative staff and community volunteers.

It opened yesterday morning to assist the victims of the AECI sulphur stockpile fire that led to the evacuation of Macassar residents at the weekend.

It was a bustle of activity, but with none of the antagonism between staff and patients often found at established clinics. It was a joint, communal effort.

About 120 patients were attended to at the centre during the first hour.

The trauma centre was started by respiratory specialist Dr Neil White, who heads the respiratory unit at Groote Schuur Hospital, which seconded some of its staff to Macassar.

Dr White said: "When I heard about the disaster, I contacted AECI and asked if they needed

help from someone like me — a specialist in chest medicine who knows quite a lot about toxicology and occupational diseases. They said yes.

"And, as you can see, the community is also happy with us."

He said people coming to the centre were asked to complete a questionnaire about where they were when they were exposed to the smoke, how long they were exposed, whether or not they required any treatment at the time and exactly what they experienced.

## Damage

"We also ask them whether they still have problems, and if they have chest problems, we conduct breathing tests that will show us if there is any suggestion of damage."

They were then examined for other problems — eyes, nose, throat and stomach — including psychological problems, which

were dealt with by a volunteer psychologist from private practice.

"We have three physicians who are seeing people, evaluating the results of the breathing tests, and prescribing appropriate treatment. We have a small pharmacy here for the sort of problems we expected to encounter," Dr White said.

The major complaints they had found were eye, nose, throat and chest irritations.

"Some people still have those problems, and we are particularly interested in the chest problems, because those are the sort one gets after toxic gas inhalation — the sort that worry one."

Dr White said the centre would remain in operation for as long as it was needed.

It was still too early to say if there was a pattern to the complaints. "We will produce a report on what we are doing here, but that will be only somewhere down the line," Dr White said.

"We would like to come back in a month's time to review the people we've seen and to whom we've given prescriptions, but we will only be able to say if there were any permanent effects in about three months' time."

## Sulphur stockpile owned by govt

### STAFF REPORTER

AMONG the major issues in the sulphur storage dump disaster were who owned the stockpile and whether there were any more. AECI had claimed it belonged to the government, but precisely which department had not been clear — until now.

"The stockpile belongs to the Department of Trade and Industry," said its acting director-general Mr Gerrit Breyl in a press release

received yesterday, four days after the onset of the emergency.

Mr Breyl said the previous government had started storing sulphur, needed in chemical processes, 27 years ago, but the venture was terminated in 1988.

Originally, there were two stockpiles — one in Somerset West and one in Umbogintwini near Durban.

"The latter has been sold to AECI. Although the government is the owner of the Somerset West

site, AECI is responsible for storage and safety measures," he said.

Mr Breyl said experts had been asked to evaluate the commercial value of the Somerset West stockpile with a view to selling it.

He said there were no other stockpiles of chemicals.

● The head of the Macassar Crisis Committee, Mr Heindrich Magerman, says the community demanded the stockpile be removed immediately without any preconditions.

# 1 000 mourn sulphur-fire dead

ARG 22/12/95

Minister lays blame squarely on 'people who have abused others'

Staff Reporter

THE pain brought about by the death of Ronnie and Andrew Williams was caused by people who had abused the people of the Heidelberg area for years, said Methodist priest the Rev Peter Grasso.

He led the funeral service for the two brothers who died during last weekend's sulphur fire at the AECI factory in Somerset West.

Ronnie, 48, and Andrew, 34, were buried side by side in the Strand cemetery after a service attended by more than 1 000 people, including AECI officials and Western Cape Environment Minister Kobus Meiring.

Mr Grasso said many people had said to him during the past week that it must have been God's will to take Ronnie and Andrew away.

"It is never the will of God that his children must suffer. Our pain today was caused by people who abused our people for years."

He said the people of Macassar literally got stank vir

dank (stinking thanks).

He said that for AECI to merely apologise for the disaster was not enough and that for something good to come out of the disaster, the company had to become a part of the community and invest in community life.

He said AECI had to follow the example of Ronnie and Andrew who did their bit to build a better community.

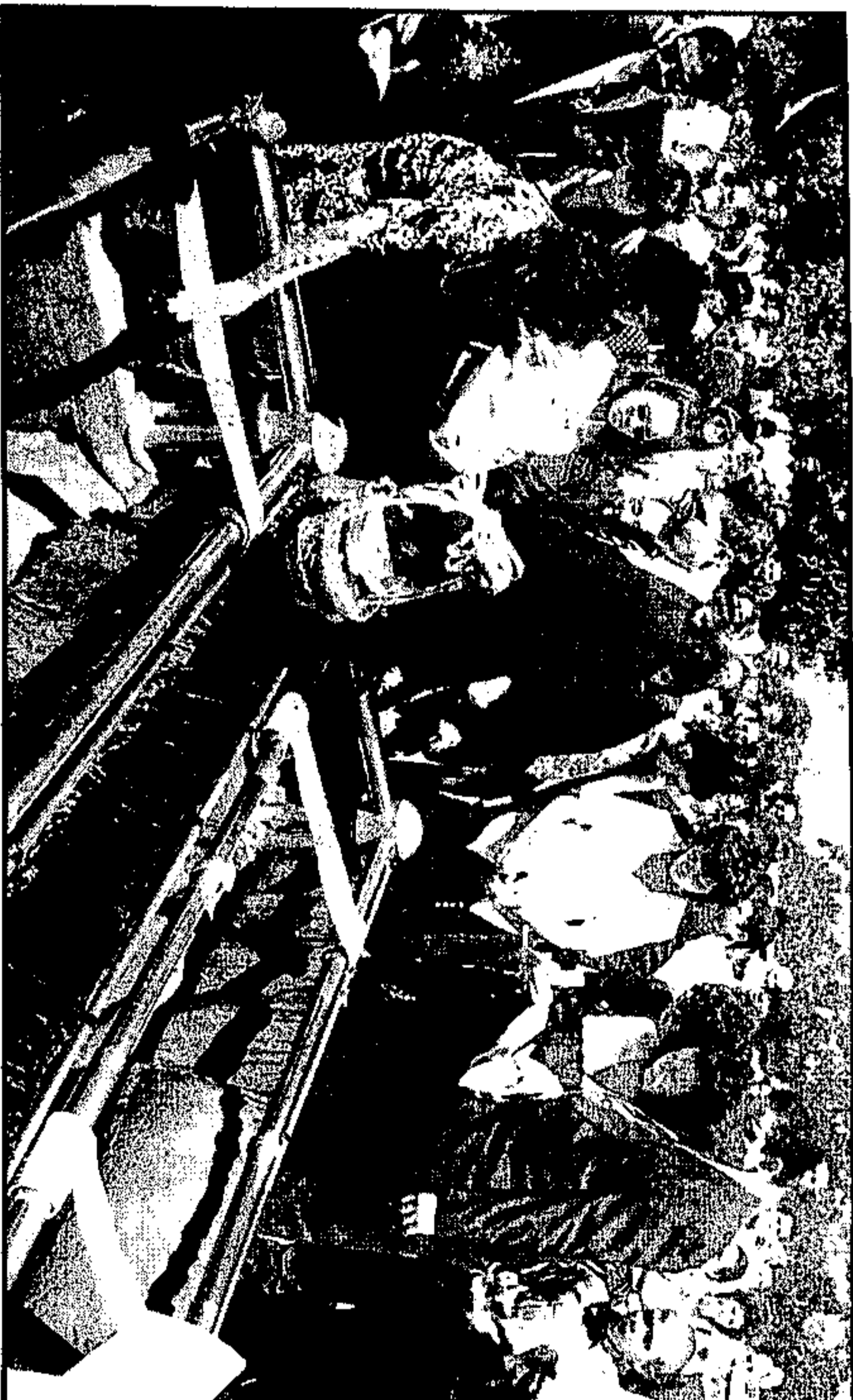
Mr Grasso also said the disaster showed it was far easier to collect chemicals than to get rid of them.

"There needs to be a new sense of urgency to get rid of the chemicals of the old South Africa."

Father Ian Hall, paying tribute to Ronnie, said that, at times, he seemed to be withdrawn, but he was a man who felt a great deal for others, especially for his family.

Andrew was a man of many loves, one of which was doves, said his friend of 20 years, the Rev Mark Arendse.

"I can just imagine how he wished to fly away like a dove from the gas that claimed his life."



Pictures: PIETER MALAN, The Argus.  
**SIDE BY SIDE:** Ronnie and Andrew Williams, the brothers who died during last weekend's sulphur fire in Somerset West, were buried side by side at a funeral attended by more than 1 000 people at The Strand.

**COMFORTED:** Ronnie Williams' wife Audrey, right, is comforted by son Bronwyn.



# Govt moves to ensure SA manages natural resources

(56) Star 22/12/95

Aim is for guidelines to work under one Act

BY PATRICK PHOSA

The Department of Agriculture was re-directing policy from merely trying to conserve agricultural land to ensuring sustainable utilisation of land, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Thoko Didiza, said in a Christmas message this week.

"A task team which includes representatives from the provinces has been set up to develop policy guidelines and review existing legislation with the intention of having one Act which could be called sustainable resource utilisation.

"In addition, the department is developing three major programmes in former home-

land areas on bush encroachment, soil conservation and pasture revival," said Didiza.

She said she was aware that policy shifts in other departments had negative effects on the agricultural sector.

"The challenge is to look at how we can co-ordinate different policies of government in such a way that we can avoid harmful situations arising.

"Although the changes have caused uncertainty, and in some cases concerns, we have emerged in the past year as a forceful sector with a dynamic leadership at both national and provincial levels."

Didiza said the plight of certain communities had brought to the forefront the importance

of conserving limited natural resources, and finding a way of managing them effectively and efficiently.

"These resources are crucial to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, and without them the economy cannot survive or grow."

A rationalisation process for agricultural legislation started this year will continue into 1996 when the Agricultural Marketing Act (Act No 59 of 1968) will be amended to serve indiscriminately the entire agricultural sector, she said.

Didiza said negotiations were under way to bargain for a better deal for agricultural exporters, and those negotiations would proceed next year.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Hazardous gaps

FM 22/12/95

The chemical fire at AECI's Somerset West factory outside Cape Town on Saturday — which caused two deaths and the emergency evacuation of an entire community — has exposed an underlying uncertainty about how strategic stockpiles and hazardous waste are to be dealt with.

The Nationalist government secretly imported about 30 000 t of sulphur in 1969 as a reserve stock for the production of commercial explosives at the AECI factory in Somerset West.

AECI says only half the amount was used and the remaining 15 000 t — stored in the open, over an area the size of a rugby field — has barely been touched in the past five years. The factory is being decommissioned and next year will stop producing explosives.

Had it not been for the veld fire which jumped two fire breaks and ignited the stockpile, spreading a dense cloud of noxious sulphur dioxide gas across the Cape Flats, South Africans may never have known of its existence.

Likewise, until the oil storage deal with Iran was revealed, people were unaware that thousands of tons of oil were stockpiled at Saldanha on the Cape west coast.

UCT head of environmental studies Professor Richard Fuggle says the location of strategic stockpiles should be revealed — especially where they pose environmental or health risks — and external audits conducted to assess their hazardous potential, and how they are to be decommissioned.

New legislation being drafted by the Department of Labour aims to protect communities living in the vicinity of hazardous installations but until the sulphur fire, thought had not been given to the potential dangers of secret stockpiles or hazardous waste sites.

Occupational Health & Safety chief director Faiza Salie says the regulations will fill a gap in the Occupational Health & Safety Act by specifying that such installations take emergency precautions to protect neighbouring communities. She says the AECI fire has been brought to her attention and the regulations will be revisited, taking this type of hazard into account.

However, the inspectorate is understaffed by 20% and, while tighter regulations may enable government to point fingers after the event, it does not imply that adequate monitoring of such facilities will be carried out.

Wildlife Society of SA conservation director Keith Cooper says there is a "huge void" regarding the transport, storage and monitoring of hazardous waste.

Fuggle says the country wants First-World environmental protection mechanisms to be in place, but is cutting the budgets of environmental departments and diverting resources to the RDP. He says the real danger is that it is inviting indiscriminate dumping of hazardous waste by failing to meet industry's need for licensed and properly controlled hazardous waste sites.

Ironically, sulphur is not normally regarded as a hazardous substance. Vast sulphur deposits are stored in the open along the Mississippi River in the US, where environmental controls are far more stringent than here.

Sulphur requires intense heat to ignite and there is speculation that the AECI fire might have been the result of arson. This does not detract from the fact that the sur-

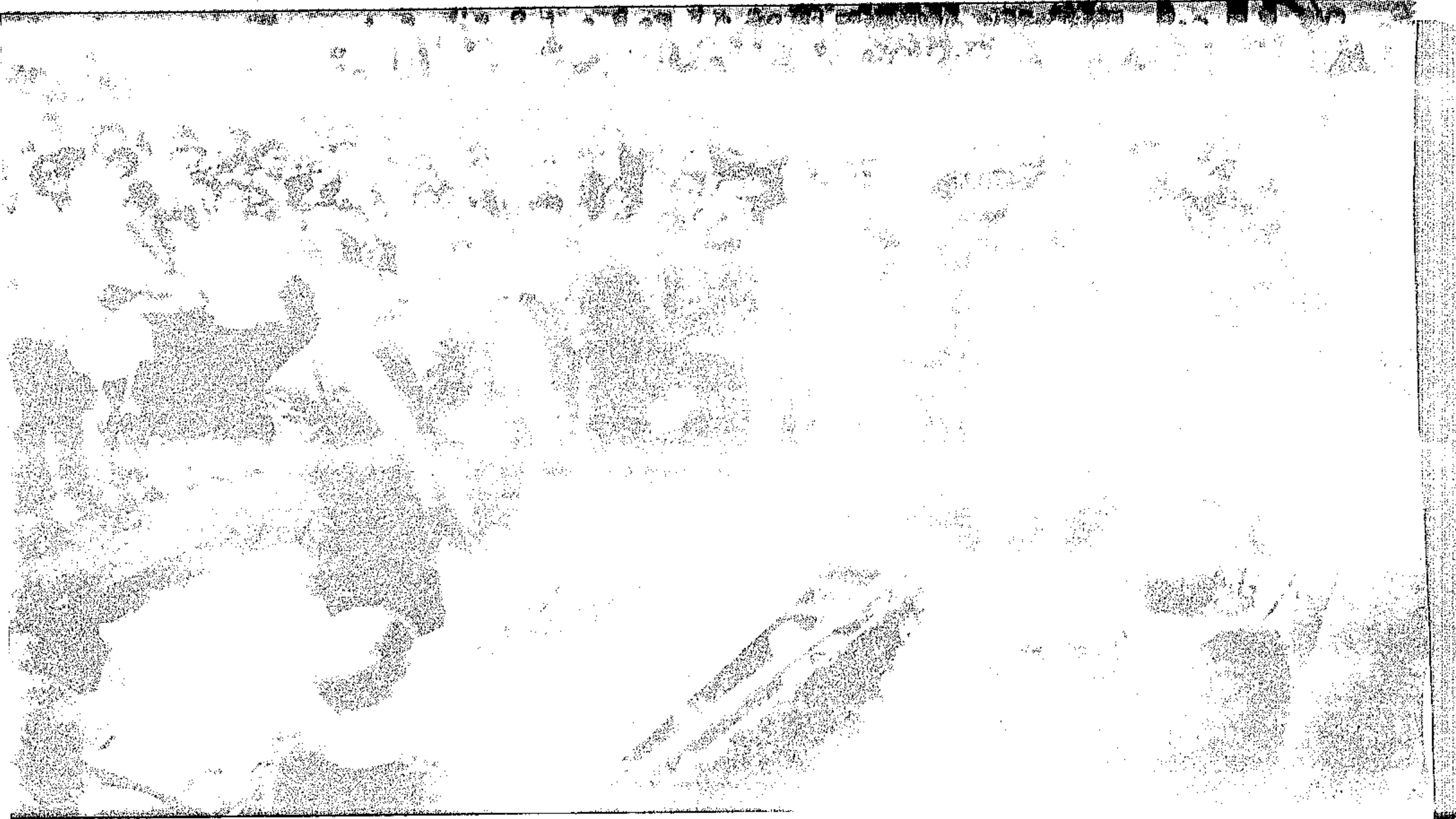
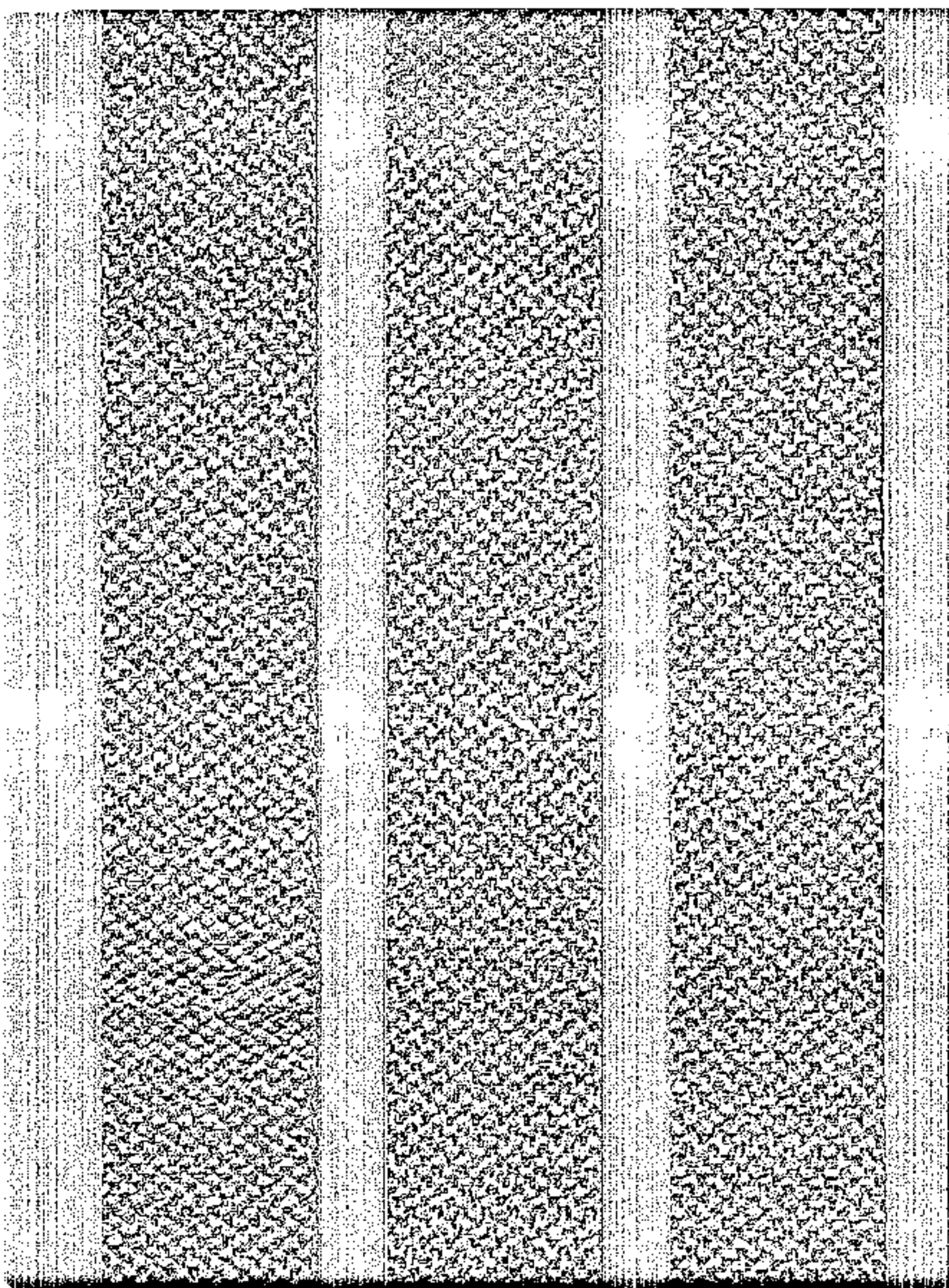
rounding communities were not informed about its existence and were thrown into panic by the choking sulphur dioxide cloud that emanated from the fire.

The gas reacted with rain on Sunday to form sulphurous acid which destroyed vegetable and fruit crops in the Hottentots Holland area, opening the way for massive damages claims from farmers.

AECI has accepted responsibility for the crop damage, injuries and inconvenience caused by the fire. It is to set up a health centre to treat victims and will foot their medical bills. It has seconded a team of technical experts to help farmers and is facilitating the creation of a board of inquiry to investigate the incident.

AECI spokesman Mike Blizzard says they would like government to take the stockpile off their hands as soon as possible and is arranging talks with the Department of Trade & Industry.

What government decides to do with the stockpile will be a matter of intense public interest and the incident will hopefully end official secrecy over the nature and location of some of SA's more dubious assets. ■



**REST IN PEACE:** Led by family members and clergy, mourners bid farewell to brothers Ronald and Andrew Williams at their last resting place at the Strand Ce

1 000 AT BROTHERS' FUNERAL

# Solidarity as fire victims buried

**THERE** was a show of solidarity at yesterday's funeral of two AECI fire victims. **ANEEZ SALIE** reports

**I**N one of the biggest funerals the Strand has seen, 1 000 mourners yesterday paid their last respects to the two Williams brothers who died on Saturday night when they were overcome by toxic sulphur fumes from the AECI fire.

The NG Sendingkerk in the former coloured group area of the Strand overflowed as people across religious and class lines attended a service of almost two hours for Ronald, 47 and Andrew, 54.

There was no noticeable presence of their white neighbours. The only politician in attendance was ANC Western Cape leader Mr Chris Nissen. No political speeches were made.

A delegation from the Macassar Crises Committee, led by its head, local councillor Mr Heindrich Magerman, came to show solidarity. The structure was set up in the wake of the sulphur disaster.

A combined choir of the Methodist and Anglican churches sang the hymns at the funeral service, accompanied by the Methodists' brass band.

The band also led the funeral procession to the graveside against the backdrop of the majestic Helderberg.

The Williams brothers died in the arms of their wives, Sandra and Audrey, while on their way to separate weddings.

Both had respiratory problems and were overcome by sulphuric oxide gas from the weekend fire at an open sulphur stockpile at the huge chemical plant, AECI.

The sulphuric gas and thick smoke from a bush fire later enveloped areas adjacent to Macassar, which led to the evacuation of many of its 35 000 inhabitants.

AECI has offered R25 000 to the Crises Committee, Mr Magerman revealed at the funeral.

He said the community would be consulted at a mass meeting for a mandate on the use of the grant and on all other issues relating to the disaster.

(56) CT 22/12/95

# No crisis, says MEC, as toxic dump closes

By **NEWTON KANHEMA**

One of only two toxic waste dumps in Gauteng will close next week, but authorities are convinced there is no crisis in the making.

While public opinion keeps a newly developed site shut, MEC for Development Planning, Environment and Works Sicelo Shiceka said this week that contingency plans were in place: the Holfontein site in Springs has been extended to accommodate the waste that would have been accommodated at the Margolis site in Germiston, which will close next week.

The waste was to have gone to the Chloorkop site in Kempton Park, but this site has not yet been opened because a public outcry forced a committee of

inquiry into the placing of the site.

A decision on Chloorkop is only expected towards the middle of next year.

Holfontein management spokesman Alistair McLean said that, as from last month, his site had been accepting 600 tons of toxic waste a day, which constitutes 90% of Gauteng's toxic waste.

Holfontein had extended its facilities to ensure that the province would be serviced for the next two years.

Shiceka said his department was taking pro-active measures to ensure the province did not allow a situation where industries that produce toxic waste found it necessary to employ illegal dumping methods.

"It is therefore not expected

that the closure of Margolis will result in a crisis in the province," said Shiceka.

Waste-Tech spent R10-million on Chloorkop, which is situated between Tembisa and Kempton Park.

Residents from both communities have registered their protest on many occasions through marches, petitions and sit-ins.

It is estimated that a million people live within a 4km radius of Chloorkop.

Some residents of Germiston have instituted civil claims against Waste-Tech because, they allege, they have contracted diseases due to emissions from the Margolis incinerator.

The Margolis site was closed-down by court order after an application by the Germiston City Council.

(56) Star 23/12/95



# Dead men's families consider legal action

We were advised not to accept AECI money to pay for funeral, says son

Legal action is being considered by the families of the two Maccassar brothers who died during the chemical blaze disaster last weekend.

**GLYNIS UNDERHILL**  
Staff Reporter

THE distraught family of the two Maccassar brothers who died after inhaling toxic sulphur gas from a chemical fire in Somerset West has refused financial help for their funeral from AECI.

Craig Williams, son of Andrew Williams, 54, who had a severe asthmatic attack after inhaling the gas from the fire at chemical manufacturer AECI, said the family was considering legal action.

"The people from AECI were here two days ago and they did offer to pay for the funeral and all arrangements, but we were advised not to accept," he said.

His uncle, Ronald Williams, 47, also died after an asthma attack when a huge cloud of vapour from the blazing sulphur enveloped Maccassar last weekend. The family would probably be taking joint legal advice, said Mr Williams.

The funeral of the two brothers, who died within 10 minutes of one another, was held on Thursday. It was one of the largest funerals the Strand has seen, with more than 1 000 mourners.

Mr Williams said his father Andrew was a travelling salesman who had only mild asthma.

"He certainly was not a sick man. The day he died he was very cheerful. We went from one wedding to another and he was more cheerful than ever. His death came as a great shock to us."



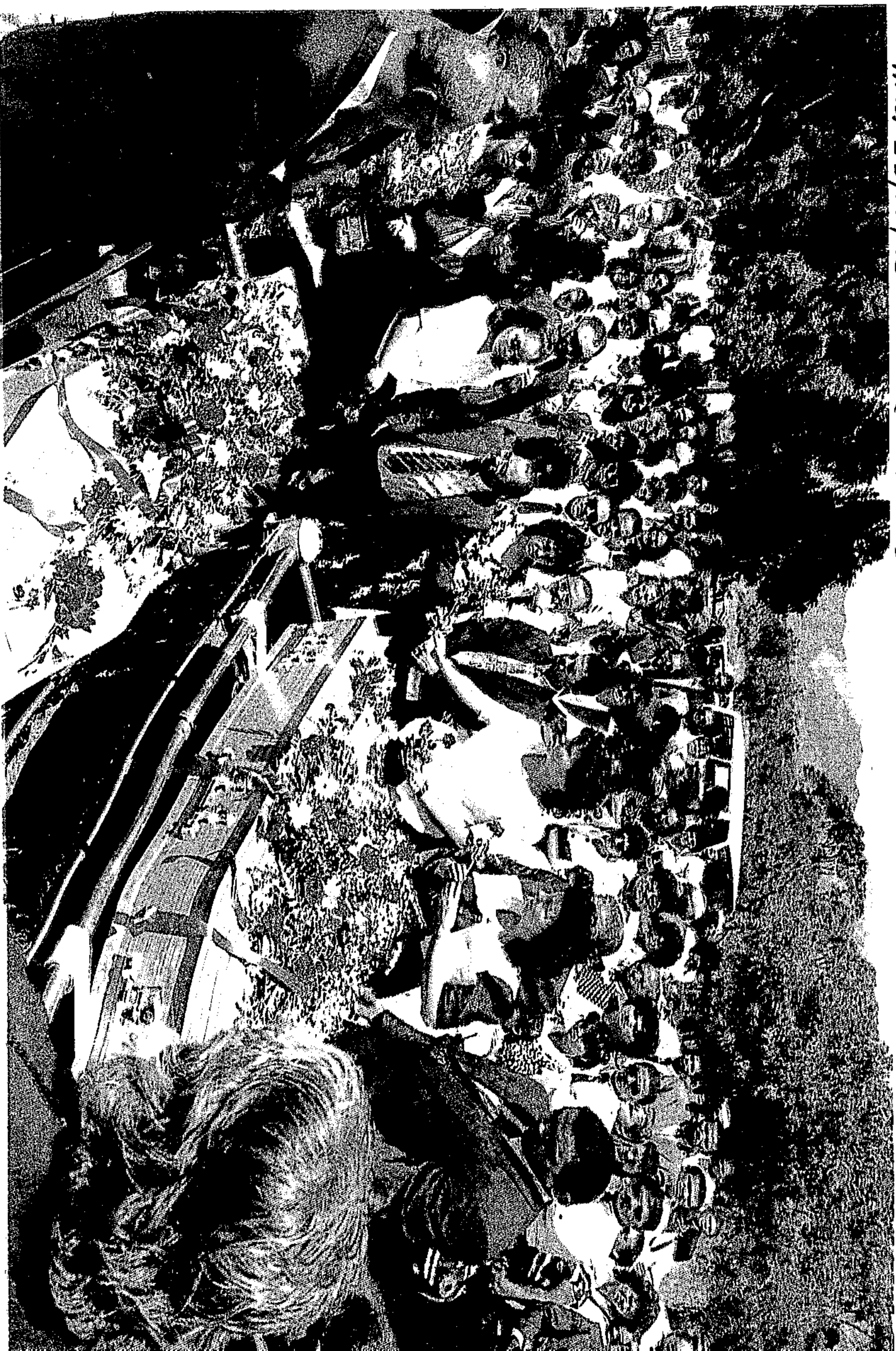
TRAGIC LOSS: A tearful Audrey Williams, wife of Ronald Williams, was comforted by her son Bronwyn.

hoped to avoid a drawn-out court case and the family had not yet held discussions with AECI.

"We are hoping it does not come down to a lawsuit."

Mike Blizard, group communications manager at AECI, said AECI had not held discussions about compensation for the families of the Williams brothers as this would have been "trespassing" on their

hoped to avoid a drawn-out court case and the family had not yet held discussions with AECI.

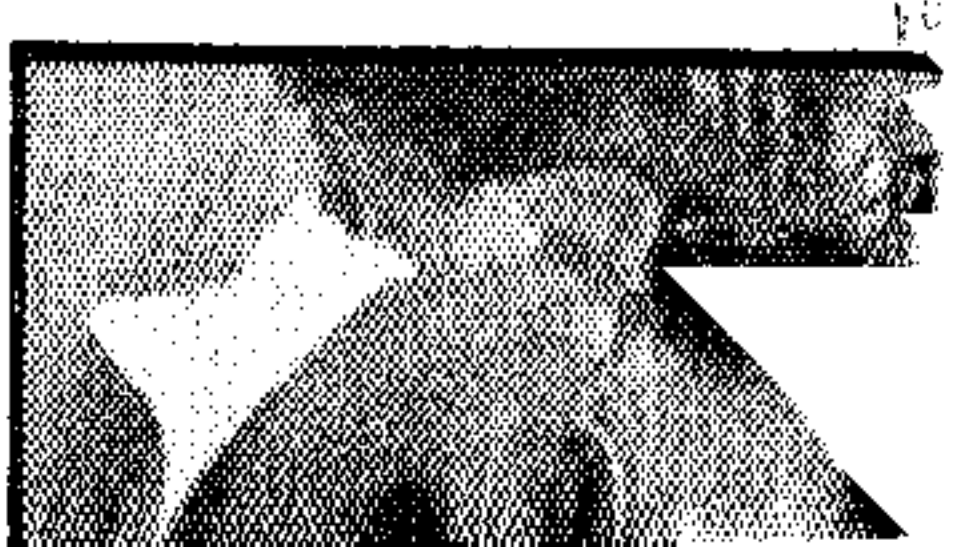


RAY 23/12/95

(56)



Andrew Williams



Ronald

BURIED TOGETHER: More than 1 000 mourners attended the Strand funeral of brothers Ronald and Andrew Williams

"It would certainly be premature at this stage to be talking to the family about that sort of thing. We have visited to offer condolences on behalf of the organisation," he said.

Mr Blizard said there was "no question" of the sulphur stockpile igniting again.

Sand and other materials had been placed on the periphery of the sulphur stockpile.

is to render the dump totally safe. The best way to do that is to remove it. Discussions will be held with the government as soon as possible," he said.

Sulphur had not been used by AECI since manufacturing had ceased at Somerset West, said Mr Blizard.

The stockpile was not owned by AECI and negotiations to have it moved would have to be held with the government,

Pictures: PIETER MALAN, Staff Photographer



# Fire raises a legal fallout

(56) ARCT 23/12/95

**GEOFF ELLIOTT**  
Business Reporter

SOUTH African industry could face a barrage of environmental litigation from workers and their communities under the new constitution, according to lawyers questioned this week in the wake of the AECI fire in Somerset West.

Lawyers note the sulphur fire, in which two people died, along with the successful criminal proceedings last week against mining and construction group Fraser Alexander for the dam burst last year which killed 17 people, have served to sharpen the aware-

ness of the community to their rights.

Peter Kantor, director of labour, environmental and constitutional law departments at Attorneys Herold Gie & Broadhead in Cape Town, said AECI could have a case to answer under the constitution's rules on the environment.

The present Bill of Rights states that everyone has the right "to an environment that is not detrimental to his or health or well-being."

These rights have yet to be tested in the courts and it is unclear if they will apply only against the state and not individuals and corporations.

But Mr Kantor noted it also emerged in the media last

week that the state owns the stockpile of sulphur which could open the door for a case against the state under the Bill of Rights.

He also noted that if the families of the deceased are now without financial support because of the fire they could have grounds to sue for damages under common law.

The sulphur-water sludge, created in fighting the fire, and which environmentalists are concerned could be seeping into the water supply, could also bring action from the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry under the Water Act.

The Act is very broad, stating the minister may seek to recover costs of rehabilitation

from "from any person who at any time did any thing on the land concerned which caused or contributed to pollution."

Then there are the complaints from the farmers who may claim for damages to their crops because of the alleged affects of acid rain following the sulphur blaze.

AECI officials could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Meanwhile, others note the sometimes lax environmental standards in South Africa also have implications for foreign investment.

Llewellyn Botha, a lawyer who runs The Environmental Law Consultancy, said corporations here have a lot of "catching up to do" with their international competitors.

He added those wishing to strike joint-venture deals were finding that part of the negotiations turn on the environment.

Foreign companies were demanding "environmental audits" designed to ensure there are no hidden environmental liabilities in which the foreign company might find itself liable for if it buys an operation.

"South African companies doing international business have to wake-up, they need to reach the same environmental levels," said Mr Botha.



□ **DEATH GAS:** A pall of sulphurous haze hangs in the air after the fire at an AECI

# Hold Your breath at Holfontein

By TISHA STEYN

CP 24/112/95  
(56)

LINE UP 500 trucks, each loaded with twenty tons of toxic waste. What would happen if there was nowhere to dump this amount of toxic waste – generated in Gauteng alone every month?

Enviroserv's toxic waste dumping site at Holfontein in the East Rand will proceed to operate – despite emotionally loaded protest letters and marches from surrounding communities.

Holfontein is the biggest – and the only operating – toxic waste dumping site in Gauteng. Ten thousand tons of toxic and twenty thousand tons of household waste are dumped into specially designed large dams called cells before being broken down by intricate and carefully monitored processes.

Residents of Sundra and the squatter community in Etwatwa – both within a three kilometre radius from Holfontein – are complaining about alleged water and air pollution which causes nauseating smells and skin and respiratory irritations.

Members of the newly formed community action committee, supported by Earthlife Africa activists, are adamant that the minister of water affairs and forestry, Kader Asmal, should not re-issue the permit allowing the dumping of toxic wastes on the site unless management is improved.

“We may dispose of everything but atomic wastes in the best practical manner possible,” says Kevin de Villiers, director of Enviroserv. “The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and ourselves are practically setting the standards in South Africa, based on knowledge gained from European countries.

“Every new cell that we build at a cost of between R3,5 and R6 million is an improvement, especially with the use of thick plastic sheeting as an additional precaution against leakage. We also use only proven European methods to dispose of these toxic wastes, and we take extra precautions over

and above what the permit specifies in certain instances,” says De Villiers.

■ But residents insist the waste site is a health hazard. “Sometimes the smell is so bad that it wakes us up in the middle of the night. We have to take our son and go spend the night with friends in Springs,” says Sundra resident Magda van der Merwe.

She also complains bitterly about ever increasing medical bills resulting from chronic skin irritations and upper respiratory illnesses. “We moved here so that our son could grow up in the country,” she laments. “Now the price of our property has dropped and we can't afford to sell and move away.”

“Although their complaints are real, the protesters are being unrealistic,” says Alistair McLean, deputy director of Enviroserv. “National health and well-being are at stake here – what would happen if these toxic wastes were to be dumped all over the country, contaminating streams, killing people?”

“We do not deny that certain problems are being experienced,” says Yolande Young, a chemist and Enviroserv's marketing manager. “The smell is natural to a dumping site and indicates that the processes are actually working.”

“We are looking at an extensive programme to contain the bad smells, which is the major problem,” says De Villiers. These actions include:

- Treating bad-smelling substances at the industry where the wastes are generated before they are transported to the site;
- Spraying the whole dumping site as often as necessary with a deodoriser or neutralising agent;
- Increasing the height of the southern walls of the cells and planting trees will be as a windbreaker to disperse the intense smell; and
- Expensive options to minimise the smells by filtering gasses and liquids through different technological processes are being investigated, and joint ventures with interest-

ed parties to implement these are under negotiation.

Enviroserv is not solely responsible for bad smells in the air, however. “There are several factors contributing to the air pollution on the Highveld,” says Dr Henry Abbott of the national Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, who also monitors air quality.

Among these Abbott lists the many coal burning power stations, coal burning in black townships, the many industries – such as Secunda and Sappi – which exude toxic gases, petrol fumes, and crop spraying.

“Many of the smells in the air are not caused by Holfontein, but are carried to this area by the wind,” says Abbott.

According to him, the new permit will be amended to prevent the dumping of toxins which might cause skin irritations over weekends and holidays in order to minimise discomfort. In some cases these toxins will be encapsulated in concrete. Cancer-causing substances such as benzene, formaldehyde and carbon tetrachloride are already treated in this manner.

The Holfontein site was chosen to minimise ground water contamination in the case of leakages. “Substances which leaked when the wall of the old cell broke some time ago, had already been treated to a great extent and did not cause any contamination,” said Abbott. “Moreover, the department monitors water quality on an ongoing basis.”

“The Blesbokspruit was killed many years ago when Sappi opened up their plant on its banks,” De Villiers adds. “In no way can Enviroserv be blamed for that.”

Priscilla Pears, a resident who lives less than two kilometres from the site, is more realistic about the existence of a toxic waste site on her doorstep. “Gauteng cannot do without Enviroserv – we need the dumping site. But we insist that an official of the department be on site at all times.”

She believes there should also be penal taxes for industrial waste generators and polluters.

# Fighting

# aliens

ST(m) 24/12/95  
provides

# RDP jobs

56 ~~57~~  
BY CHARL-DE VILLIERS

THE Western Cape's war on invader plants has cleared a 4 800ha swathe through mountain catchments in the region, giving at least 1 500 people jobs and hope of a better life.

Nationally, the R28-million RDP-sponsored water conservation programme had employed 3 230 previously jobless people by December 6, programme manager Dr Brian van Wilgen said.

Cape Nature Conservation director Kobus Jooste said the Western Cape's Fynbos Water Conservation Project was one of the most successful RDP schemes.

"It is creating jobs, giving people skills and conserving valuable water."

Kogelberg ranger Ben Swanepoel said: "There is a capacity in local communities that we would probably never have learned of, or made use of, if we had not tackled this project."

Cape Town's water supplies are threatened by the unwelcome invaders, which can soak up more than half of the runoff, says Jonkershoek scientist Chris Burgers.

# Farmers battle to count the cost of sulphur blaze

ST 24/12/95

(133) (56)

By JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

FARMERS in the Somerset West district, near Cape Town, were this week still battling to rescue what is left of crops damaged by rain after a massive fire at a sulphur storage dump belonging to the chemical giant AECI last weekend.

The fire left three people dead and scores injured. About 3 000 people were forced to flee their homes when thick fumes of acrid sulphur dioxide engulfed the town of Macassar and surrounding farms.

The blaze caused thick clouds of sulphur dioxide which, mixed with the light rain that followed, formed sulphuric acid and burnt vast tracts of crops.

A trauma centre set up in Macassar, staffed by doctors paid by AECI, has treated more than 500 people so far, many of them suffering from respiratory problems. AECI has undertaken to reimburse anyone who consulted a private doctor.

Farmers were still trying to assess their losses late this week, with the help of independent assessors. Some farmers estimate damage to crops runs into hundreds of thousands of rands.

Johannes Visser, of the farm Vorentoe, said the blow was much bigger than expected.

"Some crops not initially affected are now beginning to show signs of ruin," he said. "At least 60 percent of my crop has been wiped out."

A spokesman for the winemakers KWV, Jan Booysen, said there was no sign grape crops in the area had been affected but it would take at least 10 days before damage showed up.

"We have not had a situation like this before, so we do not know what to expect," he said.

The owners of a number of large commercial and small farms said they were lodging insurance claims with AECI.

AECI's group communications manager, Mike Blizzard, said the company has briefed claim assessors and agricultural experts to advise farmers on how to secure minimal loss and to get growth back into existing crops. Claims would be assessed early next year.

# Structure plan for mountains, coasts

(56) ARG 27/12/95

□ *Investigation launched by multi-disciplinary team*

**PETER GOOSEN**  
Staff Reporter

THE southern Peninsula's coastline and mountain chain is being put under the magnifying glass in a local structure plan process undertaken on behalf of the Cape Metropolitan Council.

The area, which stretches from south of Fish Hoek to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, excluding Simon's Town, Kommetjie, Ocean View and Scarborough, is being studied by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants under the co-ordination of land use planner Mark Callaghan.

The comments of three major environmental bodies have been collated and the deadline for further comment has been extended to January 18.

At a public workshop in November it was resolved not to go ahead with the plan formulation stage until the National Parks Board — the designated management authority — was able to take part in the study.

In a preliminary draft, Mr Callaghan listed the areas that are being studied as: Rocklands, Miller's Point, Castle Rock, Partridge Point, Smitswinkels Bay, Plateau Road, Perdekloof, Witsands/Misty Cliffs and Klawer Valley.

The three organisations that have commented are the Redhill Landowner's Conservation Group (RLCG); the Simon's Town Flora Conservation Group (STFCG) and the Swartkop Alien Vegetation Eradicators (Save).

Dealing with Miller's Point, the RLCG said no develop-

ment should be permitted to the west of the Main Road but Save suggested that the kloof above the scenic drive and the mobile home site could make an ideal sheltered camping site.

Commenting on Castle Rock, the coastal area between Miller's Point and Partridge Point, the RLCG said there should be no development on the steep slopes and there was no reason for any further sub-divisions in the area.

The STFCG said proper baobab-proof refuse bins were needed and Save said there would hopefully be funding for alien vegetation eradication.

On Partridge Point, the environmentalists said it was designated as a protected natural area and only a primary dwelling should be permitted.

It could easily be managed by a committed owner who should contact the National Parks Board to alleviate his management problems.

It was also described as the best existing area of indigenous forest which was not heavily infested with aliens.

Comments on Smitswinkel Bay included that the area around the cottages should be designated as a protected natural area and that a road should not be built into Smits.

On the Perdekloof area, one group said irresponsible ownership and neglect of the area was regrettable. On the future of Witsand and Misty Cliffs near Scarborough, the STFCG said the fact that Witsands was publically owned was no guarantee that there would not be development.

Mr Callaghan can be faxed at 689 2295.

# Forestry chief has mountain of a mission

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

LOCAL passions about Table Mountain will be foremost in David Daitz's mind when he joins the National Parks Board on January 8 to transform most of the Cape Peninsula into a world-class national park.

Currently director of the City Council's parks and forests branch, he will spearhead the NPB's negotiations with property owners, municipalities and government departments who own or manage land in and around the proposed park.

The aim is to set up a contractual national park based on a core 29 000ha nature area between Signal Hill and Cape Point.

The transition to parks board stewardship will be addressed by the major players on January 12 at a meeting convened by Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers.

While the park will eventually be run by the country's foremost conservation organisation, Mr Daitz believes its management must be rooted firmly in Cape Town.

"This park has to be owned in a very real sense by the people of the Cape metropolitan region. It cannot be

managed from Pretoria," he said this week.

Table Mountain — identified as a potential World Heritage Site — is the country's second most popular tourist destination after the Lost City.

Mr Daitz believes conservation must be able to fund itself and the Cape Peninsula is no exception.

He was, however, against compulsory entrance fees, preferring voluntary "passports" which would help pay for the park's upkeep.

He said he welcomed the Table Mountain and Peninsula Advisory Committee's decision to oversee the transition to NPB management.

Appointed by Dr de Villiers and working in public, the committee recommended that the NPB take over as the Peninsula's conservation management authority.

Mr Daitz said he did not foresee any major problems with getting about 147 private landowners to agree to NPB management of their land.

"I want to achieve undeniably significant progress by July 1, 1996. By then we should be a long way down the road towards commitments and contracts, and resolving or at least identifying staff-related issues."



MISTER MOUNTAIN ... David Daitz will help turn Table Mountain into a national park

Picture: JUSTIN SHOLK

(56) ST(M) 31/12/95

ENVIRONMENT - 1996

JANUARY - APRIL

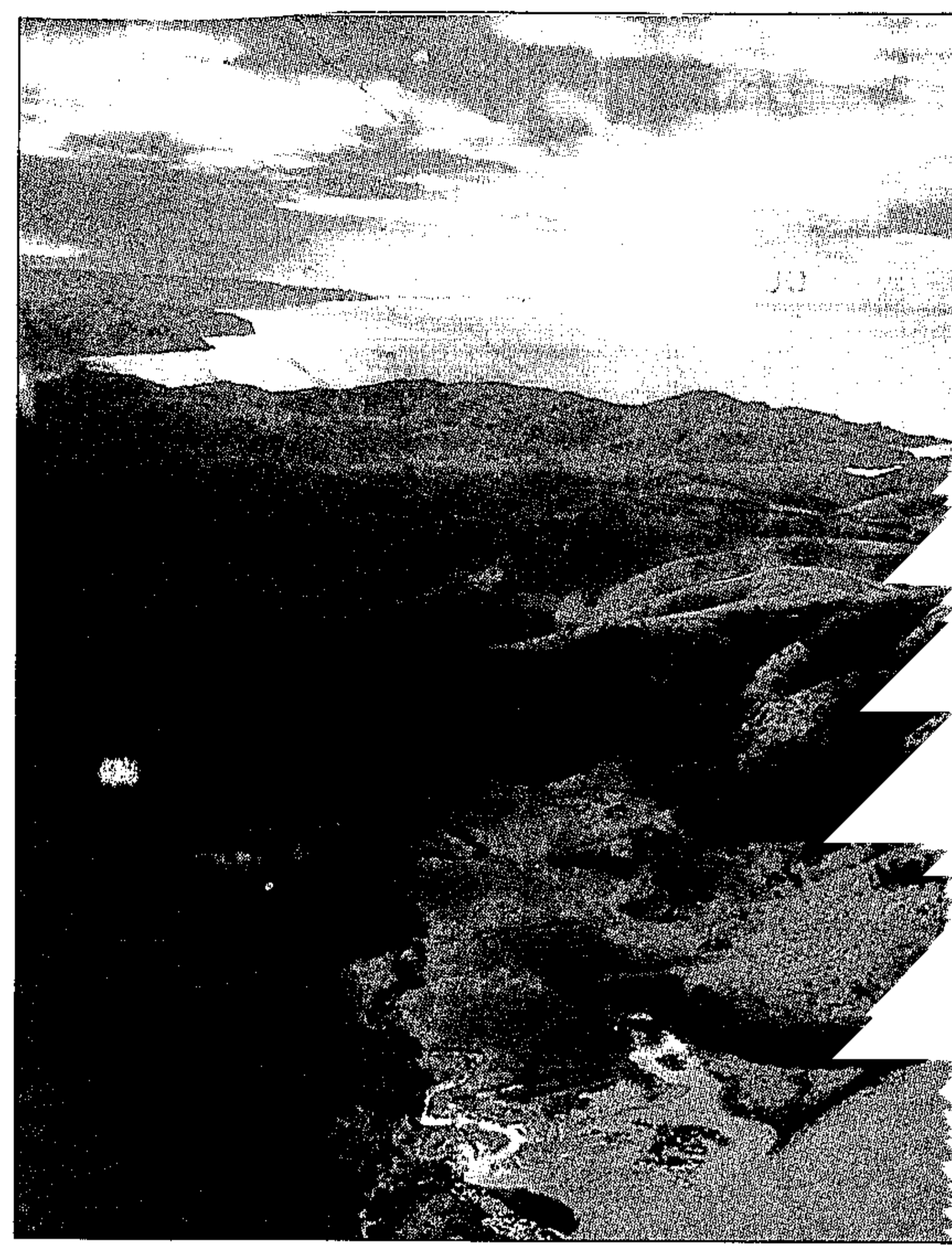
# Environment still suffering at bottom of priority lists

Star ~~3/12/9~~ 3/1/96 (56)

So far the trends have led to global co-operation on a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind. But despite all the meetings, costing billions of rands every year, the downhill run continues. Anita Allen reports

**N**O one needs a crystal ball to foretell future trends in the global environment. There will be more species extinctions, many more hectares of forests will disappear, pollution will become worse, mounting volumes of greenhouse gases will be pumped into the atmosphere, the ozone layer will become thinner, natural resources will continue to be used up much faster than they are being replenished, there will be more people to feed and less arable land to grow the crops to feed them. These trends are well known, and have led to global co-operation on a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind. But despite all the meetings, costing billions of rands every year, the downhill run continues. The one exception is global chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emissions which have dropped 60%

from their peak in 1988 thanks to the Montreal Protocol. However, there have been worrying signs recently of an emerging black market trade in CFCs. The UN goal of peace and prosperity for all, is no more than political rhetoric. There are simply too many people – and governments – for whom violence, injustice, greed and corruption is a way of life. Since the Rio Summit in 1992, the buzzwords are sustainable development. It would be nice to affirm faith in the prospects for speedy progress toward environmentally sustainable growth in the world, but it's not realistic. The reality is that the global partnership necessary for this is foundering due to a failure of political will. The environment is simply not top of political agendas. Committed groups and individuals, continue with sterling work. But for the vast majority of



Pristine beauty ...South Africa is fortunate to have strong and focused environment to ensure that precious panoramas such as this exquisite Transkei scene.

people in business, factories, cities, villages and farms, it is business as usual and the looming environmental crisis has no meaning. There were some golden opportunities in 1995 – the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, the World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Cairo World Conference on Population Development and the UN's 50th anniversary celebrations. They were thick with talk, but thin on action. Features of the future global partnership on the environment can be extracted: ■ A new partnership between the developed North and developing South will be accelerated, based on the recognition that if the developing nations in future consume as much energy and resources as the developed nations do today, it would need 10 planet Earths to satisfy all mankind's demands.

In practice, it means that the North has an obligation to pick up the costs of projects and programmes in developing countries which are beneficial to the global environment. It has led to the setting up of the UN's Global Environmental Facility, which is a funding mechanism for projects in developing countries that support the conventions on climate change, biodiversity, international waters, and ozone layer depletion. ■ Governments will be pushed towards decentralisation, so that responsibilities are devolved down to authorities who can best deal with problems. Rapid urbanisation in this century has virtually transformed the world into a community of cities and towns, all of which face similar challenges. So, besides power sharing, the accent will be on sharing of information.

■ Enhanced by citizens around urban non-governments which are about 90% related projects enhances cities and experience a specially fit and women ■ Global coordination more than treaties are less binding are in place environment ■ Compl agreements come a price The GEF, international programme driven and sustainable





## Southern Africa Labour & Development Research Unit

Research Division · School of Economics  
 Robert Leslie Building · University of Cape Town  
 Private Bag · Rondebosch 7700  
 Telephone: 650-2750  
 Fax No: (021) 650-4053

T

15 November 1995

AMOUNT	TOTAL
R64.00	



SALDRU

Environmental and conservation leaders, and a committed and knowledgeable green community remain for all to enjoy.

ing active participation is crucial. This revolves around unleashing the powers of government organisations, already implementing of environmentally-projects. Public involvement buy-in of national policies to incorporate external local knowledge, especially from indigenous people.

co-operation and co-operation revolves around the 170 international and a further about 600 instruments, which are to protect the global environment.

ance with international organisations will increasingly be a prerequisite for financing. World Bank and other external funders will favour projects that are nationally based on priorities for development.

■ Financial support for the environment from governments has stagnated. According to UN figures, official development assistance expressed as a percentage of donor countries' GNP, was 0.29% last year, its lowest level since 1973. However, there's been a striking rise in private financial resources moving to the developing world over the last few years.

The great bulk of this private financing has been Asia-bound, with a significant portion going to Latin America. The flow has bypassed Sub-Saharan Africa, largely because of demonstrated belief in the bullet rather than the ballot.

■ The danger for developing countries lies in failing to impose strict environmental conditions on the flow of development finance. This is a pollute now and pay a much higher bill later syndrome, which no developing nation can afford. Postponing environmental actions can hamper

economic and social development goals.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the future lies in a massive investment in human development.

We have strong and focussed environmental and conservation leaders, and a committed and knowledgeable green community to support them. New legislation will ensure that environmental concerns are integrated at all levels of policy making, and international funding for environmental projects is taking off.

Our environmental problems are manageable and solving them can even be exciting, as involved South Africans are already finding out.

This country enjoys the best - and the worst - of both First and Third Worlds. If that best cannot reverse the worst trends, then it will not be achieved anywhere in the world.

## Green Charcoal attracts investors

Edward West

(56) BD 9/1/96  
A NEW company planning to export charcoal derived from invasive non-indigenous vegetation — Green Charcoal — has attracted investor interest from Ireland, the UK, Zimbabwe and the US.

MD Patrick Frampton said yesterday that the Industrial Development Corporation had been approached to help finance the venture with a R4m loan. The company planned a private placing of 202 ordinary shares at R1 each and an interest-bearing loan of R20 000 a share.

The private placement had so far been "reasonably successful" in spite of the company having to attract investors over the holiday period from December 22 to the January 12 cut-off date stipulated by the corporation.

Green Charcoal said it planned to produce 6 000 tons of charcoal and 2 100 tons of extrudate logs a year. Production was expected to begin in June once a plant had been built near Humansdorp and once shareholder approval had been given.

Frampton said Green Charcoal might have to establish its own alien vegetation plantations.

## Sasol, Omnia merger rules laid down

Edward West

(56) BD 9/1/96  
THE Competition Board has set down ground rules for the proposed merger of Sasol and Omnia Holdings' fertiliser and explosives interests.

Board chairman Pierre Brookes said yesterday there would be no formal investigation into the merger but that the companies had undertaken to ensure other companies would not be prejudiced by the link-up.

"We spoke to a number of parties and there appeared to be a general acceptance that some sort of rationalisation in the industry was necessary," Brookes said.

Since SA's market opened up to the

world, a number of international fertiliser companies had set up agencies in SA and one of the parties was likely to have gone out of business had the merger not taken place, he said.

Sasol and Omnia recently cautioned shareholders that the deal was still being negotiated.

Omnia MD Neville Crosse said the hurdle which the Competition Board might have presented appeared to have been crossed. However, negotiations were still under way, he said.

Omnia's share price was untraded at its 12-month high of R12 on the JSE yesterday after rising steadily from an 18-month low of 840c since the announcement of the merger.

# Malan denies backing illicit rhino horn and ivory trade

PRETORIA — Former SA Defence Force chief Gen Magnus Malan yesterday denied having sanctioned the illicit transportation of rhino horn from Angola and Namibia until 1986 to help the Angolan rebel movement Unita.

A government commission of inquiry report handed to Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers on Wednesday said the defence force had been involved in the unlawful smuggling of ivory and rhino horn.

The defence force's covert involvement in transporting the ivory and rhino horn, the report said, had been sanctioned by Malan.

Malan said he had never been involved in rhino horn smuggling. He admitted, however, that the defence force had aided Unita by selling the rebels' ivory since the late 1970s.

Malan said he had given permission for the creation of an ivory trade channel after being approached by intelligence's chief of staff in the late 1970s with a request that Unita be assisted in the selling of its ivory.

BD 19/11/96 (56)  
The permission had been granted, providing all interested parties were consulted and that the channel was run legitimately.

Malan said he had not been asked to testify before the commission headed by Judge Mark Kumleben and that he did not have the report at his disposal.

The ANC called for officers involved in smuggling ivory to be prosecuted.

National police commissioner George Fivaz welcomed comments by the Kumleben commission that the SAPS's endangered species protection unit should be expanded.

"I wish to give the assurance that, within the framework of national policing priorities, resource assessments of units such as this unit are done on an ongoing basis."

Fivaz said the national management services of the SAPS had already launched an investigation into the structure, functioning and resourcing of the unit. — Sapa.

Comment: Page 10

# Conservation wins in a trailblazing RDP project

*Everyone feels warm about a project that eradicates alien trees, writes Bruce Cameron*

Cape Town — The sound of chopping and the buzz of chain saws is echoing through narrow, uninhabited kloofs and gorges in the catchment areas of the rivers of the Eastern Cape as the reconstruction and development programme does battle with a foreign invader.

The enemy is the prolific blue gum that has claimed hundreds of thousands of hectares of often fertile, arable land.

The blue gum is not alone. Its allies are the hakkeas and the Port Jackson willow.

The battle is taking place on a wide front in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga.

It is one of the RDP projects which is moving ahead with speed. It is also one of the most recently announced projects and was initiated

ed in the Eastern Cape.

Port Elizabeth, facing annual water shortages, was making plans to build a new dam.

The Eastern Cape department of nature conservation objected, because it saw even more land disappearing under water, wiping out eco-systems and land.

The Eastern Cape's alien vegetation project leader Japie Buckle, who is with the Eastern Cape nature conservation department, says for years an argument had been made that if the exotic tress, growing in the river valleys of the Eastern Cape, were removed the need for new dams would be reduced.

Researchers estimate that the water saved by eradicating the blue gums in the riverine systems would be enough to supply Cape Town for six months.

After being pushed by the ANC MP allocated to the Tsitsikamma area, Gill Marcus, the cause was taken up by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal, who in turn convinced RDP minister Jay Naidoo that it was worth his attention.

Everyone could feel warm about it—jobs would be created, environmentalists could feel happy (even though there are a few who don't) and the private sector could look to another growth driver.

The RDP put R25 million into the project for the first six months to this March. A further R3 million was contributed by the Forest Owners Association and R4 million by Sappi.

The amount from the RDP is expected to be substantially increased next year for what is now seen as a 20-year project.

Brian van Wilgen, the leader of the entire project, says there are now 3 500 formerly unemployed people in the field slashing, hacking and sawing. The number is expected to grow.

The project in each area is a joint effort by the water affairs department, the RDP office, official conser-

vation bodies, communities, Saffcol and private sector forestry companies.

Every proposal is fully discussed with the result that it has the full backing of local communities.

The project is not limited to chopping down exotic trees but is being designed, literally as it is implemented, to have sustainable multiplier effects to stimulate economic growth.

Project drivers hope that a new industry based in harvesting exotics will develop, ensuring it will be ongoing, eventually not having to rely on state funding.

The jobs being created directly are not limited to unskilled labour. A quick selection process has been under way to find people with matric-level education to be trained as administrative clerks; others, chosen for physical strength, as



(56)

ET (SR) 9/11/96

chainsaw operators, and others as team leaders. Those doing unskilled jobs are paid R25 a day and those doing the more skilled work receive R40 a day.

Buckle says the object is to train people to the level where they will create their own teams and tender for areas to be cleared from next year.

The trees being chopped down are owned by the property owners and the private sector is being encouraged to take advantage of the situation.

Private sector initiatives being encouraged range from production of charcoal products, chipped and compressed wood fuel blocks, pulp and paper and bark for tanning extract.

With the exotic trees estimated to cover 7 000ha of land in the Eastern Cape alone there are vast quantities of timber available.

Marcus, who was inspecting the project in the Eastern Cape recently, is optimistic that the RDP tree alienation project will be a driving force in developing the wood product

sector, particularly for small and medium size industry.

There have been other spin offs—job creation, for example. A clothing manufacturing project started by Marcus in Humansdorp, with financing from the Liberty Life Foundation, has won the contract to supply the protective clothing for the workers.

Speaking at a function in the upper reaches of of the Krom River, where the project is well under way, Marcus said it was an example of how people in the new South Africa would work together in the future.

The project was about water but "more than this it is about people. The government cannot make the country grow—only people can do this. The challenge is how to get people to work together."

One of the advantages of the project was that it had not been planned from Pretoria but each area had been permitted to work out its own approach.

This is one of the reasons why it had been possible to get the project up and running so quickly.

(56) ARG 12/1/96

## Penguin spot goes to parks board

STATE land, including a well known tourist spot at Simon's Town, is to be transferred to the National Parks Board, it has been decided at a meeting in Simon's Town.

Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom said in a statement the land, which would be included in a future protected nature area, consisted of Froggy Farm and Boulders, a tourist spot with a colony of Jackass penguins and unique coastal flora.

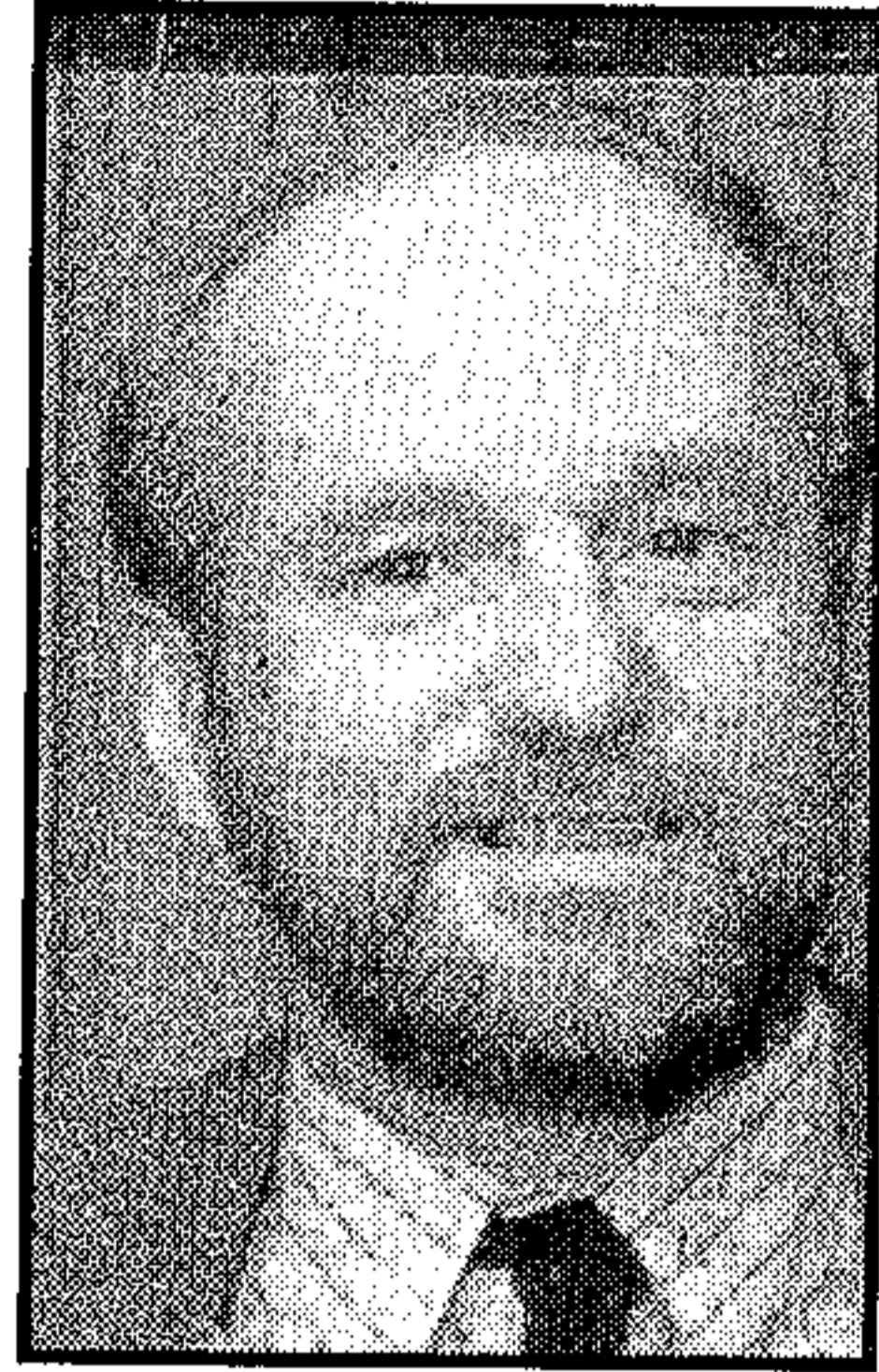
"Today's meeting follows on an earlier request from the Simon's Town Transitional Metropolitan Sub-structure to have the land ceded to the Simon's Town local authority, a request which was originally approved in principle.

"However, later developments necessitated a review of the situation.

"Following advertisements on the proposed transfer of the erven to the local authority, several objections were received from various quarters."

Mr Hanekom said the investigation into the creation of a Cape protected nature area had also impacted on the original decision to cede the land to the Simon's Town local authority.

A decision was taken at yesterday's meeting not to cede the land to the local authority but to transfer it to the National Parks Board as part of the broader initiatives surrounding the creation of a Cape protected nature area. — Sapa.



Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom.

# Call for rural ward in conservation hot spot

AKG 12/1/96 (56)  
 Need for councillor with an understanding of issues, say proposers

**Southern Reporter**  
**STRONG** representations for a rural ward in the new southern sub-structure have been made at a sitting of the Demarcation Court in Fish Hoek.

It would be an additional ward to those drawn up by the southern sub-structure's Joint Executive Committee and submitted to the court.

The area in question comprises the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment extending to south of Simon's Town, Fish Hoek, Maspithumele at Noordhoek, Sunnydale, Ocean View and Kommetjie, with the possible inclusion of Noordhoek.

Supporters of this proposal felt it essential to have a councillor who would represent issues vital to a rural area, which they considered would not be understood fully by a councillor more familiar with urban requirements.

Aida Croudace of the Red Hill Conservation Group said: "The area under consideration has been dubbed the 'hottest conservation hot spot' on earth by top-ranking conservation scientists and as such must be maintained as a major resource componently managed to ensure sustainable use.

"Unlike urban areas the issues affecting a rural area are predominantly conservation-oriented, whereas those in an urban situation revolve around rubbish removal and water supply as well as the upkeep of streets and pavements."

She said those living in rural areas were generally more self-sufficient in seeing to their own basic needs.

Duncan Bates, chairman of the Cape rural transitional substructure said: "Rural interests cannot be served or understood adequately by those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up."

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

Other bodies supporting the formation of an additional ward were the Smitswinkel Bay Residents' Association and the Friends of Scarborough.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

John Cannon representing the Noordhoek Community supported the inclusion of Noordhoek with the proposed south rural ward.

"It would be in keeping with the area now managed by the National Parks Board and would facilitate management of the area as the Board would be dealing with a single ward."

Other bodies supporting the formation of an additional ward were the Smitswinkel Bay Residents' Association and the Friends of Scarborough.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

This is considerably lower than the considered optimum of about 5 000 voters a ward and could mitigate against an extra ward being drawn up.

John Cannon representing the Noordhoek Community supported the inclusion of Noordhoek with the proposed south rural ward.

"It would be in keeping with the area now managed by the National Parks Board and would facilitate management of the area as the Board would be dealing with a single ward."

Other bodies supporting the formation of an additional ward were the Smitswinkel Bay Residents' Association and the Friends of Scarborough.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

The proposed rural south ward is sparsely populated (4 340) with the figure given for registered voters as 178.

This is considerably lower than the considered optimum of about 5 000 voters a ward and could mitigate against an extra ward being drawn up.

John Cannon representing the Noordhoek Community supported the inclusion of Noordhoek with the proposed south rural ward.

"It would be in keeping with the area now managed by the National Parks Board and would facilitate management of the area as the Board would be dealing with a single ward."

Other bodies supporting the formation of an additional ward were the Smitswinkel Bay Residents' Association and the Friends of Scarborough.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

an urban councillor, who would consider urban problems prior to rural issues due to pressure of numbers.

The proposed rural south ward is sparsely populated (4 340) with the figure given for registered voters as 178.

This is considerably lower than the considered optimum of about 5 000 voters a ward and could mitigate against an extra ward being drawn up.

John Cannon representing the Noordhoek Community supported the inclusion of Noordhoek with the proposed south rural ward.

"It would be in keeping with the area now managed by the National Parks Board and would facilitate management of the area as the Board would be dealing with a single ward."

Other bodies supporting the formation of an additional ward were the Smitswinkel Bay Residents' Association and the Friends of Scarborough.

The inclusion of Vrygrond into a ward with Muizenberg also came up for debate.

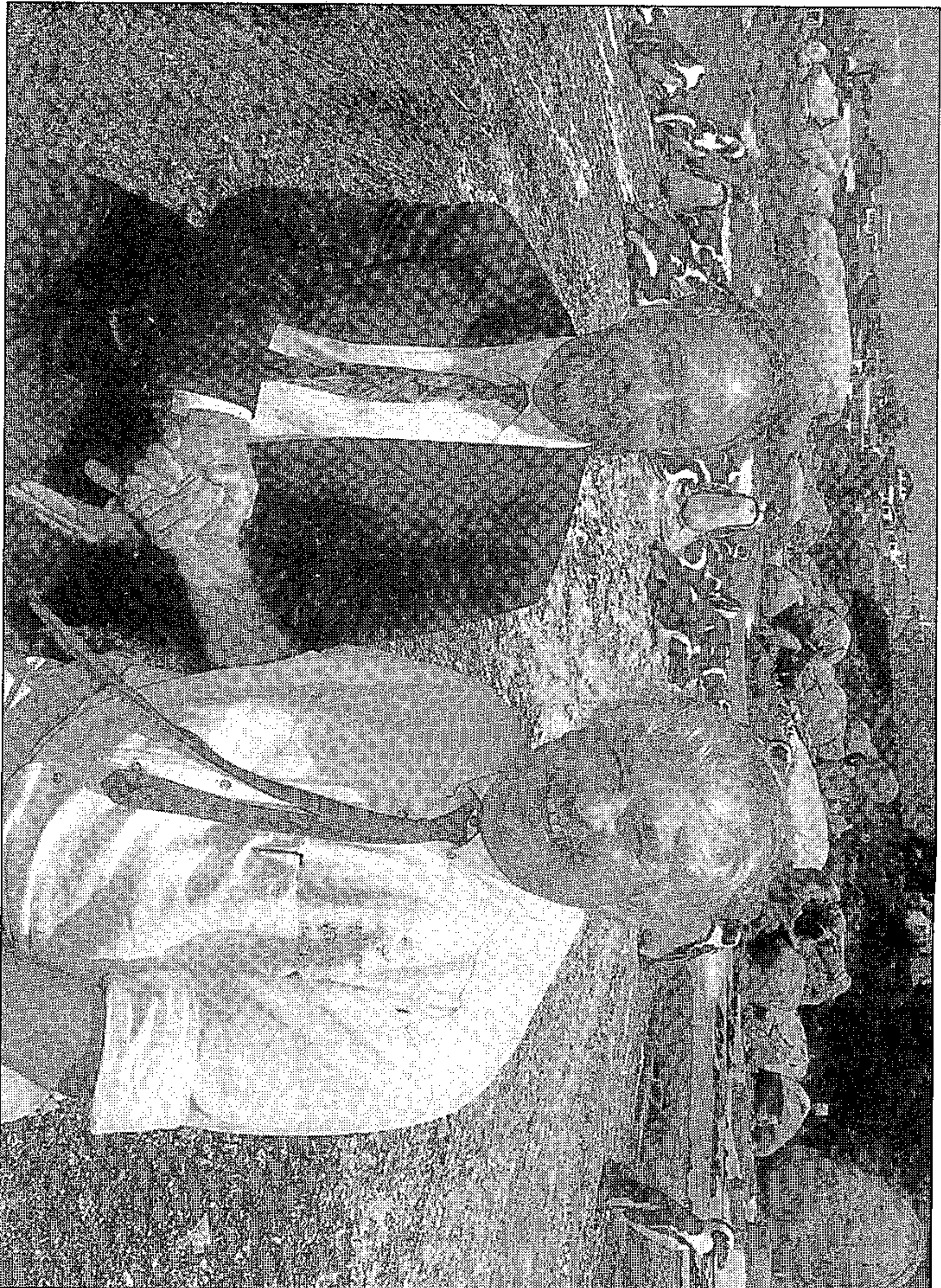
Joye Gibbs speaking in her personal capacity said: "There would be no problem including Vrygrond in the same ward as Muizenberg as co-operation between the communities has grown over the past years.

She said that Vrygrond should be considered as the 52-hectare demarcated by the city council.

"It would not be beneficial to include the area known as 'Muizenberg East', as this has the potential to develop into a ward capable of standing on its own," she said.

Mrs Gibbs felt the needs of Vrygrond for vital services and informal housing would not be in keeping with those of Muizenberg East which already had a framework drawn up.

## Boulders session hailed



**NEW NATIONAL PARK:** Land Affairs Minister Mr Derek Hanekom with Mr David Daitz, co-ordinator of the Table Mountain National Park, at Boulders Beach. The minister ceded the beach to the National Parks Board yesterday, a move hailed by conservationists as an indication of the government's seriousness about the future of the Peninsula's conservation-worthy areas.

PICTURE: ANNE LAING

## Parks Board gets

### Boulders Beach

From Page 1  
ET 12/1/96

which are quite exciting, both because of the uniqueness of the Peninsula and because of the reality of certain initiatives that have begun giving NPB control (of the CPPNE).

"I see no reason ... why this land should not be transferred to National Parks. I also have no problems with conservation-worthy state land (in the CPPNE) being transferred to the NPB," Mr Hanekom said.

Conservationists across the spectrum have welcomed the announcements.

NPB chief Dr Robbie Robinson said yesterday: "The board could not have hoped for a better New Year's gift. This bodes extremely well for the establishment of an internationally-acclaimed national park in the Peninsula."

He congratulated Mr Hanekom, who "does his homework properly and doesn't sleep on issues."

The director of conservation for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Dr Ian Macdonald, said the announcements were "extremely significant in terms of future conservation of the Cape Peninsula and we congratulate Minister Hanekom for taking a very far-sighted step."

Co-ordinator of the Table Mountain National Park Mr David Daitz said: "This is a fundamentally important decision with very wide-ranging implications. It is not only about Boulders — it is the first concrete act towards establishing a National Park in the Peninsula. Of particular importance is the minister's saying that all conservation-worthy state-owned land should be transferred to the NPB."

Chairman of the Cape Peninsula Conservation Managers' Forum Mr Paul Britton also applauded Mr Hanekom's decision: "One admires his courage to reverse a decision he had already made. We said it was important to look at the issue holistically and he decided to call the meeting to discuss it."

Simon's Town mayor and chairman of the Boulders Management Committee, Ms Pauline van Eck, who opposed the decision, said the NPB and the management committee would have to discuss management of the beach in the immediate future.

She said Boulders Beach was being degraded by 1.5 million tourists a year. Last year the council took R111 000 in gate money from the beach.

## ET 12/1/96 Boulders given to Parks Board

MELANIE GOSLING

LAND Affairs Minister Mr Derek Hanekom yesterday handed over ownership of state-owned Boulders Beach in Simon's Town to the National Parks Board (NPB) — a move hailed by conservationists as a major breakthrough and the first concrete step towards Table Mountain and the Peninsula becoming a National Park.

This ends years of attempts by the Simon's Town municipality to gain ownership of Boulders Beach, the only paying beach in the Peninsula, which derives a lucrative income from tourists who flock to see the African penguin breeding colony.

The minister also announced yesterday he agreed in principle that all conservation-worthy state-owned land in the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) should be ceded to the NPB — a decision that will have far-reaching implications for the future management of the Peninsula.

The move is in keeping with recommendations in both the Fuggle Report and the Huntley Report that the boundaries of the CPPNE be expanded beyond the Peninsula's high-water mark into the sea.

At a meeting in Simon's Town yesterday attended by local authority officials, councillors, ratepayers, the NPB, conservation organisations, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Land Affairs, Mr Hanekom said he was not opposed in principle to the transference of state-owned land to a local authority. He had initially agreed that Simon's Town local authority should get ownership of both Boulders Beach and Froggy Farm.

However, he had received objections and had arranged the meeting yesterday to hear all views and consider the broader implications.

"Normally these bits of public land would be managed by local authorities. But there are different circumstances in the Peninsula

Continued on Page 3

# New hope for SA's r

Proposed legislation incorporating international standards is set to protect these areas fro

BY HARRY BARKER

"The reason we don't know that the Earth is dying is that all the governments know that it's the one truth we couldn't handle."

If the reader surmises that this statement comes from an ecologist, a politician, a geophysicist or an environmentalist, it would be a mistake. It appeared in a letter to the writer from his granddaughter, Jean

Wetlands Conservation Bill.

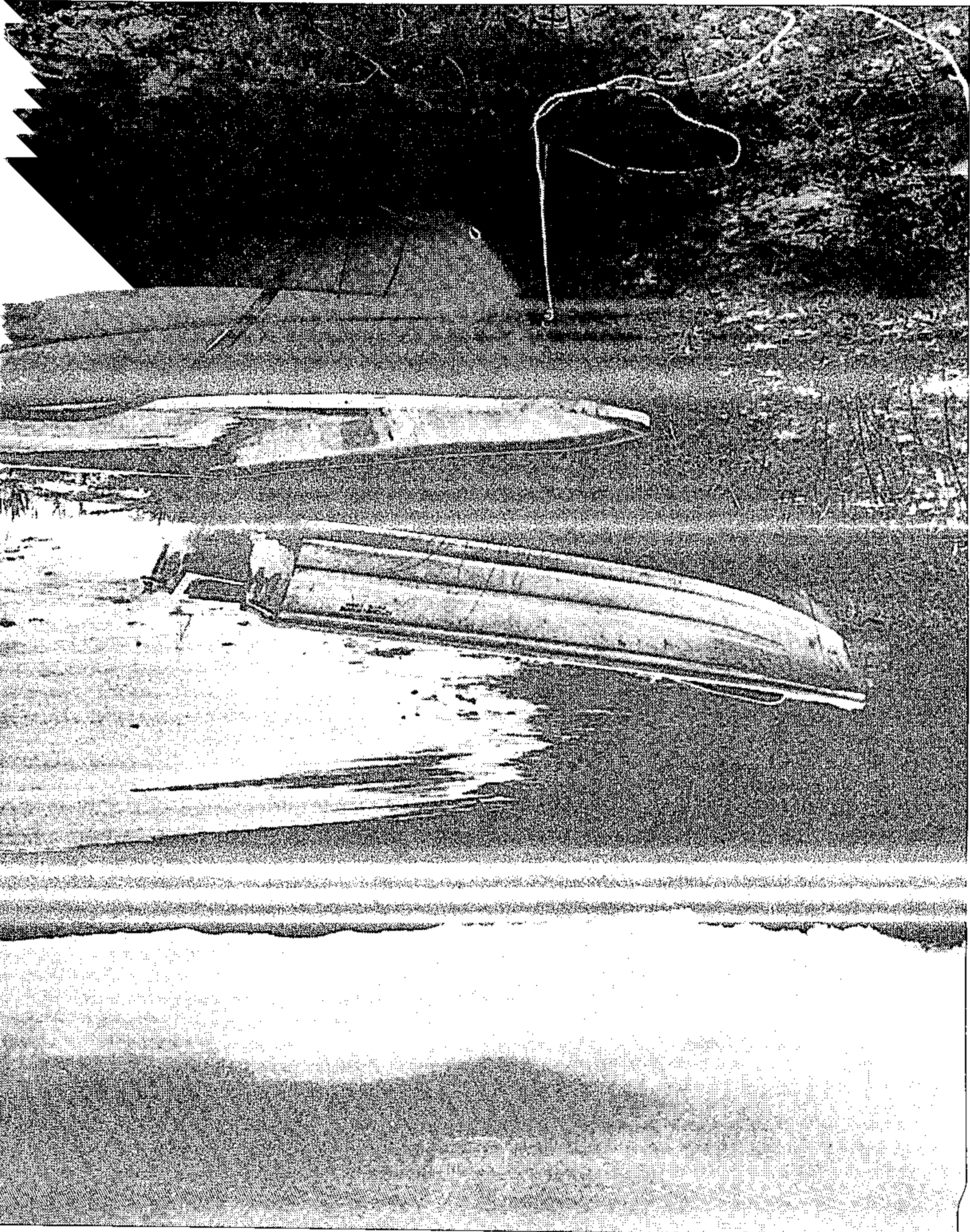
Perhaps the extensively reported breakup of a part of the great Antarctic ice cap, or the effect on almost omnipotent insurance companies of the increasing violence of natural catastrophes; or the observed gap in the ozone layer; or all of these, have alarmed "the governments". It seems that the Earth is shaking itself like an angry animal because of mankind's bullying.

Some of us may look upon this bill as one dealing with a subject of little importance, but there is the sobering thought that, if another Earth is sick, mankind will soon be sick too.

Attached to the wetlands

bill is a memorandum which says that it (the bill) "is an initiative that addresses an aspect of the environment which affects all the people of South Africa (jargon for "it deals with the environment and affects all South Africans"). The memorandum discusses the "Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance". Held as long ago as 1971, the convention is named after the place of its adoption in Iran. It is the intergovernmental treaty providing for international co-operation to conserve wetlands.

The memorandum targets estuaries and even coral reefs, as well as areas inundated by surface or ground water. It says that although wetlands have been regarded as unproductive and even unhealthy, they are vital to human beings, particularly in a dry country like South Africa. It adds: "They reduce soil erosion, drought impacts and flood damage; they help in the cleansing and storage of water, the replenishment of groundwater for boreholes and the provision of areas



Water wonderworld ... Kwazulu Natal's Lake St Lucia, which epitomises the type of South African wetland

for recreation, tourism and education; and they support thousands of species of animals and plants, including many which are rare or endangered. Wetlands are therefore essential to the economy. "If the economic reconstruction and development of our country is to be successful, then our natural resources, which sustain the lifelines of people and rural areas, must be saved.

"Lagoons and estuaries such as St Lucia, Kosi Bay and Langebaan perform a life-support function as nursery areas for many kinds of marine fish. Our marine resources are a key link in the food chain. These resources drive a large industry which feeds the nation and provides many jobs." South Africa was one of the first contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention, and, in terms of this country's contractual obligations, it designated 12 wetlands as being of international importance. These were:

- De Hoopvlei (750ha) (1975).
- Barberspan (200ha) (1975).
- Kosi Bay (2 000ha).
- De Mond state forest (Heuningnes estuary) (918ha) (1986).
- Blesbokspruit (2 000ha) (1986).
- Turtle beaches/coral reefs of Tongaland (39 500ha) (1986).
- St Lucia system (15 000ha) (1986).
- Langebaan (6 000ha) (1988).
- Wilderness lakes (850ha) (1991).
- Verlorenvlei (1 700ha) (1991).
- Orange River mouth wetland (2 000ha).

Kosi Ba  
Lak  
The da  
they we  
Africa  
welan  
tabishi  
provid  
them. I  
contrac  
of well  
natorie

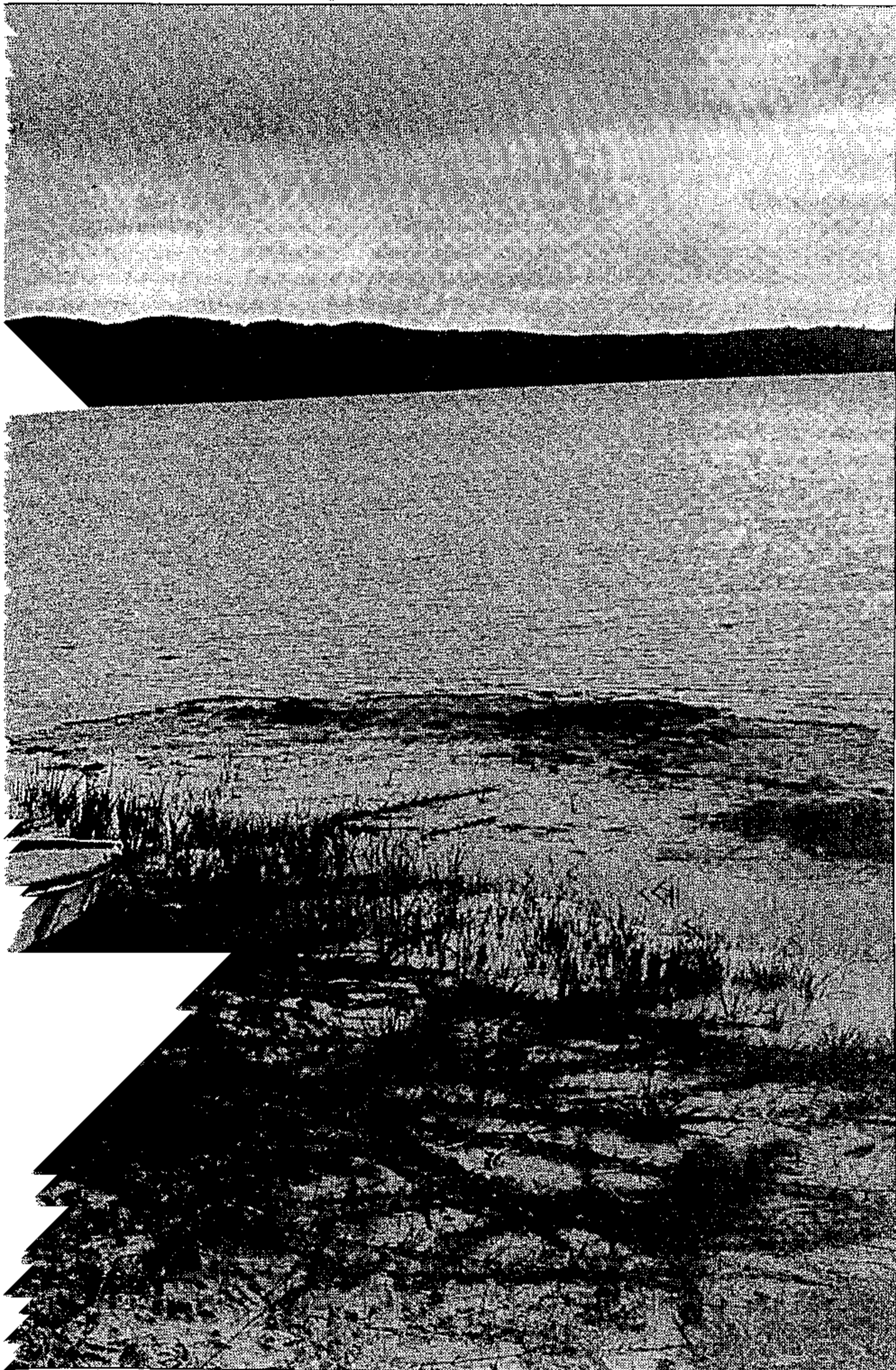


# precious wetlands

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3 1996

scenarios such as the attempted mining of St Lucia's sand dunes

(56) Stan 3/1/96 KAREN SANDISON



out to be protected by legislation encompassing the Ramsar Convention.

(1991).  
system (8 000ha) (1991).  
Sibaya (7 750ha) (1991).  
show the years when  
designated.  
Convention obliges South  
preserve and use these  
with "wisdom" by es-  
nature reserves and  
wardens to look after  
also gives the right to any  
party to add to the list  
lands, and obliges the sig-  
not to permit any activity

which would damage their eco-  
logical character. One recalls the  
threat to the St Lucia system when  
it was proposed to strip and  
dredge-mine the catchment  
dunes on its eastern shore. This  
resulted in parties to the conven-  
tion resolving at their meetings in  
1990 and 1993 to recommend to  
the South African Government  
that it not allow any activity  
which would damage the ecologi-  
cal character of St Lucia. The res-  
olution expressly referred to min-

ing there.

The memorandum to the bill  
stresses not only the moral obliga-  
tion of South Africa to honour its  
commitments under the conven-  
tion, but also the practical neces-  
sity for the country to act in concert  
with the worldwide effort to pro-  
tect wetlands. The act, which will  
follow the bill, will demonstrate  
acceptance of the obligation and  
our recognition of its necessity.

It will ratify the convention  
and make it binding on South

Africa as a law. Section 6 of the bill  
is far-reaching. It says: "Notwith-  
standing the provisions of any  
other law or any right acquired  
under or in terms of such law, no  
prospecting or mining shall take  
place in any listed wetland." The  
reference to "any right acquired"  
can make it retrospective.

Of note is that farming on a  
wetland is not prohibited, but the  
minister of environmental affairs  
and tourism, who is charged with  
implementation of the proposed  
act, will have the power to prohib-  
it any activity on any wetland or  
listed wetland which, "in his or  
her opinion", is likely to affect ad-  
versely its ecological character.

**T**he proposed act defines a  
wetland as: "... areas of marsh,  
fen, peatland or water, whether  
natural or artificial, permanent or  
temporary, having water that is  
static or flowing, fresh, brackish  
or salt, including areas of marine  
water, the depth of which at low  
tide does not exceed six metres".

In terms of this definition, a  
landowner can thus create his  
own wetland.

The convention extends this  
definition by providing that a list-  
ed wetland may incorporate ri-  
parian and coastal zones adjacent  
to wetlands and islands, or bodies  
of marine water deeper than six  
metres at low tide lying within the  
wetlands, especially where these  
have importance as waterfowl  
habitat. It guides the contracting  
party regarding selection for list-  
ing by stating that wetlands  
should be chosen on account of  
their international significance in  
terms of ecology, botany, zoology,  
limnology or hydrology.

For those of us who have  
never encountered limnology, the  
term means the science of the bio-  
logical and other phenomena of  
fresh water, especially of ponds  
and lakes, and is derived from the  
Greek word *limne*, meaning a  
lake.

Important to environmental-  
ists is also the proposed grant to  
the minister of power to restrict  
any activity in any catchment area  
which, "in his or her opinion",  
may have a detrimental effect on  
any wetland or listed wetland.

Maybe the proposed act will  
enable us, to some degree, to han-  
dle the truth to which the writer's  
granddaughter has referred.

Harry Barker is an attorney at  
Webber Wentzel Bowens. The article  
is taken from the publication *WSF  
Review*.

16  
SWI  
Gel  
CH  
20  
WV  
DR

# Inquiry over permit for toxic waste

(56)

ART 13/1/96

Own Correspondent

PRETORIA. — A commission of inquiry investigating granting a permit to a company to import 500 tons of allegedly toxic chemicals has held its first official meeting.

The commission, chaired by Pretoria Regional Court president Jan Venter, met after Dawie de Villiers, Minister of Environmental Affairs, halted a shipment which originated in Finland.

According to importers JAD Metal Concentrate, the consignment contained cupric arsenite — a raw material from

which metals can be extracted.

Environmental lobby groups have said granting the permit flies in the face of Dr De Villiers' assurances last year not to allow imports of toxic waste.

The commission's brief is to investigate all legal, financial and administrative matters relating to the approval of the importation and to investigate whether it complies with the Basel Convention on Toxic Waste.

In addition, it must probe the history, conclusion and terms contained contracts between

the department and consultant Daan Malan.

Mr Malan and his associates were contracted in December 1992 to manage a project on the environmentally safe management of materials.

Dr De Villiers said in August last year that he had first heard of the consignment as the ship was due to sail from Finland.

Speaking at an environmental conference in Johannesburg, he acknowledged that the system of granting permits for the importation of waste need-

ed to be thoroughly reviewed.

Pressure has been mounting on Dr De Villiers to explain how the importation of toxic waste was authorised by a private consultant, in contravention of government policy, without the knowledge of government officials.

It is very important to handle this as speedily as possible. The proceedings should be transparent, said Mr Venter.

We will begin with formal evidence next Thursday. All the parties will be available, with their legal representatives, until February 14.

# Truth Commission will serve to divide nation

(67) HAG 13/1/98

ALMOST everyone agrees that South Africa has undergone an incredible, seemingly miraculous, transition from white to black administration.

Instead of the anticipated insurrection and predicted violence, agreements were reached between the Nationalists and the African National Congress. While there is universal acknowledgment of the enormous role which Nelson Mandela played towards reconciliation, we must not forget the courage and determination of Frederick Willem de Klerk which created the opportunity for reconciliation.

The agreement to form a government of national unity was an acceptance by both men that what had happened in the past needed to be left behind in favour of working together to unite all races toward building a better future.

Once the elections of April 1994 were held, and the subsequent government of national unity was formed, South Africans began to focus on their future with optimism. It was considered imperative for the common good to distance ourselves from our past. Not an easy task for blacks or whites in this country.

Now, almost two years after the great election, comes the Truth Commission. The commission, which will be headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is in my view a tragic mistake. If South African whites and blacks had fought a bloody war ending in white surrender, then the blacks may have been justified in convening a war crimes commission. But once a peaceful

## Fifth Column

A forum for guest writers  
Rabbi Ivan Lerner

transition took place, and a government of national unity was formed, a commission to investigate the misdeeds of the past can only serve a divisive purpose.

The heroic efforts of both Mr Mandela and Mr de Klerk succeeded in a "win win" for South Africa by joining together (albeit with difficulty) a representative coalition government.

Mr Mandela certainly has justification for wanting to prosecute those who were partially or directly responsible for his 27 years in prison, as well as others who were undoubtedly responsible for various other racial crimes. But we must not forget that Mr De Klerk did his utmost to subdue the extremist white backlash during the time leading up to and immediately following the elections.

Mr De Klerk is also justified in his opinion that for the good of all concerned, an amnesty needs to be granted for events which occurred during the dark days of apartheid. I think Mr De Klerk is correct.

The Truth Commission is supposed to meet for a minimum of 18 months but in all probability the commission will go on for considerably longer. It is supposed to investigate "political and racial crimes" dating back to 1960. What possible positive effect will this commission have towards reconciliation and unity?

If anything, the commission will stir up the anger and animosity of whites and Zulus who are still uncomfortable with ANC black-majority rule. It is doubtful that justice will in fact be served. It is more likely that the commission will turn into a political circus. The worldwide media frenzy may make the O J Simpson trial seem mild in comparison. Whatever publicity is generated will not be helpful here or abroad.

A little over five years ago, in December of 1989 while visiting Jerusalem, Archbishop Desmond Tutu told his Israeli hosts that the time was long overdue for Jews to forgive Nazis for the murder of six million Jews (one third of the world's Jewish population).

The archbishop said that forgiveness needed to be extended to even Nazi war criminals since the Bible advocates and encourages reconciliation and forgiveness.

In no way do I suggest that the old apartheid government was justified in its nefarious activities. It was not! But these activities, no matter how awful, did not include genocide and wholesale mass murder.

If Archbishop Tutu can forgive the Nazis and

encourage their victims to do likewise, then he should apply the same standards to those guilty of racial crimes in South Africa's past.

If we use the archbishop's own interpretation of the Bible, encouraging us to forgive the deeds of the worst mass murderers in world history, then logically the archbishop should recommend to our state president that the Truth Commission will serve neither a positive nor healing purpose. Therefore, he and President Mandela should strongly recommend that the commission be disbanded before any significant damage is done. The only two people who could make such a recommendation, and be taken seriously, are the president and the archbishop.

South Africa now faces many almost insurmountable problems. Crime is rampant every-

where and the government seems incompetent in responding. Life for people in the townships has not improved.

Educational upliftment and the RDP are moving at a snail's pace, if at all! Instead of convening a Truth Commission, let's spend the money on solving the real problems which are dogging this country.

The Truth Commission will only serve to divide and distract South Africans from the critical and vital business of securing a future for ourselves and our children.

■ Rabbi Ivan Lerner is senior Minister of the Claremont Hebrew Congregation in Cape Town.

# Managing the Bay's assets

(56) ARG 13/1/96

**Y**OU won't catch renowned marine researcher, Jacques Cousteau, swimming any closer than 30 metres from the shore in the Mediterranean, so bad is the once-idyllic sea's pollution quotient.

The Med's "sickness" is so notorious and Cousteau's abhorrence so well-known that it's been elevated to the status of a question in the popular Trivial Pursuit game.

It goes without saying there's nothing trivial about sea pollution. Not in the Mediterranean, and not in False Bay.

But in False Bay's case, thorough and sophisticated monitoring, and the combined efforts of environmentalists, sea-sport enthusiasts, business people, fishing communities, and local and national government authorities have gone a long way in making sure the much-feared Med-style rot does not set in.

The next crucial step is the establishment of a ministerial advisory committee and the drawing up of a management plan.

Vigilance and thoughtful planning, now, are vital to the bay's future state.

Rex Quick, Cape Town City Council environmental planner and an authority on False Bay, notes soberly: "If we do not keep prodding authorities, politicians, developers, and the public, you can be fairly confident that in the long term, False Bay will go the same way as the Mediterranean."

One of the reasons why there is hope that it won't, lies in what Mr Quick describes as "False Bay's success story".

Five years ago, travel writer T V Bulpin almost single-handedly stirred up a storm over the "cess-pool" that he believed the bay had become — and prompted a shake-up in Cape Town's approach to protecting the famous bay.

City officials felt then that Bulpin's claims were exaggerated. Even so, City Engineer Arthur Clayton and officials from other local authorities got together and established what became the False Bay Water Quality Committee.

"It was informal, but we were committed to it," Deputy City Engineer Mike Marsden recalls.

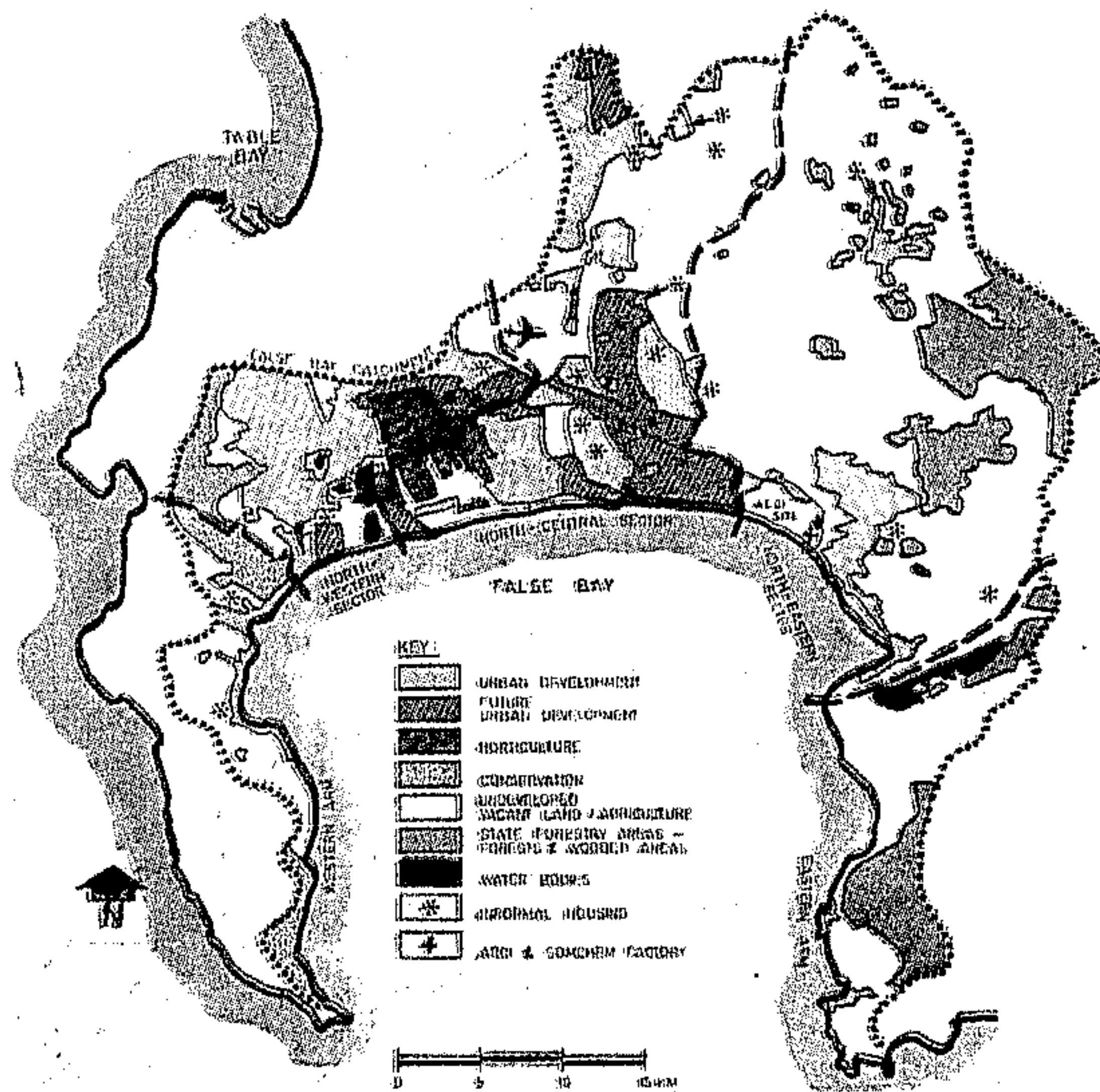
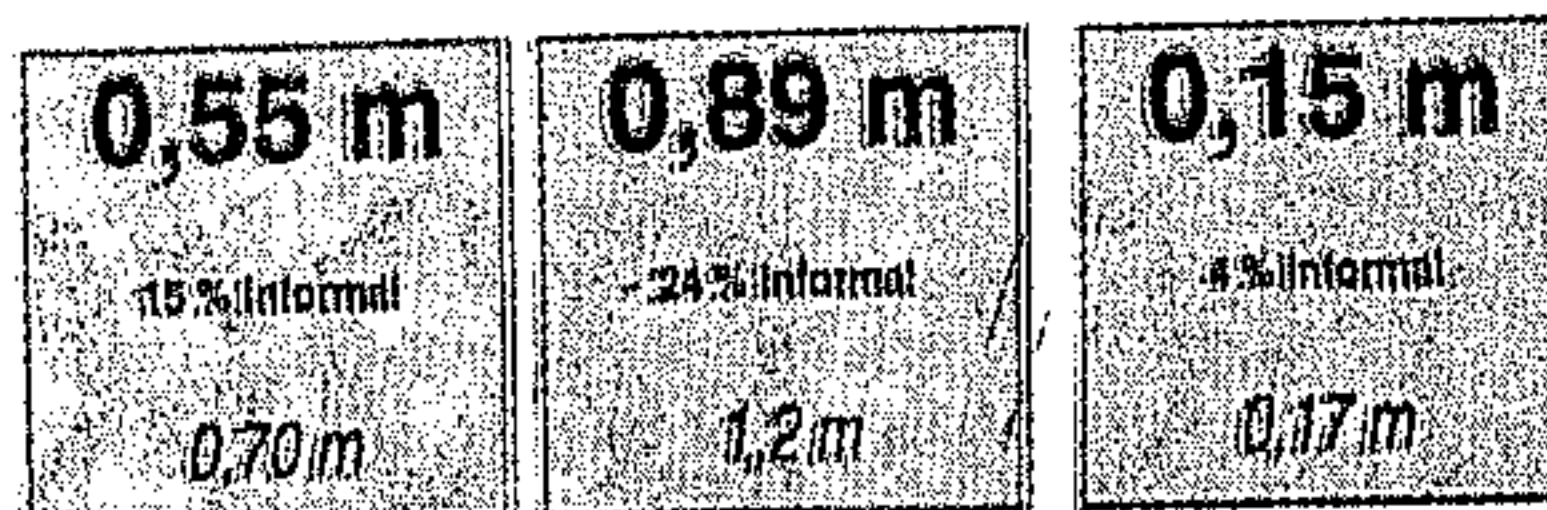
This committee then teamed up with the False Bay Forum, representing no fewer than 125 "user-groups" — ranging from environmentalists to community groups, fishermen, business people and tourism agencies.

For some years now, the bay has been subjected to thorough monitoring — at more than 30 points along its shore — based on the stringent European Union Mandatory and Guideline values for bathing water quality.

For the most part, the results indicate safe bathing conditions.

■ It is barely conceivable that a shack settlement near Stellenbosch could affect the water quality — the health — of False Bay. That it does underlines the fact that the key to husbanding the biggest — and one of the most precious — of South Africa's bays lies in upgrading the burgeoning, poor and unserved informal settlements of the Peninsula. It is the broader catchment area, not merely its popular, beach-lined fringe, that is False Bay's Achilles heel. A report by **MICHAEL MORRIS**.

**TOTAL POPULATION** 1,58 m (20% informal)  
2,03 m (year 2000)



□ **RUN-OFF RISK:** Run-off from informal settlements across the Peninsula — pinpointed in this graphic — represent the gravest threat to the water quality, and ecology, of False Bay.

But the greatest value of the tests is in indicating where the real threat lies: stormwater run-off from the huge, and fast-developing catchment area.

Spanner-like, and almost 1 000 sq km in size, False Bay is South Africa's biggest bay, and a jewel in the Cape's ecological and economic crown.

It is better-off than the Mediterranean in that it is more effectively flushed by fresh ocean water, and has much less industry on its shores.

But Mr Marsden and Mr Quick are at one in pointing to the cumulative effect of massive and on-going

urbanisation.

The False Bay catchment extends northward from Cape Hangklip, takes in Stellenbosch, Kayamandi, cuts west through Kraaifontein, Durbanville and Bellville, down through Belhar, across Wynberg and into Constantia and down to Cape Point.

In 1991, 1,5 million people were settled in this area — today's figure is much higher than that — with a considerable proportion of them living in informal, unserved settlements.

Until recently, the False Bay catchment area was administered by no fewer than 67 local govern-

ment organisations; fragmentation which made control and management of the catchment difficult.

This will be much improved after the May 29 elections, when a simpler, metropolitan local government structure comes on stream.

These are important factors for the future of False Bay.

"The only way we can assure water quality in the bay is to manage the catchment, upgrading settlements in it," says Mr Marsden.

These settlements are the chief source of problems in the bay.

Sewage is popularly blamed for pollution, but it's probably the best-managed of all the pollutants, "by and large treated in conventional water works", he points out.

"The main problem is what we call 'diffuse pollution' — human or dog faeces, or other rotting or toxic matter, swept into the stormwater drains, streams and rivers and, ultimately, into the sea."

Underlining the point, Mr Quick identified in a 1993 study the "bacterial/viral water quality of stormwater and rivers" flowing into the bay as "the management concern of the highest priority". (In contrast, he did not regard heavy metals, hydrocarbons and industrial chemical discharges into the bay as a "serious water quality threat".)

"We have a First World wastewater treatment capability, a First World awareness of the problems, but Third World problems to deal with," he notes.

"It is the massive urbanisation in the False Bay catchment area which could be the source of future problems. There is no serious problem now, but what about in 20 or 30 years' time?"

There are research deficiencies too — not enough is known about how effectively the bay flushes itself.

Recent studies have found that "currents in the bay are wind and tide dominated, with the predominant current being a slow, clockwise gyre".

Estimates of the "residence time" (how long water stays in the bay) vary from four to 14 days, but "circulation in the interior of the bay may be fairly stagnant".

"There's therefore no clear answer as to the scale of the threat," Mr Quick says.

Finally, he points out, there is a need for public involvement, public concern.

"Everything is in place for the proper management of False Bay, but the responsibility to make sure it happens rests ultimately with the people of the city. It is up to them to maintain the right kind of political pressure.

"It is fine when False Bay is making headlines, but now that it's being successfully managed, there is a perception that there is nothing to worry about. This is precisely when people should take an active interest."

# False Bay pollution control 'breakthrough'

ARG 13/1/96  
56  
**MICHAEL MORRIS**

Staff Reporter

EFFORTS to protect False Bay from a pollution onslaught, caused by massive development along its shores, have been given a major boost by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal.

His approval, in principle, of a proposal for a ministerial advisory committee to guide development in the huge catchment area across much of the Peninsula — as well as keep tabs on pollution sources and research key and little understood elements of the bay's eco-system — has been hailed as a "breakthrough".

The committee's greatest concern will be monitoring and upgrading unserviced, informal settlements in the False Bay catchment area — which stretches as far as Stellenbosch, Durbanville, Guguletu and Constantia — to limit the pollution impact of stormwater "run-off", particularly in the rainy season.

The committee, which will have legal effect under the Water Act, will draw up a comprehensive manage-

ment plan to ensure False Bay does not run the risk of becoming an eco-disaster like the Mediterranean.

The proposal is the culmination of several years' work by the False Bay Forum — chaired by environmentalist Andy Gubb — and the Cape Town City Council-led False Bay Water Quality Committee.

The Forum represents 125 organisations and interests, including environmentalists, marine sport enthusiasts, fishing communities and tourist agencies.

"This is a most important breakthrough," said Deputy Cape Town City Engineer Mike Marsden.

Water quality is being constantly monitored in False Bay (and Table Bay) and pollution sources checked where possible.

But Mr Marsden pointed out that stormwater "run-off" in the rapidly developing catchment area was the chief risk and a comprehensive management plan — backed by a committee "with teeth" — was the key to reducing the threat.

■ See page 21

# Misery after the

13/01/96

**GLYNNIS UNDERHILL**  
Staff Reporter

CASH-strapped farmers whose crops were burnt by toxic fumes from a blazing sulphur stockpile at the AECI factory in Somerset West have hit hard times as they wait for compensation.

It is feared some of the smaller produce farmers could go out of business if bridging finance is not provided while their claims are being processed.

Organic vegetable farmer Brian Pickering of Rust-en-Vrede said the devastation could not have come at a worse time. Orders for his produce piled up over Christmas, he said.

While others enjoyed the festive season, Mr Pickering faced a miserable Christmas, hiring extra helpers to uproot damaged crops and replant produce.

■ Farmers who lost financially after a cloud of sulphur from the disastrous AECI fire in Somerset West damaged their crops faced misery over the festive season.

The piles of scorched and discarded vegetables scattered around his farm tell a dismal tale.

Like some other farmers in the area, he believes he has lost some customers who turned to other suppliers after the blaze on December 16 dispersed thick clouds of acrid sulphur over the farming area.

When mixed with the rain that followed the fire, the sulphur changed to form sulphurous acid and caused extensive damage to crops in the area.

"I have lost a couple of customers who have gone to other people. It is a difficult time for me and I am up to my limit in overdraft," said Mr Pickering.

This week AECI said its insurance adjusters had apparently not been approached by

any farmers with "particular cashflow problems".

"Any such problems should be referred to AECI, which will endeavour to assist individual farmers," said Michael Blizzard of the AECI communications department.

All farmers who had claims had either been visited or spoken to, he said.

Damage claims have been lodged by 70 farmers, which included flower growers and smallholdings, and 25 nurseries, said Mr Blizzard.

Vegetable farmer Johannes Visser of Vorentoe Farm near Kuils River has estimated the damage to his crops from the sulphur fire could amount to around R550 000.

But not even an experienced farmer like Mr Visser could

have foreseen that many of his prized pumpkins would only grow to half their usual size after the leaves were scorched by the toxic vapour.

"It should have been a nice vegetable crop of quality stuff. We planted five hectares more than last year. Christmas time is the time of the year when we make money and we must make provision for the winter. Now our overdraft account is still staying as it was — even though we were supposed to be in a better position this year," he said.

Farmer Peter Turton, who grows more than 15 flower varieties on his farm near Somerset West, is feeling as glum as his neighbours after many of his outdoor flowers were destroyed.

"There was no Christmas bonus that one looks towards getting and budgets for. When it doesn't come in, you are set back on your heels," he said.

## AECI sulphur blaze: Family begins legal action

13/01/96

**GLYNNIS UNDERHILL**  
Staff Reporter

THE family of a Macassar woman who died — allegedly from respiratory failure caused by the toxic vapour released from a blazing sulphur stockpile — are taking legal action against AECI.

Maria Tamboer, 55, died on December 28.

A spokesman for the law firm representing the family said Mrs Tamboer had medical treatment on December 17, the day after the disastrous sulphur gas enveloped Macassar during the blaze at the AECI storage dump in Somerset West.

Lawyer Johan van der Merwe said Mrs Tamboer had apparently died of respiratory failure.

"She inhaled the poisonous air and was given medical treatment. The following day she made a temporary recovery but was hospitalised on December 24 when her condition worsened," said Mr Van der Merwe.

The families of brothers Andrew Williams, 54, and Ronnie Williams, 47, who died when the sulphur gas enveloped Macassar, will also be taking legal action against AECI.

More than 200 residents claiming respiratory problems

were treated in one morning at a temporary medical clinic set up in Macassar this week, according to Henrich Magerman of the Macassar Crisis Committee.

"People are still complaining of respiratory and asthmatic conditions. There is a great demand for treatment," he said.

The sulphur gas cloud from the blaze in Somerset West forced Macassar's 2 500 residents to evacuate on December 16.

A medical unit operating at the Macassar community centre before Christmas was closed between Christmas and New Year.

Michael Blizzard of the AECI group communications department said AECI had seconded some of its medical staff to help out at the Macassar community centre this week.

"Unfortunately, those who previously assisted were unable to help due to other commitments. Local doctors, hospitals and the Department of Health were approached but were unable to assist," said Mr Blizzard.

A decision would be made this weekend, in conjunction with community representatives, on whether the unit should remain in place for a longer period, he said.



Picture

□ FIRE  
Organ  
farm  
Picke  
spent  
seaso  
damag  
re

□ HALF  
Johann  
his p  
have  
size as

# poison rain

ARL 13/1/96

(S)

ns'  
abilities  
ers  
redireting  
ou at large  
abling and  
ture:  
principles of

orting the  
and cur  
Sapa.



es: ROY WIGLEY,  
taff Photographer.

**AFTERMATH:**  
c vegetable  
ner Brian  
ing (above)  
the festive  
h pulling up  
ed crops and  
planting.



**-SIZE:** Farmer  
es Visser says  
rize pumpkins  
not grown to  
a result of the  
sulphur fire.

# Misery after the poison rain

ARG 13/1/96 (56)

GLYNNIS UNDERHILL  
Staff Reporter

CASH-strapped farmers whose crops were burnt by toxic fumes from a blazing sulphur stockpile at the AECI factory in Somerset West have hit hard times as they wait for compensation.

It is feared some of the smaller produce farmers could go out of business if bridging finance is not provided while their claims are being processed.

Organic vegetable farmer Brian Pickering of Rust-en-Vrede said the devastation could not have come at a worse time. Orders for his produce piled up over Christmas, he said.

While others enjoyed the festive season, Mr Pickering faced a miserable Christmas, hiring extra helpers to uproot damaged crops and replant produce.

■ Farmers who lost financially after a cloud of sulphur from the disastrous AECI fire in Somerset West damaged their crops faced misery over the festive season.

The piles of scorched and discarded vegetables scattered around his farm tell a dismal tale.

Like some other farmers in the area, he believes he has lost some customers who turned to other suppliers after the blaze on December 16 dispersed thick clouds of acrid sulphur over the farming area.

When mixed with the rain that followed the fire, the sulphur changed to form sulphurous acid and caused extensive damage to crops in the area.

"I have lost a couple of customers who have gone to other people. It is a difficult time for me and I am up to my limit in overdraft," said Mr Pickering. This week AECI said its insurance adjusters had apparently not been approached by

any farmers with "particular cashflow problems".

"Any such problems should be referred to AECI, which will endeavour to assist individual farmers," said Michael Blizzard of the AECI communications department.

All farmers who had claims had either been visited or spoken to, he said.

Damage claims have been lodged by 70 farmers, which included flower growers and smallholdings, and 25 nurseries, said Mr Blizzard.

Vegetable farmer Johannes Visser of Vorenloe Farm near Kulls River has estimated the damage to his crops from the sulphur fire could amount to around R550 000.

But not even an experienced farmer like Mr Visser could

have foreseen that many of his prized pumpkins would only grow to half their usual size after the leaves were scorched by the toxic vapour.

"I should have been a nice vegetable crop of quality stuff. We planted five hectares more than last year. Christmas time is the time of the year when we make money and we must make provision for the winter. Now our overdraft account is still staying as it was — even though we were supposed to be in a better position this year," he said.

Farmer Peter Turton, who grows more than 15 flower varieties on his farm near Somerset West, is feeling as glum as his neighbours after many of his outdoor flowers were destroyed.

"There was no Christmas bonus that one looks towards getting and budgets for. When it doesn't come in, you are set back on your heels," he said.

## AECI sulphur blaze: Family begins legal action

GLYNNIS UNDERHILL  
Staff Reporter

THE family of a Maccassar woman who died — allegedly from respiratory failure caused by the toxic vapour released from a blazing sulphur stockpile — are taking legal action against AECI.

Maria Tamboer, 55, died on December 28.

A spokesman for the law firm representing the family said Mrs Tamboer had medical treatment on December 17, the day after the disastrous sulphur gas enveloped Maccassar during the blaze at the AECI storage dump in Somerset West.

Lawyer Johan van der Merwe said Mrs Tamboer had apparently died of respiratory failure.

"She inhaled the poisonous air and was given medical treatment. The following day she made a temporary recovery but was hospitalised on December 24 when her condition worsened," said Mr Van der Merwe.

The families of brothers Andrew Williams, 54, and Ronnie Williams, 47, who died when the sulphur gas enveloped Maccassar, will also be taking legal action against AECI.

More than 200 residents claiming respiratory problems

were treated in one morning at a temporary medical clinic set up in Maccassar this week, according to Heinrich Magerman of the Maccassar Crisis Committee.

"People are still complaining of respiratory and asthmatic conditions. There is a great demand for treatment," he said.

The sulphur gas cloud from the blaze in Somerset West forced Maccassar's 2 500 residents to evacuate on December 16.

A medical unit operating at the Maccassar community centre before Christmas was closed between Christmas and New Year.



Pictures: ROY WIGLEY, Staff Photographer.

### □ FIRE AFTERMATH:

Organic vegetable farmer Brian Pickering (above) spent the festive season pulling up damaged crops and replanting.

### □ HALF-SIZE:

Farmer Johannes Visser says his prize pumpkins have not grown to size as a result of the sulphur fire.





# Environmental leaders take a hike to greater understanding

ARL 13/11/96

(56)

**IRVING STEYN**  
Staff Reporter

WITH so many inexperienced newcomers having to decide on a policy to govern South Africa's environment, today's leaders are being advised to take a hike — literally.

The Wilderness Leadership School (WLS) has embarked on a three-year wilderness initiative programme taking parliamentarians and community leaders into the bush on four-day trails to teach them something about the environment they have to oversee.

The WLS project, supported by the European Union through the Kagiso Trust, was launched last year when four trails saw more than 30 senators, MPs, community representatives and conservation authorities coming together to experience the wilderness areas.

The trails were preceded by a three-hour workshop led by prominent local environmentalists.

■ In the face of having to decide on how best to manage South Africa's environment, decision makers are being brought back to earth in a unique scheme which is taking senators and MPs on hiking trails.

The aim was to highlight environmental issues before undertaking the trails.

The wilderness initiative project is being supported by other environmental organisations such as the World Wildlife Society and the Environmental Justice Networking Forum.

WLS says the core of its programme recognises that prevention rather than cure was the key to southern Africa's environmental future. It has brought IFP, ANC and NP select committee mem-

bers together with community and environmental leaders.

In the next six months the wilderness initiative will see another six trails being undertaken by 48 political, social and environmental leaders to the nature reserves of the Western Cape, KwaZulu/Natal and northwest regions.

National initiative co-ordinator Margot Morrison said: "A remarkable commitment has been shown by our political and social leaders, who, with hectic daily schedules, have participated in the wilderness initiative trails."

Many new decision makers have never experienced the natural environment, she said, and there was an emerging recognition of the need to have environmental issues given their rightful status.

Andrew Muir, national director of WLS, is delighted at its success.  
"The fact that we could get busy parliamentarians to go is a success. Ultimately we want 200 people to have had the experience."

Deaths	Deaths	Deaths	Deaths	Deaths

# False Bay pollution control 'breakthrough'

AR 13/11/96

(56)

**MICHAEL MORRIS**  
Staff Reporter

**EFFORTS** to protect False Bay from a pollution onslaught, caused by massive development along its shores, have been given a major boost by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal.

His approval, in principle, of a proposal for a ministerial advisory committee to guide development in the huge catchment area across much of the Peninsula — as well as keep tabs on pollution sources and research key and little understood elements of the bay's eco-system — has been hailed as a "breakthrough".

The committee's greatest concern will be monitoring and upgrading unserviced, informal settlements in the False Bay catchment area — which stretches as far as Stellenbosch, Durbanville, Guguletu and Constantia — to limit the pollution impact of stormwater "run-off", particularly in the rainy season.

The committee, which will have legal effect under the Water Act, will draw up a comprehensive manage-

ment plan to ensure False Bay does not run the risk of becoming an eco-disaster like the Mediterranean.

The proposal is the culmination of several years' work by the False Bay Forum — chaired by environmentalist Andy Gubb — and the Cape Town City Council-led False Bay Water Quality Committee.

The Forum represents 125 organisations and interests, including environmentalists, marine sport enthusiasts, fishing communities and tourist agencies.

"This is a most important breakthrough," said Deputy Cape Town City Engineer Mike Marsden.

Water quality is being constantly monitored in False Bay (and Table Bay) and pollution sources checked where possible.

But Mr Marsden pointed out that stormwater "run-off" in the rapidly developing catchment area was the chief risk and a comprehensive management plan — backed by a committee "with teeth" — was the key to reducing the threat.

■ See page 21

**UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**  
 FROM NCC TRAINING COLLEGE  
**NCC CAREER DIPLOMA IN**      **THE COURSE**

# Hanekom bows to conservationists

Major breakthrough as land affairs minister approves Boulders Bay transfer to Parks Board

By MELANIE COSLING

Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom last week handed over ownership of state-owned Boulders Beach in Simon's Town to the National Parks Board, a move hailed by conservationists as a major breakthrough and the first concrete step towards Table Mountain and the peninsula becoming a national park.

This ends years of concerted attempts by Simon's Town municipality to gain ownership of Boulders Beach - the only paying beach in the peninsula - which has a lucrative income from tourists who flock to see the African penguin breeding colony.

The minister also announced that he supported in principle that all conservation-worthy state-owned land in the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) should be ceded to the National Parks Board.

This decision will have far-reaching implications for the fu-

ture management of the peninsula.

The move is in keeping with recommendations of both the Fuggle Report and the Huntley Report that the boundaries of the CPPNE be expanded beyond the peninsula's high water mark into the sea.

At a meeting in Simon's Town attended by local authority officials, councillors, ratepayers, National Parks Board members, conservation organisations, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Land Affairs, Hanekom said he was not opposed in principle to the transfer of state-owned land to a local authority.

He had initially agreed to the request by Simon's Town local authority that they gain ownership of both Boulders Beach and Froggy Farm.

However he had received objections to Simon's Town gaining ownership and had arranged the meeting to hear all views and consider the broader implications.

Star 15/11/96

"Normally these bits of public land would be managed by local authorities. But there are different circumstances in the peninsula which are quite exciting, both because of the uniqueness of the peninsula and because of the reality of certain initiatives which have begun giving National

**He did his homework properly**

Parks Board control (of the CPPNE).

"I see no reason whatsoever in this particular case why this land should not be transferred to National Parks. I also have no problems with conservation-worthy state land (in the CPPNE) being transferred to National Parks

Board," Hanekom said at the meeting.

Conservationists across the spectrum have welcomed the announcements. National Parks Board chief Dr Robbie Robinson said: "The board could not have hoped for a better New Year's gift."

He congratulated Hanekom who "does his homework properly and doesn't sleep on issues". Director of conservation for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Dr Ian Macdonald, said the announcements were a major breakthrough for conservation.

"They are extremely significant in terms of future conservation of the Cape Peninsula and we congratulate Minister Hanekom for taking a very farsighted step," Macdonald said.

Co-ordinator of the Table Mountain National Park, David Daitz, said: "This is a fundamentally important decision with very wide-ranging implications. It is not only about Boulders. It is the

first concrete act towards establishing a National Park in the peninsula.

"Of particular importance is the minister's saying that all conservation-worthy state-owned land should be transferred to National Parks Board."

Chairman of the Cape Peninsula Conservation Managers' Forum, Paul Britton, said Hanekom's decision showed the Government was serious about making the peninsula a National Park.

Simon's Town mayor and chairman of the Boulders Management Committee, Pauline van Eck, who opposed the decision, said the NPB and the management committee would have to get together to discuss management of the beach in the immediate future.

She said Boulders Beach was being degraded by 1,5 million tourists a year.

Last year the council took R111 000 in gate money from the beach.

BROTHERS DIED IN SULPHUR CLOUD

# Macassar family to sue AECI for R1m

**MORE THAN** 30 000 Macassar residents are expected to lay claims against chemical giant AECI after their suburb was enveloped in sulphur clouds last year. **CARON PETERSEN** and **EUNICE RIDER** report.

(56) (183) et 15/1/96

**T**HE family of two brothers who died of respiratory problems when a sulphur cloud enveloped Macassar following a fire at the AECI plant will be suing the company for more than R1 million, the family attorney confirmed yesterday.

It also emerged that AECI had paid the family R15 000 just before Christmas as they were "out of pocket".

Former MP Mr Peter Mopp said the family of Mr Ronald and Mr Andrew Williams would be suing AECI for "in excess of R1 million".

He said actuaries were still calculating the particulars of the claim, and a breakdown of figures was not yet available.

The widow of Mr Ronald Williams, Mrs Audrey Williams,

told the Cape Times that she had accepted a cheque for R15 000 from AECI to tide her family over during the Christmas period.

But Mr Mopp, the former MP, insisted that this was "not a settlement as we are still going ahead with the civil suit".

Mr Bertie Humphries, general manager for AECI's operation services company in Somerset West, said that AECI had approached the Williams family with financial assistance because the Williams' "were out of pocket".

He said the R15 000 was a mutually agreed upon amount and also stressed that it was not an out-of-court settlement.

He said that the families of the two other people who died as a result of the toxic fallout, the late

Mr Andrew Williams and Ms Maria-Magdalene Tamboer, had not been not approached by AECI.

Meanwhile, the Macassar health centre, set up after the incident to offer the residents of Macassar medical aid and legal advice, is still being inundated with requests from residents requiring assistance following the December incident.

Mr Heindrich Magerman, a member of the Macassar Crisis Committee, said about 200 people were still visiting the centre daily.

"People are still filing compensation claims for damage and loss sustained as a result of the sulphur disaster," he said.

Mr George Liddle, the committee's chairman, said they were unable to estimate the amount of claims filed up till now.

But they were expecting around 30 000 claims, as they anticipated each resident would file one.

# Border wars funded with ivory poaching

Attorney-General to study judicial report with view to prosecutions of former senior military officers

By ANITA ALLEN

A judicial report revealing that the military which fought liberation movements in Namibia and Angola was also engaged in poaching ivory and rhino horn to fund its wars is to be sent to the Attorney-General for possible prosecutions.

The report is the work of the Kumleben Commission, which was appointed by the post-apartheid government to investigate the former SADF's secret operations during the "border wars".

Mr Justice Mark Kumleben said at a press conference in Pretoria yesterday: "During the period from mid-1978 to about 1986 the military intelligence division of the South African Defence Force (SADF) officially, though covertly, participated in the illicit possession and transportation of ivory and rhino horn from Angola and Namibia to South Africa."

He said the SADF had traded illegally in rhino horn and ivory to fund the Angolan rebel move-

ment Unita.

The ANC said yesterday that if conclusive evidence implicated members of the SADF in such "economic corruption", then they should be charged.

Freedom Front leader Gen Constand Viljoen, a former chief of the SADF, said last night he was bound by military law from divulging any information relating to such activities. "What I can say is that there has not been an extermination of wildlife in the region as reported."

The 200-page judicial report on smuggling of ivory and rhino horn, particularly of Angolan and Mozambican origin, was handed to Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers yesterday.

It gives startling new information on the nature of the SADF's complicity, including the actual killing of animals and the smuggling of hardwoods.

The commission dealt in detail with SADF involvement from mid-1978 to 1986.

"Initially the SADF was directly involved and at a later stage collaborated with its front compa-

ny, Frama Inter-trading (Pty) Ltd," the report said.

"The prime mover in the formation of this company was Gen Gerhardus P H du Preez. He was exclusively involved in arranging logistical support for Unita as senior liaison officer of Military Intelligence Division. He was in charge of this operation along the entire Namibian/Angola border from shortly after his arrival in Rundu in May 1975 to mid-1983."

During commission hearings Du Preez claimed the decision that the SADF should be involved with Unita was sanctioned by General Magnus Malan, at that time the commander-in-chief of the SADF, according to the report.

No evidence of similar activities by the SADF in Mozambique was led, the report said, and it found no grounds for believing that, after 1986, the SADF or its successor the SANDF had been engaged in such smuggling.

The report slated the secret Roos inquiry of 1988 into ivory smuggling by the SADF. The find-

Thursday January 18 1996

## Ivory poaching funded wars

(56)

► From Page 1  
Star 18/1/96  
ings were never made public, but a press release said it had found no involvement by the SADF.

"The Roos inquiry was not an honest attempt to fulfil its terms of reference and seek the truth," the report said. "The exercise was a charade to give apparent authenticity to the press release."

Other findings included:

■ That there were no grounds for concluding that the SAPS' Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU) is not operating effectively and conscientiously with limited resources at its disposal.

■ Customs control in South Africa at present is seriously flawed with the result that contraband can enter and leave with ease.

Some of the recommendations of the commission are that:

■ The ESPU be extended beyond its single Pretoria base, since it was playing a major role in the prevention and detection of criminal activity related to wildlife.

■ Customs control be given urgent attention and an overhaul.

■ Conservation bodies concerned should be the sole authority of a protected area, with staff having policing and security powers.

► ... To Page 2

# Inquiry implicates defence force in ivory smuggling

(56) BD 18/11/96  
Jeanne Venter

THE SADF participated covertly — but officially — in ivory and rhino horn smuggling from Angola and Namibia between 1975 and 1987, a government commission of inquiry into poaching in southern Africa has found.

The commission, appointed in October and headed by Judge Mark Kumleben, handed its report to Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers in Pretoria yesterday.

It found that the SADF's military intelligence division was initially directly involved in smuggling and later worked through a front company, Framma Inter-trading (Pty) Ltd.

There was "unchallenged evidence" that army contingents shot elephants for ivory, though whether this was "a sideline venture or on higher command" was unknown, Kumleben said.

While an anti-smuggling operation code-named "Operation Lock" was launched with "the best intentions", it used unorthodox methods and was not accountable to anyone. Its use of rhino horn to trap offenders was authorised by then law and order minister Adrian Vlok. The operation had links with the Worldwide Fund for Nature. Former members of Britain's Special Air

Services offered their services to the fund as undercover investigators.

It was up to the attorneys-general concerned to decide whether to prosecute government and the environmental agencies involved, Kumleben said. It was not within his function as commissioner to influence the decision.

The report will be made available to all relevant authorities, including those in Angola and Namibia.

Transvaal attorney-general Jan D'Oliviera said while his department could not turn down any task laid before it, he had to consider the manpower that would need to be involved. "We are overstretched," he said.

The report called for an urgent overhaul of customs control and greater powers for commissions of inquiry.

Kumleben said he hoped the report would open the debate on controlled sale of ivory. De Villiers said SA would not plead for this until he was satisfied proper controls could be enforced.

The commission recommended more resources be made available to the SAPS's endangered species protection unit and that conservation officials be trained in policing in order to have sole authority in protected areas.

Picture: Page 3

TUSKS, HORNS SENT VIA SA FROM ANGOLA

# SADF 'smuggled ivory'

(56) CT 18/1/96

**PRETORIA:** A report by the Kumleben Commission has revealed widespread ivory smuggling by top SADF brass during the civil war in Angola.

**S**ENIOR SADF officers may face prosecution for heading an ivory smuggling operation in which at least 182 tons of ivory was sent via South Africa during a decade of the civil war in Angola.

Yesterday, the Kumleben Commission said in a 200-page report that South Africa became a transit point for smuggling rhino horn and ivory in the mid-70s to mid-80s to finance Unita's war in Angola.

"During the period there was large-scale destruction of wildlife, including elephant and rhinoceros, in Angola and north-eastern Namibia as a result of civil strife and the 'border war' in those two countries," the report said.

Mr Justice Mark Kumleben said at a news conference here that the total amount of smuggled ivory or rhino horn was virtually impossible to estimate.

"The devastation was vast," he said.

Most of the rhino horn and elephant tusks were exported through South Africa "as undis-

closed contraband or with false or dishonestly obtained documentation".

The report gave new information on the nature of the SADF's complicity, including at one stage the killing of animals and the smuggling of hardwoods. The names of officers and the extent of their involvement are given.

The operation was run by the military intelligence division of the SADF which "officially, though covertly, participated in the illicit possession and transportation of ivory and rhino horn from Angola and Namibia to South Africa", Judge Kumleben said.

The commission will forward its report to the attorney-general for possible prosecutions.

One witness had told the commission that former SADF head General Magnus Malan had sanctioned the operation.

Initially the SADF was directly involved, later collaborating with its front company, Frama Intertrading, the report said.

"The prime mover in the for-

mation of this company was General Gerhardus P H du Preez.

"He was exclusively involved in arranging logistical support for Unita as senior liaison officer of the Military Intelligence Division. He was in charge of this operation along the entire Namibian/Angola border from shortly after his arrival in Rundu in May 1975 to mid-1983," the report said.

No evidence of similar activities by the SADF in Mozambique was led, the report said, and it found no grounds for believing that after 1986, the SADF or its successor, the SANDF, had been engaged in such smuggling.

The ANC said yesterday if conclusive evidence implicated members of the SADF in such "economic corruption" they should be charged.

The ANC's Mr Carl Niehaus said his organisation was shocked at the news in the report, "especially as the SADF was in Angola and Namibia allegedly to protect the people, not to plunder the natural environment".

He doubted there were any cases which related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but said such behaviour could not

go unpunished in South Africa's courts.

Freedom Front leader General Constand Viljoen, who was at the helm of the SADF at the time of the alleged smuggling, said he was bound by undertakings while in the SADF not to divulge any information about such activities.

"What I can say is that there has not been an extermination of wildlife in the region as reported," General Viljoen said.

The National Party was not available for comment at the time of going to press.

The attorney-general of the Transvaal, Dr Jan d'Oliveira, said that once a copy of the report was sent to his office it would be studied with a view to prosecutions.

His said his office was over-extended and he could not give any indication of the priority the report would receive.

A spokesman at the Ministry of Defence said they had not yet received the report.

He said the ministry could not comment at this stage.

The report was handed to Environment Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers yesterday. — Own Correspondent, Sapa

# Tug-of-war over Madimbo issue

(56) (20) Sowetan 19/1/96

By Russel Molefe

**L**EGAL ADVISERS of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs are still pondering the future of the Madimbo corridor in former Venda, which has become a tug-of-war contest between environmentalists and miners.

Department spokeswoman Mrs Elise Botha said the legal advisers were weighing the arguments submitted by environmental organisations, including the National Parks Board (NPB), which are opposing proposed prospecting for diamonds in the corridor by Duo Corporate Developers.

The recommendations to be made will be handed to the department's director-general, Dr PJ

## Environmentalists and miners to seek decision on future of corridor

Hugo, for his ruling.

The ruling is expected to be announced "in two weeks time from now", Botha said.

Some environmentalists have argued that prospecting for diamonds in the corridor may force up to 10 000 local people to be moved. But this was earlier denied by the company, which said the people would not be affected.

The Madimbo corridor, situated in the far northeast of the former Venda homeland and bordering on Zimbabwe, is believed to be rich in archeological treasures dating back to the Stone and Iron Ages and also

boasts unique and endangered fauna and flora.

This led the NPB to appeal against the granting of the prospecting permit to the company on environmental grounds.

The NPB is arguing that mining infrastructure was virtually non-existent in the corridor and ecotourism was a sustainable development suitable for the area.

But Duo Corporate Developers, owned by Pepsi-Cola chairman Mr Khehla Mthembu and Mr Richard Bluett, argue that mining will provide jobs and prosperity for the people of the area.



# Report takes WWF to 'tusk'

MTG 19-25/1/96(56)

**Eddie Koch and  
Rehana Rossouw**

**T**HE Department of Military Intelligence was heavily involved in the illegal sale of elephant tusks from Angola between 1978 and 1986 — and a commission of inquiry, established by the South African Defence Force in 1988 to probe these deals, was a white-wash.

This is the main finding of the Kumbleben Commission which this week released a 200-page report about its inquiry into the smuggling of rhino horn and elephant tusks in South Africa. The commission was appointed by President Nelson Mandela in October 1994.

Justice ME Kumbleben also criticises Operation Lock, the controversial covert operation by former British special forces officers to combat poaching in Southern Africa in the late 1980s, and says the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the head of its South African branch must take some responsibility for the behaviour of this unit.

The Kumbleben report finds there was large-scale destruction of wildlife, including elephants and rhinos, in north-eastern Namibia and Angola as a result of the 1980s wars in those countries. Most of the ivory and rhino horn obtained by poachers during this period was illegally exported through South Africa by SADF military intelligence.

The Roos Commission, set up by the defence force in 1988 to probe press reports of military involvement in the illicit trade, claimed that only about 500 tusks captured by Unita from poachers were handled by the military from 1978 onwards.

Kumbleben describes this commission as a "charade" designed to exonerate the SADF.

The report lambasts a scheme hatched by conservationists in the late 1980s to use former British special forces officers to combat poaching in Southern Africa. It describes Operation Lock — financed by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and set up by John Hanks (then the WWF's project manager at its headquarters in Geneva) — as being "accountable to no one".

Kumbleben also suggests that more than 100 rhino horns provided to these officers by the Natal Parks Board

and conservation authorities in Namibia for supposed sting operations were later misappropriated by members of Operation Lock.

Sections of the report contain extracts from a secret document (called Q in the report) which shows that the anti-poaching operation was infiltrated by members of South African military intelligence after it set up headquarters in South Africa. This was apparently designed to ensure Operation Lock could be "put to good use by the necessary South African information collecting departments".

The document claims that Colonel Ian Crooke, the commander of Operation Lock, had offered to help in "the monitoring of anti-South African bodies which are situated overseas".

Evidence presented to the commission suggests that document Q — which appears to be an internal Operation Lock memo — was drawn up by a South African military intelligence officer called Mike Richards, who had managed to infiltrate the operation.

Kumbleben questions claims by Hanks that the WWF, the world's biggest conservation NGO, was not aware of Operation Lock's activities.

**I**t goes on to stress, however, that "those responsible for putting Lock in place did not have the ulterior motive of Lock functioning as some sort of espionage or intelligence collecting agency for the RSA. It was intended by them to be an anti-poaching or anti-smuggling operation and nothing more. It may have later been contaminated by other objectives and considerations referred to in document Q."

Hanks said his involvement in purchasing rhino horn to entrap smugglers was a sincere attempt to save Africa's dwindling black rhino stocks.

"It was nothing to do with Operation Lock, it was a totally different project. The WWF had done nothing wrong in this regard."

With the assistance of Prince Bernhard, Hanks raised R250 000 to purchase rhino horn to trap smugglers. Although the horn was never again accounted for, Hanks believes it was money well spent. "There was a group of people tested to do the undercover work. They never reported to the WWF."

Hanks said he could not comment further until he had read the Kumbleben report.

# SADF trade in ivory legit

legitimate - Malan

Star 19/1/96

56

ANC describes the SADF's help in the smuggling of ivory and rhino horn during the Angolan war as a 'shock' while the former defence minister says the trade plan made economic sense and broke no laws at the time.

By Anita Allen

Former defence minister General Magnus Malan has admitted he gave the go-ahead for the SA Defence Force to "help" Unita sell ivory from elephants killed during the Angolan war.

He said the order was given as part of a secret operation, with the proviso that the contemplated trade channel should be run in a legitimate manner.

His admission follows the release on Wednesday of the Kumbleben Commission report which found the SADF was involved in illegal smuggling of ivory and rhino horn from Angola and Namibia from mid-1975 to 1986.

The commission was also sharply critical of an inquiry headed by the late Brigadier De Wet Roos in 1988 into allegations of SADF ivory smuggling.

It said the inquiry was a charade to give authenticity to a later SADF statement that it had transported limited quantities of ivory on behalf of Unita from mid-1978 to end 1979 when the practice was stopped.

Superintendent Piet Lategan, head of the SAP's Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU), said yesterday the police will prosecute individuals involved in the illicit ivory trade.

"Some of the evidence indicates that certain activities were not part of military operations and some of the people involved are already known to us," he said.

Last night the ANC called for the prosecution of SADF officers involved in smuggling ivory: "The killing and smuggling of elephants and rhino in Angola and the smuggling of ivory and rhino horn constitutes a shocking rape of the environment and national resources of a neighbouring country," the party said in a statement.

Malan said in his statement to Reuters: "Trade in ivory was legal and internationally accepted until the '80s. I was approached in the late '70s with the request that Unita should be assisted in the selling of their ivory. This made sense, since in this way Unita could make a contribution to the cost of provisions that were supplied to them by the SADF."

Malan was chief of the SADF from 1980 to 1985, and official "logistical support" for Unita continued under his two successors, Generals Constand Viljoen and Jannie Geldenhuys.

The involvement started soon after Viljoen and former Bureau of



Fiery remains ... the aircraft wreckage, from which three men were rescued.

## Air crash survivors owe their lives to SADF

**GERMISTON - 3.30PM**  
Yesterday at 3.30pm a Cessna 210 crashed on the 6th hole of the Germiston Golf Club.

judge says in his report. One must therefore not assume that its activities would have been known to personnel of other sections of the SADF."

The DP has called for a full investigation into Malan's role, and NP environment spokesman Nick Koornhof said he hoped the Attorney-General would soon react to the Kumbleben Report. Since the release of the report, the ESPU has been contacted by several people wanting to give evidence.

"We will certainly treat all information as confidential, but I can't decide on immunity. I want people to phone me, speak to me confidentially and then, if necessary, I will speak to the attorney-general concerned," Lategan said. He can be contacted at 011-234-9900.

Friday January 19 1996

### I gave go-ahead, admits Malan

From Page 4

Star 19/1/96

State Security chief General Hendrik van den Bergh visited Unita leader Jonas Savimbi in mid-1975, the Kumbleben report said.

The task of implementing "logistical support" was one of the special tasks of the Directorate Special Tasks, one of three divisions of Military Intelligence.

The latter was under the command of the Chief of Staff Intelligence, who was accountable directly to the Chief of the SADF.

In 1980, a front company, Framatrad (Pty) Ltd was set up, with two directors, one of them a Sgt-Maj Jose Lopes Francisco, a refugee from Angola who was given rank, which he held until 1985.

This company purchased and transported goods to and from Unita, and continued operating until 1988, when it was liquidated by the SADF.

Mr Justice Kumbleben said the commission was told that disclosures of operations of the Directorate Special Tasks was on a "need to know" basis.

"Perhaps more accurately stated, information was withheld on a 'need to know' footing," the

**Lead-times**

FM 19/1/96

The long-awaited introduction of unleaded fuel is due to take place from February 1 — leading to the phasing out of 87 octane petrol inland and of 93 octane at the coast.

Industry officials say unleaded fuel will be priced at 4c/l below leaded petrol and will be sold at the old 87 octane pumps inland and 93 octane pumps at the coast. Leaded petrol will remain freely available for at least the next 10-15 years.

Initially, unleaded petrol will go on sale only in main urban areas and regions near big fuel depots. The next three months will be a phase-in period, after which unleaded petrol will be available nationwide, with 87 octane and 93 octane removed from the market.

The lower unleaded fuel price is the result of government fuel taxes being reduced to below that of leaded petrol — despite the 2c/l higher costs of producing unleaded fuel. This is intended to create a 15%-25% market penetration by unleaded petrol in the first year, making the transition economically worthwhile for the oil industry. After this, leaded and unleaded petrol prices will be equalised.

The introduction of unleaded petrol will enable SA vehicle manufacturers to introduce the same unleaded vehicle technologies as those operating in Europe, the US and Japan. Industry officials say this will reduce vehicle production costs as engine technologies would be brought on par with the rest of the world, with import and export opportunities enhanced.

“Government’s assistance with the introduction of unleaded petrol will bring about substantial growth opportunities for the motor industry,” says a spokesman.

Benefits for the oil industry are expected to be longer-term: the change to unleaded petrol will prevent refineries from becoming outdated and isolated from international technologies. “About R270m has been invested in refineries so far. The oil industry must provide what is demanded by the market and that includes unleaded fuel,” says SA Petroleum Industry Association director Colin McClelland.

Most cars built after 1985 should be able to use the new petrol, with minor modifications to ignition systems. An estimated 65% of local vehicles are compatible with unleaded fuel, without any alterations. Industry spokesmen say the alterations, if necessary, will cost R50-R100 and essentially involve retarding the ignition timing.

Owners of new vehicles will benefit most as reduced fuel consumption is most effective in modern cars. Consumption performance may, however, be reduced in cars that have to be adjusted, depending on driving behaviour and maintenance. But these cars may still be able to save on petrol costs because of the lower price. ■

# How green was my valley?

**The stakes** are high but Cabinet will soon have to decide whether to allow large-scale mining by Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) at St Lucia.

The issue has come to the fore following the release of a new, ANC-requested report which supports ecotourism as the preferred developmental option for the area.

At stake is a 17-year dune mining project involving a forecast R10bn of ore body rich in rutile, ilmenite and zircon heavy minerals. Also at issue is the subject of existing mining leases owned by RBM.

Environmentalists and supporters of the ecotourism option say dune mining will have a negative impact on optimum ecotourism developments in the region for a 30-year period, as it would damage the essential "sense of place" of a proposed new national tourism node.

But the Cabinet will also have to face possible RBM claims for State compensation totalling almost R800m, should their leases be abrogated. Such claims would fall under the new Minerals Act of 1991, which allows for compensation "only in certain cases."

An alternative may be to allow both dune mining and

ecotourism to continue in tandem or else opt for the ecotourism route by eliminating the mining option and focusing on an immediate intensification of tourist facility development, including two new 200-bed camps on the eastern shores of St Lucia lake, as well as four smaller subsidiary camps. Also included in this option is the provision of equity stakes in future ecotourism developments to local people now clamouring that their land claims for parts of the St Lucia Wetland Park be speedily answered — or land invasions might follow, which could effectively destroy the park.

Monday's inter-departmental co-ordinating committee meeting led by Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers and consisting also of Mineral & Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha and Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom, could therefore herald the beginning of the end of the long running controversy, as its final recommendations are expected to be sanctioned by government as a State policy decision on the future development of the area.

Monday's meeting follows close on the heels of the release of the ANC-aligned Land & Agricultural Policy Centre's 30-page report which addressed "the key choices that decision makers need to consider with regard to the future of St Lucia." St Lucia, a Ramsar Convention wetland site and conservation area forms the core of the 250 000 ha Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, which stretches up the eastern seaboard of the KwaZulu-Natal coast as far as Sodwana Bay.

The new report follows the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research's 1993 Environmental Impact Assessment, which suggested that mining be allowed in conjunction with ecotourism.

But a subsequent review panel, chaired by Mr Justice Leon, rejected this and also recommended the ecotourism option as the preferred developmental route.

The issue, which was formerly seen as an economic choice between tourism and mining, has now become a confrontational, politicised hot potato.

While the mining lobby is increasing pressure by influencing local, poverty-stricken public opinion through promises of job opportunities and economic advancement by virtue of its projected annualised revenues of

R1,5bn, the ecotourism lobby suggests that mining would provide a belated and relatively short-term "solution" to an area which is one of the poorest in KwaZulu-Natal and would have only a limited "trickle-down" effect to the local populace.

RBM spokesman Barry Clements says: "After several years of debate and numerous studies it is still not clear why a mining lease area of 1 400 ha (0,5% of the area), two-thirds of which is currently the subject of an intensive commercial forestry industry, should be so crucial to the park's viability." He says the eastern shore "is criss-crossed with roads and tracks and traversed by a powerline. Huge timber trucks leave and enter the area every 30 minutes and will continue to do so for the time it will take to phase out the forestry industry."

The impact assessment found that mining would be less intrusive than the existing forestry activities.

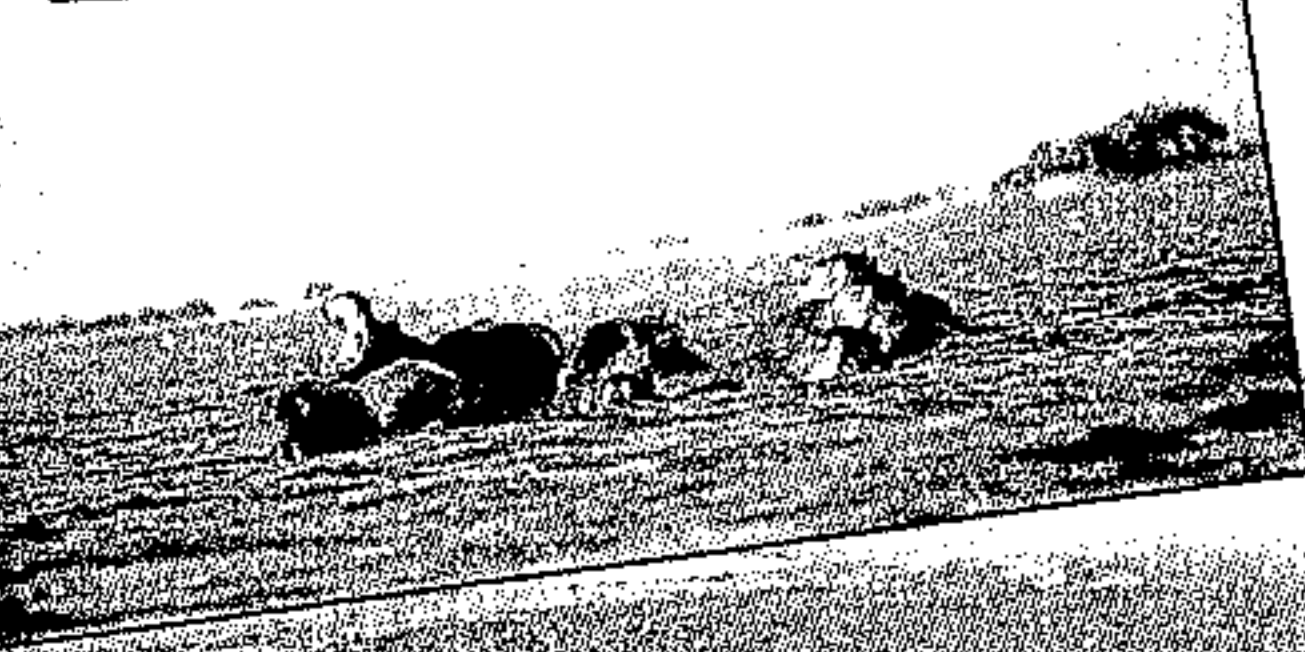
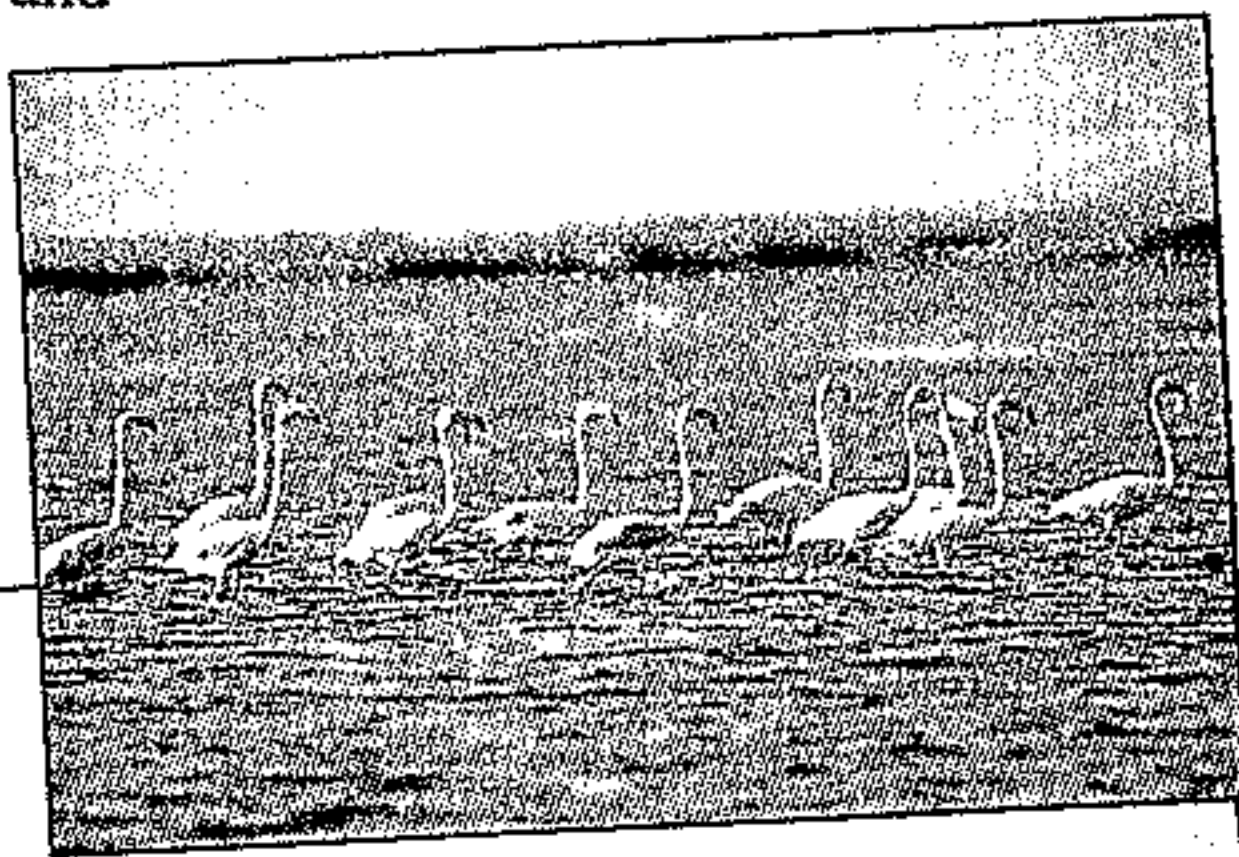
Also clouding the controversy is the prevalence of claims from dispossessed tribes who are confident that the Land Claims Court will shortly restore their ownership of land which currently falls within the Wetland Park. And fears exist that, unless government speedily resolves the conflicting claims, land invasion could threaten the stability of the region.

The ANC document says mining is an assured source of future income and of limited job creation. But, it adds, it would also jeopardise the long-term economic feasibility of the region as it would only commence by 2001, creating a further five years of economic uncertainty thereby undermining any plans for investment in ecotourism projects. And, as proper dune reclamation could take a further six years after the 17-year mining period, the huge ecotourism attraction for international visitors would be effectively destroyed.

States the report: "Land claims are a key issue that need to be resolved. It should be recognised by all parties that there are valid claims in the area, but that development cannot be postponed pending the resolution of these claims."

"We recommend that while land claims should be recognised within the eastern shores and greater St Lucia wetland, these claims should be restituted, not through re-occupation of land, but through equity sharing in ecotourism ventures and/or through the provision of alternative land."

Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom says though the report was obtained to help the ANC cement its own views on the controversial issue, the Cabinet committee and — later — the full Cabinet still has to make a final policy decision.



St Lucia . . . future in the balance

CARNAGE ESTIMATED AT 14 000 ELEPHANTS

# Malan: I gave go-ahead on Angolan ivory trade

**COMPLICITY** in the SADF's smuggling of ivory and rhino horn from Angola was at the highest government level, the Kumleben report reveals. **MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**F**ORMER SADF chief General Magnus Malan yesterday acknowledged he had given the go-ahead for the defence force to help Unita sell ivory from elephants killed in Angola.

His admission came as rough calculations on the 192 tons of ivory smuggled out of South Africa by the old SADF between 1975 and 1987 showed that about 14 000 elephants would have had to be killed for this stockpile.

More detail emerging from the Kumleben Commission report also showed that there was complicity in the smuggling at the highest government level, and that a shadow company established to set up the smuggling route had misappropriated more than R3 million.

The whole operation was run from an office in central Pretoria.

This was when international conservation agencies accused South Africa and the SADF in particular of being the "clearing house" for the biggest ivory smuggling racket in the world. The SADF denied this at the time.

"As chief of the defence force (SADF) ... I gave permission for creation of a trade channel, provided that all interested parties should be consulted," Gen Malan said in a response to the Kumleben report on ivory and rhino horn smuggling.

He said the context of the times was important. "Trade in ivory was legal and internationally accepted until the 80s. I was approached in the late 70s with the request that Unita should be assisted in the selling of their ivory. This made sense,

since in this way Unita could make a contribution to the cost of provisions that were supplied to them by the SADF," Gen Malan said.

He said he instructed that the channel be legitimate and the deal had to be kept secret as SA support for Unita was classified as such.

South Africa is a member of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which in 1989 almost completely banned trading in ivory. All trade in rhino products was banned in 1977.

A total of 192 tons of ivory, representing about 14 000 elephants, was smuggled through SA during the mid 70s and 80s.

Key witness General Philippus Orllepp du Preez, who was posted to Rundu in 1975 to establish an intelligence network in the area, testified that in 1978 the SADF had decided, on behalf of Unita, to become involved in the "disposal" of ivory brought to Rundu. He said this was sanctioned by General Malan.

Initially the smuggling was done directly through the SADF and later through a front company, Frama Inter-trading.

The commission found that General Du Preez had visited authorities in the region, including the Administrator-General, the top authority in the territory, to explain that Frama would be transporting ivory and to ensure that Frama trucks would not be subjected to road blocks and searches.

When Mr Polla Swart took over as head of SWA nature conservation in 1981, Gen Du Preez told

CT19/1/96  
him he had been instructed "by the highest authority in the RSA" that Frama trucks conveying hardwoods and elephant products were not to be stopped.

Mr Swart said that after the meeting he had gone to the then SWA Administrator-General, Mr (Danie) Hough, who told him to carry out the SADF's instruction.

In 1982 SWA conservation officer Mr Robbie Hawthorne stopped a Frama truck, contrary to the standing instruction, and saw locked military containers (trommels). Those in charge of the vehicle objected to being stopped and made a telephone call to Pretoria. Mr Swart then received an instruction from the SADF in Pretoria that the vehicle should be allowed to proceed.

The report said the sole shareholders and directors of Frama were Mr Jose Lopes Francisco and Mr Arlindo Manuel Maia. Mr Maia was responsible for the accounting in Johannesburg and Mr Francisco was the "man in the field" who organised the actual smuggling. Mr Francisco was a sergeant-major in the SADF until 1985.

The prime mover in the formation of this company was General Du Preez, the report said. The SADF supplied the capital for Frama to buy vehicles and supplies and start operations.

By 1986 the SADF became aware that Mr Francisco and Mr Maia had been misappropriating funds and Frama had become indebted to the SADF for R3,2m.

The SADF took control of Frama and recovered the debt. The company's name was changed and shortly after this Frama was liquidated. The only asset was cash of R2 599.

# Botanic Garden tox

■ Stellenbosch University's plant research projects continue to be affected by the toxic fumes from the sulphur fire at AECI's plant in Somerset West.

## GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

Staff Reporter

THE cloud of sulphur from the disastrous AECI fire in Somerset West has brought misery to researchers at Stellenbosch University's Botanical Garden.

As 400 visiting experts from around the world gathered at the Stellenbosch garden — the oldest university garden in Southern Africa — for an international congress on man and plants, dead leaves were still being removed from affected plants.

The only damper on this grand occasion organised by the South African Association of Botanists was the damage the plants used for research and teaching have suffered from the fall-out of sulphur dioxide.

Three people are alleged to have died from respiratory problems caused by the toxic vapour released from a blazing sulphur stockpile on December 16 last year. Damage claims have been lodged by 70 farmers, which included flower growers, smallholdings and 25 nurseries.

The senior curator of Stellenbosch University's Botanical Garden, Wim Tijmens, said he was still assessing the damage as leaves continued to wilt and die. Damage was expected to amount to hundreds of thousands of rands, he said.

"Our Botanical Garden is of world renown through its research publications and attracts scientists and plant lovers from abroad. The gardens are open to the general public while schools and other groups make visits by appointment.

"During 1995 the Hortus Botanicus received more than 15 000 visitors. It is the only garden where one can view indigenous as well as non-indigenous plants."

Mr Tijmens, a landscape artist, said the garden's research programmes and the plant material used for the teaching of botanical sciences had been badly affected by the

sulphur cloud.

"Our staff has worked very hard to bring the garden up to international standards. This is no longer the case due to the chemical disaster, as the leaves of many plants have already died or are in the process of doing so," he said.

The impression of the visiting experts would be disappointing and research programmes will be delayed, said Mr Tijmens.

Class material will have to be replaced and the oldest and most valuable trees in the Bonsai collection are visibly wilting, browned branches drooping.

Saturday Argus was taken on a tour of the treasured garden by Mr Tijmens. The needles of the Bonsai Cedrus species had turned brown and were dropping.

The same damage was done to the once magnificent fern trees, said Mr Tijmens.

The roses in the rose garden, herbs in the herb garden and a redwood tree have all been similarly affected.

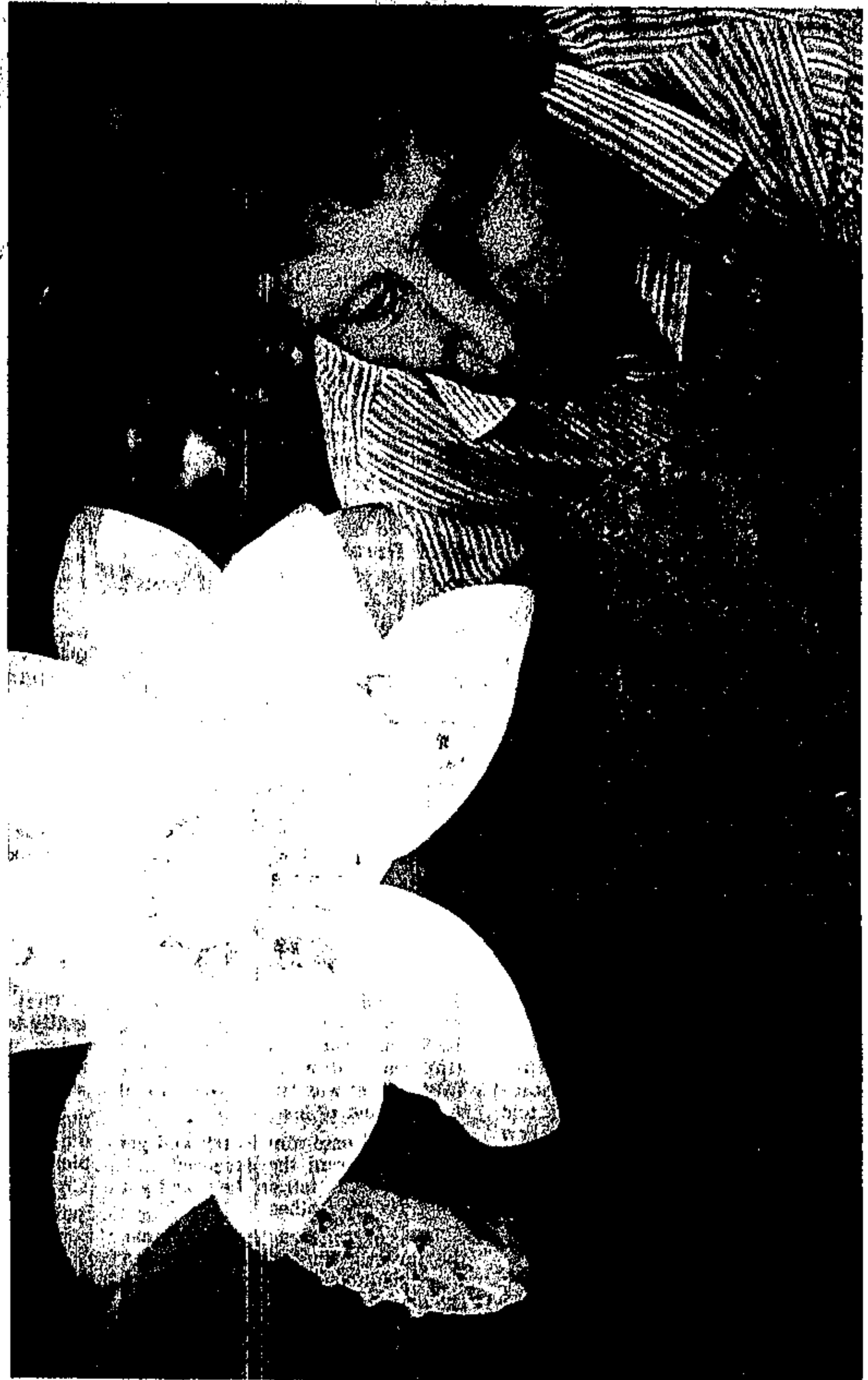
Research programmes have been badly set back and the collection of 210 Pelargonium species, commonly known as geraniums, continues to suffer the effects of the poisonous sulphur and dead leaves have to be removed constantly.

Another long-term research project is the research on the Oenothera species, known as Evening Primrose, on which field trials and chemical analyses had been completed.

Mr Tijmens pointed out the flowering Evening Primrose collection which was the result of 10 years of research.

"Continued trials of five species, selected out of the original 45, are now so badly damaged that the evaluation programme for this year cannot be objective, which brings financial implications and delays with international medical research programmes," he said.

AECI has sent an insurance adjuster to inspect the damage at Stellenbosch University's botanical gardens.



Pictures: ANDREW INGRAM.

□ LOTUS PLANT: Senior curator Wim Tijmens watches the glorious Eastern how it has been affected by vapour from sulphur fire.



□ BADLY WILTING: Wim Tijmens is devastated by the damage to the priz

innovation  
furniture contracts

**SUMMER SALE**

# en toxin disaster

(22) (23) ARG 20/1/96



□ **SULPHUR DAMAGE:** Horticulturist Pieter van der Merwe surveys a wilting fern.

Pictures: ANDREW INGRAM, Staff Photographer.  
rator Wim Tijmens watches the glorious Eastern Lotus to see  
y vapour from sulphur fire.



□ **EVENING PRIMROSE:** Wim Tijmens with the damaged Oenothera (Evening Primrose) species which is the result of 10 years' research.



1 Tijmens is devastated by the damage to the prize cycads.

# Ivory smuggling report contradicts top brass

(56) (20/11/96)  
By ANITA ALLEN

The findings of the Kumleben Commission report on ivory and rhino horn smuggling contradict statements by the SANDF's chief and former defence minister General Magnus Malan.

SANDF chief General Georg Meiring and Malan, who was SADF chief from 1976 to 1980, are on record as saying the SADF was not involved in illegal smuggling of elephant tusk and rhino horn.

Mr Justice Mark Kumleben disagreed, saying the SADF was involved from the "womb to the tomb" in its front company, which beyond doubt smuggled contraband.

In his evidence to the commission, Meiring said: "It is my official position that the SADF and now the SANDF are not and were not involved in the smuggling and illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn.

The SANDF has, therefore, nothing to hide, and undertakes its fullest co-operation with the commission and will make all relevant information available."

In his 200-page report, summarising correspondence from 140 individuals across the globe and evidence by 23 witnesses under oath, Kumleben said: "From mid-1978 to about 1986 the SADF (military intelligence division) officially, though covertly, participated in the illicit possession and transportation of ivory and rhino horn from Angola and Namibia to South Africa."

From evidence that remained uncontradicted, the judge concluded that covert operations were sanctioned from top structures in Pretoria.

When the SADF wound down front company Frama Inter-Trading (Pty) Ltd, the SADF's financial administration director, a Dr Briers, was called in. Lawyers handled the complex transaction.

The company's name was changed to Elegant Foods (Pty) Ltd, with the SADF lawyer as its director.

The SADF paid the costs of an action brought by a creditor, who finally withdrew his action.

Kumleben, describing in detail the winding down of Frama, said "this demonstrated "that from womb to tomb the SADF was involved in its life story".

Malan admitted sanctioning SADF support of Unita and payment for goods by moving ivory and rhino horn on condition that it was "legitimate".

On April 20 1989, while Frama-Elegant Foods was being liquidated, Malan referred in Parliament to the findings of the secret Roos inquiry in October 1988. "After extensive investigations the inquiry found that at no stage was the SADF involved in shooting elephant. The SADF is the target of malicious journalists," Hansard recorded Malan as saying.

"As an organisation the SADF is in no way involved in such illegal activities. The SADF does not condone any such unlawful action on the part of its members."

His use of present tense echoes similar evasions by National Party politicians on South Africa's nuclear weapons programme. It is also a highly selective quote from the Roos inquiry, the findings of which were made public at the Kumleben inquiry.

The Roos inquiry found that the SADF was involved in transporting and buying ivory and rhino horn, but did not address the question of whether permits had been obtained to make this legal.

What was certain was that from 1980 to 1988, no permits were issued by the proper authorities to Frama or its directors to possess or transport ivory and rhino horn.

That made them illegal, Kumleben said. The Roos report was "not an honest attempt to fulfil its terms of reference and seek the truth", it was not "thorough", "documents referred to were not incorporated in the record", and "the exercise was a charade", he said.

The SANDF would not answer questions yesterday on what action was being taken.



**MARLENE BURGER**  
**looks at the South**  
**African Defence**  
**Force's**  
**involvement in the**  
**international ivory**  
**trade**

**I**N THE vast expanse that is northern Namibia, the deployment of callow youths fresh from the classroom offered a moderately successful deterrent for more than a decade against Swapo insurgents.

But by 1975, when Lisbon's colonial hand dropped the reins in Luanda, "The Border" began to resemble a war zone in earnest.

The MPLA had gained control of central Angola, with Cuban assistance, and all that stood between them and South Africa's mandate in South West Africa was Unita — a ragtag band of rebels led by Jonas Savimbi.

In mid-1975 the chief of the defence force, General Constand Viljoen; the head of the notorious Bureau of State Security, "Lang Hendrik" van den Bergh; and Dr Savimbi held a meeting at which it was decided that South Africa would henceforth cater for Unita's military needs, albeit in secrecy.

According to the Kumbelen report, released this week, "involvement ebbed and flowed in the ensuing years, the tide being largely dictated by the need to take invasive action to thwart Swapo's insurgency".

By 1978, however, the secret ferrying of rudimentary arms and ammunition in tiny craft across the Kavango river to Unita had proved hopelessly inadequate. Unita's foot soldiers were not equipped well enough to halt the MPLA juggernaut moving steadily south.

Worse, as one village after another was overrun, thousands of women and children swelled Unita's ranks.

**M**ILITARY Intelligence's Special Tasks Directorate needed vastly greater sums of money for Unita than could be safely siphoned from the defence force's secret fund.

The military mandarins in Pretoria agreed the time had come to harness the resources of the defence force's road and air transport systems, but the war was already costing several million rand a day and a quid pro quo was required.

Unita was amenable to paying, at least in part, for the thousands of tons of supplies ranging from military equipment to clothes now on its shopping list.

The only forms of remuneration it could offer, however, were natural riches: teak, diamonds and ivory.

The defence force's decision to settle for ivory was almost certainly based on logistics. Ivory was easier to

move than wood.

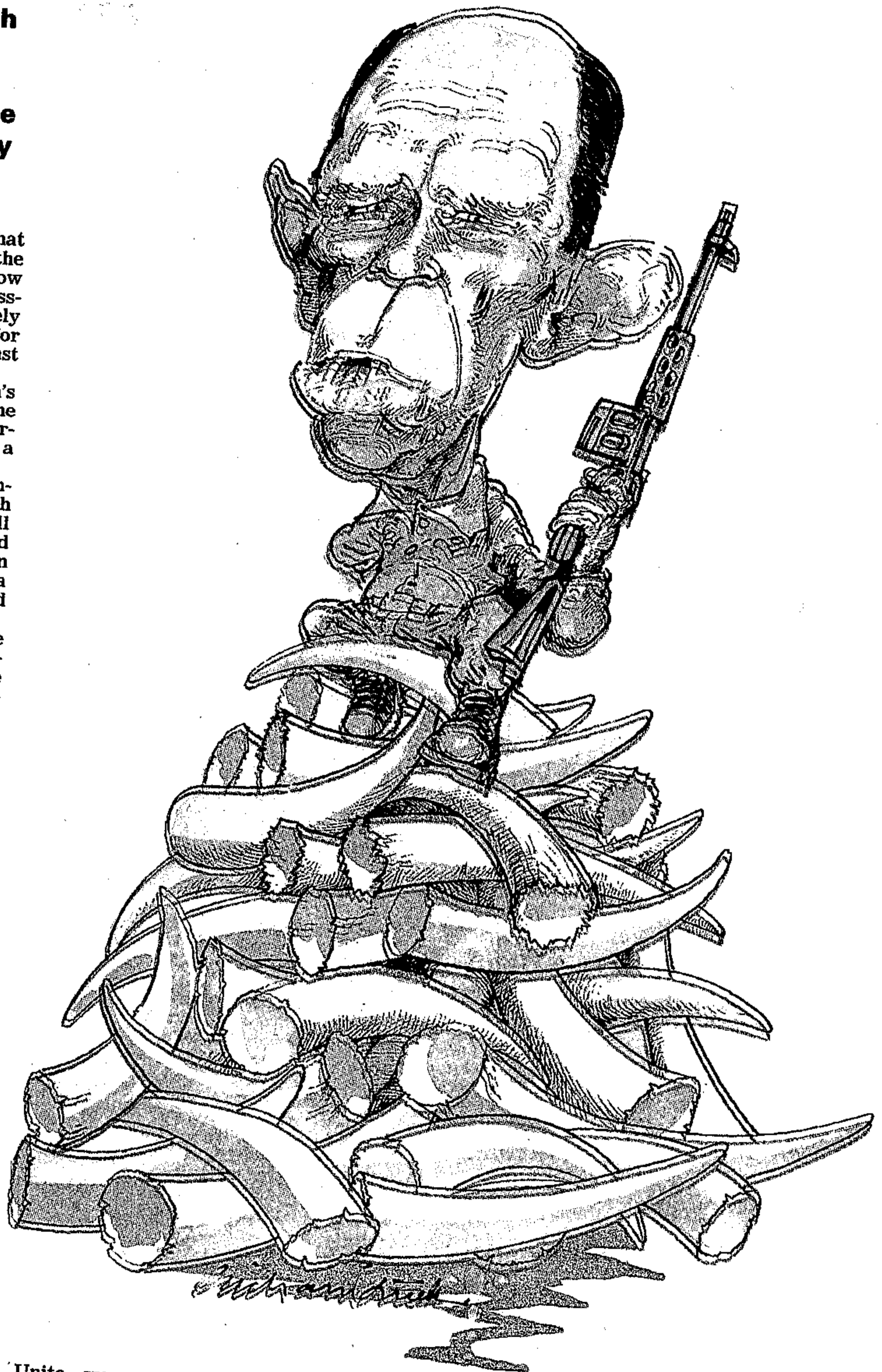
The prevailing political system offered Military Intelligence an ideal legal loophole for trade in contraband. Up to August 1980, the Kavango region, with the town of Rundu at its heart, was a South African homeland.

Permits for ivory and rhino horn entering from Angola were obtained from the Department of Veterinary Services in Pretoria — in many

cases, telephonically.

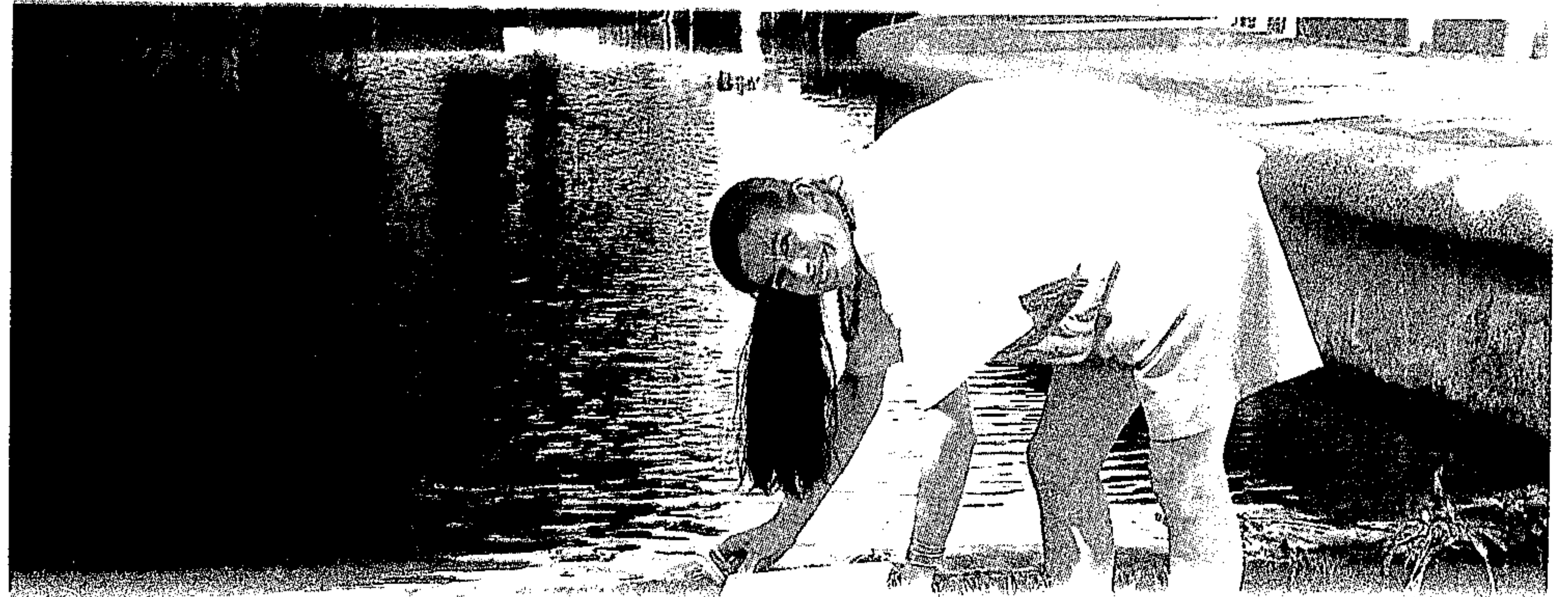
Records show that in the first three months of 1979 veterinary permits were issued in Rundu, mostly to defence force personnel, for 3 911 tusks and 700 rhino horns.

All but one of the permits were issued in multiples of five — two permits each for 80 tusks, nine each for 50 tusks, three each for 200 rhino horns — indicating "irrefutably" to the commission



REFE  
 4  
 5  
 t  
 r  
 s  
 w  
 t  
 r  
 v  
 l  
 c  
 e  
 r  
 i  
 s  
 3  
 n  
 t  
 t  
 v  
 e  
 g  
 e  
 t  
 a  
 p  
 e  
 a  
 s  
 t  
 f  
 y  
 e  
 h  
 r  
 w  
 t  
 i  
 s  
 f  
 e  
 h  
 1





Picture: TWEET GAINSBOROUGH-WARING.

**LIFE RETURNS:** Research assistant Tessa Behrens of UCT investigates the insects that have returned to the Liesbeek River since the rehabilitation of the section between the Josephine Mill and Rondebosch less than a year ago.

## Life returns to the waters of Liesbeek

Southern Reporter

LIFE has returned to the Liesbeek River less than a year after the construction of weirs and cores in the section between the Josephine Mill and Rondebosch as part of a rehabilitation programme by the developers of Albion Springs and the freshwater research unit at UCT.

Enthusiasts hope this successful project will be used as a model for other urban rivers. Rehabilitation has included the planting of indigenous plants along a walkway and the results have been encouraging, with birds and other animals returning to the area.

"The rehabilitation programme has increased the quality of life in the area," said Tony King, who takes regular walks along the river.

Tessa Behrens, a UCT research student who is involved with the project, said: "The methods used to rehabilitate the river have been so simple yet the results have been stunning."

The weirs and cores have provided a diversity of habitats attracting different animals and insects.

Cores, holes sunk through the concrete into the earth and filled with rocks, have provided food traps and shelters for insects, which in turn

provide food for birds.

Water is slowed behind the weirs, where sand and leaves are collected.

The build up of sand and leaves behind the weirs provides food for larger creatures like crabs which, attracted by the food, have come downriver.

Filter feeding insects are attracted to areas of fast flowing water below the weir and in the slower parts of the river algae is growing, providing food, oxygen and shelter to insects favouring this type of habitat.

The filter feeders play an important role as they help keep the water clean.

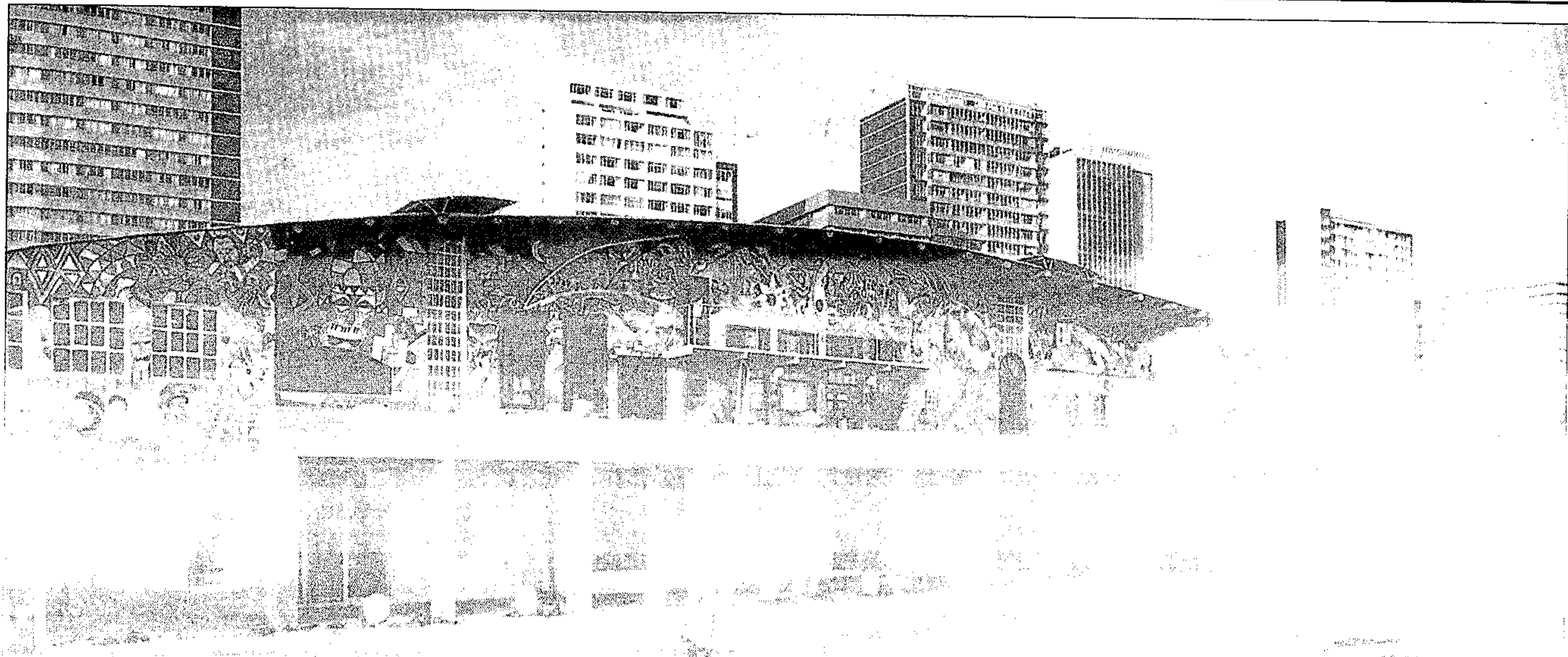
"This diversity of life results in different animals being attracted back to the river as each has its own place in the food chain," she said.

One species seen in the area again is the kingfisher and last year, a family of African black ducks was seen on the river.

The increase in vegetation has done much to increase the aesthetic beauty of the area making it popular with runners and walkers.

Prior to the rehabilitation this section of the Liesbeek was canalised with little or no life in it. In addition, it was in a state of neglect and badly littered.

ARLT 22/11/96 (56)



Batty about art: The Bartel Art Trust centre has revolutionised Durban's cultural life, with venues for music, visual art, restaurants and much more

PHOTOGRAPH: ANGELA BUCKLAND

Hannah le Roux presents the Mail & Guardian Back-to-the-Drawing-Board awards for

# The changing architecture of

**T**HIS has been a year of reconstruction, with damaged and divided urban areas getting the lion's share of funding to implement projects designed by brilliant architects, planners and engineers — in Berlin, Beirut, Atlanta and Sarajevo, that is.

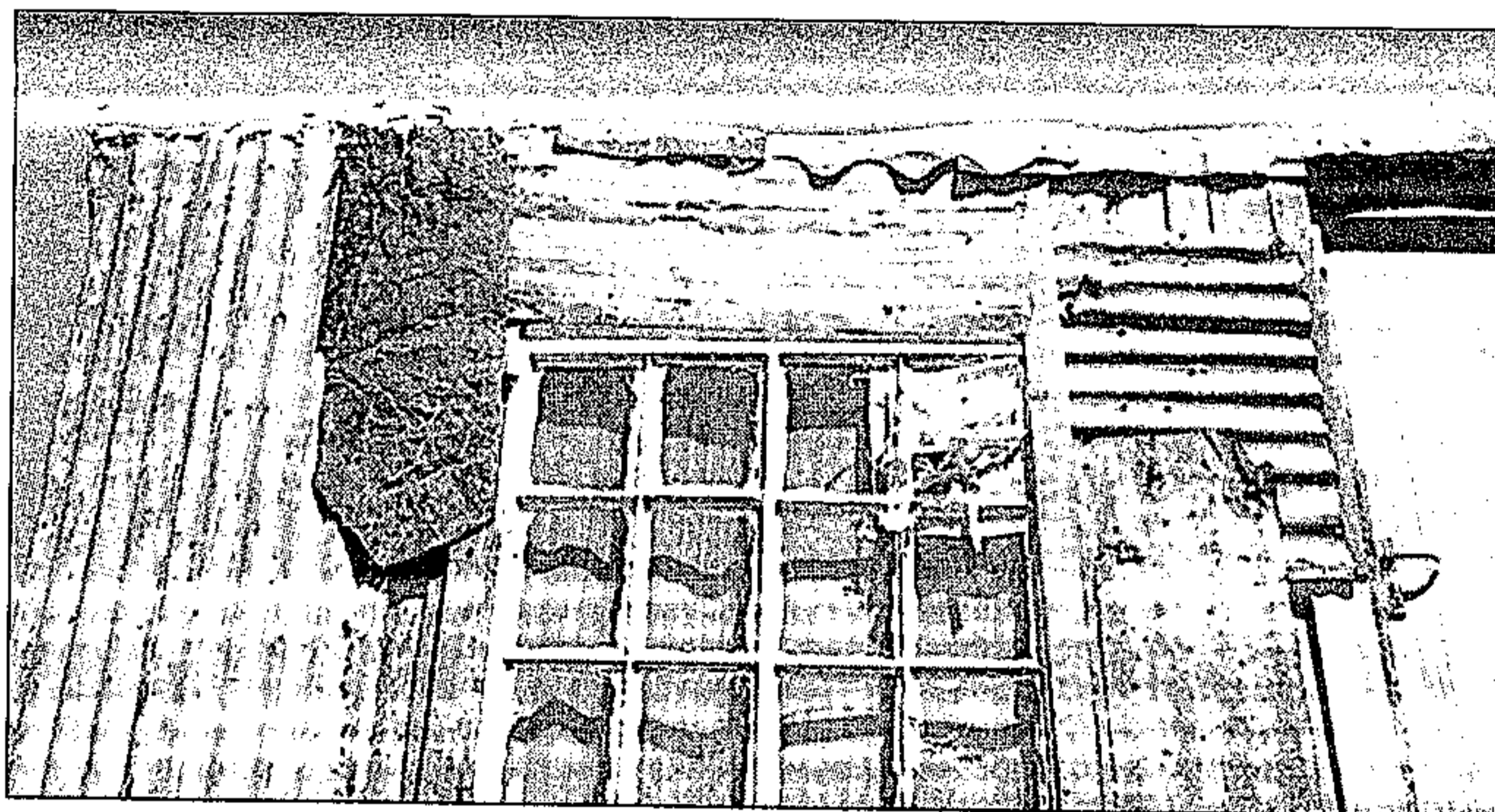
Back home, things look pretty much the same as they did 12 months ago. Nevertheless, some practitioners hung in and didn't emigrate to New Zealand, and, in a tribute to them, and with a nudge to their patrons, we present the 1995 Back-to-the-Drawing-Board awards.

**The Backs-to-the-Wall Award for the most effective use of bricks in a community-driven response to crime:** Crime was the issue this year, and Johannesburg candidates clearly led the way in responding to it. Developers Johnnic achieved record land prices in Dainfern, where golfers can swing in peace and return home within the safety of a perimeter wall, so they share the award with the community of Hurlingham Manor, who want to do the same to an existing suburb.

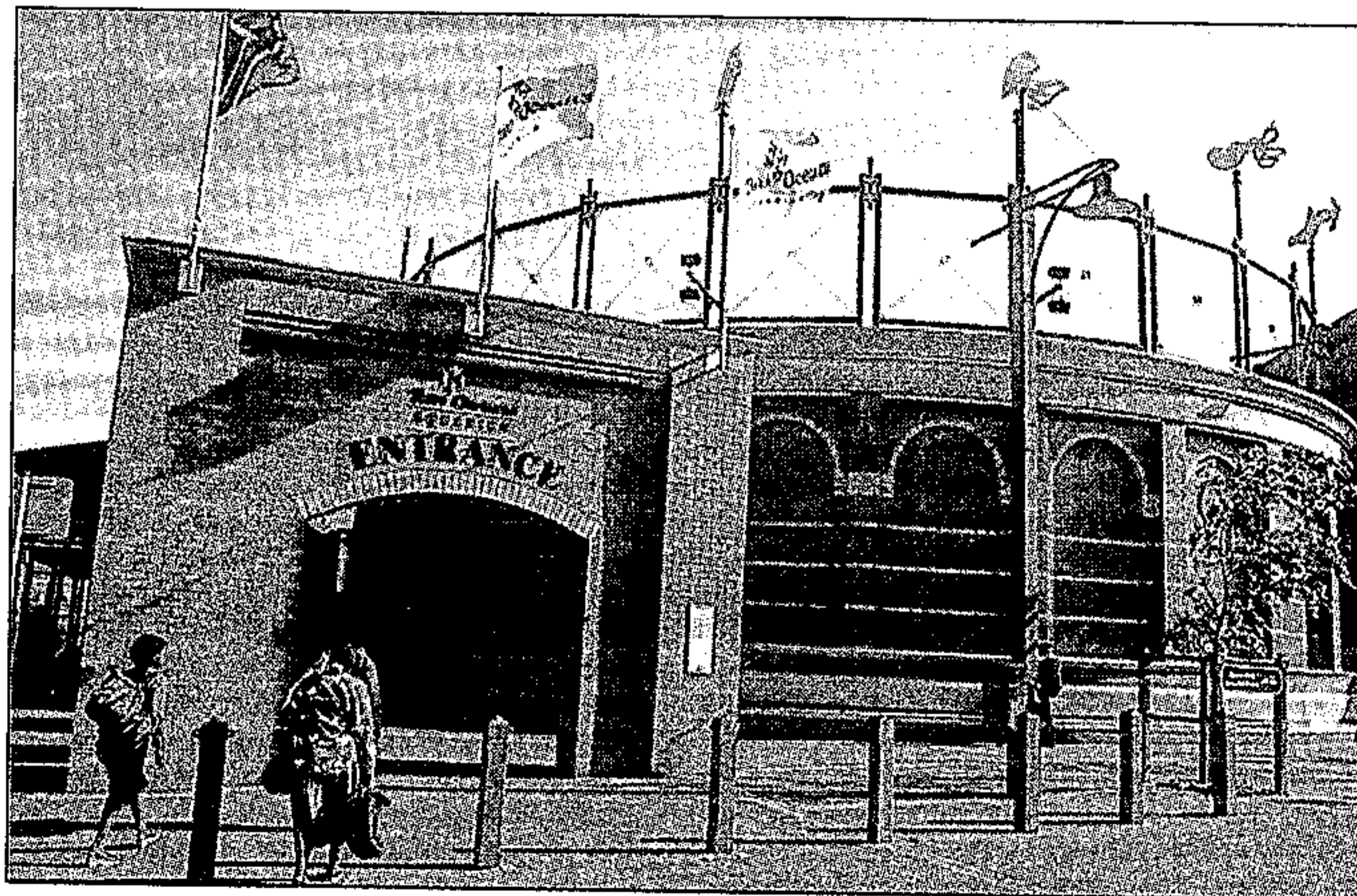
**Building material of the year:** Iscor will be glad to hear that this award goes to corrugated iron, which beat precast concrete columns, so ubiquitous in the neo-Georgian office parks that litter the periphery, and paint as used in community arts murals. Good old 0,6mm zinc has managed to span class divides as no other material since concrete has done: when the trendies get tired of their galvanised gazebos and facade cladding, they can rest assured that they will end up as the easily relocated walls of a house in an informal settlement.

**The i-51/9 Award for designing Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses that most closely resemble the infamous township matchboxes of the 1950s:** Out of spite for being left out of the process of housing the nation, architects were full of suggestions for this award. Gauteng's MEC for Housing, Dan Mofokeng, got a mention, but our difficulty in locating the houses in question means the award goes to engineers and planners Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick for the Bimella scheme in Cato Manor, Durban.

**The Change-Your-Colours Award for the best letterhead redesign by a practice**



Everyman's metal: Corrugated iron spans the class divides PHOTOGRAPH: HENNER FRANKENFELD



Oceans apart: The Two Oceans Aquarium reflects the changing face of the Cape Town Waterfront PHOTOGRAPH: RODGER BOSCH

**formerly engaged in homelands projects and currently repositioning:** Established architectural practices closed their Bophuthatswana offices, shrunk their names to initials and entered into joint ventures with

black consultants. Commendations go to Stauch Vorster — good luck with their R47-million Park Station redevelopment — and engineering consultants Africon, unburdened of their former title of Van Wyk and Louw.



Colour bright: An Aids awareness mural in Johannesburg PHOTOGRAPH: HENNER FRANKENFELD

**Worst patron of the year:** The cheque is in the post to the Independent Development Trust, which wins the award for its mass production of toilet towns, a technocratic outlook, and leaving its consultants and contractors disgruntled.

**Best patron of the year:** The best patron was harder to find in a year marked by an absence of architecture competitions and the mysterious working of the reformed Department of Public Works, whose criteria for inclusion on the new Pilot Roster of professionals are as elusive as copies of the roster itself. So, for their sponsorship of South Africa's participation in the Milan Triennale exhibition of architecture, and the selection competition leading up to it, the Department of Foreign Affairs' exhibition department takes the prize.

**The Monstrous Carbuncle Award for the worst building in a well-loved environment:** This award is split between the Wool-



# Battle for Madimbo continues

By Russel Molefe

**M**ADIMBO CORRIDOR is not as well known as the Caprivi Strip in the then South West Africa, where many battles were also fought between the then South African Defence Force and guerrillas of the liberation movements during the apartheid era.

The Madimbo corridor, a strategic strip of land in the far northeast of Venda which forms the South African border with Zimbabwe, was declared a military area late in the 1960s to cut off infiltration by guerrillas.

Entrance by members of the public was strictly prohibited without written permission of the military authorities.

The Madimbo corridor remained in obscurity until the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs' director in Northern Province granted Duo Corporate Developers a permit for diamond prospecting in the area last year.

This followed the loosening of the grip on the corridor by the armed forces after the new political order in South Africa, which ended military clashes.

## Spotlight on the area

The spotlight has now fallen on the corridor because of the debate between environmentalists and miners on the future development of the area.

The debate centres on whether mining or ecotourism will be suitable for the Madimbo corridor.

## Environmentalists and a developer still locked in war for access to area

This vexing question has ignited hostilities among communities around the corridor, giving Mineral and Energy Affairs director-general Dr PJ Hugo sleepless nights.

Hugo has piles of documents from environmentalists and miners which he is studying before making a ruling on the matter later this month.

He was approached by environmental organisations that asked him to reconsider the diamond prospecting permit of Duo Corporate Developers, which is owned by Mr Khehla Mthembu (who is also chairman of Pepsi-

Cola) and Mr Richard Bluet.

Prominent among the organisations that have lodged an appeal against the granting of the permit is the National Parks Board.

In its appeal documents, prepared by environmental lawyer and consultant Mr Duard Barnard, the NPB argues that the extent of the potential financial loss resulting from prospecting is so vast that it should be disallowed on the basis of the precautionary rule alone.

## Mining nonexistent

Research and development studies in the area also reflect that the mining infrastructure is virtually non-existent.

'Previous studies do not show any promising signs of growth in the mining industry. Some growth was shown for the construction and manufacturing industry, so it is not as if the region has stagnated.'

'The mining industry was identified as underdeveloped. It has no potential of acting as a future growth sector or as a development multiplier,' the NPB argues.

What angered environmental organisations even more is that Duo Corporate Developers did not identify a specific spot or spots for mining.

## Excavate the whole corridor

In its plans submitted to the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism, the company says it wants to excavate the whole corridor, which is more than 15 kilometres wide.

This extends to the south of the Malonga flats and to about 5 kilometres north of the Limpopo River.

This did not go down well with the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism, which ordered the company to submit another detailed plan.

Senior environmental officer Mr

(56) Russel Molefe 23/11/96

Danie Smith recently went through still photographs of the Madimbo corridor with Soweran, which reflect important sites including ancestral graves of Venda-speaking people.

The corridor is rich in archaeological treasures dating back to the Stone and Iron Ages. These treasures, together with rare and endangered species of fauna and flora, are likely to be destroyed by mining, Smith argues.

## Damaged by army

On the other hand, Duo Corporate Developers argue that the corridor has already been damaged by the army and is littered with bullet shells and other ammunition.

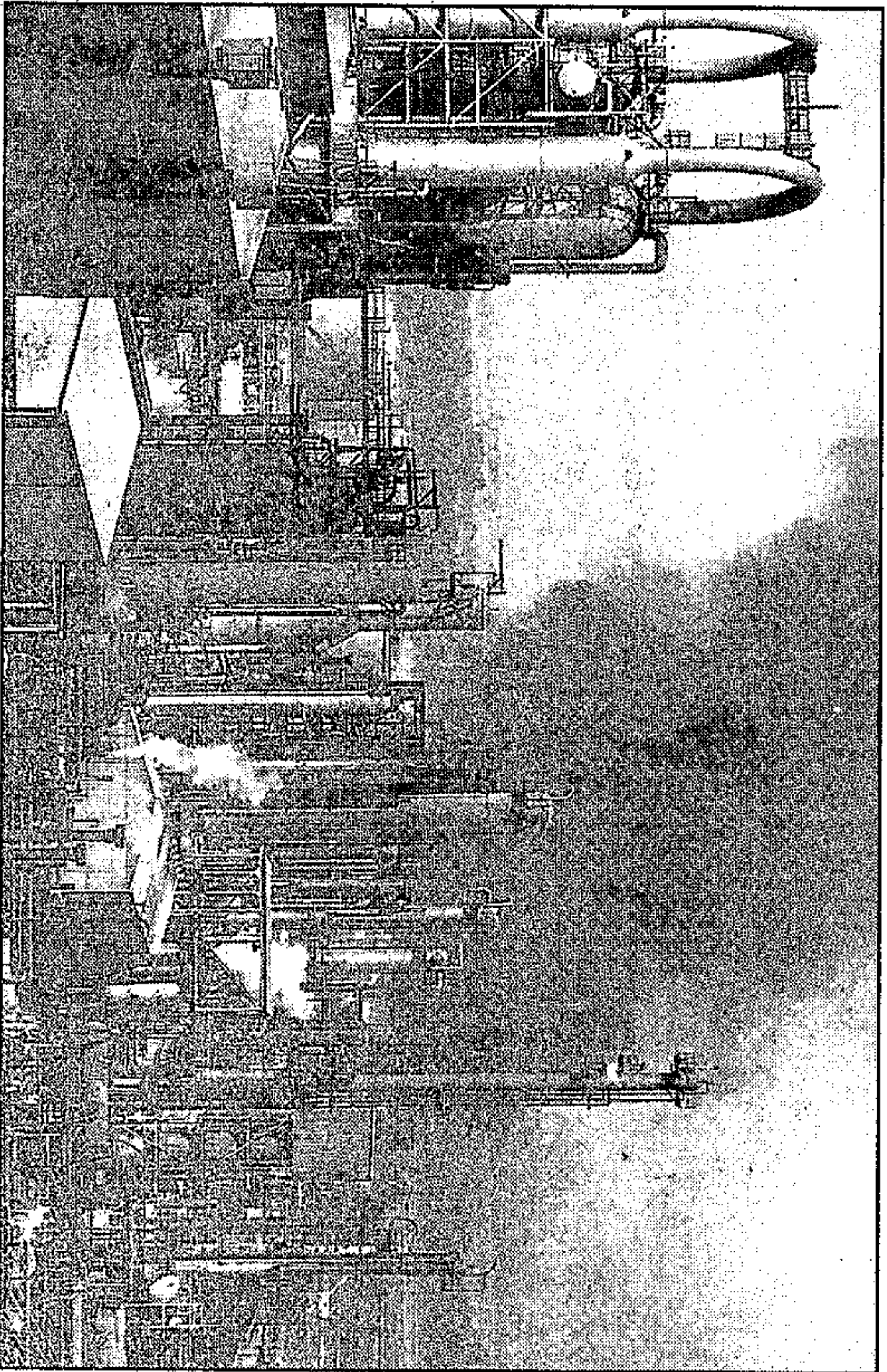
The company believes mining will bring many jobs and prosperity to the communities in the area, which has been severely affected by a devastating drought of several years.

This perception is shared by Tshikundamalema headman Mr Josias Mavundadavi, who differs sharply on the issue with Chief Jack Mutele of the Mutele clan.

For now, the future development of the corridor lies in the hands of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, which will have to make a ruling on whether mining or ecotourism is more suitable for the area.

## Previous studies do not show any promising signs of growth in the mining industry. Some growth was shown for the construction and manufacturing industry, so it is not as if the region has stagnated.

Senior environmental officer Mr



Air pollution ... environmentalists argue that mining may cause irreparable damage to the Madimbo corridor, like the air pollution caused by this Gauteng mine.

# Villagers suffer use of polluted water

(57)

Rowe 23/1/96

By Khathu Mamalla

ABOUT 30 kilometres east of Kgapane township in Botswana lies the remote village of Seaphole. The area's dense forest bears testimony to heavy rainfall, which gives credence to the popular story of Queen Modjadj's ability to make rain. But Motodjji river, which used to supply water to local villagers, is almost dry. The river is no longer flowing and has formed small pools.

The use of polluted water for consumption by villagers has been cited as the main reason for the outbreak of diarrhoea in Seaphole, which has claimed six lives and left more than 100 people hospitalised.

Although it is not known how many of the 3 000 villagers have been affected, Northern Province health and welfare MEC Dr Joe Phahla says many have symptoms of the illness.

Ms Agnes Lebedi says she does not know what caused her children to fall ill. All she remembers is that three of her children complained of stomach pains and headaches, and started vomiting shortly after Christmas.

The children - Forster (14), Lazarus (12) and Given (7) - all had similar symptoms, but the youngest became critically ill.

"I took him to Duvetskiroof Hospital but they did not admit him. They only gave him some tablets," says Lebedi.

"When I returned home, he got worse. He continued to vomit and complained of severe stomach pains. I watched him die in my hands. I could not take him anywhere as I did not have enough money to hire a car."

**Whole family unemployed**

Lebedi stays with her parents. Nobody is employed in the family of eight and they all depend on the pension of the elderly couple. She says it is common for her children to fall sick but she ignores the illness in the hope that it will go away.

"We are very poor and do not have money. Only serious cases can be referred to hospital. That is why we took Given to hospital. However, it did not help as he was sent home to die. I hope and pray the other two boys are able to bear this deadly disease."

Asked if the mobile clinic set up in the village after the outbreak of diarrhoea did not alleviate her plight, she replies that it came too late for her dead son.

Asked if she was aware she should

**I was taught to boil water only recently. But it is difficult to do this because there is no electricity here. We use firewood and it is difficult to get enough for cooking, let alone boiling water for consumption**

boil water from the river before using it. Lebedi says: "I was taught this only recently. But it is difficult to do this because there is no electricity here. We use firewood and it is very difficult to get enough for cooking, let alone boiling water for consumption."

Asked whether she is aware that she can use bleach to purify river water, she is sceptical: "I thought bleach was poisonous."

Although she later appeared to be convinced that a teaspoon of bleach could chlorinate 25 litres of water, she says she does not have money to buy it.

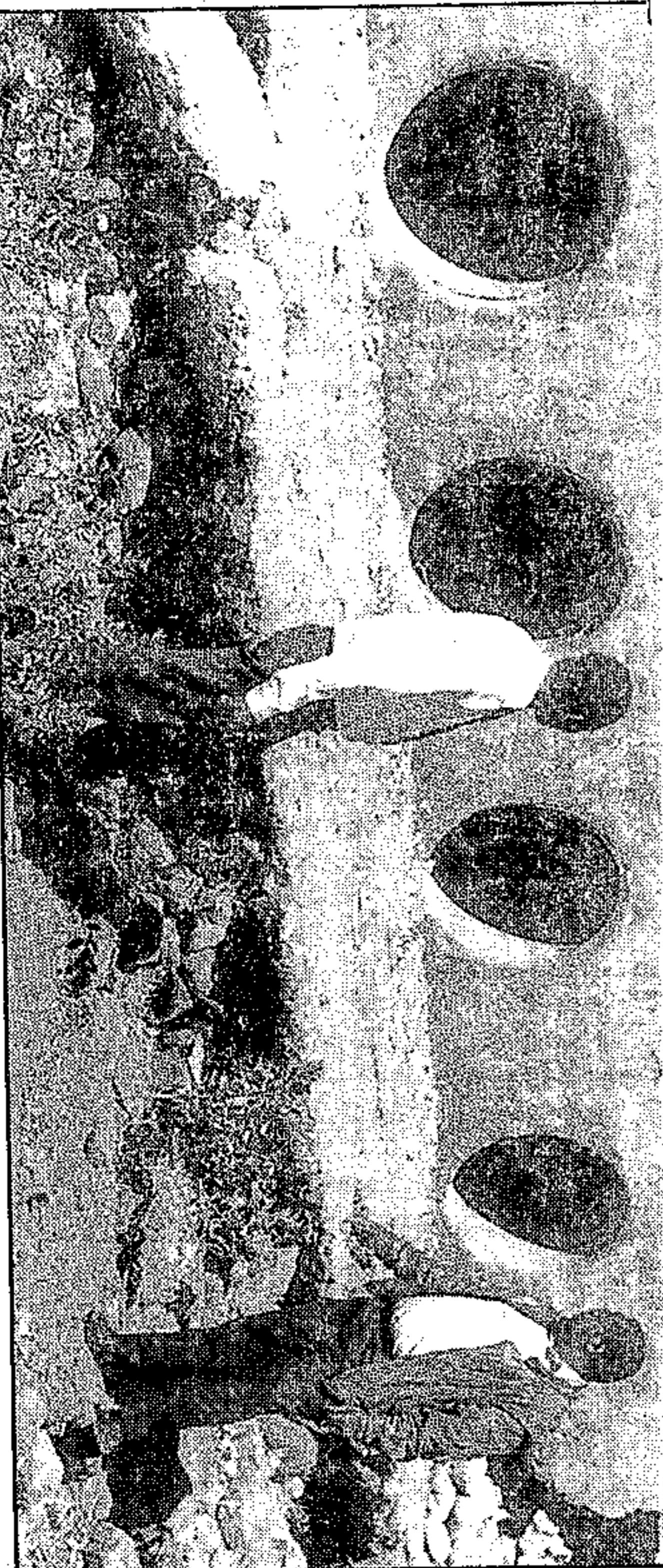
At a community meeting at the local school recently, residents told Phahla that they needed water and a clinic. They told him they were dying because they did not have any clean water and the nearest clinic was about 15 kilometres away. Residents said hospitals were far and many people did not have money for transport.

African National Congress branch executive member Elvis Mogale said while there was free medical care in government hospitals, this service was useless if it was not accessible because of lack of transport.

Nowly-elected councillors told Phahla: "People come to us and say they have elected us but we are doing nothing and they are dying."

Phahla replied that there were long-term projects to which he could not give a time limit, as they involved many factors: "Building a clinic is not only money. The main problem is we do not have enough staff, particularly in the rural areas."

However, he says, the Health Ministry will help villagers to get bleach as a temporary solution. He will also request the army to provide water for the village.



High and dry ... Northern Province agricultural workers at a dry river.

# Berg River wine spill doomed fish

ARL 23/1/96 (56)

**JOHN YELD**

**Environment Reporter**

THE accidental spilling of 147 tons of fortified distilled wine into the Berg River, by KWV probably killed some of the remaining few Berg River "witvis" — a nearly extinct strain of an indigenous species.

Cape Nature Conservation said it viewed the spill "in a serious light".

In a statement it said provisional water quality results showed there had been a significant reduction in the amount of oxygen available for aquatic life following the alcohol spill on January 5, and that more than 70km of the river between Paarl and Sonkwasdrift had been affected.

Some fish were found dying well below Paarl six days after the spill.

"The most visible evidence of destruction to fauna and flora was the death of thousands of fish," a Cape Nature Conservation spokesman said.

"Most of these were the large carp, an alien species popular with recreational anglers and subsistence fishermen.

"The death of large numbers of

carp is also indicative of the severity of the toxic spill as carp are well-known for their ability to withstand adverse water quality conditions."

Other species killed in lesser numbers included other alien species such as black bass and bluegill sunfish.

"There is also a strong likelihood that some of the remaining numbers of the nearly extinct Berg River strain of the witvis were killed."

The middle and lower stretches of the Berg River had considerable conservation value, and the river downstream from Paarl contained most of the remaining fish of this species.

Gareth McConky, the Department of Water Affairs' regional deputy director in charge of water quality, said the river had been monitored on "virtually a daily basis" since the spill.

The spill had created a water quality problem, but the department had released a large volume of water from Theewaterskloof Dam to flush the alcohol "plug" of polluted water down the Berg River to the Misverstand Dam where it could mix and disperse.





**DAMNED SPOT** The careless abandonment of industrial and tourist rubbish on our beaches and in our coastal waters is subject to a number of laws designed to prevent scenes such as this

PHOTO: JOHN WOODROOF

## Law protects SA coastline from the careless ravages of polluters

CT (BR) 23/11/96

(56)

TERRA FIRMA

The holiday season has come and gone and the authorities will be gearing up, once again, to ensure that golden beaches await the next invasion of visitors.

The dunes, lagoons and coastal reserves will need time to recover from the effect of the summertime visitors.

That is because when holiday time is over many just sigh, pack up and leave their mark on the coastline.

These marks contribute to pollution build-up. They take the form of tin cans, chicken bones and ice cream wrappings left in the sand, or oil discharged from recreational boats into the sea.

Many holiday-makers will unwittingly have committed criminal offences by polluting the shore in one way or another.

Some may not even care.

South Africa's coastline is a strategic resource. It supports a viable fishing industry and hosts competing interests such as residential, recreational, industrial and conservation activities.

The sea receives effluent and sewerage. It is also a medium for some heavy-duty marine traffic and is home to aquatic eco-systems.

To protect the valuable coastal zones and seas, laws have been enacted.

Whether you have been seafaring, beachcombing, or indulging in activities that cause pollution, your conduct is likely to be controlled by one of the relevant laws.

Here are a few examples:

□ The Dumping at Sea Control Act controls deliberate dumping of substances into the sea. This act implements a 1972 convention on the prevention of marine pollution.

Generally, the dumping of any material into the sea without a general or special permit is prohibited.

Contravention of the act is a criminal offence.



BY ROBYN STEIN

### Going to the seaside is no longer an excuse to do as you please

Factors taken into account in granting permits include the characteristics and composition of the substances to be dumped, the method of deposit, possible effects on marine life and the availability of alternative land-based methods of treatment, disposal or elimination.

□ Marine oil pollution from sea-based sources is regulated by a 1981 act designed to prevent and combat pollution of the sea.

This act prohibits the discharge of oil from a ship, which includes any vessel from which oil can be discharged, unless the oil was discharged to secure the safety of the ship, save a life, or if the discharge occurred as a result of circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the ship's master or owner.

In terms of this act, the master or any member of the crew of a ship must immediately report any discharge of oil into the sea.

□ Policy on the control of beach buggies in the coastal zone was promulgated by the minister of environmental affairs and tourism in 1994. The general policy is enforced under the Environment Conservation Act and obliges ministers, and the authorities to perform their duties in accordance with the general policy.

The general policy introduces control measures applicable to all vehicles used for recreation.

It specifies that bathing areas, beach areas, ecologically sensitive areas, protected areas specifically established to conserve the coastal environment, and historical or palaeontological sites, must be closed to vehicles.

The general policy also provides for a permit system to regulate access by vehicles that can be used on the beach.

□ The Water Act contains a general provision that makes it an offence to commit any act that could pollute any public or private water, including sea water, making it unsuitable for the propagation of fish and other aquatic life, or for recreation.

The implications of the Water Act are serious and wide ranging.

If you throw refuse into the sea and it pollutes the water in a way which renders it less fit for aquatic life or recreation, you will be presumed to be guilty until the contrary is proved.

If you were holidaying in the Cape or in Kwazulu Natal, nature conservation ordinances in these regions contain provisions to prevent the pollution of the sea.

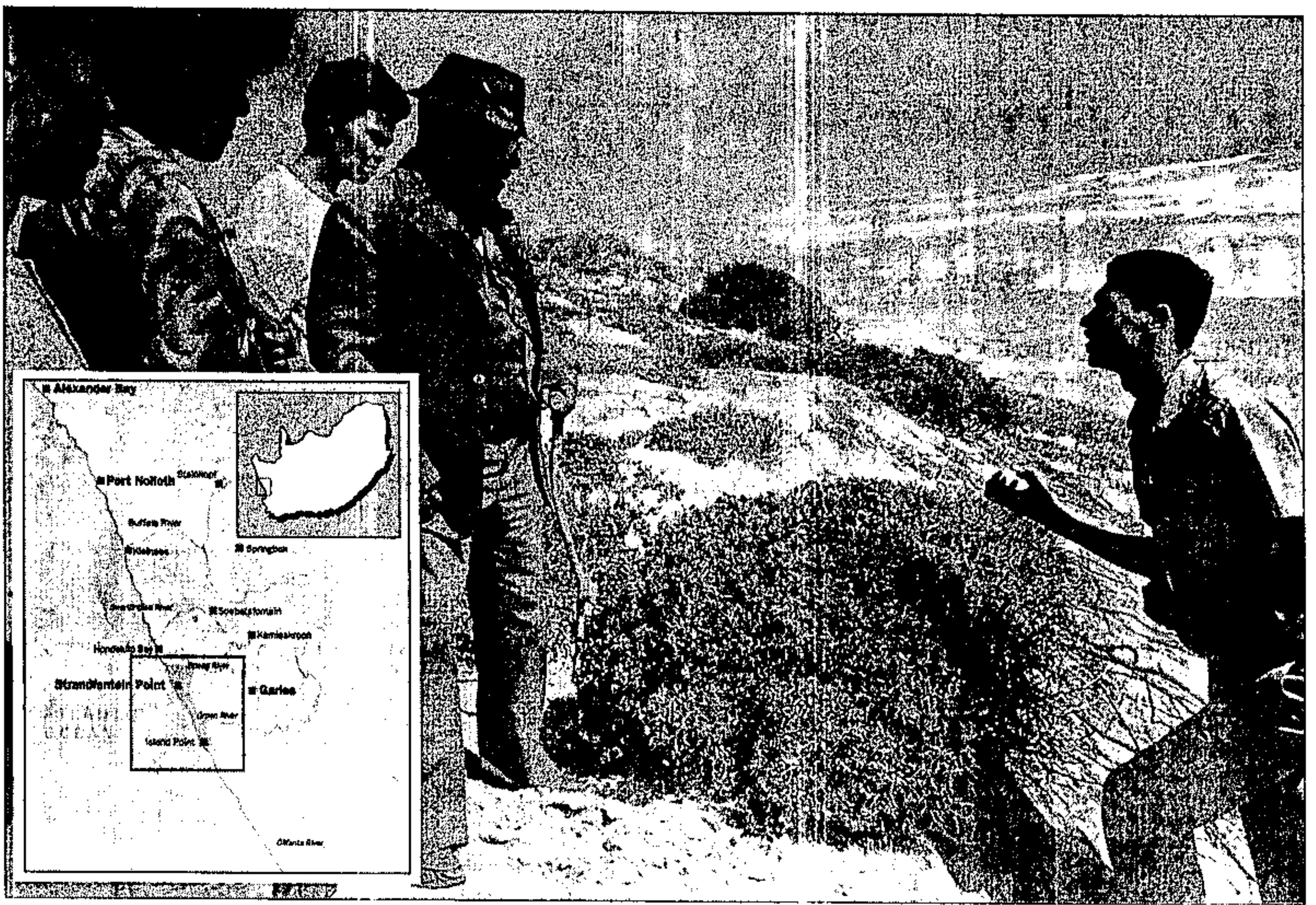
In these regions it is also an offence to deposit waste in the sea that could injure any fish or fish food.

□ When the beach party comes to an end, criminal consequences may flow from abandoning bottles, cans, papers and cigarette-ends.

Under the Environment Conservation Act, littering is an offence. On conviction a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months may be imposed.

□ Robyn Stein is an attorney practising environmental law at the legal firm Bowman Gilfillan Hayman Godfrey.

tion were y for other trists that s by dem are pre-and t we sim-tant rism ister ivity tive the tour of ron-e of uld could ten-and ure? cul-the erna the 'the ent, that into esti- ) 20 es AP



**NEW PARK:** The National Parks Board's Mr Howard Hendricks explains aspects of conservation to "Oom Japie" Bekeur of Nourivier during a visit by surrounding communities to the proposed national park on the Namaqualand coast. PICTURE: MELANIE GOSLING

# Diamond fields to become park

**MELANIE GOSLING**  
ENVIRONMENT WRITER

A NEAR-PRISTINE stretch of Namaqualand coast — part of De Beers' diamond fields that were closed to the public for decades — is soon to become a national park and be opened to the public for the first time.

The remote 47km of coast between the Spoegrivier and the Groenrivier, an area of 38 000ha east of Garles, is home to several threatened animal species and contains stretches of succulent karoo vegetation — one of the most species-rich arid zones in the world.

Botanists say it qualifies internationally as a "hot-spot", a concentration of plants that occurs nowhere else in the world.

There are still diamonds underground, but in such small quantities they are not commercially viable.

Succulent karoo is a major conservation priority in South Africa as it is the most under-conserved vegetation type in the country, with less than one percent of it falling in conservation areas.

Driving through the area at the weekend in four-wheel-drive vehicles belonging to De Beers, representatives of surrounding Namaqualand communities were able to see the "diamond area" for the first time — kilometres of wilderness coastline interspersed with rocky outcrops and sandy bays.

In the north are magnificent high white sand dunes, home to the endangered Namaqua rain frog and dwarf adder.

For Mr Kobus Maarman of Garles the drive was a memorable experience. "This is the first time I

have ever seen sand dunes and the first time I have ever seen seals."

The visit was part of a public participation process to get all interested parties involved at the planning stage of the national park.

National Parks Board's head of research and development Dr Anthony Hall-Martin said public participation was in keeping with the board's new direction.

"National parks have to be based on consultation with all stake-holders and there must be a desire on the part of people to have the park because of the benefits they can get from it. In the case of Namaqualand it is likely to be spin-offs from tourism. We went through this process with the Table Mountain National Park, which set the pattern for the future. It is very different from the past when national parks were simply proclaimed."

De Beers has been running sheep on the land for decades, but because of careful management and low stocking, the veld is in exceptionally good condition.

De Beers will continue to own the land, but will lease it to the board. The mineral rights will still rest with the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

The area was once home to leopard, eland, gemsbok, red hartebeest and even elephant, graffe and black rhino.

Ms Judy Beaumont of the Department of Environmental Affairs, who is spearheading the public participation process with Ms Rachel Wynberg of UCT's Environmental Evaluation Unit, has organised several workshops to get residents of surrounding towns and villages involved in planning the park.

(56) ET 23/1/96

## Witvis extinction closer

**ENVIRONMENT WRITER**

THE massive 147-kilolitre KKW wine spill into the Berg River earlier this month, which killed thousands of fish and harmed aquatic life for 70km downstream, has pushed the threatened Berg River witvis a step closer to extinction.

Cape Nature Conservation's Mr Kas Hamman said yesterday: "The witvis is already on the verge of extinction. We can only verify two witvis caught in the Berg River in the last eight years. There were tons and tons of fish killed and although we did not pull out any witvis in our samples of the fish killed, those few that were left in that stretch of river must have been wiped out."

"We can only hope that if there are any upstream they can

repopulate the affected area, but there were so few already they were not really a viable breeding population. Indications were that most of the witvis were found downstream."

He said KKW were still investigating the cause of the spill.

Hamman said Nature Conservation viewed the spill in a serious light because high concentrations of alcohol were toxic to fish and all forms of aquatic life.

Scientists had found fish still dying in the river well below Paarl six days after the spill.

"Pollution of this kind is of serious concern to Cape Nature Conservation. We really need a management plan for the Berg River to avoid this kind of pollution," Hamman said.

"This visit springs out of one of those workshops when the people asked how could they comment on the proposed park if they had never even seen it," Beaumont said.

A major stumbling block to declaring the park is the squatter problem at Groenrivier mouth. Local Namaqualand farmers and some people from up-country have staked claims on the state-owned land over the years and built about 70 holiday shacks.

Minister of Land Affairs Mr Derek Hanekom has attended a couple of workshops with the squatters, in the hope of getting

them to leave voluntarily. So far they have not budged.

Hall-Martin said: "The parks board can't move them because it is not our land. The majority of squatters have said they will move if we build chalets and camping sites in that spot so they can continue to come there. As they don't own the land, that really is blackmail."

The National Parks Board's Mr Sarel Yssel said: "The issue of squatters and land rights touches on principles that go way beyond this park. I hope in this case conservation issues will, for once, get priority."

# AECI ready to pay after sulphur fire

LINDSAY BARNES, Staff Reporter

AECI is preparing to pay millions in compensation to the community of Macassar and farmers hit by the sulphur stockpile fire on December 16.

The first claim to farmers will be paid tomorrow, and compensation will be paid to Macassar residents from Monday.

About 270 claims totalling R500 000, the majority being less than R1 000 each, came from the community, according to AECI Provisions Services (Pty) Ltd managing director, Boet Coetzee.

Cheques would be written "there and then", he said.

The majority of claims were from Stel-

lenbosch, Kuils River and Faure, and most ranged between R50 000 and R2,5 million.

Mr Coetzee also released details of preliminary findings on how the fire happened. He said five fires raged during a period of four days, igniting the stockpile.

AECI helped the family of the two Williams brothers, Ronnie and Andrew, who died of asthma on the night of the fire. They organised a professional counsellor and bridging finance of R15 000 to help the family over their bereavement.

ARG 24/1/96 (56)  
**LATEST**

# Agreement to widen mercury probe

BY TROYE LUND

AND ANITA ALLEN

STW 24/1/96  
An inquiry into the importation of mercury waste by Thor Chemicals in KwaZulu Natal has been widened after protests by environmental groups, commission head Prof Dennis Davis has said.

He made the announcement last night following complaints by Earthlife Africa that the scope of his commission was not wide enough.

Earthlife also complained that they would not have enough time to testify, but Davis said the commission was willing to have special sittings at a date convenient to the organisation.

When Earthlife complained that the effects of disposal methods on workers and the environment were not part of these terms, Davis included them, he said.

He has a letter dated January 17 from Earthlife Africa's lawyers to say the new terms were "perfectly acceptable".

The original terms of reference were:

■ To investigate the history and background of the acquisition of a spent mercury catalyst stockpile by Thor Chemicals, as well as additional mercury-containing sludge on the premises, and to report on the further utilisation or disposal thereof.

■ To recommend on the best practical environmental option to deal with the problem of mercury-containing catalyst and/or waste currently on Thor's premises.

Davis said last night the changes included "workers and environmental issues which were agreed on at the meeting with Earthlife in June".

When the commission was appointed by President Mandela in March 1995, the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF), the Chemical Workers Union of SA and Earthlife Africa immediately gave notice that they would seek legal advice on what was claimed to be a deliberate attempt to exclude the grouping from helping to frame the terms of reference.

The basis for objections was that it would effectively preclude any investigation into other toxic waste at the site and what happened while the toxic waste was there, as well as possible complicity of various government officials.

Another objection was that taxpayers were effectively being asked to pay for a study which should have been conducted and paid for by Thor Chemicals.

Davis said any changes to the terms of reference that did not include the worker and environmental issues were "leaky news" to him.

# AECI faces sulphur fire claims

(56) (S)  
Samantha Sharpe

BD 24/1/96  
AECI faced between R15m and R20m in legal claims arising from last year's sulphur fire at its plant near Somerset West, the industrial group said yesterday.

The 20-year-old, 15 000-ton sulphur stockpile — owned by government but managed by AECI — caught fire in December. It left two people dead, and caused extensive agricultural damage.

AECI spokesman Mike Blizzard said the group had received about 250 claims from the local community — about 2 500 Macassar residents were forced to evacuate the area at the time — and about 150 claims from the agricultural sector.

All these would be met, provided they were legitimate, he said.

There would be no provisions

for the fire in AECI's financial statements as the claims would be covered by group insurers.

Blizzard said AECI was still negotiating with government on removal of the stockpile. "It's not ours and we would like to see it moved," he said.

Meanwhile, the group had installed additional safety measures in the form of a new sprinkler system and 24-hour patrols.

Trade ministry spokesman Ismail Lagardien said that while government would assist wherever possible in moving the stockpile, it was not its responsibility to do so.

The deal that had been entered into with AECI 20 years ago saw the group take over control and management of the sulphur stockpile and government was under no legal obligation to move it, he said.

---

---

# UN may protect SA nature sites

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

(56)

ET 24/1/96

PRETORIA: The director of the United Nations-backed World Heritage Centre arrives in South Africa on January 26 to assess moves to give UN protection to natural and cultural wonders here.

Mr Bernd von Droste, director of the Unesco (UN Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage Centre, will visit the Tswaing Crater, Kruger National Park and Table Mountain during his two-week stay.

He will meet nature conservation officials, parliamentarians and officials of South African cultural heritage agencies.

Von Droste will also visit St Lucia, where an international outcry has arisen from plans to mine dunes in the Ramsar designated wetland, as well as Mapangubwe archaeological site in Northern Province, the Florisbad fossil site and Robben Island.

Spokesmen for conservation organisations said Von Droste's visit was a good omen for South Africa, which may at last have some of its natural wonders listed as World Heritage Sites.

These are protected from development.

---

# Passing the buck in civil circles

ET 24/1/96

(56)

EVER tried to get hold of the right person in the right government department, but given up after about the tenth person refers you to some one else?

Well, even government officials sometimes give up in despair.

Ms Judy Beaumont of the Department of Environmental Affairs was at the receiving end of two public queries recently, and tried to sort them out, one successfully, the other not.

"I'd like to report that an eland has jumped the fence," the first caller said.

What fence, where, when? At Rhodes Memorial, that morning, as the caller was out jogging. In fact, as the eland — South Africa's biggest antelope — started trotting towards him, the jogger became slightly anxious and jumped the fence himself. So the eland was outside the park and the jogger inside. When the eland disappeared into the distance, he (the jogger) jumped the fence again and telephoned the Department of Environment.

Now the caller, an American, might be forgiven for thinking the Department of Environment Affairs was the right authority to



**MELANIE GOSLING**  
Environment Writer

telephone. After all, these are wild animals in a sort-of a game park.

But the department has nothing to do with eland, managing game parks or anything wild and woolly. They formulate environmental policy, work in city offices, and are about as far removed from the heat and the dust of the bush as a New York taxi driver.

But Beaumont, having told him she did not deal with fence-jumping eland, said she would find out who did and make sure the eland was returned to the fold.

After being sent from pillar to post in the Cape Metropolitan Council's and the City Council's Parks and Forest Departments, some one suggested the Department of Public Works.

Somewhat sceptically she tele-

phoned Public Works and, yes, the eland are their affair, as are the wildebeest, zebra and probably even the New Wave quagga. So — Rhodes Mem joggers take note.

The second caller, his voice high-pitched with panic, squeaked down the phone: "Is that the Department of Environment Affairs? Well I live in Fish Hoek and there's a baboon in my kitchen. Can you get it out?"

Beaumont said no, she did not deal with baboons in kitchens, but she would find out who did.

First try was Cape Nature Conservation in Kalk Bay. No, they said, they did not deal with baboons in kitchens, but she should try Cape Nature Conservation in Bellville.

After several phone calls to

nature conservation in Bellville, she established that they too did not deal with baboons in kitchens — in Fish Hoek or anywhere else.

"Anyway, if people want to live so high up on the mountain in Fish Hoek they must expect baboons in their kitchens," one chap told her.

Eventually they referred her to Fish Hoek police. "They deal with that sort of thing."

Beaumont phoned them.

"Yes, ma'am, the Fish Hoek police have been known to deal with baboons in kitchens, but we don't do that anymore."

"Why not?" she asked.

"Well ma'am, we usually just shoot them and then the public gets very upset and its very bad publicity for us, so we no longer handle baboons in kitchens."

At this point Beaumont gave up. After all, the only reason the calls had come through to her was because she was sitting in her boss' office while he was out, since he has a view and she doesn't.

For all she knows the baboon could have taken up residence by now. Could make a nice movie plot. "Home Alone with Son of King Kong."

# Asmal warns against complacency on pollution

ARG 25/1/96

(56)

Staff Reporters

AFRICA'S underdevelopment had partially protected its people from industrial and nuclear pollution causing cancer and hereditary genetic changes, but there was no reason for complacency.

This was the warning sounded by Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Kader Asmal, who said Africa had, nevertheless, felt the impact of industrialisation, and that gold and asbestos mining in South Africa had hazardous effects on health.

Dr Asmal was speaking at the second conference of the Pan-African Environmental Mutagen Society in Cape Town, which addressed issues of pollution which exposes people and the environment to mutagens (compounds which cause hereditary genetic changes) and carcinogens (compounds which cause cancer).

It was hosted for the first time by the South African Medical Research Council and attended by 150 delegates from 30 countries, including 10 African countries.

"Several countries in Africa have been tempted by the short-term financial gain of importing hazardous

waste from developed nations — waste that they are ill-equipped to deal with," Dr Asmal said.

He also cited the recent transportation by sea of radioactive waste from France to Japan, which passed the African coast. Such transport of waste was scheduled to continue.

Turning to South Africa, he said the country had the unhappy status of having probably the worst managed asbestos mines in the world and that gold mine dumps had recently been found to be radioactive.

The release of radon (a radioactive substance) from mines was a matter of concern, as was the possibility of heavy metal and radioactive pollution of nearby water systems. Mr Asmal said his department had instructions to prosecute when pollution of water rose above the level fixed by law.

Walter Marasas, of the Medical Research Council's Programme on Mycotoxins and Experimental Carcinogens, told the conference environmental pollution and exposure to hazardous agents such as radiation, pesticides and petroleum products constituted some of the most important problems facing modern society.



# Bid to raise funds to stamp out poaching

(b) Star 25/1/96

By ANITA ALLEN

Science Writer

A major private sector initiative to raise funds for the South African Police Service's anti-poaching unit was launched at a gala function in Midrand last night.

The Endangered Species Protection Unit Trust (ESPU) is the brainchild of Johann Roode, executive chairman of Genfood, and has the full support of Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi and Police Commissioner George Fivaz.

The trust will be run by a board of trustees chaired by Dr Salomon Joubert, former chief warden of Kruger Park.

The major objectives are to provide the ESPU with suitable operational headquarters since their eviction from the notorious Vlakplaas base, and to promote community participation in protecting all aspects of the natural environment.

Fivaz said at the launch of the trust that police were committed to the preservation of the environment as part of his thrust to make the SAPS service-oriented.

“  
**Extinction  
is for ever,  
and list bound  
to increase**  
”

The ESPU had been behind the signing of the Luaka Agreement by South Africa and seven other African countries. It would help international conservation enforcement on the continent and see police from participating countries seconding their officers to each other.

The ESPU was involved in several projects, including Project Ecowatch, which would concentrate on the protection of South Africa's rare cycads, rhinos, seals and rivers, Fivaz said.

Supt Piet Lategan, head of the ESPU, said an urgent and concerted effort was needed to stamp out the continued illegal poaching and smuggling operations of international crime syndicates.

“Extinction is for ever, and as long as the ruthless onslaught on our natural environment is allowed to continue, the list of extinct, endangered and threatened species is bound to increase,” he said.

“Obviously we will do everything we can to bring individuals to court, but we are a small unit of 30 people. We need massive support from members of the public and nature conservation organisations to contribute to our trust,” Lategan said.

# AECI looks to the sky for answers

56 (183) 25/1/96

**ANEEZ SAJJIE**  
STAFF WRITER

A LARGE bird could have started last month's fatal sulphur fire that caused three deaths and the midnight evacuation of thousands of Macassar residents, according to AECI's Mr Boet Coetzee.

Coetzee, managing director of AECI operational services, said yesterday a preliminary, in-house investigation had found that the stockpile caught alight because of five veld fires over four days, one kilometre east of the sulphur.

The first was on Wednesday, December 13 last year.

"The initial indications are that it was initiated by some sort of discharge from a high tension wire," Coetzee said.

"We have spoken to Eskom ... and they have had experiences where a large bird can actually induce such a discharge. We have a witness who saw a discharge, and we recorded an event on the instrumentation that co-incident with what the witness saw.

"(But) we could not find the carcass of a bird or anything like that, so we can only speculate.

"Exactly how it took place I can't explain to you yet, and may never be able to."

Coetzee said AECI's own fire department doused the initial fire, and another the following day, Thursday, December 14.

He claimed they "went to some pains" to ensure the flames were thoroughly doused, but it started again the next day (Friday), and the day after that.

"This time it had a strong south-easter behind it, estimated at between 70 and 80km/h."

He said they had had difficulty in dousing the stockpile fire, and had asked the air force for help.

# Reserve for San people 'no zoo'

LINDSAY BARNES,  
Staff Reporter

CRITICISM that the Kagga Kamma Reserve is dishing up members of the San tribe like "animals in a zoo" has been dismissed as nothing new.

Managing director Peter de Waal said that at the time the project was initiated they had consulted widely — including anthropologists — on how best to incorporate the San into the reserve.

Two options had been discussed and they settled on the totally informal approach where visitors make an appointment to meet the Bushmen at the workshop area to learn about their culture.

But it wasn't a show and it did not resemble a zoo, he said.

Mr De Waal was responding to a recent report in London's Sunday Express that claimed "near-naked" Bushmen children were being exhibited "along with wildebeest and springbok" in the game park.

The scathing article, labelled "The Human Zoo", said the display of the San culture was done in a manner that revealed "the depth of the racial divide that still exists in the 'new' South Africa".

It is accompanied by a photograph

(5b)  
of a white child looking down on five San children who appear to be naked and are on their hands and knees.

The Sunday Express described the picture as shocking.

According to the reporters, "nearly two years after Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president, black children are being held in a game park and shown off as entertainment for white tourists".

The report claimed charities and pressure groups were "shocked" by the exploitation.

However, Mr De Waal said the reserve's management had been sensitive to the criticism of foreigners and had decided against a formal show such as dancing for the tourists.

Head of the San, Dawid Kruiper, who is still recovering from a serious car accident in which one of the tribe members died in November last year, could not be contacted for comment.

In an earlier interview, he scorned the assertion that his attempts to educate visitors on the San culture resembled animals in a zoo.

He denied feeling like a "zoo attraction" while sitting in traditional garb performing Bushman activities for tourists. "It's not a zoo. We are sharing our culture," he said at the time.

## Police protection to include cycads, rhinos

Environment Reporter

(5b) ARG 26/1/96

SOUTH Africa's rich natural heritage is being damaged beyond repair by selfish people such as illegal hunters, cycad dealers and ivory smugglers, National Police Commissioner George Fivaz has warned.

Speaking at the launch of the police's Endangered Species Protection Unit Trust in Gauteng, Commissioner Fivaz paid tribute to the unit and said its future activities would include "Project Eco Watch".

Subdivisions of this project would include:

- A "cycad-watch" in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.
- A "rhino-watch" in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province.
- A "marine-watch" for seals, particularly on the Eastern Cape coast and,
- A "river-watch" to combat pollution, particularly in and near to informal settlements.

South Africa had a rich natural heritage which was owned by all its people and which lured thousands of visitors to this country each year, Commissioner Fivaz said.

"It is also to be that section of our economy which will, in future, show tremendous growth — the future of ecotourism is indeed bright.

"But, this heritage is being threatened by those people who are illegally destroying it merely for their own selfish gains. The illegal hunters, the ivory smugglers, the cycad dealers, to mention but a few, are in the process of damaging our South African heritage beyond repair.

While the prime function of the police was to maintain law and order, this did not only apply to the protection of people, Commissioner Fivaz said.

# First AECI payments to farmers

ARG 26/1/96  
LINDSAY BARNES, Staff Reporter

THE first AECI payouts have been made to farmers affected by the devastating sulphur fire which poured toxic fumes into the air in December.

An AECI spokesman said a farmer was paid an unknown amount, and further payouts were expected to be made today, a little more than a month after the tragedy in which three people died.

The compensation is expected to total between R15 million and R20 million, AECI operations services managing director Boet Coetzee said.

However, claims from farmers may extend over a period of a year due to the nature of farming, he said.

No Macassar residents have been paid out yet as negotiations between

(56) (53-3)  
the company and the Macassar Crisis Committee over the method of payment are still underway. Compensation, however, appears imminent.

More residents appeared at the plant yesterday to file claims, including a couple whose wedding was disrupted when victims took refuge in the hall where the reception was held.

A full environmental impact study, being conducted by a professor at the University of Cape Town, will be complete next week.

According to Mr Coetzee, the sulphur dioxide level soon after the incident was at "manageable levels".

Although the stockpile, from which the fumes poured when it caught fire, had been reduced by half, 15 000 tons still remained.

# Talks on navy role in policing

JOHN YELD, Environment Reporter

THE SA Navy's role in helping to police South Africa's fisheries is to be discussed at a top-level meeting next week between the director-general of Environmental Affairs, Colin Cameron, and the head of the navy, Robert Simpson-Anderson.

This was revealed at a press briefing today by Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers, who said poaching was "of very great concern to us" but that South Africa did not have enough funds to equip an effective marine inspectorate.

"The number of inspectors is far below what is required and their salaries are a major problem," Dr De Villiers said.

(56) ~~56~~ ~~ARG 26/1/96~~  
"But we're not going to get enough money next year or even the year after, and we'll have to find new methods."

There was "close co-operation" with the navy which was of great importance in policing South Africa's offshore areas, but much of the poaching, involving species like perlemoen and rock lobster, occurred in the inshore area, Dr De Villiers said.

"There are limitations ... The navy is not a panacea." ARG 26/1/96

There would be discussions next week between Dr Cameron and Admiral Simpson-Anderson to see how co-operation could be improved.

# Steely eyes for Saldanha sought

(56) (~~1994~~) ARG 26/1/96

Environment Reporter

NOMINATIONS for people to serve on the environmental monitoring committee which will act as a watchdog over the Saldanha Steel Project are being called for by regional Finance and Environmental Affairs Minister Kobus Meiring.

The committee must ensure that, among other things, internationally acceptable standards are applied to monitoring and environmental auditing systems for the controversial R4,7-billion steel project.

It must also monitor the performance of the project in relation to identified environmental issues and review the environmental management plan.

The nominations are called for in Press advertisements placed at the weekend by the Western Cape provincial government.

According to the advertisements, the monitoring committee must be broadly representative and must include people from environmental interest groups, local authorities, relevant provincial and central government departments, labour, the local Saldanha business community and Saldanha Steel.

The establishment of the monitoring committee was one of the conditions of approval for the re-zoning application of Saldanha Steel, granted by provincial Agriculture, Plan-

ning and Tourism Minister Lampie Fick in November.

According to these conditions, the monitoring committee must be appointed and empowered before construction starts.

Factors relevant to the committee's appointment include the following points:

- Western Cape Premier Henus Kriel will have the final say in the committee's composition, mandate and structure;

- It must be chaired by a "credible" person with no vested interests in the area;

- The committee's objective will be to "provide an opportunity to the public to assist authorities in the protection of the environment"; and

- Its brief may be extended to any associated industry, including any established in the area.

The committee will be allowed reasonable access to the site at all times during the construction and commissioning of the steel plant.

It will also have access to the results of all monitoring and environmental auditing systems, to ensure that internationally acceptable standards are met, and it will be able to make these publicly available.

Nominations for the monitoring committee must reach the provincial government by February 5.

# W Cape boom continues

## Five-day countdown at Saldanha

AR 5 27 1196

■ It is all systems go for the controversial Saldanha Steel project on the West Coast.

**WILLEM STEENKAMP**  
Staff Reporter



CONSTRUCTION of the controversial R6,8-billion steel mill near Saldanha is set to start within five days.

Saldanha Steel spokesman Tom Ferreira said the first test holes had been drilled for the huge concrete piles on which the mill will be constructed.

Ground-moving equipment will move on to the site within five days and the project is expected to be completed by the end of 1998. Full production of 1,2 million tons of steel will be reached within a year after completion.

More than 6 000 people will be employed at the site during the construction phase and the contractors have been instructed to employ only people from the West Coast.

Workers from elsewhere may only be recruited once the local supply of workers has been exhausted.

A temporary construction village will be built on the site for construction workers. Mr Ferreira said contractors had also agreed that anyone employed at the site from areas outside the West Coast during the construction phase would be rehired once the project had been completed.

The first 140 people who will work at the mill have also been recruited from towns on the West Coast and are undergoing training.

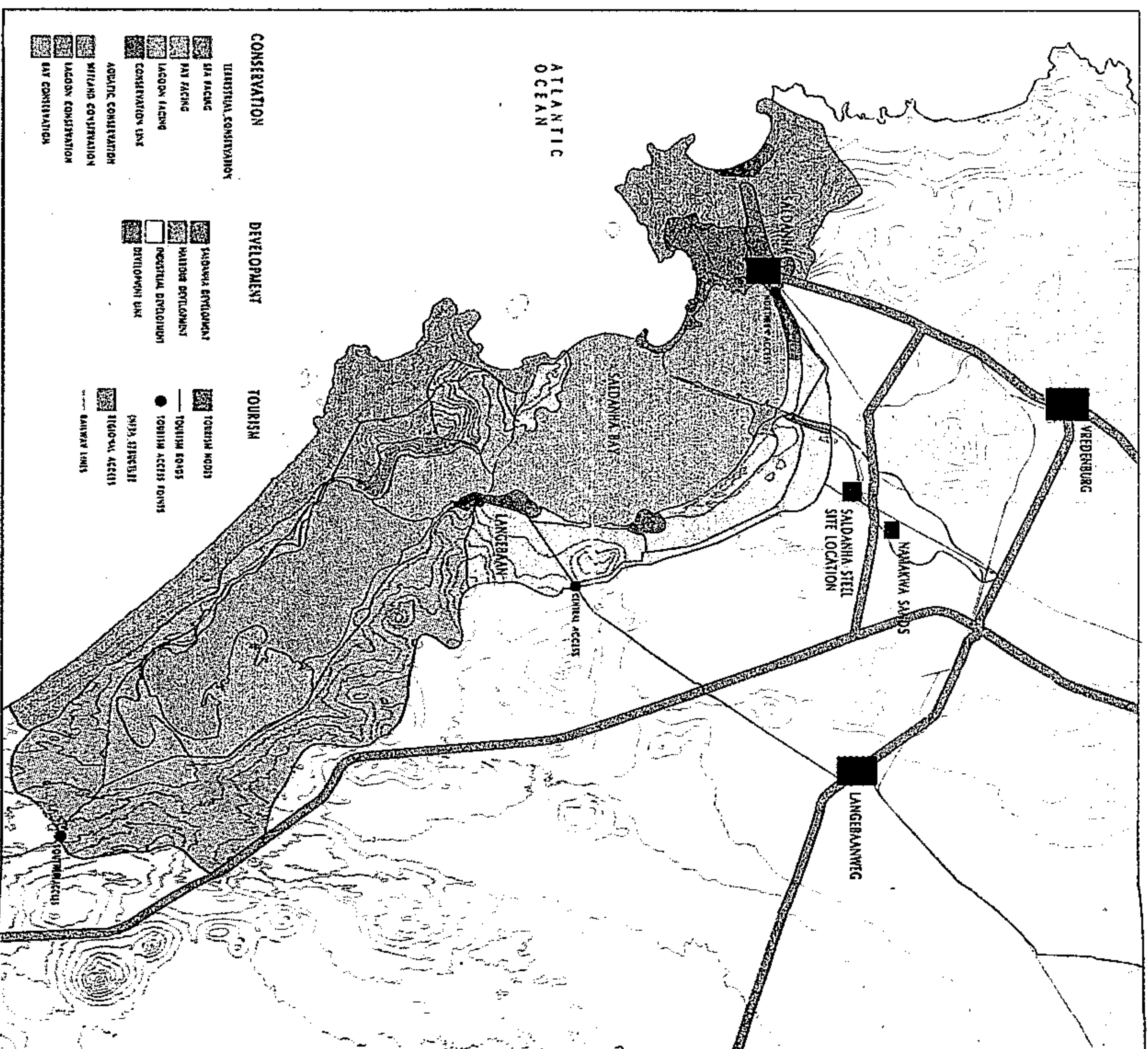
In total, more than 600 people, most from the West Coast, will be permanently employed at the mill.

An additional 1 800 indirect jobs will be created in areas such as catering, security, maintenance and other auxiliary services.

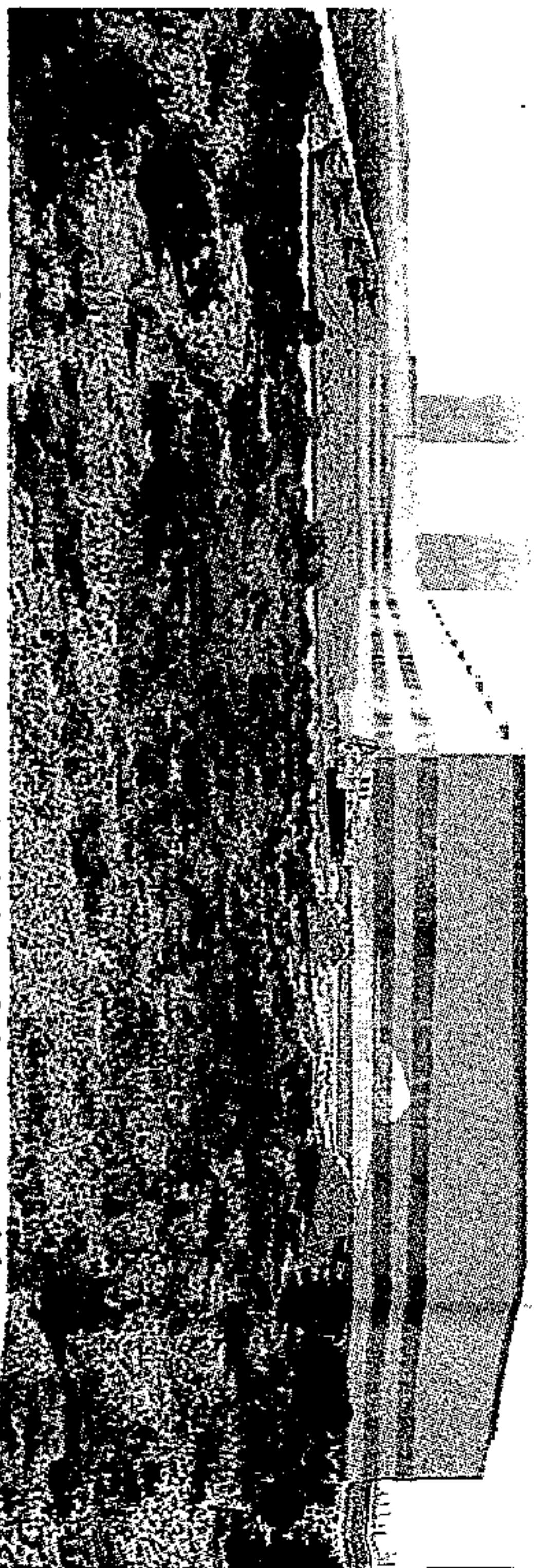
The project is expected to create a network of satellite industries including a coating plant, pipe manufacturers, cement producers and cold-rolling industries.

The plant will consist of a corex iron-making plant, a direct reduction iron-making plant, an arc electric steel-making plant and a continuous caster and hot-strip mill.

Saldanha Steel also intends opening a recruiting office in Cape Town as some equipment needed for the plant will probably be produced in Cape Town. Contractors for this work will be recruited only if there is a shortage on the coast.



□ SALDANHA BAY: The schematic zoning proposal for the area.



□ STEEL PROJECT: A computer simulation of the proposed factory.



# Go-ahead for EU deal

ST 28/1/96

(66)

Own Correspondent: London

THE 15 European Union foreign ministers meeting in Brussels tomorrow are expected to accept Britain's demand for an immediate mandate to proceed with negotiations for a free trade agreement with South Africa.

An overwhelming majority of the 15 EU countries are prepared to support British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind's initiative for a draft mandate clearing the way for long-frustrated negotiations to start in earnest at the next EU full council meeting on February 26.

A French-led attempt to remove Mr Rifkind's mandate proposal from tomorrow's agenda failed last week.

Mr Rifkind warned his 14 European opposite numbers that South African economic progress desperately needed the free trade pact and delays were forcing South Africa to question the EU's integrity.

France, which has led delaying tactics that have frustrated progress with the furious South African negotiating team for more than a year, capitulated after losing

the backing of key nations Germany and Italy, now reported to be solidly in favour of clearing the way for South African trade.

France, leader of the EU's Mediterranean bloc including Portugal, Spain and Greece, reportedly fears that a free trade deal with South Africa will force similar deals across Africa. France has acted to protect its fruit and vegetable markets in particular from tariff exemptions.

Britain's plea that a liberal free trade agreement is a vital step in the economic reconstruction of South Africa has been most strongly supported by Sweden, Denmark and more recently Holland.

In individual letters to EU foreign ministers, Mr Rifkind said: "We must move forward on Monday. The South Africans... must be reassured of the EU's goodwill."

"Liberalisation can be daunting, for them more so than for us. But we all stand to benefit in the long run, both economically and politically."

The progress towards a free trade agreement will be a significant boost for Anglo-South African relations before President Nelson Mandela's visit to Britain in July.

# Mining threat to Macassar dunes

(257)  
(56)

ARG 29/1/96

**ANDREA WEISS**  
Municipal Reporter

**ECOLOGICALLY** sensitive dunes near Macassar are under threat because of increasing demands for building sand, and because the land is still earmarked for urban development.

This was revealed after application was made for a temporary departure to allow sand mining on two farms owned by the State.

Portions of the farms have been leased for sand mining, and the dunes are also still earmarked for the expansion of Khayelitsha, Town 4.

Hippo Quarries and Ready Mix Materials have mineral leases in the area. Hippo Quarries also has seven prospecting permits, including an existing sand mine.

But now the planning committee of the Cape Metropolitan Council has urged that a management plan for the dune system be drawn up to determine "if and where" sand mining should take place, and to establish the environmental importance of the dunes.

The CMC previously issued

applications for temporary departures because plans were to build Khayelitsha, Town 4, in the place of the dunes.

Now the CMC is reconsidering this position because of a shift in planning thinking embodied in the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF), which argues against continued urban sprawl at the expense of the environment.

Instead, the MSDF maintains that people should be housed closer to employment in high-density corridors of activity.

The Metro South East Plan, derived from the MSDF, suggested that the housing of people far from job opportunities should not be perpetuated, and that plans to expand Khayelitsha Town 4 should therefore not proceed.

In addition, the local Macassar community development forum has expressed concern about the absence of consultation in the issuing of mining rights.

It points out that participants in an RDP self-build housing scheme of 600 units about two kilometres from a

demarcated mining area are paying R40 a cubic metre for sand, which is more than 500 percent higher than the base price of R8 from the sand mine.

The CMC proposal is that Cape Nature Conservation, the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, local authorities and affected communities be involved in drawing up a management plan for the dune area.

While the environmental sensitivity of the dunes has been recognised, a report on building sand in the Western Cape says the dunes are a significant source of high-quality sand for the future.

A 1993 report by the Minerals Bureau said the Western Cape was likely to experience a critical shortage of high-quality building sand by about 2002. Mining of the sand deposits at Macassar would relieve this shortage considerably.

Barrie Low, of the National Botanical Institute, found 210 indigenous plants in the dunes, two of which are threatened. In addition, the dunes have the only milkwood trees remaining on the Cape

Flats, and these are protected by the Forestry Act.

He suggested that the area should be managed as a multiple-use conservation area and that a moratorium be placed on any future development to allow consultation with affected parties to take place.

During an on-site inspection recently, the CMC found that the area was environmentally degraded and that mining operations had already started on one of the two sites for which application was made.

"This is cause for concern as it implies that the applicant is not concerned with the findings of the CMC and considers itself above the relevant planning procedures," the CMC report said.

The CMC said the dunes were seen as a "strategic building sand resource" and as such needed to be exploited, but this should not happen at the expense of the environment.

"It is also obvious that current mining is not properly managed, as can be seen by the lack of rehabilitation of the present mining site and a disused mine."

# Anger at plan for Oudekraal hotel

(288) (56) CT 29/1/96

**MELANIE GOSLING**  
ENVIRONMENT WRITER

DEVELOPMENTS along the pristine Cape coast may threaten the environmentally sensitive mountain area and co-ordinator of the proposed Table Mountain national park, Mr David Daitz, is worried there could be a rush of applications to local authorities to push through undesirable developments on the fringe of the proposed national park before the National Parks Board (NPB) has legislation in place to control development.

In one development, the roughly two-kilometre stretch of undeveloped mountainside from Camps Bay to Hottentots Huisie Bay up to about the 300m contour is also privately owned and has planning approval for a township, including a school, of 250 erven on the section abutting Camps Bay.

The approval for the township was granted in the 1960s and is still valid, according to a spokesman for the Cape Metropolitan Council.

The landmark "White House" at Oudekraal on the internationally-acclaimed scenic drive between Camps Bay and Llandudno will also be demolished next month to make way for a multi-million rand 70-bedroomed hotel, restaurant and conference centre.

This has raised concern that the hotel could trigger a rash of development along the stretch of coast.

The development has surprised many Capetonians who believed the slopes of the Twelve Apostles would not be developed after the announcement last November that Table Mountain and the Peninsula chain were to become a national park.

But the White House is on privately owned land which falls outside the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE), which will become a park.

Mr Roddy Gregory, who organised a

placard protest against the new hotel, said: "Everyone I know thinks the whole stretch of coast between Camps Bay and Llandudno is part of the nature area. Now it could turn into another St Tropez with wall-to-wall houses. The mountain should belong to the nation and we don't want a township or a hotel here."

Another angry Capetonian, Mr Julian Brandon, said: "If the hotel is built, that whole area will soon look like the concrete jungles on the European coast. Tourists don't come to the Cape to see hotels, they come for things like the world-famous beauty. Fifteen years ago tourists flocked to the Canary Islands because they were so beautiful. Now they don't go there anymore because of the gross development. We cannot let that happen here."

Another development on the fringe of the proposed national park which has raised concern is the controversial housing scheme on the slopes of Elsie's Peak in Fish Hoek.

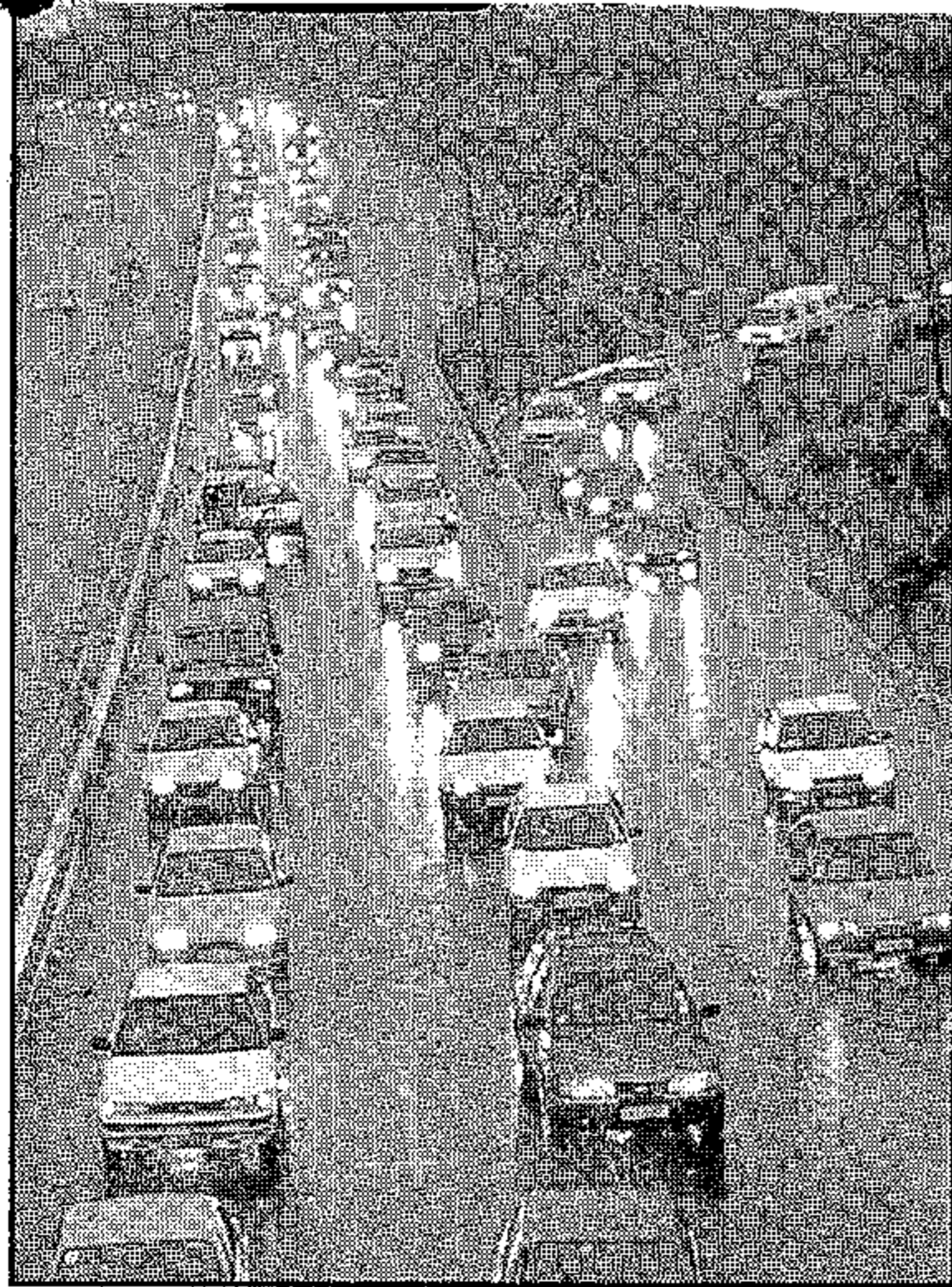
The proposal to sub-divide the 4,1ha slope into housing plots has been revived after huge public outcry when it was first proposed in 1992.

The controversial housing development on Fish Hoek's Zone C abutting the CPPNE is still on the cards after years of wrangling between the council, province, developers and environmentalists.

Daitz said it had been envisaged by many that NPB would control all development on the fringes of the future national park, by having the final veto on any development proposals in this area.

It was essential that the parks board find some mechanism to influence what happened on the edge of the park, he said.

● Architects Martin and Steytler said yesterday the White House hotel development had been approved after three years of negotiations with local authorities in which plans were amended several times to comply with environmental controls.



**FUMES GALORE:** A familiar sight on South African freeways and city streets: Streams of cars and lorries and fumes galore. The vehicles will remain, but the fumes could be a thing of the past with unleaded petrol.

# Unleaded won't cost the earth

(56) (183) ARG 30/11/96  
PRETORIA - Thursday sees the launch of unleaded petrol in South Africa and motorists are already wondering just how its arrival will affect them.

At the coast, unleaded petrol (with a slightly lower octane rating) will be available at a cost of about R1,71 a litre. This is 4 cents a litre cheaper than the equivalent leaded fuel, a ploy designed by the authorities to encourage motorists to switch to unleaded.

The idea is that, at the coast, petrol pumps that provide leaded fuel with a 93 octane rating (and known as regular, which is the lowest octane available locally) will be used to serve the new unleaded. As the demand for unleaded grows, more pumps will be switched to provide the new fuel. By May 1, unleaded should be available at every garage.

According to the fuel companies, all the major petrol stations in the greater Pretoria area should have at least one pump available providing unleaded from next Thursday.

The plan is that fuel companies will empty and clean 93-octane leaded tanks at stations before Thursday, fill the tanks with the new unleaded fuel and fit the narrower pump nozzles needed.

In reality, however, it appears some fuel companies are running behind schedule because several petrol stations approached by The Argus report that the conversion has not yet taken place.

So, who will be able to use the new fuel? The major motor manufacturers report that 65 percent of all cars on the road will be able to switch to unleaded immediately. Almost all cars built in the past five years have engines designed to run on unleaded.

About 15 percent of the remaining vehicles, mostly older cars, will need some form of retuning to use unleaded, while a further 10 percent will need to run three tankfuls of unleaded to one tankful of leaded.

The final 10 percent, either very old cars or high-performance cars with high-compression ratio motors, won't be able to use unleaded at all. This is not a major problem, however, as leaded fuel supplies will be provided for at least the next 15 years.

So, how do you know whether your car can use unleaded fuel? The plan is that petrol stations will be supplied with brochures motorists can study. Many stations already have these in stock.

But, if the brochure information does not cover your car, however, authorities suggest you call your local dealer or manufacturer, all of whom have set up advice lines.

The manufacturers also have supplied dealer workshops with details of any modifications needed by models that may need retuning.

According to the workshop manager of a city dealership chain, modifications will be fairly simple and cheap.

"We are expecting dozens of inquiries," he said, "and it would be unfair to charge them much.

"We reckon we could do it for as little as R20 a car."

In addition, major fuel manufacturers also have toll-free information lines.

Most of these toll-free services will be able to provide phone numbers and contacts for people needing advice on whether their motorcycles, motorboats and lawnmowers will be able to run on unleaded. Diesel vehicle owners will be unaffected.

The numbers are: Total 0800-118-089 (8.30am to 10pm); Shell 0800-027-027 (8am to 5pm); BP 0800-222-456 (8am to 5pm); Engen 0800-212-005 (8am to 5pm); Caltex 0800-226-655 (8.30am to 4.30pm) and Sasol 0800-111-705 (8am to 5pm).

## MEDIA SPOT

# Industry faces consumer resistance to unleaded fuel

BN 30/1/96 (183) (56)

Reports by  
Jacqueline Zaina

THE expectation of the petrol and motor industries that 20% of customers will convert to unleaded petrol in the first year of its availability highlights the extent of the communications challenge facing these companies.

Although the introduction of unleaded petrol next month could prove to be an effective marketing tool, the industry is concerned that consumer nervousness about filling up with a new type of fuel may initially limit its success.

Shell marketing manager Ralph McKellar said yesterday: "Based on international experience and the lower price — unleaded fuel costs 4c less a litre — we are confident the industry will achieve a 15%-25% conversion rate among existing consumers."

He said the outcome of the introduction of unleaded petrol for oil companies would depend largely on whether consumer awareness was heightened sufficiently to effect understanding and acceptance of the new product.

"Internationally, the introduction of unleaded fuel has been characterised by an initial lack of understanding which was countered only once customers became aware of the benefits of the petrol, such as the extension of engine life," said McKellar.

The advent of the unleaded op-

tion had resulted in co-operation between petrol and motor companies in an educational drive, said McKellar. Co-operation in the marketing of unleaded fuel in major newspapers and car magazines had been prompted by the realisation that it would have been wasted economy for all fuel and motor companies to educate consumers on the same thing. "It was decided that following the broader educational drive, we would brand our products separately and fight the war on that basis," he said.

The main thrust of Shell advertising launched in December has been on the detergent additive, which is now promoted as being available in both leaded and unleaded fuels.

McKellar said he did not expect to see much advertising on the basis of the environmental benefits of unleaded petrol yet, but said Shell might consider this platform in the longer term.

Total, which launched its "Great Extender" campaign as early as November, emphasised the ability of unleaded fuel to extend engine life, while Caltex also introduced a brand-specific unleaded petrol campaign towards the end of last month.

One of the central tenets of Engen's advertising is the ability of the fuel company to offer unleaded petrol throughout SA on the basis of its extensive network of service stations. All major petrol compa-

nies would also provide toll-free lines for additional information.

The main thrust of advertising by motor companies would be the compatibility of unleaded fuel with various vehicles.

Network agency client service director Jurgen Lubbe, who handles the Nissan account, said the car company's unleaded campaign focused on the way in which unleaded fuel affected Nissan vehicles. It stated the possible need for timing adjustments which could be required to ensure optimum efficiency of vehicles running on the lower-octane unleaded fuel.

Lintas client service director John Holding said: "Awareness of unleaded petrol is generally low, and non-existent in the black market, indicating that petrol and motor companies face a massive consumer education programme."

A recent Lintas survey indicated that the customer's choice of petrol was determined mainly by quality service and the perceived performance of their vehicles. This may have important implications with regard to the use of unleaded fuel which, being a lower octane fuel, may be perceived to reduce performance levels.

However, an Engen spokesman said about 65% of vehicles would be unaffected by the conversion. About 15% of cars which required timing adjustments to run on unleaded petrol would experience a slight reduction in efficiency.

# Govt absorbs unleaded fuel bill

MD 30/1/96

(5b) (P)

Mungo Soggot

GOVERNMENT would take a R160m-R170m knock from subsidising the introduction of unleaded petrol this year, fuel industry economists said yesterday.

Transnet economist Mike Schussler said government's tax revenue from unleaded fuel would be 6,2c/l less than that of leaded fuel. Based on projected sales of unleaded petrol — government hoped it would account for about 20% of the market after the first year — this would cost government between R160m and R170m.

The Central Energy Fund confirmed last week that unleaded fuel would hit the pumps on February 1 at a

4c/l discount to leaded fuel. Cabinet had decided on the 4c/l price differential to ensure unleaded petrol captured 15% to 25% of the market in a year.

The SA Petroleum Industry Association said there had been no hitches in the run up to the introduction of unleaded fuel and everything was on track for a smooth start up.

Econometrix economist Tony Twine said that in a "neat coincidence", government's 4c/l knock from the price differential between leaded and unleaded would coincide with a 4c/l cut in the subsidy given to Sasol.

The cut in Sasol's subsidy, which comes from the 9c/l motorists pay to the equalisation fund, will be diverted to state coffers.



**SITE VISIT:** Developer Mr Steve Jones (right) explains the layout of the proposed hotel to be built on the site of the "White House" at Oudekraal to Minister of Planning and Tourism Mr Lampie Fick while protesters Ms Melissa Hallaway and Mr Roddy Gregory make notes.

PICTURE: ANNE LAING

# Fick visits site of planned Oudekraal hotel

MELANIE GOSLING  
ENVIRONMENT WRITER

WESTERN CAPE Minister of Planning and Tourism Mr Lampie Fick has called on his department to investigate the procedures that led to approval being granted for the controversial building of a hotel on the site of the landmark "White House" at Oudekraal.

Fick made a surprise visit yesterday to the site of the proposed 70-bedroom hotel and conference centre where Cape Townians opposed to the development had draped protest banners from the White House saying "Save our mountain".

The White House, on privately-owned land, is to be demolished next month.

Earlier, peak-hour traffic on Victoria Road was backed up for kilometres as protesters handed out anti-hotel leaflets to motorists.

Fick said his visit was to "acquire the facts".

"I have asked my department to inform me of all the procedures involved in this development," he said.

He asked Mr Steve Jones, developer and owner of the White House, to attend the site visit.

Mr Jones told him he had followed the correct channels in getting approval for the development. He had negotiated with the local authorities for more than two years.

"I agreed in the development plans to enter into an environmental contract," Jones told Fick.

Surrounded by protesters, Fick said it was imperative that South Africa did not destroy natural areas with unplanned development.

"The major attraction for overseas tourists is our natural areas. We must be careful not to follow the example of Europe where the tourist boom led to unplanned development," he said.

"Now hotels in Nice and other areas are standing derelict because they have destroyed the product that attracted tourists. If we are going to continue to attract tourists, we must have planned strategies that include development and maintaining natural areas."

Asked if he would give permission for the rezoning of the privately-owned land below the

Twelve Apostles, which falls within the proposed national park, Fick said: "I would be very reluctant to condone development within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Area (CPPNE)."

"I don't know all the facts, but I would also be reluctant to see further development on the rest of the private land (between Camps Bay and Oudekraal)."

There was a heated exchange between the protesters, who have taken up residence in the White House, and Jones who said they were occupying the property illegally.

The protesters said Jones had given them permission.

Earlier yesterday, Jones, accompanied by Camps Bay police, ordered them to leave.

They refused. Jones said he had handed the matter over to his lawyers.

"I have spent R1,2 million in professional fees for this development and have gone out of my way to meet all the requirements," Jones said.

"I have done nothing behind anyone's back."

Mr Roddy Gregory, who is spearheading the protest, said: "We will not leave. If necessary, the government must buy back this land. We don't need or want a hotel on the mountain."

Fick said later that according to the preliminary report from his department, the developer and local authorities had followed the legal steps necessary in the rezoning and development applications.

CT 30/1/96 ~~AAA~~

(56)

# Oudekraal AR 31/1/96 protesters given notice

JOHN YELD (56)  
Environment Reporter

PAPERS have been served on protesters occupying the derelict White House at Oudekraal, informing them that an urgent application for their eviction has been scheduled for 10 am tomorrow in the Cape Town Supreme Court.

About 30 protesters, many of them members of the Alliance of Alternative Communities of Africa, have been occupying the building for about two weeks.

They are vehemently opposed to a hotel development on the site, approved in November after three years of negotiation between developer Steve Jones and local authorities.

Yesterday, a representative of the Sheriff's Office, Shaun Trytsman, arrived at the site about 3,40 pm and read a copy of the application to the 20-odd protesters present. He was accompanied by attorney Theodor Smith, acting for Mr Jones, and by two policemen.

Seven of the protesters, including spokesman and leader Rod Gregory, have been named as respondents. Only two of them — including Mr Gregory, who said he was incorrectly identified in the papers as "Roddy" — were present, and Mr Trytsman stuck the other copies into the front door jamb of the building.

The application will ask for an interdict ordering "the respondents and fellow protesters" to vacate the White House immediately, and for the Sheriff and the police to be authorised to assist if necessary.

The application will also ask for them to be "interdicted and restrained" from returning to the premises.

Responding affidavits must be filed by 4 pm today.



# Cabinet may decide future of Lake St Lucia today

ARLT 1/2/96

(56)

**JOHN YELD**  
Environment Reporter

LAKE St Lucia is one of South Africa's "top three" conservation sites but is still not adequately protected by legislation, members of parliament have been told on the eve of an expected cabinet decision.

The cabinet is due to decide at its meeting today whether to allow Richards Bay Minerals to mine the dunes on the eastern shores of St Lucia.

The issue, one of South Africa's biggest and most controversial environmental debates, has been dragging on for several years.

Campaigners opposed to the mining lobbied all 400 MPs, sending them a letter asking for their support.

The letter, signed by Nolly Zaloumis of the Working Group for St Lucia, on behalf of the Wildlife Society, said the eyes of the world were on the cabinet.

"We are asking you, on behalf of all South Africans and the world community, to say 'No' to mining at St Lucia," his letter stated.

"St Lucia is one of the three most important nature parks in this country, but in spite of 100 years of care, it is still not protected by adequate legislation."

The eastern shores area was the "heartland" of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park — an area that had already been acknowledged as a Ram-

sar Wetland of International Importance.

"Irreparable damage will be caused by mining which will severely affect its development and its value as a prime ecotourism and nature conservation area," Dr Zaloumis said.

"Mining is a dead-end option that will provide only the equivalent of five years' raw materials for the smelter at Richards Bay.

"The ecotourism option will provide permanent employment for thousands of people in the future in one of the most economically under-developed regions in South Africa."

A recent survey had shown that economic benefits from ecotourism would be at least equal to those of mining, Dr Zaloumis said.

"There are other places that can be mined, but St Lucia is unique ... It belongs to all South Africans; it is not for trashing.

"Let us keep St Lucia for future generations, unspoiled and free, symbolising the pride of our nation in its heritage."

# SA seeks national strategy as biodiversity agreement takes effect

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

(56) Star 1/2/96

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was ratified by South Africa on November 2 1995, came into force in South Africa this week.

The international agreement, ratified by more than 100 countries, commits the signatories to the conservation and sustainable use of indigenous flora and fauna.

"It commits South Africa to drawing up a series of protected areas, representing all the biomes in the country. And, for once, the whole spectrum of natural resources are drawn into one box - from the small genetic and species level, right up to ecosystems," Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism co-ordinator Dr Pieter Botha said yesterday.

The CBD was one of the major achievements of the Rio Summit in June 1992.

It approaches the issue of environment and development in a comprehensive way and goes beyond the conservation of indigenous flora and fauna and their sustainable use, to encompass such issues as biotechnology, biosafety, education, access to genetic resources and technology, and the sharing of benefits derived from the use of genetic material.

Twenty-three African countries attended a meeting on the CBD in Pretoria last year, to formulate an African stand on the issue, which was presented at the second conference of the CBD in Jakarta, Indonesia, in November.

Now the development and implemen-

tation of a national biological diversity plan is a priority.

A meeting of all role-players in South Africa was held in April last year. About 30 individuals, organisations, and central and provincial governments then formed the CBD reference committee, which is driving the process.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has secured funding support of R350 000 for the CBD project from the Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development.

In addition, the department has committed R175 000 to the project, which includes the development of a national environment policy known as Connep.

A steering committee and a consultant - namely Rachel Wynberg of the Environmental Evaluation Unit at Cape Town University - have been appointed.

Wynberg has just completed the first draft of a discussion document on the implementation of the CBD, which was discussed at a meeting of the reference committee this week.

It will be available for public comment, in print and on the Internet, by the end of this month. At the same time, a summarised version written for the layman will be available.

From this first round of consultation, a draft green paper will be issued, which will be discussed at a workshop of all role-players later this year. After the workshop and further consultations, it is hoped that a white paper will be ready for tabling in Parliament by October.

**Commitment  
to protect  
life, great  
and small**

'BILLIONS LOST IN REVENUE'

ET 2/2/96

(56)

# Wildlife, plant trade in SA 'out of control'

**JOHANNESBURG:** The trade in indigenous flora and fauna in South Africa is virtually out of control because of fragmented and inadequate legislation and administration, says a wildlife trade monitoring report released yesterday.

**S**OUTH AFRICA is losing billions of rand in revenue because the government cannot control the illegal trade in plants and animals or protect its rights on genetic resources.

This is said in the latest report by Traffic, the wildlife trade monitoring programme of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature and the World Conservation Union.

The report, released here yesterday, concludes that South Africa is not fulfilling its responsibilities as a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites).

"No national legislation has been adopted to implement either the text of the convention, or resolutions adopted by the Cites parties," Traffic officers Mr Ashish Bodasing and Ms Teresa Millukin said.

"Cites implementation in South Africa could best be described as ad hoc."

They also found that:

- There was evidence for allegations that SA is a laundering point for illicit wildlife trade in species originating outside the country.

- The trade in indigenous flora and fauna was virtually out of control owing to fragmented and inadequate legislation and administration.

David Newton, head of Traffic in South Africa, said. "The lack of policy on genetic resources has resulted in foreign countries being able to exploit our genetic resources, before we have had a chance to develop these markets."

As an example, he said that of 7 000 succulent plant species endemic to Southern Africa, 5 000 were already being sold by foreign countries.

"Another implication is that if any of those species were found to contain a valuable drug, then SA has lost not only the resource, but

the income that could accrue."

At the same time, SA had failed to take advantage of the potential market in some plant species, such as cycads.

"There is a great demand for cycads and SA has the potential to supply these, and earn revenue, through artificial propagation. Unfortunately, foreign governments refuse to accept SA permits, and that market which could have been lucrative is closed down," Newton said.

Echoing the recent Kumleben Report, the 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-year study of trade in wildlife, involving 120 investigations, found the systems and legislation to control the trade in wildlife urgently needed an overhaul.

"Poor administration, inconsistent legislation and inadequate wildlife trade controls are the primary reasons behind the legitimisation of otherwise illegal shipments of animals and plant or their products," the report said.

The report has been presented to Environment Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers. — Special Correspondent

# Fish Hoek housing plan 'could lead to urban sprawl like LA'

**MELANIE GOSLING**

A HOUSING development in Fish Hoek's Zone C — on land earmarked for the proposed Table Mountain national park — epitomises the kind of urban sprawl that could lead to "another Los Angeles" developing around the Peninsula.

This is the view of the co-ordinator of the proposed Peninsula national park, Mr David Daitz, who has hit out at the housing scheme as "totally inappropriate".

"This urban development on Zone C is within the boundaries of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Area (CPPNE) and flies in the face of all principles of the Metro-

politan Spatial Development Framework."

Although the proposed housing scheme is within the CPPNE, it is on private land.

The Fish Hoek local authority has called for objections to the application for subdivision of Zone C to develop the 37ha site into 314 housing units.

The developer, Fish Hoek Land and Estate, has also applied to the provincial authorities for a permit to develop within the CPPNE.

This comes in the same week as a visit to Cape Town by Dr B von Droste of the World Heritage Centre in Switzerland, who is here to look at potential World Heritage Sites in South Africa.

Table Mountain and the Peninsula chain is one of the sites.

The announcement last year that the area would be controlled by National Parks Board was seen as the first step towards getting it accepted as a World Heritage Site.

But Mr John Cobby, vice-chairman of the CPPNE's management advisory committee, said more than 20% of the land in the CPPNE was privately owned by about 187 land-owners, and the board would have to negotiate with each one.

This could take several years.

Objections to the Zone C subdivision application can be sent to the Town Clerk, Private Bag X1, Fish Hoek, 7975 by February 20.

ET 2/2/96

(56)

## Toxic waste ship to berth in city

PRETORIA: The Department of Environmental Affairs said yesterday it had given permission for a ship carrying toxic waste to Belgium from Australia to stop over in Durban and Cape Town.

The Panamanian vessel MSC Clorinda will carry a 1 000-ton cargo of copper lead dross en route to Antwerp, a statement said.

The ship is due to arrive in Durban on February 27 and in Cape Town on March 2.

"The consignment ... is destined for Belgian company Union Miniere, where it will undergo a special process for the recovery of metal."

"The department will inform the public of the exact whereabouts of the ship so that it can be monitored by any institution interested in doing so," the statement said. — Reuter

(5b) CT 2/2/96

# Oudekraal protesters 'must quit'

2/2/96 (56)  
SUPREME COURT REPORTER

ENVIRONMENTAL protesters occupying the White House at Oudekraal were ordered to leave yesterday afternoon after the Supreme Court granted an urgent application by the developer, Mr Steve Jones.

The sheriff delivered the order to the group of about 40 protesters, who oppose the development of a hotel complex on the site.

Camps Bay police said the protesters would be given until 9am today to leave before any attempt would be made to remove them physically.

The protesters have said that if anyone tries to evict them they will strip to the skin and fasten themselves to the gabled 1929 home on Victoria Road known as The White House.

Mr Acting Justice M A Albertus granted the eviction order against seven people named in court papers.

He also ordered off about 35 other people and "everybody living on the property or who made common cause with them".

After the hearing a relieved Mr Jones said the occupation had been "scary".

# Hazardous waste ship to dock in SA harbours

Cape Town. — A Panamanian ship loaded with 1.000 tons of hazardous waste en route to Antwerp in Belgium will be allowed into Durban and Cape Town harbours, the Department of Environmental Affairs said yesterday.

The department said the *Clorinda*, which is carrying a consignment of copper-lead dross, left Sydney on January 24 and would arrive in Durban on February 27 and remain there for two days. It

would dock in Cape Town on March 2, before leaving for Belgium on March 4.

While in South African waters the ship would be under the supervision of Portnet to ensure that no waste was offloaded at either local harbours.

"Being aware of the sensitivity and controversy surrounding the transport of hazardous waste in South Africa, the Department of Environment and the Department of Transport will be moni-

toring all movements of the vessel on a continuous basis."

The cargo is destined for the Belgian company, Union Miniere, where it will undergo a special process for metal recovery.

The department said it had given the green light to a request from the Environment Protection Agency in Australia to allow the passage of the cargo.

In terms of the Basel Convention on the Con-

trol of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal, Australia must get prior consent from all countries through which shipments of its hazardous waste are scheduled to travel.

The department said it had granted this request as the material had been legitimately traded between these two member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. — Sapa.

(56)

Star 2/2/96

# Report calls for tighter wildlife laws

Michael Moon

LOOPHOLES exist in current laws governing trade in wildlife, and new national legislation to protect endangered species should be a goal of "immediate importance", a new study has found.

The report, by the international wildlife trade monitoring group Traffic, also says SA's administration of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species is "problematic" and needs to be overhauled.

Law enforcement in wildlife trade also needs improvement,

say the authors of the report who conducted a three-and-a-half-year investigation in SA with support from the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Endangered Wildlife Trust.

SA's reputation for conserving wildlife is being undermined by government's inability to adequately control trade in wildlife and enforce the convention, according to the report.

It says the provincial nature of trade controls lies at the heart of the problems.

The "compartmentalised" nature of controls is inefficient and

BO 2/2/96 (56)  
ineffective. Implementation of the convention in SA "could best be described as ad hoc", with provincial officials variously interpreting the convention, implementing some provisions and ignoring others, says the report.

The researchers have called for national legislation to provide uniform legal coverage for trade in species listed by the convention.

Customs officials should become part of a comprehensive strategy for controlling wildlife shipments.

Few shipments are inspected prior to export, they say.



# Open season for poachers

~~3 FISHING~~ (56)  
**WILLEM STEENKAMP**, Staff Reporter

SOUTH Africa's marine resources, generating thousands of jobs and billions of rands annually, are ready to be poached by unscrupulous international fishing fleets.

Protection of marine resources has come to a virtual standstill with all seven of the Department of Environmental Affairs' patrol vessels in a serious state of disrepair.

By the end of this week only two of these vessels were deployed. The others are simply not seaworthy enough to go to sea.

Johan van Zyl, deputy director of marine conservation at the Directorate of Sea Fisheries, said R175 million was needed for a fleet of five patrol boats to protect South Africa's marine resources, but no money was available.

In the interim the Department of Environmental Affairs has asked for R2 million for repairs to some of the boats but even this money has not been forthcoming.

"The sad fact is that some are simply too old to repair. We now have to call on the South African Air Force and Navy to assist us in patrolling the coastline," said Mr Van Zyl.

The department has also been hit by budget cuts and one of the vessels still able to go to sea, the *Custos*, cannot sail because of a lack of staff. *ARLT 3/2/96*

Aircraft are used to spot ships which poach in South Africa's waters, but they can escape relatively easily because there are no patrol boats to catch them.

The SAAF and the Navy have their own budget problems. Dozens of pilots have left the Air Force for better pay in the private sector and the SAAF's Dakotas, used for marine patrols, have long since passed their sell-by dates.

SAAF pilots have at various times expressed concern about the safety of the aircraft and there is a dire need for modern aircraft to fulfil the duties of the Dakotas.

Most of the Navy's ageing fleet of minesweepers and missile craft have also reached the end of the line and many will have to be decommissioned in a few years.

The Department of Environmental Affairs has already identified new modern patrol vessels which would ensure that South Africa's marine resources were adequately protected but until some money is made available, it is open season on the SA fishing waters.

## Hazardous waste ship gets <sup>(56)</sup> green light to use SA ports

A PANAMANIAN ship loaded with 1 000 tons of hazardous waste en route to Antwerp in Belgium would be allowed into Durban and Cape Town harbours, said the Department of Environment Affairs.

The department said the Clorinda, which is carrying a consignment of copper dross, left Sydney on January 24 and was due to arrive in Durban on February 27 for two days.

It was due to dock in Cape Town on March 2, before leaving for Belgium on March 4.

While in South African waters, the ship will be under the supervision of Portnet to ensure that no waste is off-loaded at either Cape Town or Durban. *ARCT 3/2/96*

A statement said: "Being aware of the sensitivity and controversy surrounding the transport of hazardous waste in South Africa, the department, together with the Department

of Transport will be monitoring all movements of the vessel on a continuous basis."

The cargo is destined for the Belgian company Union Miniere where it will undergo a special process for metal recovery.

The department said it had given the green light to a request from the Environment Protection Agency in Australia to allow the passage of the cargo.

In terms of the Basle Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal, Australia must get prior consent from all countries through which shipments of its hazardous waste are scheduled to travel.

"The department granted this request as the material was legitimately traded between these two member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development," said the statement. — Sapa.

# Check before switching to unleaded

**CHARLENE CLAYTON**  
Business Reporter

UNLEADED petrol was introduced to South Africa for the first time this week at four cents a litre cheaper than leaded fuel — but motor vehicles not compatible with the new fuel could be seriously damaged.

Although almost 90 percent of the cars currently on the roads will be able to use unleaded petrol according to a comprehensive list compiled

(56) ARG 3/2/96  
by the National Automobile Manufacturers Association of South Africa (NAAMSA), about ten percent will not.

The South African Chamber of Business (Sacob) has cautiously welcomed the introduction of unleaded fuel.

"We need to do it to bring us in line with trends internationally. One of our chief concerns is the effect it will have on the minibus taxi industry," said Sacob manager Peggy Drodskie.

Unleaded fuel has been introduced at octane levels of 95 at the coast and 91 inland and will replace the present 93 and 97 octanes.

Initially unleaded fuel will be available from selected service stations only, but from May nearly all retail petrol stations will stock it, said Terry O'Donovan, chairman of the Unleaded Petrol Communications Task Group.

The introduction of unleaded fuel was initiated by the motor

industry because of the need to produce vehicles that can be exported.

Mr O'Donovan warned that people who are not sure whether their vehicles are compatible with unleaded fuel should stick with leaded petrol, which will still be available for 15 to 20 years.

Lead is used in petrol as an inexpensive way of increasing octane levels in fuel or increasing an engine's resistance to knock.

According to an independent consultant and mechanical engineer, Patrick Swan, certain high performance vehicles will not be able to use unleaded fuel because the octane levels at which it is being introduced are too low.

In older vehicles, lead is used to lubricate the valve seats of engines and the use of unleaded fuel could cause poor operation, increased exhaust emissions and serious damage to cylinder heads.

la  
ti  
b  
m  
m  
s  
s  
s  
e

3/2/96 ARG.

(56)



□ **STANDING FIRM:** Protesters link hands as Cape Town sheriff Shaun Trytsman reads the eviction order.

GROUP spokesman Roddy Gregory happily describes himself as "the chief thorn in the side" in the furore over the planned hotel on the Oudekraal site near Llandudno.

Mr Gregory is part of the group calling themselves Guardians of the Mountain who took occupation of the development site two weeks ago. They have refused to budge from the property in spite of multimillion rand plans to develop the site.

"This is the last piece of beautiful coast in the world. We are not going to let them spoil it," he said.

Pointing to the gabled White House which was home to around 50 people this week, Mr Gregory said he "did not give a damn about the house".

"We are here to guard the mountain and we will not leave. They will have to put a bullet between my eyes to move me off this site," he said.

Mr Gregory threatened legal action if the group occupying the site were described as "hippies" in Saturday Argus, a description he said was "derogatory".



□ **TEPEE TORPEDO:** A lone tepee dweller on the Oudekraal site. The tent was due to be pulled down after the police arrests yesterday.

Picture: BRENTON GEACH, Staff Photographer.



□ **A DIFFERENT BEAT:** House at Oudekraal two

□ **NEW HOTEL:** A montag



□ **PEACE, SISTER:** This protester did not go willingly. Female protesters were mostly escorted off the White House property by policewomen but those who resisted arrest had to be carried.

## Environmental protesters 'just dagga-smoking hippies'

DEVELOPER Steve Jones is apoplectic with rage at the thought of the group of people who occupied his land illegally at Oudekraal being described as "environmental protesters".

Describing the group as "out-of-work hippies" who invaded his private property two weeks ago, he says the historic gabled White House has no water, no sewerage and no electricity.

"The site is now dirty and fires have been started in the house on oak floors. The mess is unreal and far from environmentally friendly. Yet they say they represent the public," he said in frustration.

Mr Jones, who plans to build a R45-million hotel complex on the site, is adamant the group are not environmental protesters and claim they are simply opportunists.

"The hippies had been on the site for a few days and had a party. Only when they were told to leave did they decide to protest. Then they talked about saving the mountain," he said.

Mr Jones accused the people who invaded his land of smoking dagga around Western Cape Minister of Planning and Tourism Lampie Fick when he visited the

site to speak to Mr Jones.

One of the leaders had introduced himself to Mr Fick as "Captain Cosmos", he alleged.

"I don't know which planet these people are from - I just can't believe they think they represent the people of Cape Town," he said.

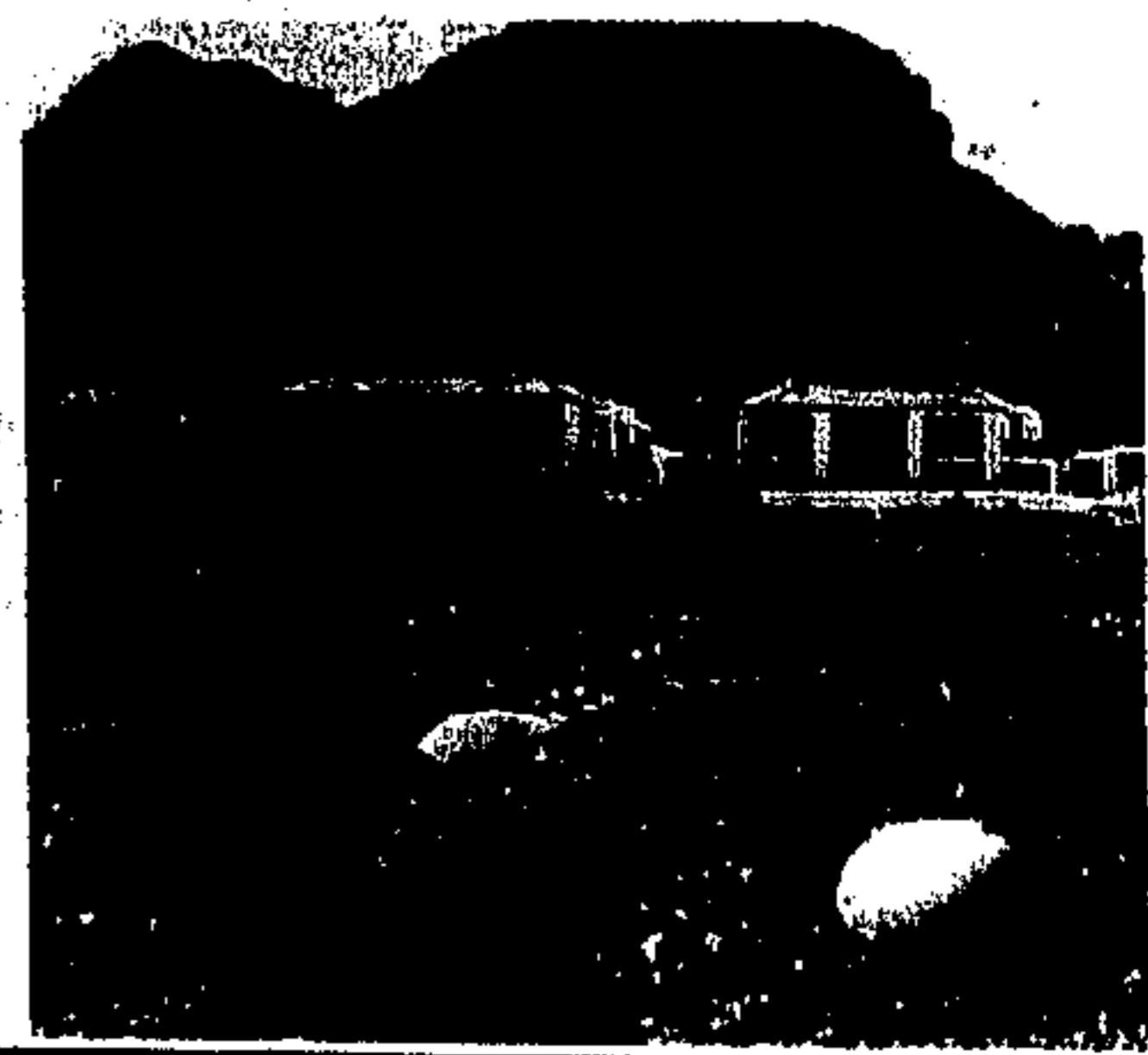
It was Mr Jones himself who two weeks ago gave two students from Hout Bay permission to stay temporarily on site - with the proviso they leave when development began, he said.

Two days later Mr Jones and his wife Linda were driving past the White House when they noticed numerous combis on the site.

The next day "Save The Mountain" banners were strung up over the gables of the White House, he said.

For more than a year former financial consultant Mr Jones has been submitting reports to the city council - which led to approval being given for the building of the proposed hotel on the site.

The angry developer held up wads of environmental studies and traffic impact studies he submitted before approval was granted.



# M TECH & D TECH

By GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

GROUP spokesman Roddy Gregory happily describes himself as "the chief thorn in the side" in the furore over the planned hotel on the Oudekraal site near Llandudno.

Mr Gregory is part of the group calling themselves Guardians of the Mountain who took occupation of the development site two weeks ago. They have refused to budge from the property in spite of multimillion rand plans to develop the site.

"This is the last piece of beautiful coast in the world. We are not going to let them spoil it," he said.

Pointing to the gabled White House which was home to around 50 people this week, Mr Gregory said he "did not give a damn about the house".

"We are here to guard the mountain and we will not leave. They will have to put a bullet between my eyes to move me off this site," he said.

Mr Gregory threatened legal action if the group occupying the site were described as "hippies" in Saturday Argus, a description he said was "derogatory".

A group describing themselves as Guardians of the Mountain caused a rumpus when they moved into the historic White House on the Oudekraal site near Llandudno.

The people were members of the Alliance of Alternative Communities of Africa, which was founded in Grahamstown, he claimed.

All the people staying on the Oudekraal site were drug-free, alcohol-free and 99% meat free, claimed Mr Gregory, who admitted smoking "lots of marijuana" to keep up his strength over this issue.

When asked if he described himself as an environmentalist, Mr Gregory said he was a "man of life".

The group needed financial support for their work and today and tomorrow would be "open house" for Cape Town, he said.

There would be fire-eating displays, juggling, yoga and other activities.

"The bridge club from Hout Bay said they were going to bring us cookies, but they have not come yet. Tell the people of Cape Town we need their support to guard the mountain," he said.

The group was communicating with environmentally concerned people around the world and surfing the Internet as part of the information network, said Mr Gregory. The group could be contacted by cell-phone.

A comprehensive information centre consisting of newspaper clippings pinned to a board and piles of leaflets on a table has been set up in the entrance to the White House.

The surrounding rooms are occupied and beds are laid on the floors. A tepee has been erected in the garden and people mill about the property, cooking on an open fire in the front.

"My lady, we are going to be here for the next 900 years. We are going to be here to guard the mountain because the elders are gathering," said Mr Gregory.

Environmental groups would pull together to save the Peninsula, he said.

Mr Gregory said a CNN crew was also camping on the site.

"The whole world is watching us right now."

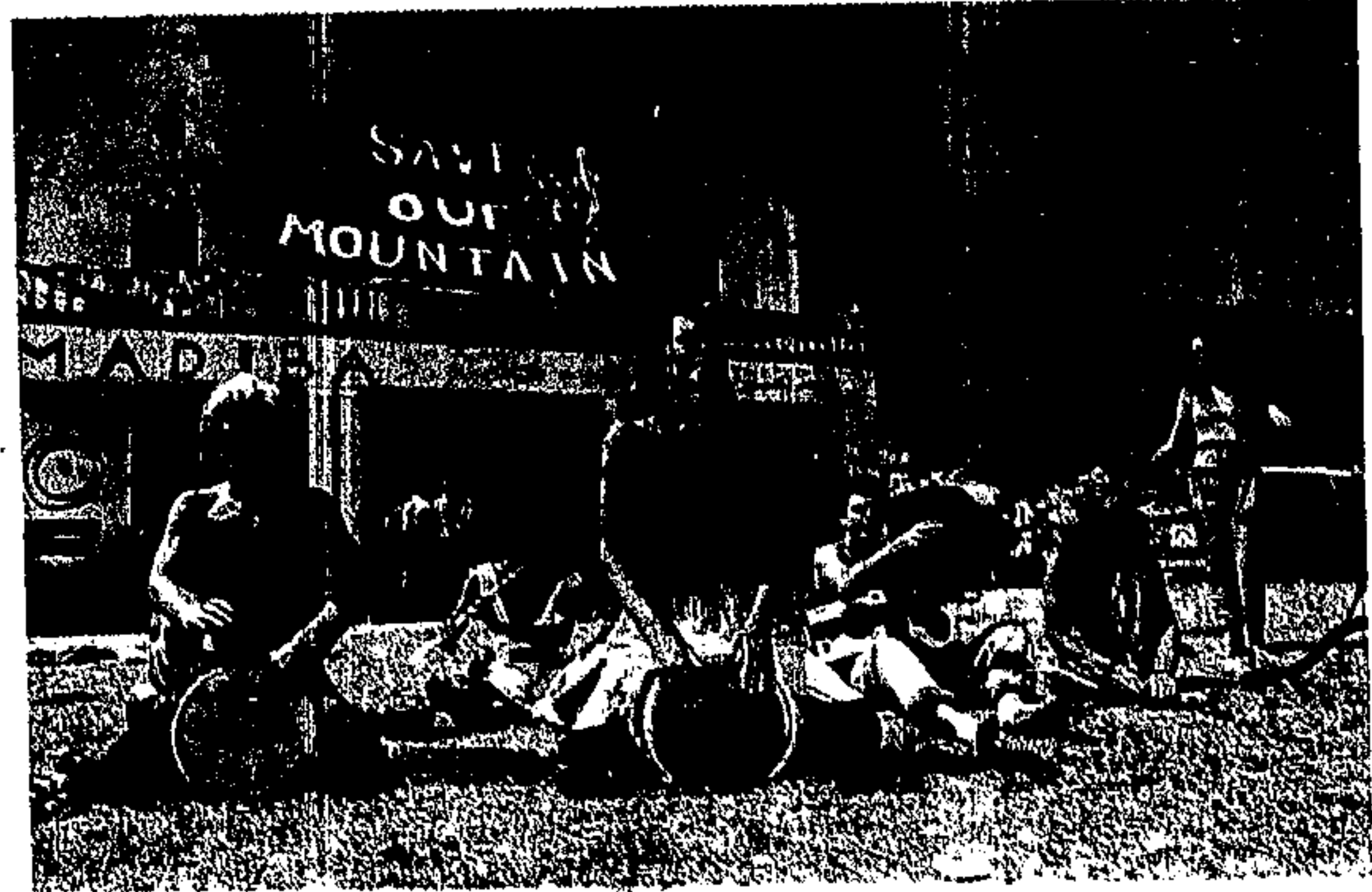


Is the eviction order.



RENTON GEACH, Staff Photographer.

illed down after the police



Picture: ANDREW INGRAM, Staff Photographer.

A DIFFERENT BEAT: Part of the group of about 50 people who moved into the White House at Oudekraal two weeks ago and protested against the building of a hotel.

NEW HOTEL: A montage of the model of the proposed R45-million hotel on the Oudekraal site.

# 'S pies'

introduced him-ain Cosmos", he

net these people lieve they think of Cape Town,"

self who two ents from Hout temporarily on hey leave when id.

es and his wife he White House rous combis on

Mountain" ban- r the gables of

ormer financial been submitting - which led to the building of site. eld up wads of



**M TECH**  
**R D TECH**



### BURSARIES

The bursaries range from R7 000 per year (M Tech) to R10 000 per year (D Tech) for a period of two years.

The M Tech degree (Master's degree in Technology) and the D Tech degree (Doctorate in Technology) require a thesis/dissertation on an industry-related subject for the



Picture: OBED ZILWA, Staff Photographer.

□ **FORCED REMOVAL:** "I demand a lawyer!" cries group spokesman Roddy Gregory as he is carried off by police.

## Battle for Oudekraal ends in mass arrest

**LINDSAY BARNES**  
Staff Reporter

SHOUTS of protest greeted police when they arrested 37 people protesting against the development of a 70-room hotel at Oudekraal's White House.

Clothes were torn as members of the group, calling itself the Alliance of Alternative Communities of Africa, resisted arrest.

The police action ended several days of squatting by the group.

The sit-in highlighted concern for Table Mountain and encroaching developments.

The showdown began at 10am yesterday when police escorted the sheriff of Cape Town, Shaun Trytsman, to the property.

While Mr Trytsman read the eviction notice, squatters on the lawn at his feet blocked their ears with their fingers.

Music played by others reached a high pitch as they attempted to drown the voice of authority.

Shortly after 1pm a convoy of about

10 police vehicles appeared on the road.

Police spokeswoman Virna Simon said the squatters had been warned a number of times to leave and they were well aware they were trespassing.

As some of the leaders negotiated with the police, others danced and sang in defiance.

Police moved en masse and attempted to make arrests.

After 15 minutes most of the protesters had been moved and stragglers packed their vehicles and drove away.

Three men stayed on the roof and the Hostage Squad was called in to negotiate.

In total, 22 men and 15 women were held.

They were to appear in Cape Town Magistrate's Court and expected to be released on bail, said their lawyer, Joe Weeber.

The demolition of the building began shortly after they were taken away but applications to stop it were in progress, Mr Weeber said.

■ More reports and pictures, page 5.

Coopers & Lybrand Computer Co

Telephone Support : (021) 59

Courses	February	March
<b>FINANCIAL SYSTEMS</b>		
Pastel 3	12 & 13 & 14	4 & 5
Pastel 4	5 & 6 & 7 & 8 27 & 28 & 29 & 1 March	12 & 13 15, 25 27
Brilliant	15 & 19 & 22	18 & 19
AccPac (All Modules)	Training available	
<b>MICROSOFT WINDOWS</b>		
Intro to Windows	5 & 19 & 28	1 & 11
Windows '95	26	
<b>MICROSOFT OFFICE (Windows)</b>		
MS-Word	8-9 & 19-20	4-5 & 11
MS-Word (Advanced)	14 & 21	
MS-Excel	5-6 & 14-15 & 19-20	4-5 & 11
MS-Excel (Advanced)	15-16	11
MS-Powerpoint	9 & 21	
<b>LOTUS SMARTSUITE (Windows)</b>		
Wordpro '96		2

disclosure at Simpson's... ions last week that he... go, and again which he... follow... papers

## Thor probe to cover mercury processing controls

President Nelson Mandela has agreed to extend the mandate of the commission of inquiry investigating Thor Chemicals to include a probe of mercury-processing controls, commission chairman Prof Dennis Davis said yesterday.

The agreement followed a request to Mandela to extend the commission's terms of reference. The commission would be required to recommend steps to help minimise risk, and protect workers and the environment.

Davis said the commission would first complete the initial part of its brief, which included:

- Investigating the background to Thor's acquisition of spent mercury catalyst stockpiles and other sludge on its premises.

- Reporting on use or disposal of the sludge.
- Recommending how to deal with catalyst and waste.

The commission, appointed in March last year, will hold its first public hearings early next week. - Sapa

(56) (scribble) Star 3/2/96

**ZOO LAKE**  
ARTISTS MARKET ASSOCIATION



**EXHIBITION THIS WEEKEND**

Thousands of paintings of all sizes and shapes to suit all pockets and tastes

**GIFT VOUCHERS NOW AVAILABLE**

© The Star 01/1/0824

**Beautiful Persian Carpets & Kilims?**

From Lidchi, with total confidence - since 1936!

- Prices range mainly between R500 - R4 900
- Authenticity, quality and value guaranteed!
- Appro's welcome • Terms available
- Credit cards accepted
- Expert cleaning & restoration

**SAT AND SUN 10-4PM**  
**WEEKDAYS 9-5PM**

**Victor Lidchi**  
THE TRUSTED NAME IN PERSIANS AND KILIMS

Sandton Square  
Shop 38, Square Level  
Cnr 5th & Maude St  
Sandown  
Tel: 784-2555

# Crisis for coastal

ST (M) 44 196

# patrols

ST (M) 44 196

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

SOUTH Africa's fishing grounds are being patrolled by two ageing vessels which stand little chance of preventing a potentially catastrophic plundering of the country's marine resources, the Directorate of Sea Fisheries warned this week.

Sea Fisheries confirmed that only three of its seven patrol vessels are operational — and that fishery law enforcement along South Africa's 3 000km coastline has virtually ceased.

"Our patrolling capacity is insignificant. It's no secret that we desperately need new patrol vessels to replace our ageing fleet," a senior Sea Fisheries spokesman told Metro this week.

"It must be stressed that failure to protect our fishing resources will have catastrophic results for South African fisheries, especially for the coastal communities dependent on them," the Chief Directorate: Sea Fisheries said this week.

"All the patrol vessels are in a serious state of disrepair and most of them are unseaworthy.

"With an average age of 23 years, these vessels are incapable of providing an effective platform for the purpose of conducting fisheries inspection and law enforcement," the chief directorate said.

Replacing the obsolete patrol fleet would cost R175-million, the chief of the Sea Fisheries inspectorate, Dr Johan van Zyl, said.

Meanwhile, the director-general of Environment Affairs, and the Chief of the Navy were busy drafting a co-operation agreement. Sea Fisheries and the Air Force were also linked via a marine patrol control centre at Ysterplaat, Dr van Zyl added.

Tasked with policing the one-million km<sup>2</sup> Exclusive Economic Zone — between the Orange River mouth in the west and Ponta do Ouro in the east — marine officials have seen their resources whittled away by under-funding and staff shortages.

"Deep-sea patrols up to 200 nautical miles are non-existent because the Custos, the only deep sea vessel, is laid up at Cape Town because of a staff shortage," a spokesman said.

Patrolling has been left to the 14-year-old Pelagus, based at Gansbaai, and the Protector II at Laaiplek — which has already seen 25 years of service.

According to the Sea Fisheries chief directorate, the Pelagus should be withdrawn by March as she is not suited for her job and is too expensive to repair.

Restricted to a top speed of 12 knots and a seaward limit of 10 nautical miles, she is no match for powerful modern trawlers.

Last week Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers said the inspectorate did not have enough resources when his department took it over from the Cape provincial administration last year.

The poor salaries in the inspectorate were a major problem, but moves were under way to upgrade the status in the civil service of sea fisheries management.

Dr de Villiers said it would cost millions of rands to replace or refurbish the patrol boats and his department was discussing possible co-operation in deep-sea patrol work with the navy.

## New boss for Sea Fisheries

Dr MONDE Mayekiso of Fort Hare University has been appointed Chief Director of Sea Fisheries from March 1.

Environment Affairs and Tourism Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers said this week Dr Mayekiso was joining the department at a very important time.

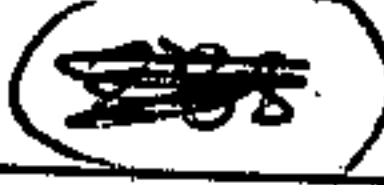
Dr Mayekiso's work includes studies in quantitative techniques in fishery management, fishery science, resource management and ecology, and evolution and management of African fishes. — Sapa.



# Call to freeze upgrading of cableway

ST (M) 4/2/96

(5)



**THE Cape Town city council has been urged to delay approving plans to upgrade the Table Mountain cableway until an environmental survey into the R45-million project is completed.**

The appeal by the National Parks Board follows the council's decision to call off its legal battle to expropriate and evict the cableway's owners from Table Mountain.

The company, however, still needs approval from at least four statutory authorities before it can go ahead with an ambitious multi-million rand programme to upgrade the cableway.

The NPB said it would be "inappropriate and premature" for the council to approve rezoning and building plans until the company's integrated environmental management process had run its full course.

"This implies that pertinent issues raised or highlighted during the process must be satisfactorily addressed by the (company) before the process of approval can proceed," NPB chief executive Robbie Robinson told Cape Town's City Planner this week.

And, according to the Mountain Club of South Africa, it was essential that an enforceable environmental management plan be added to the cableway company's lease with the city council.

While Mr Louis de Waal, the chairman of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, said he was happy with this proposal, a Mountain Club spokesman said there were so many unresolved substantive issues "that it would surely make sense to delay the project by a year".

By CHARL DE VILLIERS  
and JEREMY WOODS

It was impossible, however, to draft such a plan until the environmental impact of acceptable alternatives had been publicly assessed, he added.

"Waste and litter disposal, sewerage and combined routing of these services with the power supply have not yet been addressed," he said.

Mr de Waal said the company hoped to have approval for the main aspects of the upgrade by early March. If all goes to schedule, the revamped cableway should be ready for operation by December 1 this year.

But this week Mr de Waal admitted that there was "absolutely no way" that work could start if any of the relevant authorities disapproved.

These include the city council, the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment Management Advisory Committee and the National Monuments Council.

The National Parks Board, as the future managers of the mountain chain, would also have to be satisfied.

Mr de Waal said a sewage disposal system still had to be finalised for the top cableway station, but this should not have to delay work as an existing seepage system was functioning normally.

Official city council correspondence this week confirmed that the council and cableway company had resolved their differences.

Key elements to the settlement — endorsed by the company on January 25 — include the company upgrading the cableway to international standards this year.

# White House: Greens out

## — shotgun guards in

(67) ST 4/2/96  
By JAMES BOWYER and  
CHARL DE VILLIERS

THIS week's police swoop on a peaceful protest against a hotel planned for Oudekraal came a few days before a top-ranking United Nations official was due in Cape Town to assess Table Mountain's value as a potential World Heritage Site.

The White House — the hub of a proposed R40-million hotel and conference centre development — is now being guarded by three shotgun-toting police men who moved in after security arrested 37 protesters armed with bongo drums, frangipani blossoms and aborigine didgeridoos.

Police spokeswoman Inspector Verna Simon said the protesters faced charges of trespassing and contempt of court when they appeared in court soon after their arrest. They were released on their own recognisances and warned to appear again on March 8.

While the colourful two-week protest was abruptly halted by developer Steve Jones' three court interdicts and police intervention, the White House controversy has rekindled appeals for a development moratorium in and around the borders of the proposed Peninsula national park.

Critics, including the Wildlife Society, say it also urgently underlines the need for public involvement in planning decisions.

On Thursday, Unesco World Heritage Centre director Bernd von Droste will visit Table Mountain and the National Affairs Board as part of his two-week fact-finding mission of potential World Heritage Sites in South Africa. NPB Table Mountain coordinator David Daitz confirmed.

Meanwhile, the Wildlife Society said it opposed the White House development and queried why it was not preceded by an integrated environmental management (IEM) process.

"It's ironic that at the time that the hotel development was approved, the whole question of the management of the Peninsula mountain chain was under public scrutiny," spokesman Addy Gubb said.

Western Cape Development Planning Minister Lampie Fick said the White House development had been processed "absolutely lawfully".

"But I'm set on calling an absolute halt to developers who think they can make a quick million because of the tourism boom," he told Metro.

Provincial planners would also "think very carefully" before allowing other private land between Mr Jones' White House scheme and Bakoven to be rezoned for development.

IEM procedures were being included in a new provincial planning statute, he added.

'UPGRADE RUSH MAY HARM MOUNTAIN'

# Freeze of cableway construction sought

CT 5/2/96

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE CONCERNED** that in the rush to rebuild the Table Mountain cableway the mountain could be harmed. **LOREN KOLEVSOHN** reports.

**T**HE Mountain Club of South Africa and the National Parks Board (NPB) have asked for a freeze on the R45-million facelift for the Table Mountain cableway, due to begin later this month, claiming time pressures are overriding important environmental factors.

The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company still needs approval from at least four statutory authorities before it can go ahead with the upgrade, but the head of the mountain club, Lester Coelen, said yesterday he did not believe the company had explored the various options, but had favoured some and excluded others far too quickly.

He said: "If they cannot complete the environmental assessments properly, then they cannot go ahead with the development."

Coelen said it was accepted that the cableway needed to be upgraded, but he felt there was "enormous political pressure" to go ahead, as the project needed to be completed by the next holiday and

tourist season — December 1.

Mr Robbie Robinson, chief executive of the NPB, one of the future managers of the mountain chain, told Cape Town's city planner last week that it would be "inappropriate and premature" for the City Council to approve rezoning and development plans until the environmental impact and management assessments had been completed.

The head of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment Management Advisory Committee, Dr Douglas Hey, said he shared the concerns of the NPB and the mountain club that "any development should be secondary to the existence of the mountain, the flora and fauna".

Hey said the danger of too many people eventually being accommodated at the top of the revamped cableway was also of grave concern.

The new R20m Swiss cable cars will be able to ferry 700 passengers an hour, compared to the current cars, which only carry 230 people

an hour.

He added: "The cableway company have got to have official approval before construction begins, and we have not yet given any formal go-ahead. We are having a meeting with the developers shortly."

The cableway plans to close to the public completely from May so that full-scale construction can begin. This includes facilities and equipment for the disabled, a 120-seat auditorium and an additional restaurant and restrooms.

Environmental convener Mr Jonathan Levy said he wanted to see the right balance between development and environmental protection, "but with the current rush to get construction off the ground, this balance is not being achieved".

Levy and Coelen both say the City Council has failed to show them important issues in writing, such as detailed proposals on sewage, waste and litter disposal.

City planner Mr David Daniels could not be reached for comment yesterday and the managing director of the cableway company, Mr John Harrison, was on business in Switzerland.

(288) (56)

# Cableway upgrade to be 'environmentally sound'

□ Council bid to allay the fears of pressure group

ART 5/2/96

(56) ~~288~~

**ANDREA WEISS  
and JOHN YELD  
Staff Reporters**

THE Table Mountain cableway will only be upgraded if the proposals are environmentally sound, city planner Dave Daniels promised.

The plans, which have been submitted to Cape Town City Council, will be considered by the full council before any approval is given.

Mr Daniels was responding to some environmentalists who claim the improvements are being tackled too hastily without due regard to the mountain's environmental sensitivity.

The upgrade is part of a legal settlement between the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company and the council, which had earlier tried to terminate the company's right to operate the cableway.

As part of its agreement, the company undertook to follow a full Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process, including an environmental impact assessment.

At the end of January, a draft summary impact assessment report was sent to interested and affected parties with a request for comment by February 19.

The report includes specialist study assessments of the mountain's carrying capacity, of the impact of an increased number of visitors on the vegetation, and a visual assessment of the upgrading proposals.

But the Mountain Club has criticised the IEM process, saying the cableway company kept presenting new plans for consideration and that major issues of concern hadn't been fully addressed.

These included an environmental management plan to

ensure that any agreements were adhered to during the future operation of the cableway, the size of the new restaurant complex and the removal of sewerage.

"For example, they originally said the sewerage would be taken off the mountain, now they want to use the existing facilities — that's a hell of a change," said Mountain Club spokesman Lester Coelen.

"Some of the new plans are very good and can probably be implemented after just a little discussion, but overall there are a lot of broad issues that need to be resolved, and it will take a lot of political will to do what is right for the mountain and not be bludgeoned into acceptance.

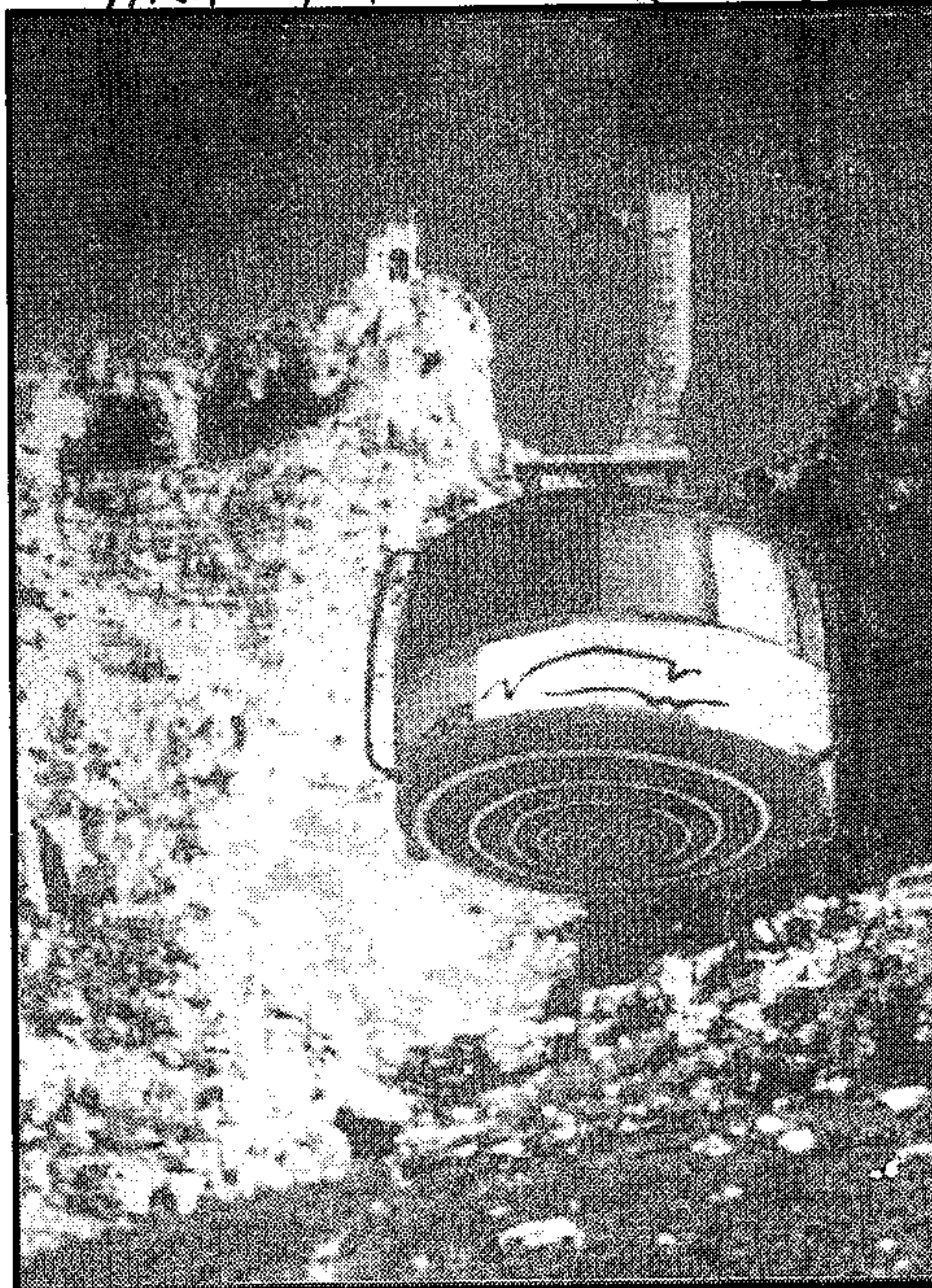
"There is no doubt that we have to upgrade the cable car system, but it's a question of how."

Louis de Waal, chairman of the cableway company, said groups like the Mountain Club and the National Parks Board, which will manage the mountain in future, wanted the IEM procedure completed in its entirety before any work on the upgrade started.

However, the city council was keen to have the work completed as soon as possible for tourism purposes, and also because of the city's Olympic bid. International Olympic Committee members will visit Cape Town in September to assess the bid plans.

Mr De Waal said views expressed by the environmentalists arose out of the IEM procedure which was started last year, and the company was willing to abide by them.

He believed it was important for the upgrade to proceed and



**FUTURE VISION:** What the new cableway will look like.

for individual issues, such as the question of sewerage, to be dealt with separately.

Referring to the dispute about sewerage, Mr De Waal said the existing soakaway system could be used in the interim and decisions about how to lead sewerage pipelines off the mountains with minimal environmental impact could still be taken.

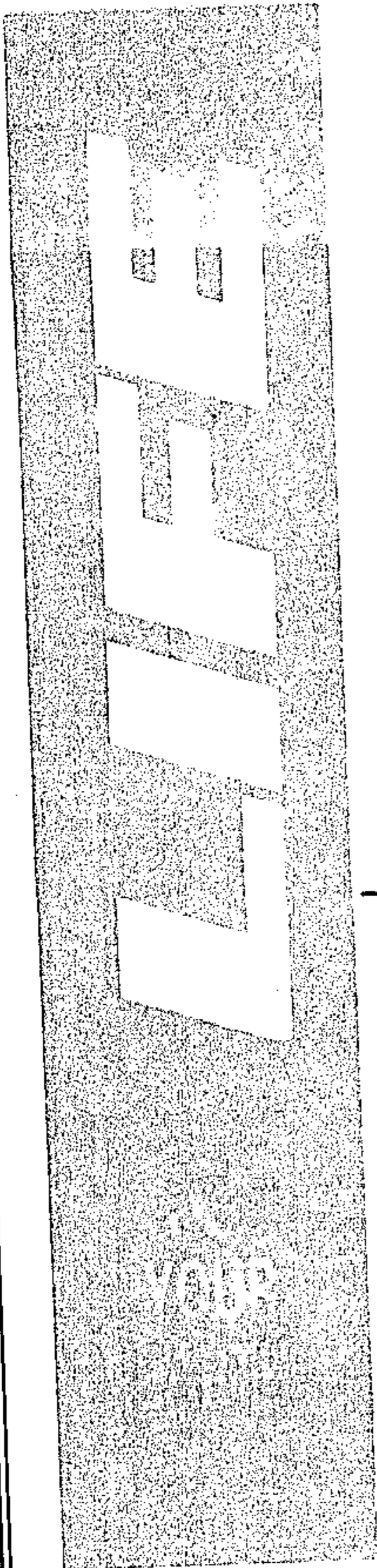
"We are willing to give a written undertaking," he said.

Mr Daniels said that plans

for the new upper and lower cableway station had been submitted but these would still be circulated to interested parties, including the National Parks Board, the National Monuments Council and the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) management advisory committee.

Thereafter, they would be taken to the urban planning committee and the full council before approval would be granted.

# Mr Fick display



**S**IR FRANCIS DRAKE'S famous words about "the fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the globe" have become something of a cliché by now, but many people would still agree fervently with his assessment.

Mountains, sea, fynbos ... and, if you take a more modern view of things that Drake unfortunately missed out on, the list is even longer: summer concerts at Kirstenbosch, the Waterfront, the wine routes ...

It is one of the most beautiful corners of the world, and presumably we should be directing all our efforts at keeping it this way.

To add to its attractions - or at least not to detract from them - visitors to the Cape have little to fear from predators, apart from a few Great White Sharks, muggers in Government Avenue and the odd minibus taxi driver on the roads.

So, given this absence, it was something of a surprise to see crocodile tears being shed about development threats to the Cape's spectacular natural heritage - or is that highly unfair?

Certainly, one of the handful of people most closely entrusted with conserving that heritage - the regional Agriculture, Planning and Tourism Minister, Lampie Fick - expressed deep concern last week as controversy continued about planned developments along the base of the Twelve Apostles between Bakoven and Llandudno.

After a visit to the disputed White Horse site at Oudekraal, Mr Fick reportedly said that South Africa's natural areas were a big attraction for overseas visitors.

"I would be very reluctant to condone development within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE)," he was quoted as saying.

*Despite strong opposition from concerned environmentalists, the dunes close to the Silvermine River - within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment - have been substantially modified since it was first assessed. An environmental assessment is that potentially significant adverse effects should be looked at the proposal, which has been rejected.*

## Battle lines drawn

**T**HE provincial government is close to a decision on whether to allow a controversial township development to be built on the Fish Hoek sand dunes.

The proposed development is within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) - the core area of what will soon become a national park.

An application for subdivision of Fish Hoek Extension 7 Zone C and for a permit to develop within the CPPNE is being advertised for objections, and there is an "open house" today to explain the development proposals for the 37ha site.

A permit, in terms of the Environment Conservation Act, must be granted by the Western Cape Premier, Hernus Kriel, after advice from the CPPNE management advisory committee, chaired by Douglas Hey.

The development is strongly opposed by the Silvermine Valley Coalition, a group of concerned organisations and individuals, which says permission for Zone C could set a precedent for "equally unsuitable" development on other private land within the CPPNE.

It wants the entire Peers Hill ridge, including the sand dunes, and the Silvermine River corridor between the Silvermine nature reserve and the sea, incorporated into the nature reserve area.

The coalition withdrew from the Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process, which included an environmental impact assessment, after the regional Agriculture, Planning and Tourism Minister,

Lampie Fick, ruled that the assessment needed only to consider proposals which conformed with the property's current zoning.

This ruled out a "no-development" option, which the coalition wanted considered. The coalition has hit out strongly at the proposed development and particularly at the authorities which approved the property's change in status over the years, saying: "As a result of a series of official blunders and insensitive rulings, the authorities have rezoned this area for residential development, despite overwhelming public opposition."

The property was rezoned by the Western Cape government in October 1994 to allow for the residential development.

In 1993, Mr Fick, while Deputy Minister for Home Affairs and Regional Affairs, approved an amendment to the Cape Metropolitan Area Guide Plan, which changed the status of Zone C from "nature area" to "urban development".

This was a significant change from 1986, when the then Minister of Environment Affairs, John Wiley, allowed development of Zones A and B and part of C in Extension 7 on the southern side of the bypass road, but firmly rejected the remainder of Zone C.

"I have no hesitation in rejecting any proposals for development in the Nature Area at Fish Hoek on the sand dune side (north) of the Fish Hoek bypass road," he said in a press release.

The current proposals, which have

been submitted, are then, are and threatening slight the site.

According to the d have used approach been missed of the sensitive areas of

A recent mental included, have been significant. Fish Hoek the threat now is f area.

Potential impacts aesthetic dynamism ecosystems be of low mitigation mented.

"They actively impacts ated w ment."

The landscape Oberholzer specialist - on visit "The using a ited the

jo  
e.  
el  
nt  
ls  
  
et  
m  
is  
le  
  
al.

# is the other side of his nature

ARG 5/2/96 (56)

of  
ed  
s's  
at  
  
le  
is  
ng  
  
le  
el-  
os-  
  
se  
id  
he  
  
ne  
la  
)

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



Now, admittedly, Mr Fick was talking about the Atlantic seaboard, and he also referred specifically to unplanned development - but surely his sentiments should apply to the rest of the CPPNE as well, and to all development that reduces the remaining natural area?

Because it is significant that it was Mr Fick himself who sanctioned, directly and indirectly, changes that have, to a large degree, paved the way for a development on

a natural area that is squarely within the CPPNE: Extension 7 Zone C on Fish Hoek's sand dunes.

The details of his involvement are spelled out elsewhere on this page; suffice it to say that the integrity of the CPPNE is now directly at stake as a result of his previous decisions while a deputy minister, and as provincial cabinet minister.

What is at issue here is the principle, not the detail.

At a brief, uncritical reading, the new proposals for the Zone C development are a vast improvement on previous planning, and appear to have been handled sensitively, given the nature of the site.

But that is not the issue. Why was the property's original status of "nature area" changed in the first place? And why was the rezoning approved, given that it is within the CPPNE?

The sub-division application for the development is in the public domain at the moment, and people have just under three weeks left to let the decision-makers - including Mr Fick - know what they think about the proposal.

There is also still the possibility of a legal challenge, based on Mr Justice Rose-Innes's landmark ruling against development at Myburgh Park at Langebaan, which was also within a Protected Natural Environment (PNE).

So there are really two concerns - the detail and the principle.

Personally, when looking at the detail of the proposal, I admire the professionalism of the planners and consultants involved - but I will weep real tears if the already undersized CPPNE is further violated by more development, either on the Fish Hoek sand dunes or anywhere else.

*mentalists and many residents, a township development may be approved on the Fish Hoek sand rea earmarked for a Cape Peninsula national park. But the planned residential development has proposed more than a decade ago, and the overall finding of a recent environmental impact e effects can be reduced to a low significance. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD takes a close as been made available for public comment and objections until February 20*

# awn in the sand dunes

ARG 5/2/96 (56)

stantially modified since for 311 residential units community facilities covtly less than 30 percent of

ng to the summary report eveloper's planners. they l a "design with nature" t. It says: "Coverage has mised by the compaction elopment on to the least and most developable he site."

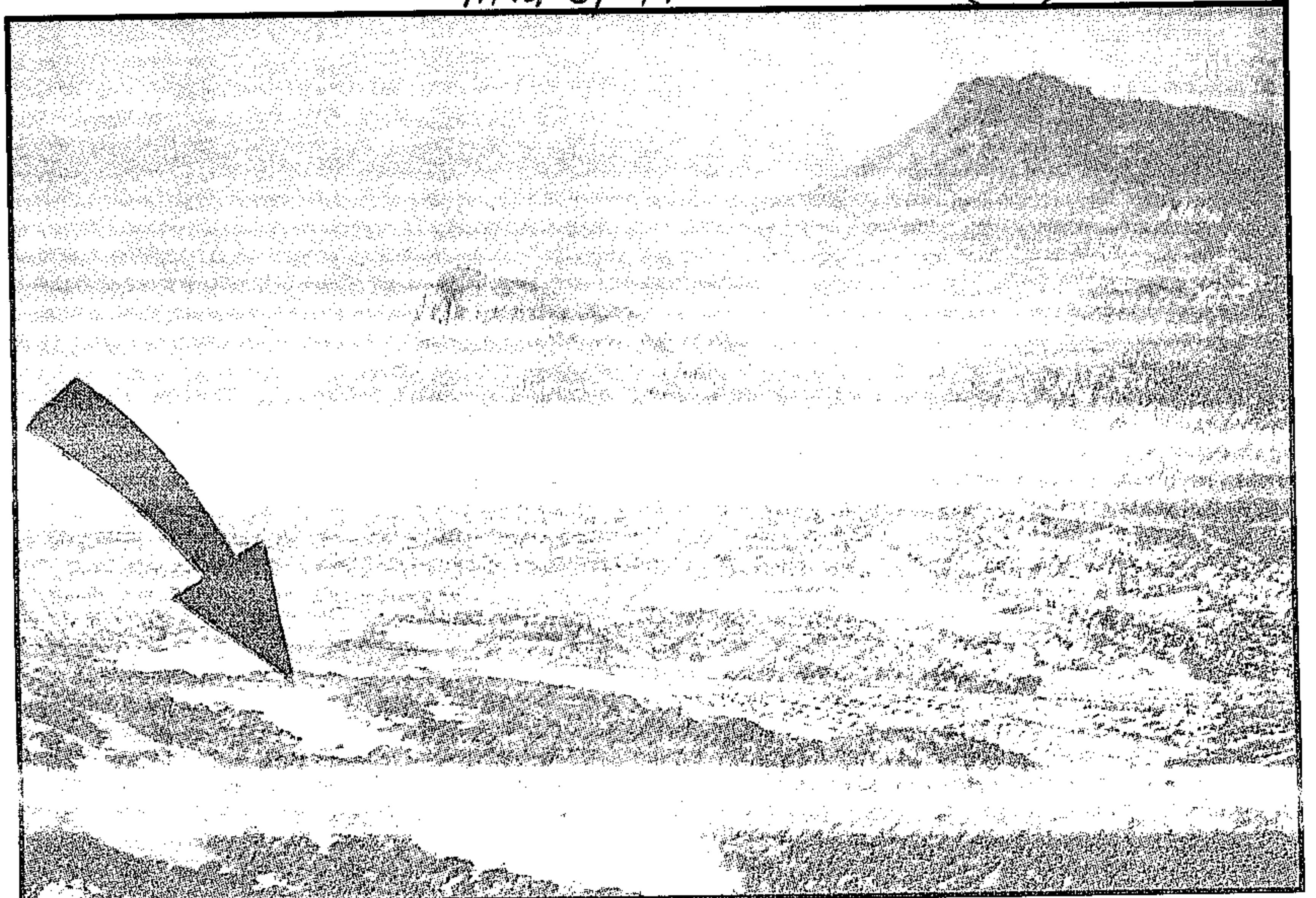
ntly completed environ pact assessment (EIA) on at the development e-ultifical impacts of medium e on the rates structure of s. on job creation, and on ened leopard toad, which nd only in the sand dune

ally significant adverse n hydrology, visual and considerations, sediment , and flora, fauna and functioning, were likely to

measures were that according to the EIA report are (also) a number of rel or beneficial and adverse low significance associ- the proposed develop- summary report states.

minent Cape Town land- itect and planner Bernie r, who produced a spe- rt - one of five in the EIA l impact, concluded:

ferred development, by novative layout, has lim- tential visual impacts to a



**DUNE SITE:** The arrow indicates the site of a proposed township development on Fish Hoek sand dunes.

large degree ... The aesthetic quality of the development will, however, depend on the employment of mitigating measures, and these should be seen as an integral part of the development plan."

The Wildlife Society, a key member of the coalition opposing the

development, said the Silvermine River was recognised as the least disturbed river system in metropolitan Cape Town.

The coalition's proposals would give the river the unusual status of being preserved from its source to the sea.

Copies of the development application are available in the Fish Hoek and Ocean View libraries. The closing date for objections is February 20.

The "open house" to explain the proposal is at the Fish Hoek civic centre from 2 pm today.

# Environmentalists reject current draft of constitution for its neglect of green rights

By ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

(56) Star 5/2/96

Green rights in the current draft of the constitution have been rejected as inadequate by environmentalists who attended a high-powered workshop in Pietermaritzburg at the weekend.

They expressed alarm at the lack of public debate on the issues and called on concerned South Africans to inform themselves as

jeopardise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The 60-odd delegates at the workshop, which included international experts, judges, environmental lawyers and specialists from a wide range of experience, also debated options set out in the draft constitution regarding legislative authority and functions of Parliament as opposed to those of the provinces.

After much lively debate, the principle of environment and nature conservation (excluding national parks, marine resources and botanical gardens) was endorsed as a provincial function.

Accordingly, the meeting decided on the widest statement on central government powers (option 1 of section 155 of the draft constitution), qualified by the strongest powers for provinces to contain central powers in the event of conflicting legislation (option 4 of section 159).

The workshop was convened by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Environmental Law Association, the Institute of Natural Resources

## Experts alarmed at lack of debate on issues

a matter of urgency in the face of the February 20 deadline for comment on the draft constitution.

The draft retains the single right currently expressed in the interim constitution: "Everyone has the right to an environment which is not harmful to their health or wellbeing."

And it adds a second right: "Everyone has the right to have their environment protected through reasonable legislation and other measures designed to (1) prevent pollution and ecological degradation; (2) promote conservation; (3) to secure sustainable development and the use of natural resources."

The main objections from the group were that:

■ The first right retained its wording in the negative, which could mean it would have less weight than positively stated rights.

■ Both clauses failed to entrench the view that man's wellbeing is interlinked and interdependent on nature, and man therefore has a duty to protect and conserve his natural heritage.

■ Intergenerational equity is not reflected. This is expressed in the idea that the present generation, in meeting its needs, should not

## Two clauses omit idea of duty to protect heritage

and the School of Law of the University of Natal, the Wildlife Society, the Environmental Justice Networking Forum and the UN Development Programme.

The objective of the workshop was to reach consensus on issues with a view to submitting a single document response to the Constitutional Assembly.

This will be compiled by the Institute of Natural Resources from a recording of the proceedings.

This document will also appear in the upcoming issue of the Southern African Environmental Law Journal.

# KWV may be prosecuted for pollution of Berg River

## Environment Reporter

LIQUOR giant KWV may be prosecuted under the Water Act for polluting the Berg River at Paarl last month.

This has been decided by the Department of Water Affairs, following the incident starting on January 3 when 141 000 li-

tres of fortified wine was discharged from KWV's premises via a stormwater channel into the Berg River. (56)

About one-and-a-half tons of dead fish were collected from the river after the spill.

The department said today it

had referred the incident to the Attorney-General.

ARG 6/2/96  
A report for the Attorney-General had been prepared by the department's Western Cape region, following an independent investigation which had found alleged deficiencies.

These included inadequate physical arrangement of pipework which had allowed the spillage of the wine product into a stormwater drain.

And an operational procedure in which insufficient checking of pipework or valve leaks was undertaken.



# New 'green' standards for manufacturers

(56) (88)

Many companies will need to rethink procedures to protect the environment

Star 6/2/96

By Nikki Whitfield

To some, ISO 14 000 might sound complicated and confusing - a set of numbers and letters lumped together by superior brains - but you know they must mean something really important.

And important is exactly what ISO 14 000 is - it is set to alter drastically the lives of manufacturers as the global quest for a purer planet rages on.

Soon a sticker slapped on to a product proclaiming it to be "CFC-free, environment-friendly" will simply not be good enough.

Manufacturers will have to do a lot better. They will need to rethink the management of their business activities and alter their manufacturing procedures, and this could involve some expense.

Once the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) has accepted ISO 14 000 as its guide to judging environmental management activities, every business in this country will need to start considering its standard-setting policies too.

Here is what it is:

ISO stands for the International Standards Organisation and 14 000 is the number given to the standard providing the guidelines, which will have a large im-

act on the activities of manufacturers, more than on the actual end product.

ISO 14 000 will provide a yardstick against which a company's activities are measured. The company will set goals for itself in such fields as reducing noise and air pollution, looking after its waste water treatment, limiting refuse and and sourcing its supplies of raw materials.

These requirements were spelled out by Dr Henri van Rensburg, a microbiologist and vice-president (chemical departments) of the SABS, and Martin Kellermann, SABS deputy president.

Van Rensburg led the South African delegation to the international committees responsible for the formulation of ISO 14 000.

"You may get a company which does a good job, but produces a product which is not really environmentally friendly," he said. "There are some products you can really do nothing about.

"Look at the tyres of a motor car - there's very little you can do with them when they are used."

Most manufacturers, however, can clean up their acts.

"From our perspective, compliance with ISO 14 000 will become something which will affect all companies in the future. It is the latest development to have the

widest impact on activities which affect the environment."

An environmental management system standard (BS 7750) was first developed by the British, who, along with the Canadians, initiated the development of the ISO 14 000 documents.

Several major South African companies will be targeted this year to participate in an ISO 14 000 pilot certification scheme. By the end of 1997, the

## ISO 14 000 will guide business activities

SABS hopes to declare a formal ISO 14 000 certification scheme.

Not that local manufacturers are completely switched off when it comes to the environment. When the SABS published its own environmental management system document, SABS 0251, about two years ago, South African businesses participated.

"Because we had developed our own document, we could contribute to the deliberations of the international ISO technical committee," Kellermann said.

"But SABS 0251 is not an international document and we are keen to become a part of global standard-setting.

"When ISO 14 000 is published between the middle and the end of this year, we will adopt it and withdraw SABS 0251."

Van Rensburg said the ISO was also looking at setting standards for product labelling, chiefly out of concern for the consumer.

"A wide range of stakeholders will have an interest in this, not least the consumer, to whom a label is very important and highly visible. International standards for product labelling can also have an impact on exports and could unfortunately also be used as trade barriers for exportation.

"If you have an export product, the requirements set for labelling it as environmentally friendly could mean manufacturers will have to consider various requirements such as the sources of raw material, their impact on nature and the effect on water sources. This could lead to a company being unable to label a product environmentally friendly."

But Van Rensburg believes eco-friendliness can be carried too far. Eco-labelling requirements could become so complicated that they could restrict exports.

## Incineration cheaper than using landfills, Thor Chemicals probe told

Durban - A presidential commission probing mercury waste at the Thor Chemicals plant in KwaZulu Natal began yesterday to assess the company's waste-recycling programme over the costlier alternative of burying it.

Commission chairman Dennis Davis told reporters his team was investigating the problem of stockpiles of spent mercury catalyst waste at Thor Chemicals.

Its brief was to recommend to President Nelson Mandela the best practical method for dealing with the waste with as little environmental impact as possible, he said.

In his submission to the commission, Thor director Stephen van der Vyver said the company incinerated the waste instead of dumping it in landfills - which tended eventually to leak and pollute the environment with con-

centrated toxic waste.

"The advantage of the process of incineration is that the metallic mercury is obtained in a form in which it can be returned to industry and, therefore, does not contaminate the environment."

He said the dumping programme was also costlier than incineration. "At about R1 000 a barrel, I estimate the landfill option would cost R30-million compared to the R2-million a year it costs to run the recycling plant."

The investigation into the British-based company was commissioned in March 1995.

Van der Vyver and two other senior Thor employees were acquitted last year of charges of culpable homicide arising from the death of two workers from alleged mercury poisoning in 1993.

- Reuters.

(5b) Star 6/2/96

## Water policy document completed

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Dramatic changes to the way water is managed in SA — including its transformation into a national resource not subject to private ownership — are investigated in a document which will be handed to Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal today. The report is the work of a high-powered group appointed by Asmal to investigate the principles and objectives of water policy. It is the first step in a long process which will culminate in a new water Act.

Chairman of the investigating committee Geoff Budlender (newly appointed director-general of land affairs) stressed that the committee was asked to start from scratch and that "we are still a long way from a water Act".

Sources close to Asmal said it would be wrong to assume that everything in the report would go into legislation. There would be an extensive consultation and negotiations process.

Some of the committee's findings will prove controversial. It moots the possibility of forcing industry to locate only where there is adequate water, limiting farmers in dry areas to certain crops, substantial increases in water tariffs to subsidise the poor and the exportation of water from water-rich to less well-endowed provinces.

# Agreement reached on students' debts

Kevin O'Grady

STUDENTS and management at the University of the Western Cape yesterday reached agreement on the repayment of R21m in student debt that will allow the campus to reopen today after its closure because of violent protests last week.

University spokesman Stan Ridge confirmed an agreement was signed between the university executive and the students' representative council, ending a five-day stand-off.

Students walked out of talks with management last week in protest against the exclusion of academically qualified students on financial grounds. The university had said it could not afford to pay students' debts.

In terms of the agreement, students who are unable to settle their debts will be expected to make minimum contributions — the amount depending on the size of the debt — with the remainder being advanced as loans.

Students owing less than R1 000 will have to pay their account in full before registering for this academic year. Discussions will be held with one student who owes R30 348 to determine his contribution.

Students owing between R1 000 and R25 000 will be permitted to reg-

ister following payment of their minimum contribution.

This ranges from 60% for a debt of between R1 001 and R3 000 — 40% being advanced as a loan — to a R4 500 contribution and a R7 000 loan for debts over R15 000.

Additional debt will be rolled over into students' accounts for this year.

"Where students are unable to pay the minimum amount required, their cases will be examined individually so as to determine how further assistance could be extended," the agreement, signed by rector CA Abrahams and student council president JJ Tabane, said.

The university expected all students to make an upfront payment at registration each year "in order to ensure that the university has adequate operating funds for the first three months of the year before it receives its first subsidy payment".

Following yesterday's talks, the university and the student council agreed to jointly appeal to government to "address the national student debt and especially the backlog faced by historically black universities".

They also announced plans to launch a relief fund and a fund-raising campaign to increase the pool of student financial aid. Ridge said registration would begin today.

## Most Cape black pupils fail at least once

SEVEN out of 10 black pupils in former department of education and training schools in the Western Cape fail at least one standard, contributing to overcrowding and increased costs, a study by EduSource shows.

The results were released yesterday, and the study found there was a low rate of standard repetition in coloured schools.

The standards most repeated were

sub A and standards six, eight and nine. "These standards would therefore require a more direct form of intervention if schooling efficiency is to be improved," EduSource said.

The authors called for intervention by government, schools and non-government bodies in providing more in-service training, particularly for primary school teachers, and reducing class sizes. — Sapa.

## Thor Chemicals inquiry hits snag

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — The government-appointed commission of inquiry into Thor Chemicals ran into problems at its first sitting yesterday after concern was expressed that it would prejudice a legal case pending against Thor.

Thor director Stephen van der Vyfer asked commission chairman Prof Dennis Davis not to ask questions related to water pollution at Thor. This was because the water affairs department had charged Thor with polluting a stream in Cato Ridge. Thor could be prejudiced during the trial if it was questioned by the commission on water pollution.

Davis said he would discuss the

matter with KwaZulu-Natal attorney-general Tim McNally. McNally was entitled to press ahead with charges, but this could create "difficulties" for the commission.

Thor could exercise its constitutional right to refuse to answer pollution-related questions. This would make it difficult for the commission to investigate whether the Thor plant had a negative impact on the environment, although the commission's terms of reference required it to do so, Davis said.

The commission was appointed by President Nelson Mandela after continued pressure from environmental and health groups who blamed Thor for the death of two company employees from mercury

poisoning. Thor was acquitted in a criminal case on culpable homicide charges, but was found guilty of contravening legislation on occupational safety.

Davis said the commission would continue taking evidence on two other areas of its terms of reference — on the most effective way to dispose of mercury residues and on wastes stored at the Thor plant.

Van der Vyfer said there seemed to be only two ways to dispose of waste containing mercury. One way was by the process of recycling, which Thor had adopted. The other was by immobilisation and landfill, which US experience showed could result in leakage of toxic waste.

## Macassar: AECI may pay up to R20m

OTE 7/2/96

(56)  
~~(123)~~

JOHANNESBURG: Chemicals giant AECI expects to pay out about R20 million in compensation for damages incurred by a poisonous sulphur cloud emitted from its factory in Somerset West on December 16 last year.

"The claims are not finalised yet, but we are looking at about R20m," AECI said yesterday.

Damages relate to crops, household items, illness and in, three cases, death.

The company's insurance underwriters have already settled 300 claims from residents of Macassar township, 2 500 of whom were evacuated when their homes were enveloped by a cloud of toxic fumes from a blazing sulphur stockpile.

AECI's insurers had paid out R500 000 to address immediate medical costs of the 1 000 people who suffered injury from the accident. — Own Correspondent

● See Page 15

# AECI likely to pay R20m in damages for toxic cloud

OT(BR) 7/2/96 (56)

JAMES LAMONT

Johannesburg — Chemicals manufacturer AECI expects to pay out about R20 million in compensation for damages incurred by a poisonous sulphur cloud emitted from its factory in Somerset West December 16 last year.

"The claims are not finalised but we are looking at about R20 million," Fulvia Putero, an AECI spokesman, said yesterday. Damages relate to crops, household items, illness and, in

three cases, death. The company's insurance underwriters have already settled 300 claims from residents of Macassar township, 2 500 of whom were evacuated when their homes were enveloped by a cloud of toxic fumes from a blazing sulphur stockpile.

Putero could not give figures for the 300 claims settled so far, but said AECI's insurers had paid out R500 000 to address the immediate medical costs of the 1 000 people who had suffered

injury from the accident. However, according to a source in the Somerset West town council, the local media has reported that Macassar residents are not happy with the payments they are receiving from AECI.

Two hundred claims remain unsettled and more are expected. With hefty claims lodged by local farmers, who had their vegetable and flower crops destroyed by the toxic cloud, and claims expected for three fume-related deaths and

some from local vineyard owners, Putero said the total compensation bill would be about R20 million.

AECI are due to give a progress report on the status of claims to the portfolio committee on agriculture in Cape Town today. The company is also anxious to begin negotiations with the government concerning the removal of the apartheid-era strategic stockpile.

The company wanted what it considered government property to be moved as soon as possible.

# Sulphur: Macassar seeks new deal

CLIVE SAWYER (56) (56)  
Political Correspondent

THE Macassar Crisis Committee says it will break off talks with AECI unless a new deal is reached on compensation for victims of the sulphur cloud released from the chemical giant's Somerset West factory. ARG 7/2/96

The committee wants a panel of medical experts and actuaries to be appointed to adjudicate claims.

Speaking before giving evidence today to the national assembly committee on agriculture, water affairs and forestry, committee member Heinrich Magerman said his organisation was "extremely unhappy" about the way AECI was proceeding.

The company announced yesterday it expected to pay out about R20 million in compensation. Claims have not yet been finalised.

Three people died in December last

year when the toxic cloud was released. Crops, gardens and household items were damaged.

Mr Magerman said his committee, which includes representatives from civic associations, the transitional council, RDP and community-police forums and the African National Congress, wanted parliament to press for the appointment of a commission of inquiry.

He alleged that in terms of the current process of payment for compensation people were being asked to sign indemnity forms and then being paid as little as R250.

Mr Magerman claimed people lacked the confidence to argue their claims against the company and agreed to sign indemnity forms even though they were not satisfied.

Unless AECI agreed to a new process by tomorrow, the crisis committee would withdraw from negotiations.

# Billions lost in flora and fauna theft

Conservation officials are unwitting partners in illegal trade in wildlife

(56)

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

South Africa is losing billions of rands in revenue due to the Government being unable to control the illegal trade in plant and animals species, and to protect its rights on genetic resources.

This is according to the latest report by Traffic, the wildlife trade monitoring programme of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and The World Conservation Union (IUCN).

The report, released in Johannesburg last week concludes that South Africa is not fulfilling its responsibilities as a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

"No national legislation has been adopted to implement either the text of the convention, or resolutions adopted by the CITES parties. "CITES implementation in South Africa could best be described as ad hoc," Traffic officers Ashish Bodasing and Teresa Milukin said.

They also found that:

- There was evidence for allegations that South Africa is a laundering point for the illicit wildlife trade in species originating outside the country.

- The trade in indigenous flora and fauna was virtually out of control due to fragmented and

inadequate legislation and administration.

"The lack of policy with regard to genetic resources has resulted in foreign countries being able to exploit our genetic resources, before we have had a chance to develop these markets," David Newton, head of Traffic in South Africa said.

As an example he quoted that of 7 000 succulent plant species endemic to southern Africa, 5 000 of which were already being sold by foreign countries.

"Another implication is that if any of those species was found to contain a valuable drug, then South Africa has lost not only the resource, but the income that could accrue," he said.

At the same time, South Africa has failed to take advantage of the potential market in some plant species, such as cycads.

"There is a great demand for cycads and South Africa has the potential to supply these, and earn revenue, through artificial propagation. Foreign governments refuse to accept South African permits, and that market which could have been lucrative is closed down," Newton said.

Echoing the recent Kumleben

Report, the three-and-a-half-year study of trade in wildlife, involving 120 investigations, found the systems and legislation to control the trade in wildlife were in urgent need of an overhaul.

"Poor administration, inconsistent legislation and inadequate wildlife trade controls are the primary reasons behind the legitimisation of otherwise illegal shipments of animals and plant or their products," the report said.

"Species not found in South Africa have been imported and subsequently re-exported declared as "wild-caught" or "captive-bred" locally when in fact they originated in other countries," the report said.

One investigation showed a permit had been granted to a Free State business for the import of six wild-caught cheetah from Namibia - ostensibly for a breeding programme. In the same period, the business was given permits for the export of 17 cheetah hunting trophies.

"What we have shown is that CITES implementation and controls are so bad that nature conservation officials can't implement the convention," Bodasing said.

Star 7/2/96

Administrative problems were common in all wildlife trade permit-issuing offices and in this way conservation officials were unwitting partners in the illegal trade. They were often not given proper training and skills necessary to control the trade, and they issued permits without sufficient scrutiny or knowledge.

"No matter how good the conservation officers are, they are not in a position to stop the trade because there are too many loopholes," Newton emphasised.

"The implication is that at the next CITES meeting, should South Africa want to table a proposal for downlisting of elephant, the proposal would not be accepted while the country is unable to monitor its resources properly."

The absence of national legislation was a major part of the problem, the report found.

"Legislation is inconsistent allowing transactions that are illegal in one province to be legal in another. When some traders are refused permits in one province, they simply apply for permits in another where trade controls are more lax."

The findings of the report had been presented to Environment Minister Dawie de Villiers, he said.

"The bottom line of our report is damning evidence and we hope the minister will take constructive action."

“  
**The absence  
of national  
legislation is  
a big problem**  
”

## Officials back toxic recycling

(56) / Mar 7/2/96  
Durban - Three government departments backed the recycling of 3 000 tons of toxic mercury waste stored at Thor Chemicals instead of burying it, a presidential commission heard yesterday.

The departments of labour, water and environmental affairs were giving testimony before the commission investigating why mercury contaminated products were stockpiled at Thor's Cato Ridge recycling plant, and how best to deal with the problem.

"Our preference would be to minimise the use of the waste through recycling it and utilising the mercury. Recycling is certainly our preferred choice," said director of water quality management, Sakkie van der Westhuizen.

Representatives of the other two departments agreed, but commission chairman Dennis Davis questioned the lack of regulations on importing toxic waste before 1980s and the government's "cavalier" attitude towards the environment. - Reuters.



## Supreme claims will be opposed

Deborah Fine

SEVERAL large financial institutions have been granted leave by the Rand Supreme Court to defend summary judgment applications involving millions of rands lodged against them by the liquidators of Supreme Holdings and Supreme Investment Holdings.

These include Fidelity Bank, Liberty Life and Boland Bank as well as attorneys, Macauley and Riddle, and financial consultants Alexander Forbes Executives.

The liquidators claim the companies are liable for the R270m in losses suffered by public investors — who allegedly acted on advice of the companies' brokers — in the unsecured debentures offered by the Supreme Group between 1987 to '92. Supreme collapsed in November 1992, amid allegations of fraudulent and reckless practices.

The liquidators have submitted the brokers were negligent by failing to establish that Supreme was financially sound before offering the investment advice, and that their conduct was, in law, also their employers' conduct. The institutions were thus liable for Supreme's debts to investors.

Fidelity Bank has been granted leave to oppose a claim of R2,4m; Boland Bank a claim of R2m; Liberty Life R4,1m, Alexander Forbes R1,3m, and Macauley and Riddle a claim of R136 384.

An application by First National Bank for leave to resist a claim of R25,4m will be heard today.

## Swazi trade unionist arrested in Mbabane

Business Day Reporter

SWAZILAND Federation of Trade Unions assistant general secretary Jabulani Nxumalo was arrested in the Swazi capital of Mbabane yesterday, days after the federation had announced another national stayaway on February 19 to press its political demands.

The arrest — reportedly on charges of fraud and perjury dating back to the 1980s — came two weeks after the arrest of the federation's general secretary, Jan Sithole. Charges against Sithole were later withdrawn.

On Monday King Mswati III assured British Overseas Development Minister Lynda Chalker that the country's 1968 constitution would soon be revived.

He told Chalker that the revival of the constitution was one of a number of recommendations by

the Swazi people to a special political reform review committee which sounded public opinion in the country two years ago.

During her visit Chalker urged the king not to be too slow in introducing changes.

The arrest of Nxumalo, as he was leaving the offices of the Federation of Swaziland Employers, is likely to further raise tensions in the kingdom, which was hit by a five-day pro-democracy stayaway a fortnight ago.

Meanwhile, the leader of the largest pro-democracy party in Swaziland, the People's United Democratic Movement, has denounced as "undemocratic" Mswati's announcement that the 1968 constitution is to be restored.

Kislon Shongwe said constitutional issues could only be decided at a convention of political parties and other organisations.

## Premier shares dream of Ulundi as capital

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — KwaZulu-Natal premier Frank Mdlalose said yesterday that his dream was to see Ulundi become the "hub of the wheel of development" for the whole of KwaZulu-Natal.

Addressing IFP supporters who are pushing for Ulundi to be

proclaimed the provincial capital, Mdlalose said a constitution for KwaZulu-Natal would have to be passed, followed by legislation making the town the capital.

His vision included "spokes of development", connecting Ulundi to different areas. Ulundi would be connected to a port, and all the towns would become "great cities".

## Govt backs Thor's recycling operation

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — Government officials from the environmental affairs, water affairs and labour departments yesterday threw their weight behind Thor Chemicals' plans to continue recycling toxic waste at its Cato Ridge plant, giving the company a boost in its fight against the environmental lobby.

KwaZulu-Natal air pollution control chief officer Gerrit Coetzee said mercury emissions from the plant were "much less" than emissions from some coal mines. He said the media had "blown out of context" the effects of emissions from the Thor plant.

Coetzee was giving evidence to

a government-appointed commission of inquiry which has to decide what should be done with 3 000 tons of toxic waste at the plant.

The plant was the only kind in the world. Its clients were in the plastics industry, including AECI and US-based Borden Chemicals.

Commission chairman Dennis Davis said the NP government had been "cavalier" in its approach by failing to pass legislation in the 1980s to control the importation of toxic waste to SA.

If recycling was to continue, stringent regulations would have to be in place. Coetzee conceded that this was necessary. The Air Pollution Control Act was passed in 1965 and had become a "beard-

ed man with a walking stick".

Labour department occupational and health safety chief director Faiza Saleh said recycling posed dangers but a better option was unknown. Water affairs department water quality director Sakkie van der Westhuizen said Thor had co-operated in monitoring pollution levels.

The Environmental Justice Network Forum, which led protests against the plant after the deaths of two workers, would give evidence in May. Forum national co-ordinator Chris Albertyn said "the way leading the departments to the case". Recycling posed "far greater dangers" than initially thought, he said.

## School row march today

POTGIETERSRUS —  
The ANC said yesterday  
a march would be held in  
Potgietersrus, Northern  
Province, today to pro-  
test at a local primary  
school's refusal to admit  
black pupils. (56)

Police spokesman Snr  
Supt Leon Ruiters con-  
firmed supporters of the  
ANC, Cosatu, SA Com-  
munist Party and SA  
National Civics Organi-  
sation would take part in  
the march. This would  
end at Potgietersrus po-  
lice station, where a  
memorandum would be  
handed over.

Local ANC officials  
say police are supporting  
whites who have been  
guarding the gates of the  
school to prevent black  
parents from enrolling  
their children.

Local ANC spokes-  
man Nocks Seabi said  
the police supported the  
Afrikaner Weerstand-  
beweging last week  
when a group of white  
men prevented three  
black children from en-  
tering the school and  
threw teargas at a tele-  
vision crew.

"They've been pro-  
tecting the white com-  
munity.... They are con-  
doning their actions....  
They did not arrest the  
people who were misbe-  
having," Seabi said.

The march was the  
first phase of the protest,  
and further action —  
even a consumer boycott  
— was being discussed  
with the taxi industry  
and businesses.

A provincial govern-  
ment urgent application  
for a court interdict to  
force the school to admit  
three black pupils will be  
heard on Friday. —

Sapa.

BD 7/2/96

## LESS MONEY TO MAINTAIN PARKS

# Townships to benefit

ET 8/2/96 (56)  
pot.

**A**NYONE who believes we will be able to keep up the present standard of maintenance of public parks and gardens must be wearing a blindfold, says parks director Mr Marius Coetzee.

Municipal boundaries are due to change soon, probably on July 1 this year.

Cape Town municipality's new boundaries include Pinelands, Langa, Guguletu, Nyanga, Crossroads and Brown's Farm.

In the present financial year, the council's parks and forests branch was allocated just over R100m, to look after the mountain, nature reserves, parks, sportsfields and flower beds.

A new budget is being drawn up for the year from July 1.

Initially separate budgets are being devised for each existing local authority (Cape Town, iKapa, Pinelands, Crossroads), but later all of these will go to Cape Town's Joint Executive Committee which has the power to shift money around.

Coetzee said the days when a council employee could prescribe to a community what facilities there



**WITH** facilities desperately needed in disadvantaged areas there will be less money to maintain parks. **PETER DENNEHY** reports.

should be in its area, were long gone.

"We will be given a budget, then we will go to the community, and say: 'This is the situation, you don't have playgrounds, you don't have flower beds, you don't have trees in the streets, you don't have a decent sportsfield. What should we concentrate on? You must choose.'"

It was possible that those who were to be given the benefit of the re-allocation of parks and forests funds would choose better street drainage or roads rather than a sportsfield, Coetzee said.

In this case, money might have to be shifted away from the parks and forests department.

But all this was still in the melting

The council's executive committee was meeting this week to take decisions about the process to be followed in drawing up a budget.

The one thing that seems certain is that less money will be spent on beautifying the "old areas" and more spent in the areas that are to

be included within Cape Town's municipal boundaries.

But the changes may not be dramatic, Coetzee said.

It makes financial sense to maintain an existing asset rather than let it deteriorate until it becomes unusable.

On the other hand, the new facilities that will be built will inevitably mean more maintenance.

This will have an impact on rates and service charges, which should affect everyone.

Budgets cannot be cranked up continually to take on the additional cost of maintenance.

Eventually even those who benefit from the new or improved facilities will find that they would prefer to pay lower rates.

# Warning on hazardous AECI sulphur stockpile

ARG 8/2/96 (56)

**TYRONE SEALE, Political Staff**

THE remainder of the AECI sulphur stockpile which caught alight and turned Macassar into a crisis zone more than a month ago is still intact and hazardous — even though precautions are in place.

This warning was sounded to a parliamentary portfolio committee yesterday by Boet Coetzee, managing director of AECI Operations Services.

Mr Coetzee said hazards persisted while the sulphur remained on site and the situation was not any more or less dangerous than it was at the time of the December 16 blaze in which the stockpile caught alight as a result of an encroaching bush fire.

Three people, including two Macassar brothers, died when they inhaled the fumes produced by the blaze, and hundreds were treated for medical complications.

Thousands fled their homes to escape injury and farmers and private gardeners in Macassar and the Helderberg basin reported damage to commercial crops and other plants.

According to Mr Coetzee, farmers alone have so far claimed R13,34 million in compensation, but with the help of an AECI-sponsored help desk farmers had been given advice to help them minimise losses.

Mr Coetzee told the national assembly portfolio committee on agriculture and water affairs that while AECI did not want to shift any blame on to the Department of Trade and Industry, the department remained ultimately responsible for the strategic stockpile dating back to the sanctions era.

But as custodians of the stockpile,

AECI was taking precautions by keeping emergency services on alert, rehabilitating the surrounds damaged by the December fire and sprinkling the sulphur which was not soluble in water.

AECI was prepared to assist the department of trade and industry in removing the sulphur by rail and taking it to a sulphuric acid plant or elsewhere.

Also at yesterday's meeting Mr Coetzee agreed his company would pay for legal representation for the victims of the December sulphur stockpile blaze in which three people died and hundreds were treated for health difficulties.

Mr Coetzee gave this undertaking in response to a call from National Party MP Pieter Saaiman who echoed the concerns of Macassar community representatives who attended yesterday's briefing.

In line with a proposal from committee chairman Janet Love, all the parties concerned with the December 16 and 17 disaster agreed to take their differences on outstanding issues to the disaster management task team of the department of inter-government relations, formerly the department of provincial affairs and constitutional development.

This committee will bring together the Macassar and Helderberg basin communities, AECI, the departments of agriculture, water affairs, environmental affairs and trade and industry as well as AECI staff and organised agriculture to see if claims and other issues arising from the disaster could be settled without a full, statutory commission of inquiry.

# R50m for eradicating alien plants from catchments

**BARRY STREEK**

ANOTHER R50 million has been allocated to the eradication of invasive alien plants and trees from water catchment areas — and R20m of it could come to the Western Cape if this is matched by local contributions.

This was announced last night by Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal, when he addressed a Royal Society of South Africa symposium at the University of Cape Town.

Asmal said he had proposed to the Cape Town Metropolitan

Council that the government match it on a rand-for-rand basis "in a R40m investment in the security of water here in the Western Cape".

A special adviser to Asmal, Dr Guy Preston, said the programme had been extremely successful and streams that had not flowed for years were now running.

"We simply don't have the choice. It is most cost effective way of saving water," he said.

● Meanwhile strategies to deal with an impending crisis in water supplies are to be discussed at five conferences in the Western Cape

(56) CJ 9/2/96  
between February 13 and March 7.

The conferences are part of an evaluation of the Western Cape system analysis, a major study on water supply and use in the region.

The study, initiated by Asmal's department, concluded there was a growing demand for water in the region.

Conferences will be held at Grabouw on Tuesday, Mowbray on Thursday, Saldanha Bay on February 21, Worcester on February 22 and Paarl on March 7.

Anyone wishing to attend should telephone the organisers at (021) 448-3073.

# R50-m towards removing 'water guzzling' plants

ARL 9/2/96

(5)

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

THE innovative programme to boost water supplies in South Africa's major catchment areas by removing "water-guzzling" alien plants has been given a huge R50 million vote of confidence by the government.

This is the amount awarded by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office for the 1996/97 financial year — double the amount provided last year for the start of the project.

The funding was announced yesterday by Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal in a speech to the Royal Society of South Africa's symposium on fulfilling basic needs: the role of science and technology.

The alien vegetation clearance programme, introduced by Professor Asmal's department, has already provided just over 2 700 jobs in the Western Cape alone, and the new funding is likely to provide at least another 2 300 in the region.

Overall, more than 6 000 previously unemployed people — more than half of them women — have been employed through the project.

"And with each worker having something like eight or even 10 dependants, this is having a huge

impact," said Guy Preston, the University of Cape Town environmental scientist seconded to Professor Asmal's office to co-ordinate the department's water conservation programme.

But in his speech Professor Asmal said the R50 million was not enough, and he challenged the Cape Metropolitan Council to match, on a rand-for-rand basis, a further R40 million "investment in the security of water in the Western Cape".

Referring to scientists, he said they had to assist South Africa by making its economy internationally competitive.

"To be able to meet basic needs, to be able to pursue scientific research, and to maintain our democracy, we need a strong economy."

Scientific research was high on the government's agenda and would continue to get the support it deserved, Professor Asmal said.

"But scientific agencies and scientists themselves will have to become more accountable to the people as to the value of the work being done.

"They will have to address the moral and social impacts of the research they are involved in.

"They will have to develop a new patriotism in South Africa."

# Robben Island deserves to be World Heritage site — Unesco

ARC 10/2/96

56

**JOHN YELD**  
Staff Reporter

ROBBEN Island has international symbolic value for human rights similar to sites like Hiroshima and Auschwitz and deserves the status of a World Heritage Site under the auspices of the United Nations.

This was the message yesterday from Bernd von Droste, director of the World Heritage Centre, the Unesco (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) agency which is responsible for administering the 469 sites proclaimed under the World Heritage Convention.

Mr Von Droste, who is visiting potential World Heritage Sites in South Africa as a guest of the Department of Environmental Affairs, said the convention had the most signatories — 144 — of any international conservation-oriented convention.

"We hope that South Africa will soon become the 145th state adhering to this convention," he told an audience at the South African Museum after watching a summary of the presentation of the application to have Table Mountain

and the rest of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) declared a World Heritage Site.

There were very strict criteria governing the declaration of such sites and the application and checking processes were long, cumbersome and difficult, he warned.

Table Mountain and the rest of the CPPNE appeared to qualify for nomination on several criteria.

These included its huge number of plant species, many of them occurring only here and also threatened: "South Africa has some other (biological) 'hotspots' but Table Mountain is crucial as the hottest."

The application also appeared to qualify in terms of the category of significant artificially designed landscapes because of Kirstenbosch.

"After walking there early today, I'm more convinced than ever that Kirstenbosch is a very important part of your application," he said.

Table Mountain also had the potential to qualify for World Heritage Site status on cultural grounds, as it was an "icon" for both Cape Town and South

Africa, he suggested.

Responding to a question as to whether Robben Island was a potential site on its own or whether it could be included as part of the Table Mountain site, Mr Von Droste said either case could apply, but he understood it was not linked in the present application.

"Robben Island stands out from many sites around the world for its symbolic value, because of its association with human suffering."

It was a symbol both of people's non-respect for the cultural identity of others and for the non-respect of human rights, said Mr Von Droste.

"But, it also stands for hope, reconciliation and the new South Africa, which is hope for humanity as a whole."

Unesco staff believed Robben Island was extremely important.

"Therefore, I personally hope it will be elevated to the highest (conservation) level."

Mr Von Droste said he had been highly impressed with the number of significant palaeontological and archaeological sites in South Africa, sev-

eral of which he had visited during his trip.

Other than these cultural sites, he had also seen other potential World Heritage Sites in the "natural" category.

These included Kruger National Park, Great St Lucia Wetland Park, Hhuhluwe-Umfolozi game reserve and the Tswaing Crater outside Pretoria.

● Environmental Affairs spokeswoman Ingrid Coetzee, who is accompanying Mr Von Droste, said the department was pushing to have parliament ratify the World Heritage Convention during the session which started yesterday.

At a separate function last night, Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal — who also serves on the African National Congress's national executive's environmental committee — said the cabinet was likely to decide on the application to mine heavy minerals on the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia at its next meeting, within a fortnight.

He described Lake St Lucia as "an ecological jewel".

# Board eyes Cape land plans

**GLYNNIS UNDERHILL**

Staff Reporter

THE National Parks Board is investigating five proposed developments in Cape Town and its surrounds which it believes could detract from the quality of the environment.

David Daitz, recently appointed by the Parks Board to facilitate the creation of the Cape Peninsula National Park, has met the developer of the controversial Oudekraal site near Llandudno.

The proposed development of the Oudekraal site as a R45 million hotel caused a public outcry last week when 37 protesters were arrested on the site and released without bail.

Mr Daitz said it would be unwise to

■ Protracted negotiation for valuable land lies ahead for the National

Parks Board in its creation of a Cape Peninsula National Park.

(56) *NRG 10/2/96*

try to halt the development in the Supreme Court at this stage without proper negotiation.

"There is a growing groundswell of public support against development on this site. We are investigating it. We need to be able to take an informed decision on the issue," said Mr Daitz.

While the National Parks Board has the power to expropriate land for inclusion in the National Park, it has avoided going to these lengths for many years. "We don't want to be seen to be waving a big stick," said Mr Daitz.

The National Parks Board wants to take over land at the Cape of Good

Hope, the Slangkop area at Kommetjie and some smaller sites, which are now in the hands of the Cape Metropolitan Council.

Protracted negotiations over the land are expected to follow.

If any of this land was declared a Schedule One National Park, it would then take a joint sitting of the Houses of Parliament with a two-thirds majority to deproclaim land.

■ Another vast tract of land which is under the scrutiny of the Parks Board is the site running behind the urban edge at Bakoven and the White House. The Parks Board is concerned devel-

opers have their eye on the land, which is currently in the hands of a private trust.

Mr Daitz is trying to determine the trust executors' plans for the site. This land is arguably one of South Africa's best locations and investors would pay a fortune for it.

■ The National Parks Board is to object formally to a proposal to develop houses on the Fish Hoek sand dunes.

An application to develop more than 300 houses on the dunes within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) — known as Extension Seven Zone C — is being advertised for

objections.

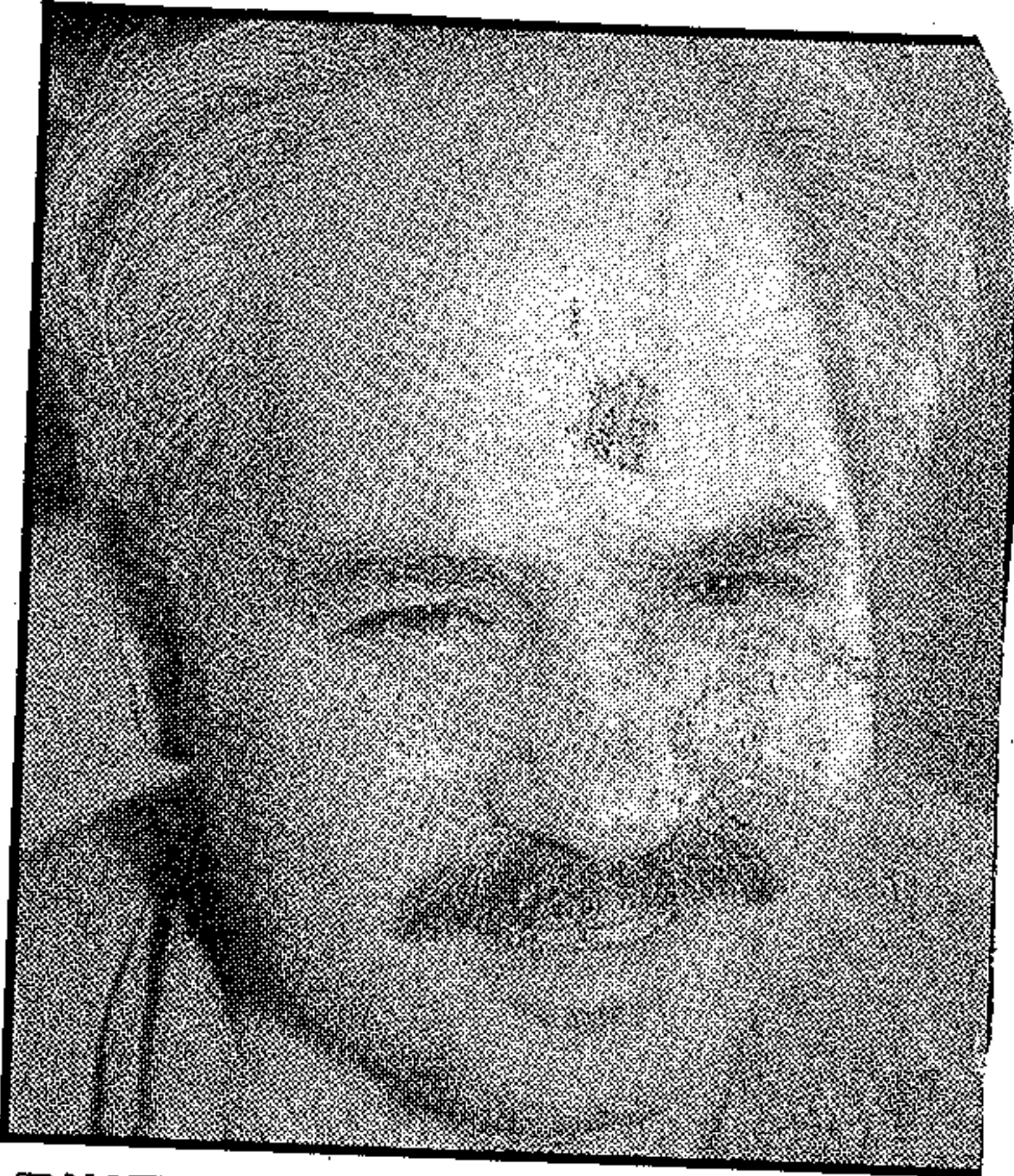
"The site has a lot of conservation-worthy attributes and we believe the land should become part of the National Park," said Mr Daitz.

■ Investigations about proposed developments at Elsie's Peak in Fish Hoek, which falls outside the boundaries of the CPPNE, are also being undertaken by the National Parks Board.

There are concerns about whether these would be "appropriate developments" on the edge of the National Park.

■ The Scarborough wetlands is another area the National Parks Board is watching closely.

Mr Daitz said the board was investigating whether the land was being sold off with transfer subject to sub-division.



□ **NATURAL GUARDIAN:** David Daitz, co-ordinator of the Table Mountain project for the National Parks Board.



# Strong plea to have Robben Island and Peninsula declared World Heritage sites

By JOHN YELD

Cape Town – Robben Island has international symbolic value for human rights similar to sites like Hiroshima and Auschwitz and deserves the status of a World Heritage Site under the auspices of the United Nations.

This was the message yesterday from Bernd von Droste, director of the World Heritage Centre, the Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) agency which is responsible for administering the 469 sites proclaimed under the World Heritage Convention.

Van Droste, who is visiting potential World Heritage Sites in South Africa as a guest of the Department of Environmental Affairs, said the convention had the most signatories – 144 – of any international conservation-oriented convention.

## Table Mountain

"We hope South Africa will soon become the 145th state adhering to this convention," he told an audience at the South African Museum after watching a summary of the presentation of the application to have Table Mountain and the rest of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) declared a World Heritage Site.

There were very strict criteria governing the declaration of such sites and the application and checking processes was long, cumbersome and difficult, he warned.

Table Mountain and the rest of the CPPNE appeared to qualify for nomination on several criteria. These included its huge number of plant species, many of them occurring only here and also threatened. "South Africa has some other (biological) 'hot-spots' but Table Mountain is crucial as the hottest," Van Droste said.



**RUGGED BEAUTY:** The lighthouse on Minto Hill, the highest point on Robben Island

The application also appeared to qualify in terms of the category of significant artificially designed landscapes because of Kirstenbosch.

"After walking there early today, I'm more convinced than ever that Kirstenbosch is a very important part of your application," he said.

Table Mountain also had the potential to qualify for World

Heritage Site status on cultural grounds, as it was an "icon" for both Cape Town and South Africa, he suggested.

Responding to a question as to whether Robben Island was a potential site on its own or whether it could be included as part of the Table Mountain site, Von Droste said either case could apply, but he understood it was not linked in the present

(56) Star 10/2/96 application.

"Robben Island stands out from many sites around the world for its symbolic value, because of its association with human suffering."

It was a symbol both of people's non-respect for the cultural identity of others and for the non-respect of human rights, Von Droste said. "But it also stands for hope, reconciliation and the new South Africa, which is hope for humanity as a whole."

"Unesco staff believe Robben Island is extremely important, therefore I personally hope it will be elevated to the highest (conservation) level."

Von Droste said he had been highly impressed with the number of significant palaeontological and archaeological sites in South Africa, several of which he had visited during his trip.

## Kruger Park

Other than these cultural sites, he had also seen other potential World Heritage Sites in the "natural" category. These included Kruger National Park, Great St Lucia Wetland Park, Hhuhluwe-Umfolozi game reserve and the Tswaing Crater outside Pretoria.

Environmental Affairs spokesman Ingrid Coetzee, who is accompanying Van Droste, said the department was pushing to have Parliament ratify the World Heritage Convention during the session which started yesterday.

At a separate function on Thursday night, Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal, who also serves on the ANC national executive's environmental committee, said the Cabinet was likely to decide on the application to mine heavy minerals on the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia at its next meeting, within a fortnight.

He described Lake St Lucia as "an ecological jewel".

By JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

**THE hunt is on for R20-million earmarked for the RDP in the Western Cape which has disappeared and, according to a top-ranking Environmental Affairs official, seems "to be floating around somewhere".**

If the money is not unearthed by the end of this month, crucial environmental and Sea Fisheries projects in the Western Cape may fold — including a R7-million plan backed by the European Union to upgrade impoverished fishing villages at Waenhuiskraans and Struisbaai.

High-ranking staffers in the Western Cape government and central RDP office this week were at a loss to explain where the funds were.

Western Cape MEC for Economic Affairs Chris Nissen said he had received information that the money had been approved last year.

And while no crime is suspected, a well-placed local source this week said: "We fear the money might have been released and bureaucratic red tape is delaying implementation of the various projects."

He said the money — also meant for studies on coastal zoning and a national environmental policy — should have been available by late last year.

The source said he had liaised with senior officials in the national RDP office who, he claimed, confirmed that the RDP Cabinet Core Committee had approved the allocation.

He was concerned that the funds would be returned to the national RDP office if they were not used by the end of the current financial year.

If the money had been released by the RDP office, it would have been channeled to the various projects through the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism, according to Environment Affairs Director-General Colin Cameron.

"Our information is that it is potential spending money that is floating around somewhere," Dr Cameron said.

**R20m for RDP goes**

**missins**

ST(M) 11/2/96

(56) (94)

# Lagoon project's fate in the balance

ST(m) 11/2/96

~~56~~ 56

By TOM HOOD

THE fate of a R200-million hotel and residential development at Milnerton Lagoon hinges on the outcome of an environmental study.

Twelve organisations formed a protest organisation to stop the project in its present form and they say the site should be used in the broader interests of the general public.

Replying to critics, Johannes Coetsee, managing director of Lagoongate Waterfront Development, said yesterday the company had complied with all the conditions stipulated by Milnerton council when it put the property out to public tender.

However, the company commissioned an in-depth environmental impact assessment in October and its results would determine the outcome. The study was due for completion next week and would be discussed with all the parties concerned.

"We hope to find a solution which reflects the wishes of most, if not all, those involved," he said.

Mr Coetsee said the development had received significant support from residents and the business community and this should be balanced with the concerns voiced by the environmental group.

Johan Roodt, managing director of the company marketing the development, said "a lot of interest" had been shown in all parts of the proposed development.

# 150 RDP hackers strike for boots

# ST(M) 11/2/96

~~56~~ (56)

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

RDP workers clearing invasive plants in Jonkershoek went on strike this week just days before Forestry and Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal pledged R50-million for a clearance programme.

About 150 hackers had refused to work on Monday because they had not been given boots, Cape Nature Conservation Boland district manager Grevile Ruddock said.

"Because state tender procedures are slow, we can't always equip the workers as quickly as we'd like to."

A senior adviser to Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal said industrial action in RDP projects was problematic.

"If one embarks on a programme which is designed to create as many jobs as possible, there is a trade-off with the amount of money that is

available. That can lead to some degree of conflict," Dr Guy Preston said.

"If we don't invest heavily in this project now, we're going to pay for it later with less water, environmental harm and leaving many people jobless."

Mr Marais said CNC would continue paying the wages of two women workers who had been killed in a road accident near Paarl recently.

## vote to decide destiny of mountain

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

TABLE Mountain's chances of being ranked as a World Heritage Site depend on a crucial parliamentary vote and local government's willingness to enter into conservation pacts with the National Parks Board.

These factors have emerged as key elements in the National Parks Board's bid to have the mountain listed as a site of outstanding universal value.

While World Heritage Centre director Bernd von Droste says he has no doubt that the mountain deserves the highest conservation ranking, the rigorous process towards declaration as a World Heritage Site can start only once Parliament has ratified the World Heritage Convention.

The World Heritage Centre would also have to be satisfied that management plans catered for a buffer around the core conservation area.

Welcoming this condition, NPB Table Mountain co-ordinator David Daitz said only elected representatives of the public could make land-use planning decisions.

"This is fine, except that in the Peninsula we'll have to find a different solution because of the national park being situated in the midst of a major city.

"We'll need some kind of mechanism which allows land-use planning issues in the buffer zone to be jointly decided by the National Parks Board and local authorities."

Department of Environment Affairs spokeswoman Ingrid Coetzee said all efforts were being made to push ratification through the current Parliamentary session.

"This is a Catch-22 situation. We can't claim UN funds to help us compile a tentative list of potential World Heritage Sites until the Convention had been endorsed by Parliament.

# A powerful champion for Table Mountain (and Robben Island too)

**B**ETTER and better! That's the prospect for the future conservation of Table Mountain and the rest of the Peninsula mountain chain, after the fleeting visit of Bernd von Droste, director of Unesco's World Heritage Centre. The centre administrators the World Heritage Convention, which - we hope - South Africa will ratify during the present session of parliament.

Incidentally, the fact that his visit to the city was so short did not detract from his appreciation of this wonderful asset of the Cape - as he was quick to point out, he spent a year studying botany at the University of Stellenbosch, during which time he also climbed Table Mountain.

"No one needs to tell me about the importance of fynbos," he told the small but enthusiastic audience who greeted him at the SA Museum. And although it was extremely unlikely that anyone else in that particular

audience needed such reminding, the brief slide show presented for Dr Von Droste as a summary of the World Heritage Site application for the mountain chain emphasised some of its natural highlights: the Cape Peninsula has the highest plant species density for any region anywhere in the world - 2,285 in just 450 sq km; it has the highest number of endemic plant species (occurring nowhere else on earth) - about 100 - for any area of its size; it has more threatened plant species - 175 at the last count - than anywhere else of comparable size; more than 120 orchid species; and at least one frog - the Table Mountain ghost frog - and three species of butterfly, unique to the area.

Impressive statistics, which Dr Von Droste pointed out were probably enough in themselves to qualify Table Mountain (in the generic sense) as a World Heritage Site. But it was his equally enthusiastic embrace of the

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



mountain and - significantly - Robben Island, for their respective cultural and symbolic values that was particularly pleasing to a number of those in the audience. They have been feeling uneasy at what they see as an imbalance in the application to have the mountain declared a World Heritage Site, by an over-emphasis on its natural history attributes and a dismissal, by omission, of its socio-cultural significance. And by way of illustration, they note that the slide show pre-

sentation made no reference to the period before the arrival of European settlers.

This aspect is clearly something close to Dr Von Droste's heart. Referring to his visit to the early hominid site at Sterkfontein with archaeologist Phillip Tobias, he remarked: "It was an unforgettable experience." And that, remember, from a man whose daily task is the administration of 469 sites of such cultural and natural significance that the world community values them above all others.

Robben Island, Dr Von Droste suggested, was worthy of World Heritage Site status in its own right, because of its deep significance as a symbol of human rights abuses and the triumph of hope and reconciliation over tyranny and suffering.

There is, it appears, the wonderful prospect of Capetonians being the custodians of two World Heritage Sites within a few kilometres of each other - surely a unique situ-

ation. But that prospect is also extremely sobering, given the awesome trust and responsibility it implies.

If these declarations materialise - or even if Robben Island is incorporated into a Table Mountain heritage site - it will be impossible to downplay or ignore the cultural significance and the needs of the community who live on the fringes, and management plans will have to be crafted accordingly. Those feeling uneasy now can probably rest assured on that score.

Also, there is a powerful message to the handful of spoilers apparently still trying to delay or even undermine moves to have the mountain and its satellites, like Robben Island, brought under a single authority: even the international community wants these magnificent heritage sites properly conserved. Stand aside now - and let those who really care get on with the job!

(56) ARU 12/2/96

## Mine under scrutiny over polluted water

(21) (56)  
BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Star 12/2/96

The Grootvlei gold mine in Springs has come under fire from several government departments for failing to meet permit requirements controlling the pumping of polluted water into the Blesbokspruit.

The polluted groundwater directly affects an internationally recognised wetland as well as agriculture downstream.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry last year granted Grootvlei a permit to pump iron- and salt-rich water on condition that measures be taken immediately to purify the water.

The mine was threatened with closure and the cumulative loss of 4 000 jobs if it didn't pump between 30 and 80 megalitres of water daily out of its shafts.

But according to Grootvlei general manager Peter Noble, the mine could not afford a desalination plant to purify water without assistance.

Environmental stakeholders are deeply concerned about the noticeable damage caused to the wetland by the polluted water since pumping began. Mine management said pumping had been suspended for six weeks, but resumed last week.

In spite of heavy rainfall, water discolouration and the deaths of some plants and reeds have been reported. Damage to water organisms, birds and fish has not been ascertained, but seems probable if pumping continues.

The Gauteng department of conservation and agriculture has charged the mine with contravening the nature conservation ordinance, and has said a speedy solution to the problem is required.

A spokesman for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs said an agreement on the desalination plant was being negotiated.



# Environment is taking a back seat

(56) Star 12/9/96

The draft constitution fails to properly address issues vital to South Africa, writes Anita Allen

**P**rofound disappointment. That is my reaction to environment rights in the draft of our rainbow nation's constitution. And it will be profound sadness if they persist as stated through to enactment by Parliament.

The delegates to the Constitutional Assembly have not seized the moment to propel South Africa to a pre-eminent position in worldwide environmental legislation. It's like Bafana Bafana or our rugby Springboks or our cricket team qualifying for World Cup finals, and then not fielding the best teams.

In deciding to follow the route of a bill of rights and a constitution as the supreme law of the land, South Africa is treading a well-used path. However, given the time and our history, our constitution could be a beacon for all other nations.

At present we have a single environment "right" in the interim constitution which the Codesa, Kempton Park drafters admitted was not what they would have liked: "Everyone has a right to an environment which is not detrimental to his or her health or well-being."

In the draft we have two rights, as follows:

"Everyone has the right:

- To an environment which is not harmful to their (sic) health or well-being.
- To have their (sic) environment protected through reasonable legislative and other measures designed to (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation, (ii) promote conservation, and (iii) secure sustainable development and use of natural resources."

The grammatical error is clumsy. The substitution of "harmful" for "detrimental" is not an improvement, since in law it may well be argued that a thing can be detrimental and cause loss without causing harm, as in hurt or injury. In short, the main objections to the interim constitution clause have not been addressed.

**T**he first right is still framed in the negative, which places a question mark over its weight in law, should it conflict with positively stated rights. This legal debate has not been resolved, but it is a danger signal. The last thing one wants in the supreme law of the land are clauses or words like "well-being", which are nebulous and vague, and would cause real problems of interpretation. Inevitably, this means the right will be unenforceable, and what is the use of right which is unenforceable?

The addition of the second clause is strange. No other right in the draft is followed by a right to have legislation enacted to protect the right. Rights that are enforceable without subsequent legislation are obviously stronger and better.

The only reasonable inference to draw is that the framers themselves recognise that the first clause is unenforceable. However, legislation comes and goes, and in our own history it has been based on political expediency. So it would be better if the environment right could stand on its own and be binding, no matter who rules the land.

Obviously the framers were not happy that the first right was sufficient. But the second right is not a step towards greater clarity, it just further muddies the already murky water.

**T**he addition of categories of action – prevent pollution, ecological degradation and so forth, is not exhaustive. So, does that mean that issues left out need not be protected by legislation? The adjective "ecological" before degradation is incorrect in the context, and point (iii) is ambiguous. One interpretation could be that it promotes protection of the environment through the unqualified use of natural resources.

In summary, what we have in these draft environment rights are symptoms of a far bigger problem, which has its roots in the debate in South Africa on green rights.

The debate has been low-key rather than vigorous, and dominated by too small a circle of legal experts. It has been unnecessarily legalistic, with a concentration on whether the environment right is blue, red or green.

According to this view, human rights come in three generations or colours: ranging from the strong, enforceable, fundamental blue rights; to softer, more difficult to enforce red rights; and finally the green rights, which are open to interpretation and therefore difficult to prove in a court action. Green rights would defer to fundamental rights, for example. The dominant legal view is that environmental rights belong in the third generation or green category. I do not agree, for the simple reason that it flies in the face of global precedents.

The interim constitution, and now the draft, not only fail to capture the interrelationship between man and his surroundings, they also fail to express the doctrine of inter-generational equity.

The time is ripe to entrench the view that the survival of mankind is interlinked and interdependent on nature, and present generations hold this natural heritage in trust for future generations.



# R3-m boost for

# Robben Island

(56) (57)

*Kenneth  
12/196*

By **Mathatha Tsedu**  
Political Editor

**N**ORWEGIAN prime minister Mrs Harlem-Brundtland yesterday donated R3-million towards the establishment of a national museum on Robben Island.

Brundtland accompanied President Nelson Mandela on a tour of the island where the South African leader spent 18 years as a prisoner.

TV cameras rolled and photographers clicked incessantly as Mandela, standing in the quarry where he had smashed rocks for more than 13 years, also launched the sale of quarry rock from the island to raise funds for ex-political prisoners.

The rock, with a certificate signed by Mandela authenticating the stone, will sell for R39,95 at Woolworths stores countrywide from today.

President Mandela's visit coincided with the sixth anniversary of his release from 27 years of imprisonment.

Accompanied by his young relative Ms Rochelle Mirara and Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, Mandela handed Brundtland a picture and a box of the quarry stone.

He said it was fitting that Norway was the recipient of the first stone as

it had stood full force behind the struggle to liberate South Africa. Brundtland in return donated the R3 million to the museum that will sustain the memories of what she called huge sacrifices by prisoners and the entire nation of South Africa.

Mandela also lashed out at whites in SA and said they should stop thinking in narrow racist terms.

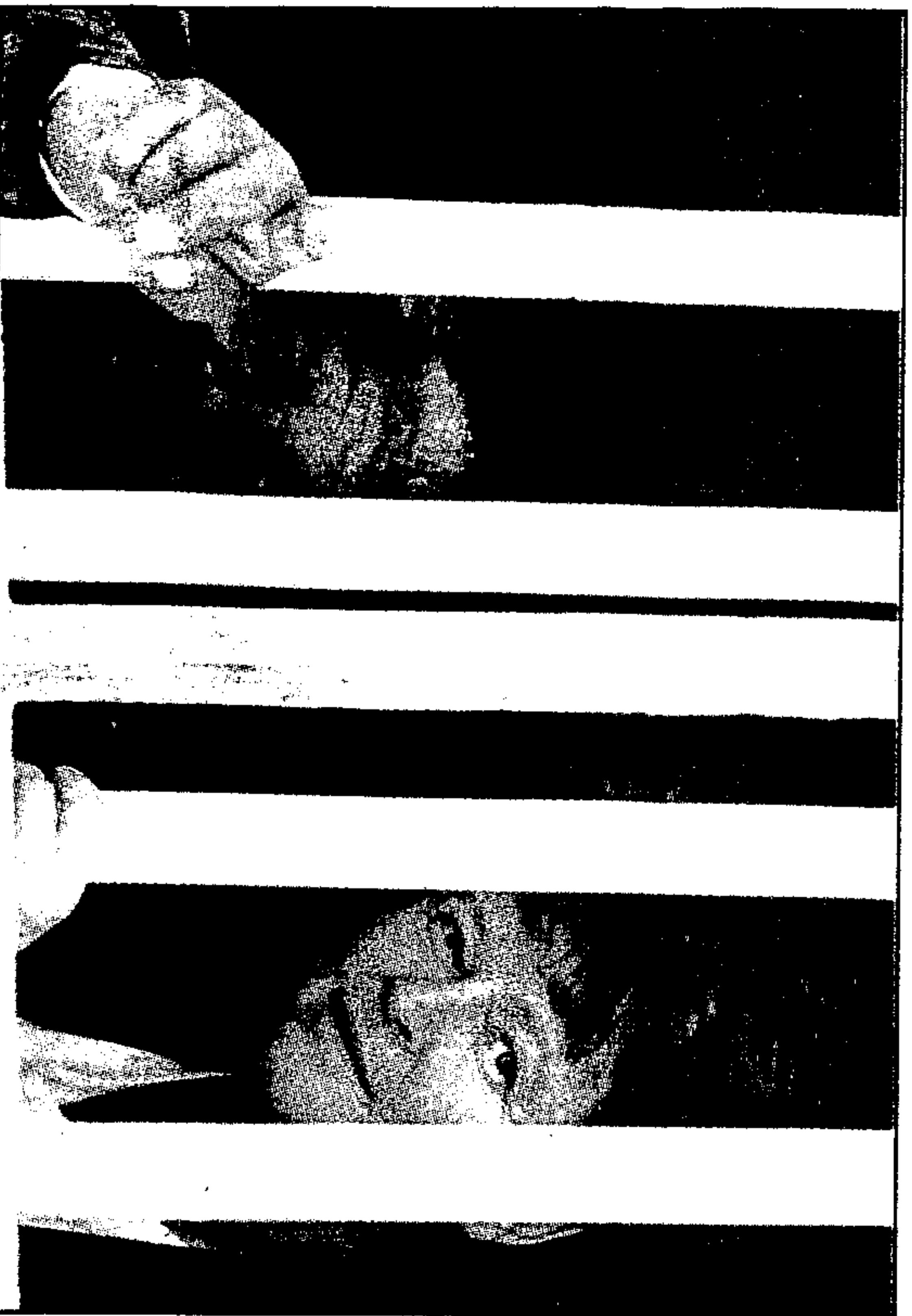
He was clearly referring to the Potgietersrus racial incident, where black children have been refused entry to a school which currently has only white pupils. Earlier Mandela visited his former cell and addressed common law prisoners still serving their sentences on the island.

### New dispensation

There are presently 175 prisoners who will be moved out by the end of the year when the new dispensation on the future of the island will be implemented.

The chairman on the Cabinet Committee on the Future of Robben Island and parliamentary councillor in the office of the President, Mr Ahmed Kathrada, said the rock that will be sold "symbolises our seemingly endless struggle for freedom and our eventual triumph towards democracy."

● See also page 4.



President Nelson Mandela shows Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem-Brundtland the view from the cell he occupied during his imprisonment on Robben Island yesterday - the sixth anniversary of his release from prison.

PICT: AP

# SABC is full of flaws

**L**AST WEEK'S RELAUNCH of the South African Broadcasting Corporation was spectacular and spot on. The assurance by President Nelson Mandela of a free and independent media adds value to democracy in South Africa.

The Media Workers' Association of South Africa supported the launch and encouraged our members to attend.

We supported it because of the SABC's willingness to change its character and content. The change in value system will also bring about quality changes in programming. We believe these initiatives are positive and should be encouraged and nurtured.

We also agree that the National Public Broadcast Service must keep pace with the changes in and outside South Africa.

The problem is not what the SABC is doing but how it is doing it. Firstly, there was no proper consultation with workers and therefore the final product lacks the invaluable contribution of key role players.

The result is clearly visible from the face of the new SABC. Whoever planned the changes concentrated on the theoretical model, with very little regard for practical results.

This is the major disadvantage of overlooking the workers who, as practitioners, are armed with both theory and practice.

Mwasa also has problems understanding just how the new SABC will address past problems. Apartheid broadcasting used the old TV1, which was South Africa's largest network, for the smallest portion of the population – an example of economic waste to preserve a decadent system.

## Out in the cold

We clearly understand the demographic imperative that the SABC has to contend with. However, changing the channels perpetuates the advantages of the urban population and leaves remote and rural areas out in the cold.

The old CCV network, which was designed for the majority of South Africans, had a limited transmission network. Even some not-so-remote areas in the Free State, like Ficksburg, did not receive a clear CCV signal.

They had to rely on spill-over from a TV1 transmitter on the Lesotho border. Mwasa discussed this problem with the SABC, which continues to plague people in that part of the country. Recently they were able to see only part of the African Cup games.

There is yet another problem, even for urban people who may have all the channels: they must do a lot of channel-hopping to find programmes they want to watch.

Remote areas are still the hardest hit. The

Mwasa says the SABC still faces problems and the media association proposes a few solutions to the most important ones. **Sithembele Khala** comments...



**Sithembele Khala ... general secretary of the Media Workers' Association.**

largest network, SABC1, broadcasts in Zulu, Xhosa and English. This means that people in rural areas will now receive transmissions in those languages.

But, in some of those areas, the signal will not be picked up because people do not have TV sets. The language problem and absence of sets could lead to a big waste of a powerful channel.

Other regions and areas will end up with languages they do not understand at all. The SABC rightly argues that the survey conducted before the launch shows that about 70 percent of those surveyed accept English as their second choice.

## English is second preference

Therefore, if all areas receive English, it is within that mandate. Mwasa's problem is why people should be given a second preference when it is possible to give them their own languages.

When the Independent Broadcasting Authority deliberated, we hoped they would insist the SABC go back to the drawing board in the public interest.

When the IBA said that the SABC cannot decide for the people, we thought that they would demand specifics of exactly how the new SABC would benefit South Africa.

In the end, the IBA simply reduced its own argument to a mere licence technicality. We agree that compliance with licence conditions is important – but not as important as spending about R5 million in less than five hours and still failing to deal with the core problem.

We feel the IBA is also an important role player that should have contributed to designing the new SABC. We are unhappy that the IBA again failed to intervene effectively.

Furthermore, the SABC is aware of Mwasa's concerns for job creation and preservation. In their argument for regional television, they clearly captured these concerns.

Mwasa however remains sceptical about an autonomous regional TV. Although on the surface it looks as if jobs will be created, the question is whether this is sustainable by a public broadcaster which is not sure of its future source of funds. Our fear therefore is that the advantages could be short lived.

We are also not too sure, in the context of the global village, whether there could be any significant regional news to justify the building of studios, cameras and crews.

In areas like North West, where these facilities already exist, we do not believe it is wise to convert them to regional needs. These facilities are massive and advanced, and to confine their use to one region would result in terrible under utilisation, which will be costly to the public service.

## Under-utilised studios

North West recording studios, which are among the best in the world, are already under utilised and this can continue under autonomous regional television.

Our suggestion to the SABC would be to concentrate on expanding its transmission network and making channels and programmes accessible to everybody in the language of their choice.

We would further suggest that regions be kept on the national network and only be allowed to break at predetermined intervals for regional programmes, documentaries, magazines and news.

We would have hoped that a pure regional television service would be a separate arrangement either by the Government and the community (for education and regional preferences) or by the private sector.

We believe that remaining with a national network will be more effective and will not lead to unrealistic expectations.

*(The writer is Mwasa's general secretary.)*

## Thor appeal fails against SA claims in England

MARITZBURG. — A final appeal by Thor Chemicals to the British House of Lords to prevent South African Thor mercury workers from pursuing claims against the company in England, has been rejected.

(56) ARG 14/2/96  
London attorney, Richard Meeran, who represents three Thor claimants, Anastasia Cele, Busisiwe Ngcobo and Albert Dlamini, said he was "amazed" at the lengths to which Thor had gone to try to

deny justice to the victims.

The company had been unsuccessful in two earlier applications last year.

Proceedings have so far been lodged in England on behalf of another 20 Thor workers.

**T**HE stage is being set for an all-out war between developers and those who consider themselves to be guardians of Cape Town's beauty. A recent sit-in at the historic Oudekraal site showed that the two camps are just not speaking the same language.

Drivers winding along the coastal road between Camps Bay and Llandudno have until now had only one structure to distract them from the kelp-littered sea: the landmark White House, which has stood in glorious isolation on that coast since the early part of the century. Recently, however, a hand-painted banner bearing the legend "save our mountain" was strung up between its gables and an appeal for help to President Nelson Mandela was painted on its facade. The Alliance of Alternative Communities of Africa, also known as Guardians of the Mountain, settled in for 10 days to protest against plans to demolish the White House, and to build a hotel and conference centre on the site.

**T**he group says Table Mountain is an "energy centre" which must be protected from developments of this kind. They have suggested that the homestead be used as a community centre, or an information centre for the proposed Table Mountain national park.

Developer Steve Jones was not impressed, saying the protesters were hippies and opportunists. A court order was obtained, the squatters were removed along with their teepee, and before the ash from their cooking fires had cooled, preliminary work on the site had begun.

It is not only crystal mystics who are upset by plans for the Cape's relatively unspoiled coastline. It has been reported that fibreglass scale models of the jewel of Cape Town's mountain chain — the Twelve Apostles — are being used by development planners in Malaysia, Japan and the US, something that is making all of Cape Town's nature-loving lobby jumpy. The pristine 2km stretch of coast between Oudekraal and Bakoven, all of which is privately owned, may be the first to go. Although the Devland group has been refusing to comment, it is believed

# Stage set for battle Over Cape Town's natural assets

HEATHER PARKER

BD 14/2/96

the group has bought several portions of land from the Wiehahn Family Trust, which owns much of that stretch. One plan mooted for this site has hotels and a 36-hole golf course.

On the other side of the peninsula, a proposed housing development in a protected area on the Fish Hoek sand dunes has been described as the kind of sprawl that could lead to "another Los Angeles" developing. Add to this an application for township subdivision in the Scarborough wetlands and an application to build high up the mountain at Elsie's Peak, and the direction is clear: instead of densification to accommodate its growing population, Cape Town is heading towards urban sprawl.

The dispute between environmentalists and developers is not a new one, but as tourism picks up and Cape Town becomes the St Tropez of sub-Saharan Africa, the potential for profit is soaring and the fight is becoming more urgent.

Large parts of the Table Mountain chain have long been declared part of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment.

Environmentalists have gained ground in recent years with the publication of the Fuggle report on the best way to manage the mountain chain and the establishment of the Huntley committee to explore im-

plementation of the report.

One of the Fuggle report's recommendations was that a single authority be appointed to replace the existing 14 management authorities responsible for the mountain chain; another was that the boundaries of the protected zone be extended, including out to sea to create a marine reserve area. On December 7 the National Parks Board was appointed to be that single authority, and environmentalists breathed a sigh of relief.

However, the parks board and its agent David Daitz, who is the coordinator for the project to establish the Table Mountain national park,

found themselves thrown in at the deep end: the Bakoven-Oudekraal stretch which is allegedly earmarked for massive development is one of the stretches central to plans to consolidate the protection zone. Land within the zone is not sacrosanct: any property rights are retained, which is how a township has come to be mooted on land designated natural environment.

"Land can come into the park in one of two ways," said Daitz. "Either we can buy the land and proclaim it a schedule one national park (the highest level of protection), or the freehold owners of the land can contract for it to be incorporated in the

national park. The terms of that contract would vary on a case-by-case basis."

If owners were reluctant to sell, the land could be expropriated and compensation paid, but the parks board has limited resources to fight this kind of battle. And while various environment-friendly processes were under way at local and national level, a moratorium on development would be impossible to enforce. "The parks board respects property rights," says Daitz, "but owners often think it is their inalienable right to do what they please on their land. We stand against that idea."

Land owners were trustees for future generations, he said.

There was widespread acceptance in the community that the urban edge needed to be fixed to prevent urban sprawl into areas of the mountain chain, or the wine- and wheatlands surrounding the city.

**W**hite House site developer Jones rejects the idea that his R40m, 70-suite, five-star hotel could be considered urban sprawl. With 14 months' worth of documentation, a budget on which environmental considerations have weighed heavily and mounting irritation over the fuss surrounding his development, he is feeling picked on.

"Those hippies wouldn't know the difference between a rookkrans and a milkwood," he says. "We haven't destroyed one indigenous tree on the site. The White House did not have proper foundations and was subsidising forwards. The national monuments council issued the demolition order. It would have gone anyway, and what we are putting in its place effectively replicates it."

Daitz is unconvinced. "In principle, we believe the stretch should be preserved in its natural state. It is spiritually refreshing for both residents and visitors to drive out of the urban area and emerge into what is effectively untouched nature, apart from the road they are on.

"That is why people live in Cape Town and what brings visitors here. We need to protect it with all the energy we can muster."

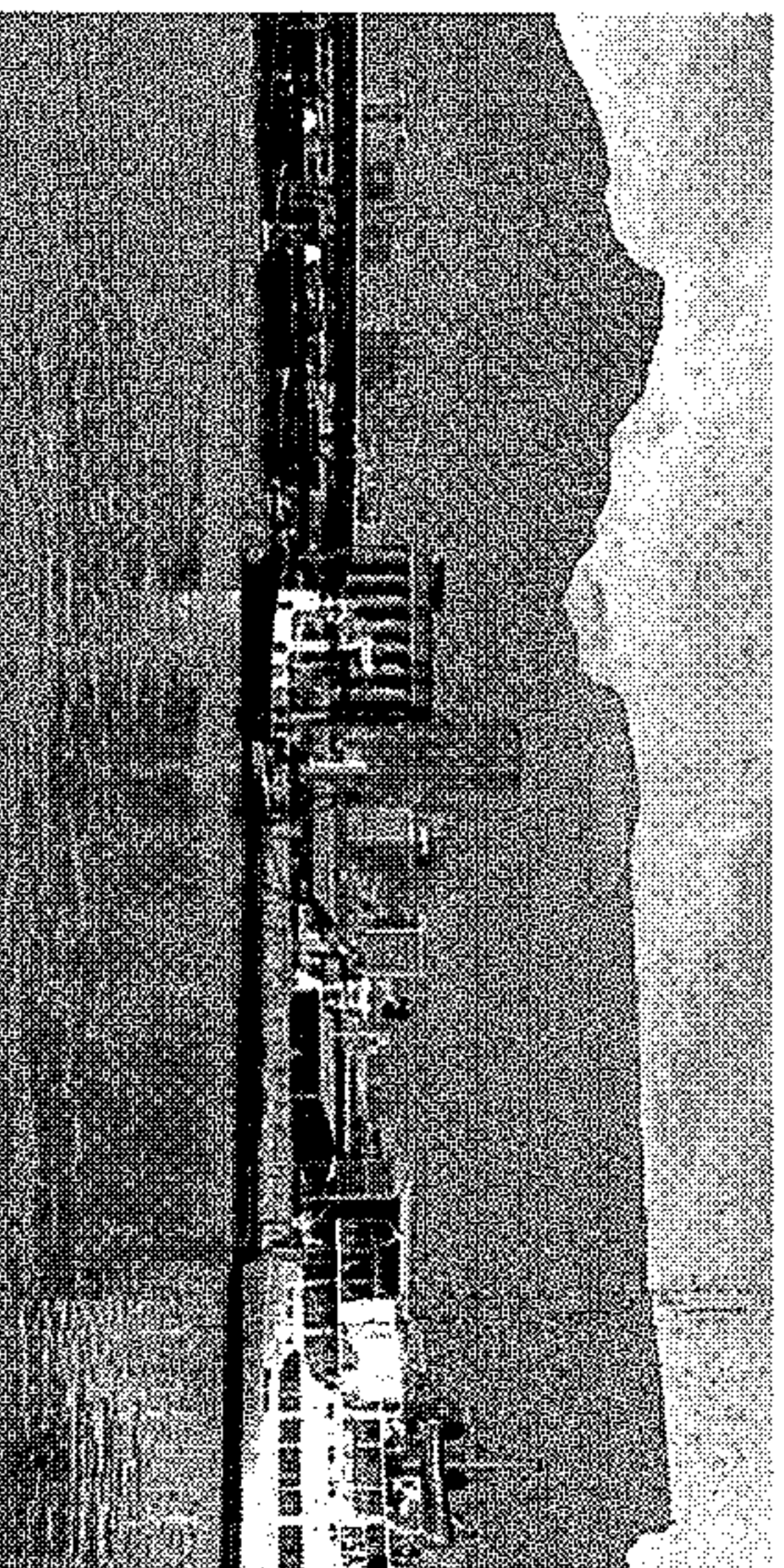


Table Mountain... centrepiece in the development row

## Thor Chemicals loses appeal to prevent workers' claims

Star 15/2/96 (48) (56)

Pietermaritzburg – A final appeal by Thor Chemicals to the British House of Lords to prevent South African Thor mercury workers from pursuing claims against the company in England was rejected

on Tuesday. London attorney Richard Meeran of Leigh Day & Co, who represents three Thor claimants, Anastasia Cele, Busisiwe Ngcobo and Albert Dlamini, said: "The decision means that we

can at last press ahead with the claims for compensation." Proceedings have been lodged in England on behalf of another 20 Thor workers. – Own Correspondent.

# Saldanha steel watchdog team appointed

96  
~~1996~~

ARG 16/2/96

LINDSAY BARNES Staff Reporter

AN ENVIRONMENTAL monitoring committee has been appointed to enable people to help the authorities protect the environment during the building of the Saldanha Steel Project.

The Western Cape Cabinet announced yesterday the committee is to be led by the president of the Habitat Council, J H Giliomee.

When the controversial project to be developed at Saldanha Bay was approved last year, a condition was the establishment of a committee to monitor the performance of the project with regards to environmental matters.

The committee is to monitor the environmental management plan and to ensure that internationally acceptable standards are applied.

# Oudekraal developer demands removal of petitions

Staff Reporter

(56) ARG 16/2/96

AT least two Hout Bay concerns have been asked by property developer Steven Jones to remove copies of petitions opposing the 70-room hotel he is to develop at Oudekraal.

The local library and a business confirmed they had had phone calls from Mr Jones. Claims that he had contacted two other local organisations could not be confirmed.

Mr Jones has obtained a court order pre-

venting squatters removed from the White House land at Oudekraal - now calling themselves the Guardians of the Mountain - from interfering with the development.

Mr Jones' attorney, Deon Smith, said if petitions had been placed by any of these parties, they would be flying in the face of this restraining order.

The organisers of the petition aim to collect a few hundred thousand signatures calling for a halt to the development.

They believe that if it goes ahead, it will set a precedent for future develop-

ments encroaching on the mountain.

Both the library and the local firm said Mr Jones' request was made in no uncertain terms and that the petitions were removed. The company asked to remain anonymous as Hout Bay "is a small town".

Meanwhile, the protesters arrested last week for trespassing on the White House property have made sporadic attempts to return.

The land is being protected by a security company, said a police spokesman.

# Sulphur fire victims demand state action

MTG 16-22/2/96

(56) (103)

The lackadaisical response of government to last year's massive sulphur fire at the AECI plant near Somerset West has confounded experts, reports **Rehana Rossouw**

**R**EPORTS of bronchitis, lung infections and asthma-like illnesses are rife in the 35 000-strong community of Macassar after it was smothered by a cloud of sulphur dioxide gas on December 17 last year.

The township was thrown into turmoil when a government sulphur stockpile at the adjacent AECI factory caught fire. About 2 500 people were evacuated in the early hours of the morning and the fire was extinguished 20 hours after it started, but not before two brothers died following suspected respiratory complications.

The Macassar Crisis Committee, formed after the incident, says about 1 000 people have been paid between R250 and R1 000. So far, no claims for personal suffering have been submitted.

The committee has been attempting to draw government attention to the plight of Macassar's residents. It has earmarked President Nelson Mandela in particular, as he has the authority to call for a commission of inquiry into the incident.

The committee wants the inquiry to investigate the effect of the fire on people's health and their environment, the emergency measures in place at AECI, the province's emergency resources, and how much longer and under which conditions the sulphur will continue to be stockpiled.

Committee chairman George Liddle said he had sent a letter to Mandela last month appealing for an inquiry. The only response was a standard letter from the president's office acknowledging receipt of his letter.

This week, Mandela's spokesman, Parks Mankahlana, said the request for a commission of inquiry had been forwarded to the Ministry of Environment Affairs and Tourism.

The ministry confirmed it had received the request, but a spokesman said it had in turn been referred to Western Cape MEC for Finance Kobus Meiring.

His spokesman Pieter Coetzee said the request had been received and

Meiring was "looking into the matter", AECI supported the request for a national commission of inquiry and would provide its full co-operation, said company spokesman, Mike Blizzard. The company had started an internal investigation within days of the fire.

Liddle said he has had to use an inhaler daily since the fire. "I've never used one before, but I often strain to breathe. Many people have bronchitis and we're all very scared. We're putting all our hopes into the president to get a commission to find out what's wrong with us."

---

**Many people have bronchitis and we're all very scared. We're putting all our hopes into the president to get a commission to find out what's wrong with us**

---

While medical experts are still determining the lasting effects of the fire on the community, residents are becoming more alarmed. They blamed the fire for two more deaths in January, but an official determination can only be made after an inquest.

A teacher at Zandfliet Secondary School in Macassar, Edward Jephtha, said his wife and daughter had been constantly sick since the fire. There also seemed to him to be a high incidence of bronchitis among colleagues and pupils at the school.

"My daughter Carlie, who is 14 months old, has had bronchitis since a week after the fire. My wife has a lung infection. Both went to the doctor for the third time last week, and were put on stronger medication," Jephtha said.

"I can't prove that it's because of the fire, but I'm definitely worried. Carlie often can't sleep at night because her lungs are so congested, and she's never been sick for so long."

Dr Neil White, of Groote Schuur Hospital and the University of Cape Town's respiratory clinic, examined 400 Macassar residents in three days

after the fire. He intends doing follow-up visits to determine the longer-term medical effects of high exposure to sulphur dioxide.

"The gas is an irritant which affects the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract on contact. Most people we examined immediately after the fire reported those symptoms," White said.

"People who have asthma are very sensitive to exposure and it is guaranteed to bring on an attack. It seems to have had quite a prolonged effect subsequently and people are still dribbling in from all over the Peninsula with complaints."

White was particularly concerned about the long-term effects of the fire on children, whose lung function was difficult to assess, and frail people.

"I've tried to do some research, but I haven't found a single similar event described and published. I also haven't found a disaster on this scale anywhere in the world. Everything I've been doing so far I've had to cobble together myself."

White said he was concerned that not enough was being done to prevent a disaster like this happening again. He hoped the province's disaster plan would be reviewed soon, although the ambulance and fire staff were extremely courageous under difficult circumstances. "If this is the way we respond to a disaster like this, what will happen if the Koeberg nuclear power station explodes?"

After his follow-up visits, White will produce a report detailing the medical effects of the fire on residents.

**D**r Eugene Cairncross, a chemical engineer at the Peninsula Technikon, said he was also very concerned that it appeared the authorities were "ducking their heads and hoping the problem would disappear."

"We need an investigation into why the incident happened in the first place, why it was not contained after the fire started, and what the implications are for other hazardous sites in the country."

"The investigation needs to draw scientific conclusions about the effects of the fire so that we can make the information available to the rest of the world. It is our duty to the communities affected and to the scientific community."



# What ostriches can teach us

(56) Mt G 16-22/2/96

**Ostriches and rooibos tea provide insights into how South Africa can prevent the pillaging of its fauna and flora, report Saliem Fakir and Eddie Koch**

**T**HE plight of South Africa's wild plants and animals has been in the news lately with the publication of two hard-hitting reports that document a large-scale, illicit drain of valuable indigenous species from the country over the past two decades.

The Kumlleben Commission's report described extensive illicit trading in ivory by the South African military in the 1980s, while a study by Traffic, an international body which monitors illegal trade in fauna and flora, found a thriving illegal trade in South African birds, reptiles and plants.

Both reports propose more stringent regulations and customs control, with additional resources for police and other enforcement agencies.

But two South African species — the ostrich and a type of fynbos that grows only in the sparse climate of the Cedarberg — provide useful lessons about how expensive state controls can be supplemented with measures that promote responsible entrepreneurial use of indigenous products.

Wildlife conservation in South Africa has in the past been dominated by a protectionist mindset: game reserves were fenced off and patrolled by paramilitary anti-poaching patrols; bureaucratic permit systems were set up to control the export of animals, plants and fertile embryos of native species; and rigid agricultural marketing controls restricted innovative industries which could have made constructive use of wildlife products.

This policing-from-above approach, along with government restrictions on legal commerce in wildlife, involved inevitable failures, mainly because the state lacked the capacity and finances to enforce its regulations. Today, the new government is even more hard-pressed to release funds for conservation.

The recent histories of the ostrich and the rooibos leaf show, in different ways, how commercial and entrepreneurial exploitation of plant and animal products can provide more vibrant, cost-effective and efficient ways to preserve rare species — without taxing ordinary people and the state's coffers.

The African Black Ostrich, whose genes were originally indigenous to the Karoo, is the basis of an extremely profitable rural industry — even though the fashion market for the bird's feathers, which first provided

the impetus for farmers to domesticate them, collapsed in 1914.

They are valued for meat, in high demand in many European countries because of consumer fears that beef carries mad cow disease. The skin is prized for quality leather products. Eggs are used in the curio industry. Oil, for cosmetics and moisturisers, is extracted from their fat. Feathers are used to make non-static dusters for computers. There is a specialised demand for feathers from the organisers of Mardi Gras carnivals like the one in Rio this month. And bones and toe nails are crushed to make bone meal.

Sid Birch, an ostrich farmer in the Little Karoo, estimates the industry has the potential to earn the country a whopping R550-million every year in foreign exchange.

The problem lies in the way the Klein Karoo Co-operative imposed a tough, single-channel marketing system on farmers until October 1993, insisting that it handled the sale of all ostrich products. The co-op also pressed the government to legislate, in terms of the Livestock Improvement Act, against the export of fertile birds and eggs.

The result: smugglers had a field day, sneaking birds out through Namibia and Bophuthatswana, while South African farmers were forced to accept prices for their birds way below the international market levels. There were few incentives to develop local meat-processing plants or tanning factories which added value to the bird's primary products.

At the same time, farmers in other unlikely parts of the world began working with smuggled South African birds, which are prized over species found in other parts of Africa because they are more docile, female birds lay more eggs than their counterparts, the chicks mature more quickly and the skin of our ostriches has more pimples — making it more attractive in the leather market.

Now Texas has nearly as many African Black ostriches as Oudshoorn. Italy has plants that turn the meat into salami. There are 50 modern ostrich farms in Britain, mainly in the Oxfordshire district. They have so many African Blacks

running around on them that a local animal rights group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, is demanding that the government protect their welfare. And Holland has 120 ostrich farmers whose birds have adapted surprisingly well to the cold climate.

The ostrich industry in South Africa was deregulated in the late 1980s after farmers took legal action against the monopolistic practices of the Klein Karoo Co-op. Bird farming has since taken off all over the country and these wild animals have spread to almost every province.

But all this may have

come too late. The single biggest obstacle to expansion of trade in ostrich products is this country's failure to capture the international export market at an early stage — especially for manufactured goods with added value.

"The increasing international interest in ostrich farming [with the giant South African bird] is posing a threat to the ostrich industry and its worldwide dominance," reports an October 1995 edition of *Farmer's Weekly*.

Rooibos, or *Aspalathus linearis*, presents the opposite lesson in how creative commercial use can cultivate a national species.

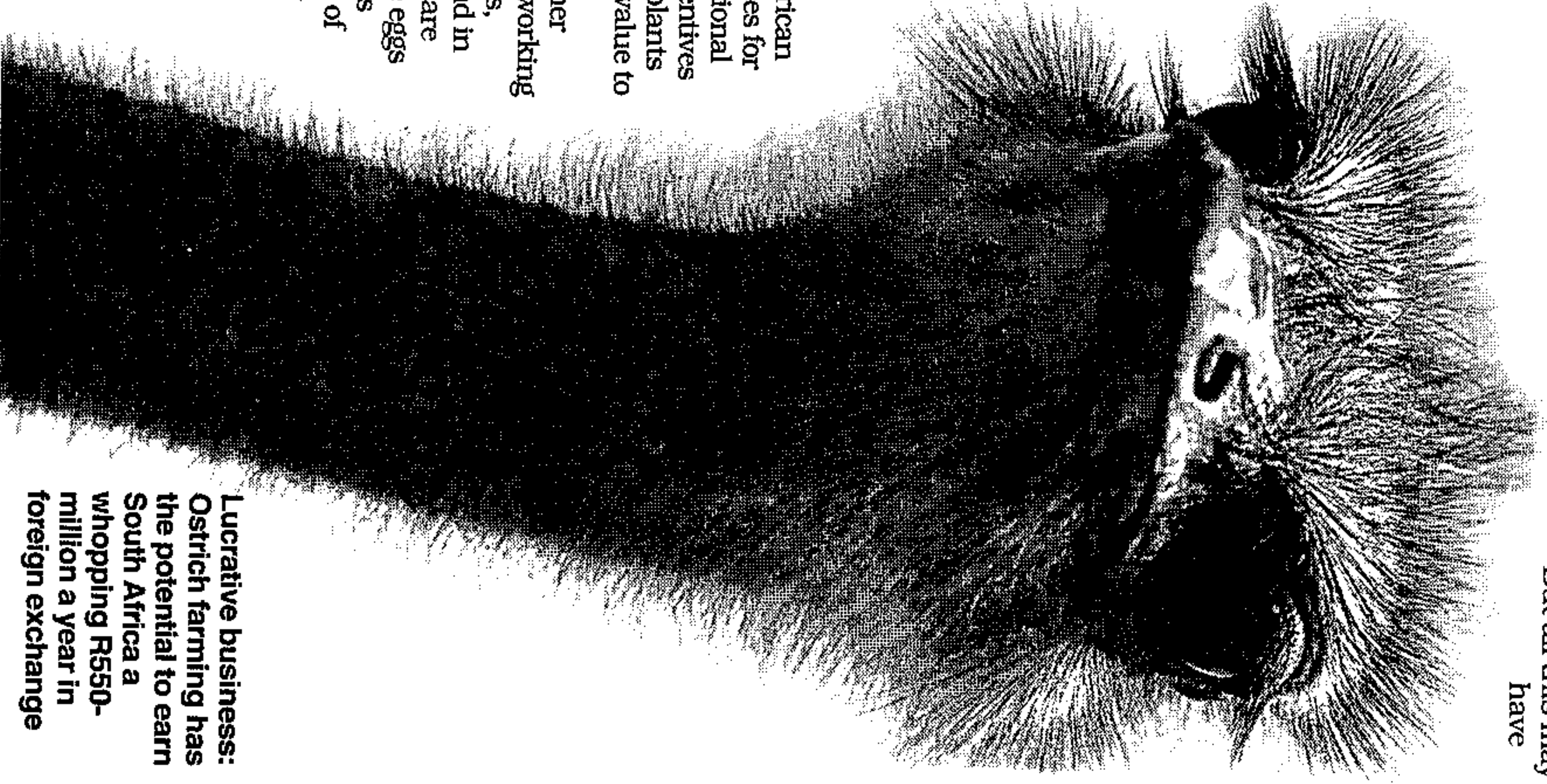
Records show that Khoisan people used the leaf to make a tea-like brew for centuries. White settlers then used it. The first modern industry began in 1904, but it only really took off when a group of local entrepreneurs formed the Rooibos Co-op which, despite its name, operated as a private-sector company from 1993.

About 18 000ha has been put under rooibos cultivation, much of it farmed by small-scale coloured farmers in the Clanwillian area. About 4 700 tons of the tea is produced annually with close on 2 000 tons being exported. No single player controls the market and growers are allowed to trade freely. The result: a vibrant local industry which, unhindered by government interference and red tape, has captured the international market and has created a significant source of livelihood for small farmers.

**T**he different experiences of the bird and the tea leaf underscore two vital points. South Africa is among the 10 countries with the richest biological diversity. This natural wealth has, if managed in a flexible but strategic way, a massive potential for creating rather than consuming funds for conservation.

Commercialisation creates several opportunities: it provides new activities for farmers and alternative crops; it develops a technology and research base that can be applied to other potential products; it diversifies the economic base (especially in a sector prone to natural hazards such as drought and flooding); and it creates multiple job opportunities.

This marks a major shift from a protectionist approach, to creating more value out of our primary natural resources, which traditionally would be exported and re-imported as manufactured products at higher prices. The lesson is simple: if we don't encourage economic development that thrives on the rich diversity of this country's natural assets, the threats to our biological riches will triumph.



**Lucrative business:** Ostrich farming has the potential to earn South Africa a whopping R550-million a year in foreign exchange



□ **BIG STINK:** St Helena Bay resident Wendy Heydenrych at the outlet pipe from West Point Processors.

Pictures: OBED ZILWA, Ste. Hel. 137

# Fishy business in the air

AR6 17/2/96

(56) ~~STINK~~ NIG

Residents fear for their jobs as factories' rotting fish makes life unbearable

St Helena Bay residents, previously happy to co-exist unquestioningly with smelly fish factories, are now insisting they become environmentally friendly.

**ADELE BALETA**  
Staff Reporter

ANGRY residents living in the shadows of three fish factories in St Helena Bay want the plants to clean up their act by putting an end to air and sea pollution in the picturesque West Coast village.

Air pollution control director of the National Ministry of Environmental Affairs Martin Lloyd warned the factories not to stall in submitting plans to clear the air or face closure.

SATURDAY ARGUS went to the small bay to investigate complaints from residents that the fishy smell and fire stack emissions from the factories was "intolerable", "suffocating" and aggravating asthma sufferers.

Indeed, the pungent fish odour from the factories permeated the air and immediately was noticeable, although none of the factories were producing fish meal at the time.

It is in the production of fish meal that boilers — fired by coal — are used and malodorous smoke is belched into the atmosphere. Effluent from the factories causes discoloration of the water and coal waste from at least one factory was lying scattered on a nearby beach.

The factories concerned are West Point Processors, Suid Oranje and the Oceana Group, owned by St Helena Bay Fisheries.

Many residents employed at the plants did not want to talk to SATURDAY ARGUS for fear of losing their jobs. However, others, who would not give their names, believed it was time to clean the



UNDER FIRE: West Point Processors general manager Gerhard Wiese says clean-up operations have begun at the factory.

area, but insisted they did not want the plants to shut.

Western Cape deputy regional director of water quality at the Department of Water Affairs Gareth MacConkey said all three factories were involved in CSIR impact studies.

"The Suid Oranje factory has been reported for water pollution and the matter is with the attorney-general who will decide whether to prosecute.

"We are forming a water quality forum for Saldanha Bay to establish what residents want and to set guidelines for the future. We are a similar forum for St Helena Bay," he said.

There is large-scale development in the area and road-side signs promise "a strip of heaven" along the West coast. Now developers fear potential clients will be put off by the air and sea pollution.

The smell is particularly bad when the north-westerly wind blows and wafts smoke towards the residential areas.

Mr Lloyd said: "We have to look at the history. These plants have been operating for decades without air or water pollution control. People have accepted the situation without complaint because the factories provide much-needed

work for the locals.

"Two years ago, we negotiated with the plants' managements, saying the area would be developed and asked the owners to come up with a plan of action. Few came back to us. We had another meeting and the Fishery Industry Research Institute (FIRI) recommended pollution control systems. The factories have still not responded properly. They have been using delaying tactics. I am not happy with their attitude."

He said his department had not given a clean-up time frame, but the situation would be monitored. Unless plans were submitted soon he would withdraw their certificates, which ultimately meant closing the factories down.

The management of all three factories admitted there was a problem and that they were investigating ways to upgrade their plants.

However, they pleaded poverty in the light of cuts in fishing quotas and the expense involved in pollution control. They argued there were no standards for the fishing industry.

All said they were waiting to see the efficiency of a closed-circuit system to control air pollution recently installed at the Oce-

ana Group's Hout Bay factory before committing themselves to buying the system (which costs about R2,5 million).

Malcolm Wallace, general manager of St Helena Bay Fisheries near Stormpneus Bay, said: "All three factories were involved in a CSIR impact study on water control for 1996 which was costing them each about R100 000.

"We have stipulated that boats are not allowed to bring in more fish than we can deal with in a 24-hour period because rotting fish — which can be used for fish meal — causes the odour. We are watching Hout Bay. The factory operates under the best hygiene conditions. We also have invested in an indirect dryer."

Eric Germishuys, general manager of Suid Oranje, whose pungent emissions are affecting the Sandy Point development and local residents, said he had booked a flight to Namibia this week to see what was being done at Walvis Bay.

Plant engineer Barend Smit said: "We are spending a lot of money to control water pollution this year and will only be able to look at a five-year plan from next year to deal with the air pollution. It will cost us over R1 million for

two condensers and, although there will be no smoke, it's unlikely the smell will be removed."

West Point Processors general manager Gerhard Wiese said: "We are looking at long-term plans for air pollution. No one can tell us what the solution is."

"Walvis Bay factories do not have the answer either, but there is no nonsense from the locals there. The industry was there first and the town built around it. With fishing quotas being cut, it's difficult to have a feasible operation."

Resident Maggie Heydenrych said part of her home, which was "in the firing line" of West Point Processors, had become blackened from the soot emitted from the fire stacks.

"I have pleaded time and again with them to do something. When we bought, we had no idea of how rotten the smell was. People never complained before because they were too scared to lose their jobs. Now, people are wanting to retire here. I have to close all the windows and doors to keep out the smell."

Domestic worker Barbara Kawe says when the smell "is really bad" she cannot hang up the washing.

"It's no good. The clothes may be clean, but they stink of fish. I get headaches from the smell and people complain of an after-taste of fish in the mouth. It feels like an extra lining in the throat."

She says the "rotten mist" causes chest problems for her 25-year-old son who got asthma shortly after arriving in the area. "It gets better when he moves away from the area," she said.

Wendy Heydenrych said her two-year-old son suffered from asthma. "His chest closes as soon as the north-westerly wind blows the smoke in our direction. It's very uncomfortable for him."

Professor Arthur Weinberg at the Red Cross Children's Hospital said there was no question that sulphur-dioxide emitted from factories that burnt coal aggravated asthma and other respiratory problems.

# R500 could spell the end for small claims courts

ST 18/2/96

(53) 18 (56)

LAWYERS defending Sappi-Saiccor against a R500 claim for damages have put a question mark over the future of the small claims court.

Sappi-Saiccor, based at Umkomaas on the South Coast, has been sued for medical expenses by a retired professor who says the company's pollution made him ill.

The day before the case was to be heard, Saiccor's lawyers wrote to the clerk of the Scottburgh small claims court demanding to be allowed to represent the company. The firm said a provision in the Small Claims Court Act forbidding legal representation was unconstitutional.

If the court did not agree, the firm said it would ask for the case to be stopped while an appeal was made to the Constitutional Court.

Such an appeal would have major

By CARMEL RICKARD

implications for the country's 113 small claims courts, which have given thousands of plaintiffs quick and cheap access to justice. Last year almost 26 000 trials were heard by small-claims commissioners, dealing with sums of up to R3 000.

Norman Brauteseth, Saiccor's attorney, said the "no-representation rule" should be challenged.

Professor Jack Booyens, a former professor of physiology at Medunsa, now living in Scottburgh, brought the claim after falling ill allegedly as a result of the "toxic fumes" emitted by Saiccor's plant at Umkomaas.

He said the company was using "bully boy tactics" in threatening to involve the Constitutional Court.

"Saiccor's sulphur dioxide fumes affect thousands of people in Umkomaas. Since I moved here I have been getting broncho-spasms.

"There is a court for small matters like this and then this huge corporation comes with this excuse, trying to damage the nature of the small claims court."

Mr Brauteseth said it was "inherently unconstitutional" to have a court system where no one was allowed representation of any kind.

"It is unconstitutional to disallow representation, especially when a person might find the process intimidating or might need expert help."

Sashi Bhimsen, a clerk of the small claims court, said he would meet the commissioner, Pat Bandulal, early this week to decide how to respond to Saiccor's move.

# Developer of hotel is trying to fill the gap

(56) ~~ARC~~ ARC 19/2/96

LINDSAY BARNES

Staff Reporter

"I DIDN'T ignore the environment," is the emphatic word from Steve Jones, the developer behind the controversial upmarket five-star country hotel planned for Oudekraal.

In an exclusive interview just days before work on the hotel started, Mr Jones said two independent environmentalists were used by the Cape Metropolitan Council and that he had also employed his own environmentalist to carry out environmental impact surveys on the land.

And as far as he knew the environmental contract had been signed.

At present, preparatory work is being undertaken on the site in anticipation of the earthworks which will start in the next two weeks, but Mr Jones declined to name the contractors for fear of recriminations.

The R45-million project - to be called De Oudekraal - should be finished in a year's time if it does not yield to pressure from environmental concerns bent on preventing it.

The White House became the target of a group of concerned people who dubbed themselves the Guardians of the Mountain, and who aim to stop construction of the hotel.

If De Oudekraal went ahead, other developments would have free reign to encroach on Table Mountain, they said.

But the development should bring in revenue of R1-million

a month from year one of operation and, from an economic point of view, was sorely needed, Mr Jones said.

Hout Bay desperately needed the hotel, which would create about 100 jobs directly and indirectly, and would support the local businesses.

"It will probably create businesses in Hout Bay such as a laundromat and coffee shop," he said.

Mr Jones, an investment adviser for a life assurance office for 13 years, said he was not a developer as such, although he had become involved in the industry.

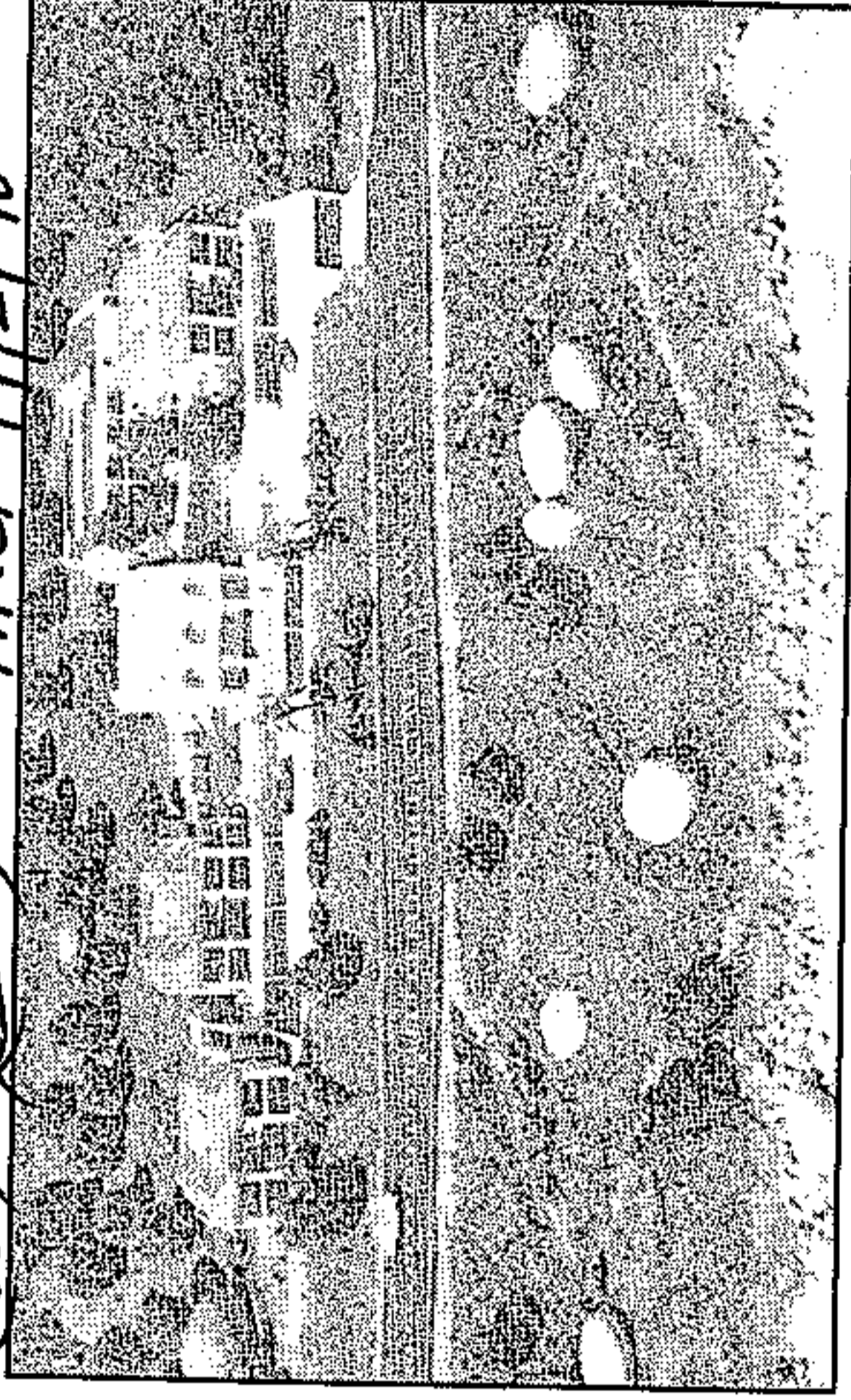
From the operator to suppliers, he had contracted local concerns and some of them were based in Hout Bay itself.

"This is all local Cape Town content - there are no out-of-townners involved," he said.

In 1994 he identified a need connected to the anticipated boom in tourism in South Africa, which has materialised.

"I'm trying to fill a gap in Cape Town that sorely needs filling - there are only 16 000 beds on offer and a demand of 31 000. Old hotels are being turned into sectional title developments which means we are going backwards."

Earlier this month local Development Planning Minister Lampie Fick condoned the development as having been processed "absolutely lawfully", but said an "absolute halt" should be called on developers who attempted to make a quick



**MODEL HOTEL:** A model of the proposed 70-room hotel shows the reconstructed White House, centre, surrounded by five outbuildings which house the suites.

million out of the tourism boom.

Mr Jones said he had been in negotiations since 1994 to develop the land.

The property contained 27 milkwood trees and five wild olives - one of them more than 100 years old - and these would not be chopped down, he said.

Various buildings had been on the farm, stretching from Bakoven to Llandudno, since 1836 and the White House itself was built in 1929.

A full geotechnical survey revealed a bed of decomposing granite beneath the building, and this was probably the reason it had begun to lean forwards.

"The house has no foundations because of the granite bed and it is beyond repair," he said.

buildings of a farm were generally less conspicuous.

The suites would cost between R360 and R990 a night.

Mr Jones said: "We went to a lot of trouble to design the outbuildings so they have minimum visual impact against the surrounding mountain. The White House will be the dominant feature containing the reception, a restaurant, a bar, a cocktail lounge and a conference centre."

The entire floor plan of the buildings totalled 2 120 m<sup>2</sup>, which was just less than 40 per cent of the plot.

Meanwhile, the anti-hotel lobby was based largely on ignorance on the part of the protestors, said Mr Jones.

"I recently spoke to five environmentalists who said they could see no reason for criticism of this development. Anyone who takes the time and makes the effort to look at the project will discover it is environmentally friendly and its location is viable. I'm too busy with the development for it to worry me but I wish people would get informed before opening their mouths and going to print. Half the things said have been totally unsubstantiated. The town planners have gone out of their way to make sure this development is totally environmentally friendly."

He said previous applications had been "undesirable" but the potential to use the site for accommodation purposes was generally supported.

# Measures to prevent pollution of the sea 'deficient'

(66) Star 21/2/96  
BY HELEN GRANGE

There are serious deficiencies in preventative measures against sea pollution off South Africa's coastline, a performance audit by the Auditor-General of the Transport Department has found.

The audit, contained in a report of performance audits on 11 state departments during the period from July 1994 to June 1995, found that several important international conventions and amendments concerning safety of life at sea, standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers and the prevention of pollution from ships have not been incorporated into relevant legislation by the Department of Transport.

There was no coastguard in place and fines were not adequate to deter ships from polluting the sea, the audit said.

For example, in America a ship is fined R1,7-million for polluting the sea, while in South Africa a maximum fine of only R250 000 is applicable for a similar offence and only R200 000 for oil pollution.

The audit also found that:

■ The detection of pollution of the sea by the aircraft "Kuswag Sewe" was not satisfactory.

■ The objective which had been set in 1987 to inspect 10% of the foreign vessels visiting South African harbours was not always attained.

■ The estimated annual operating cost of ships which were applied by certain state departments for activities along South Africa's coastline was determined at R42-million for the 1993-94 year, compared to an estimated annual cost of R20-million to operate a coastal patrol service.

■ It was only possible to prosecute 13% of offenders involved in oil pollution incidents during 1992.

The audit noted that a contingency and strategic plan for the combating of pollution of the sea was currently being drawn up.

The report of audits was tabled in Parliament this week.

(2) Telkom is exploiting the following avenues to recover the loss:

- An insurance claim of R100 million has been lodged.
- Negotiations have been initiated with foreign telecommunications operators affected by the fraudulent traffic to write off certain of the fraud related amounts owing to them, amounting to something in the order of R110 million.
- Civil action to recover losses from 161 suspects so far is being considered for economic feasibility. Potential for recovery of losses is low, as only small operators in the scam have really been caught. The big operators are part of an international crime syndicate based outside South Africa.

(3) Telkom has introduced extensive measures to improve internal checking procedures. These include:

- The monitoring of international telecommunications traffic to ensure the early detection of fraudulent call patterns. (This has resulted in the communications traffic declining from 4 500 000 call seconds per day, at the height of the scam to specific countries, to 600 000 call seconds per day).
- The monitoring of call patterns from electromechanical exchanges through implementation of electronic metering. This will counter inherent risks associated with old exchange technology.
- The establishment of a highly skilled investigations unit similar to the best in class functions at other telecommunications operators in the world. This unit will be fully operational by 1 May 1996. In the interim period quick-hit actions are being taken to address the issues involved.

**Oil storage agreement: environmental impact**

\*4. Mr J A JORDAAN asked the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs:

- (1) Whether his Department has investigated the environmental impact (a) of South Africa's oil storage agreement with Iran in general and (b) the resulting increase in

tanker traffic in Saldanha Bay in particular; if so, (i) what were the results of the investigation, (ii) who conducted the investigation and (iii) over what period was the investigation conducted; if not, why not;

- (2) whether his Department intends conducting such an investigation; if not, why not; if so, when?

N4E

**THE MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY AFFAIRS:**

- (1) The oil storage agreement between the National Iranian Oil Company and SFF Association states: "This agreement is subject in its entirety to the suspensive condition that the results of an environmental impact study which is presently being undertaken confirms that the execution of this agreement will not have a detrimental effect on the Saldanha and Langebaan Lagoon environment."

SFF Association has commissioned an environmental impact study which is being undertaken by the CSIR and is executed with the involvement of all interested and affected parties. A draft report defining the parameters has been drawn up with the assistance of the interested and affected parties and is in the final stage of acceptance by these parties. Progress is being made with 12 specialist technical sub-studies of the main study as requested by the interested and affected parties. The specialist sub-studies to be undertaken are as follows:

- to identify potential Single Buoy Mooring (SBM) sites, operating criteria and overall feasibility of this project option;
- to establish the mooring and underkeel clearance requirements of very large crude carriers entering the port and berthing at the Saldanha Oil Jetty;
- the impact of dredging activities;
- to model oil spill scenarios for the various project alternatives;
- to assess the existing and required contingency planning and capacity for oil spill control within Saldanha Bay, for the SBM project option and within

South Africa's coastal waters in general;

- to assess the state of oil transfer and storage technology employed by SFF;
- to assess the impact of oil transfer and storage on groundwater and water quality within Saldanha Bay;
- to assess the potential impact of oil spills on the Langebaan and coastal ecosystem (and key ecosystem components, such as bird and saltmarsh communities);

— cost-benefit analysis of the various project options;

— environmental risk assessment, particularly relating to oil spills for the various project options;

— to assess the impacts of ballast water disposal; and

— study of the policy and legal aspects of SFF's existing and proposed operations.

It is expected that a fully transparent study will be completed by the end of June 1996.

A CSIR environmental impact study on the effects of the extension of the general cargo quay in the port of Saldanha to accommodate the traffic required for Saldanha Steel, was commissioned by Portnet. After an extensive process of public and stakeholder consultation, the final Report was issued on 15 February 1996. Portnet has signed a letter of commitment to all the recommendations in the Report.

- (2) Falls away.

**Employment practices: discrimination**

\*5. Ms M SMUTS asked the Minister for the Public Service and Administration:

- (1) Whether, with reference to his reply to Question No 110 on 2 May 1995, an agreement has been reached in the Chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council; if so, what are the relevant details; if not, why not;

- (2) whether, after finding the refusal of a housing loan to a married woman an unfair

*Hansard 21/2/96*

labour practice, the Industrial Court set a deadline of January 1996 to the Government to eliminate unconstitutional discrimination in its employment practices; if so,

- (3) whether this deadline was met; if not, why not; if so, what steps, incremental or otherwise, were taken to ensure that the deadline was met? N5E

**THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

- (1) Previously the home owner allowance scheme only allowed for the participation of married female personnel if their spouses had been permanently medically unfit to obtain paid employment.

Emanating from an agreement that has been reached in the Chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council at central level, a married person (male or female), with effect from 1 October 1995 may participate in the relevant scheme if he or she occupies a dwelling which is registered in—

- the person's names; or
- both the person *and* his or her spouse's names together,

provided that the spouse does not already participate in the scheme for the Public Service.

- (2) Falls away.

- (3) Falls away.

**Road accidents**

\*6. Mr D H M GIBSON asked the Minister of Transport:

- (a) (i) How many persons died in road accidents in the Republic in 1994 and (ii) what was the estimated cost to the economy resulting from these accidents and (b) with reference to his reply to Question No 21 on 29 March 1995, what progress has been made by the Joint Task Group with regard to the reorganisation of traffic policing?

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT:**

N7E

- (a) (i) The preliminary figure for the total number of fatalities due to road traffic

(a) At present ±350 of the approved 1 760 posts are vacant.

(b) These vacant posts have recently been advertised and will hopefully be filled in the very near future.

*Note:* It should be mentioned that a percentage of all imported goods (including meat) is physically examined by Customs and Excise officers. In the case of meat, agreement has also been reached between the Department of Agriculture and Customs and Excise whereby inspectors of the Animal Health Division of that Department who inspect all consignments of imported meat will render assistance to Customs and Excise in identifying the different kinds and cuts of meat.

#### Ratification of World Heritage Convention

\*5. Sen E K MOORCROFT asked the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism:

- (1) Whether South Africa has ratified the World Heritage Convention; if so, what are the relevant details; if not, why not;
- (2) whether it is the intention to ratify this convention; if not, why not; if so, when?

SSE

The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM:

- (1) South Africa has not ratified the World Heritage Convention as yet.

The prescribed procedures for concluding international agreements, laid down by the President's Office, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Parliamentary Office, require line function departments to consult with: the Department of Justice; the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Finance.

As the World Heritage Convention deals with both natural and cultural sites, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and the National Monuments Council also have to be consulted. Furthermore, both the environment and culture are provincial competencies in terms of the interim Constitution. This implies that the provincial governments need to be consulted in addition. With the exception of

The MINISTER FOR POSTS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING:

The Chairperson of the SABC has informed me as follows:

- (1) Both the Management of the SABC and Sentech, the signal distribution company, have conducted studies (a) 1 778 297 as at 1996-01-31 (b) it is not possible to ascertain such a figure.

- (2) Proposals have been submitted to the Independent Broadcasting Authority requesting permission to switch SABC 2 and SABC 3 transmitters in certain parts of the Eastern Cape during prime time transmission and in other parts of the country throughout the transmission period in order to ensure a wider transmitter coverage of SABC 3 programmes.

#### Near collision of aircraft at Cape Town International Airport

\*7. Sen J SELFE asked the Minister of Transport:

- (1) What were the circumstances surrounding the near collision of a South African Airways Boeing 737 and a South African Air Force Hercules at Cape Town International Airport on 19 October 1995;

- (2) whether the investigation into the incident has been concluded; if not, (a) why not and (b) when will the investigation be concluded; if so, (i) what were the findings of the investigation and (ii) what action has been taken on the basis of these findings?

S7E

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT:

- (1) The Boeing was being operated on a scheduled flight from Durban to Cape Town. The Hercules was on a training flight doing circuits and landings at Cape Town. Both aircraft turned onto final approach for the same runway, at the same time, from opposing directions. Both aircraft then had to take avoiding action to avert a collision. The Air Traffic Controller concerned was immediately suspended from duty pending investigation. The South African Air Force convened its own Board of Inquiry.

(2) The investigation has been concluded.

- (a) Not applicable.
- (b) Not applicable.

(i) The findings of the investigation were as follows:

- The Air Traffic Controller on duty in the tower neglected his duties in not separating the two aircraft concerned.

- The commander of the Hercules failed in his responsibility to watch for other aircraft in the circuit pattern.

- The commander of the Boeing was not at fault.

- The use of non-standard procedures by both the controller and the Hercules commander contributed to the incident.

(ii) On the basis of these findings the following actions were taken:

- The relevant Air Traffic Controller was placed on a refresher course at the Air Traffic and Navigation Services company training college.

- Upon successful completion of this course he was returned to shift duty, but placed under dual instruction.

- On 6 December 1995 he was re-assessed for solo duties and found to be fit for duty.

- The Hercules C130 commander has been departmentally reprimanded and an entry describing the incident and subsequent reprimand was made in its training file.

- The incident (together with the video tape of the radar picture taken during the incident) will be used as a case study by all multi-crew squadrons in the SAAF as well as during flight safety courses in order to prevent a recurrence of incidents of this nature.



# Army use of poisons 'caused disaster'

CT 22/2/96

PIETERSBURG: The use by the army of poisons to remove an impenetrable sisal hedge on the northern border had caused Northern Province's worst ecological disaster, a report handed to authorities last week said.

Herbicide contamination was detected in soil in the Limpopo valley and in water from Messina to the Kruger National Park, prompting complaints by Mozambique and calls from local farmers for compensation.

A 26-member Herbicide Task Group appointed last year to probe contamination along the 130km Madimbo Corridor sisal hedge handed its report to Agriculture METask group chairman Mr Gerrie SchoeC Mr Tienie Burgers last week.

The group found that herbicides had been used on the sisal hedge without written consent from farmers and had spread to affect vegetation on the banks of the Limpopo.

Herbicide concentrations had also been found on the riverbed and in neighbouring irrigation land. Tests showed crops had been damaged. The group recommended that crop production cease in some affected areas.

man said yesterday "the shocking magnitude of the contamination" showed how important it was to responsibly manage natural resources.

The sisal fence was planted about 20 years ago by the defence force as a security barrier and to curb illegal immigration. The army

(51)  
decided a few years ago to replace it with an electric fence and put contracts for its removal out to tender.

Contractors sprayed the fence with herbicides, prompting an outcry by farmers and conservationists.

The task team found traces of bromacil (Hyvar X), tebuthiuron (Spike) and ethidimuron (Ustilan) in particularly clay areas where boreholes are drilled for irrigation.

The removal of the sisal hedge has since been stopped, to prevent further contamination. But farmers say the contamination has already affected crop production and reduced the value of their land.

Transvaal Agricultural Union president Dries Bruwer said farmers had suffered severe financial losses.

Legal action was being taken against the defence force, with demands for millions of rand in compensation.

"Their land is now virtually worthless as nobody would be willing to buy contaminated land with limited production potential," he said, adding: "They have suffered financial losses because of the damage caused to nearly all crops."

He said Mozambique had complained because the Limpopo, Nkomati and Olifants rivers had been contaminated. "I was told vegetation on the banks of the river had started dying."

Agricultural Research Council member Mr Ralph Mynhardt said land in the area was no longer suitable for tomatoes and other fresh produce. — Sapa

# Operation 'Save the Animals'

(5b) (5b) ARG 22/2/96

## Schoolchildren scour Saldanha steel mill site for little creatures

LINDSAY BARNES, Staff Reporter

THIN clouds scudded across a pale sky and the sparse vegetation rocked gently in the wind as hundreds of school pupils set out on their mission - to save the animals on the new site of the Saldanha Steel project.

The vast stretches of veld were dappled with patches of red flowers and the flatness was broken in the distance by low koppies. The silence of the morning belied the presence of a few hundred people, their faces intent as they scoured the surface of the land for living treasures.

Among them were Cindy Kaese and Shaleen Moodley, Std 9 pupils at Vredenburg High School. Their goal: to rescue tortoises, lizards, geckoes and the like from the site.

A sudden shriek of delight nearby heralded the first find by a group of youngsters: A small creature, which was carefully cornered, was picked up and placed in a cardboard box for removal to higher, safer ground.

The rescue operation was being mounted on the 80 ha site a short drive from Saldanha Bay by 250 school pupils. Their task was to remove small animals and reptiles from the land before earthworks started this week on the Saldanha steel mill's new site.

The task was no mean feat as the creatures were adept at hiding and it was some time before a find was made.

Spurred on by the success of other groups, Cindy and Shaleen scurried about, lifting up fronds and rocks in the hope of finding a life form to save.

"I love animals, but if we find a snake I'm calling one of our teachers," laughed Cindy, 16. In fact, only two harmless snakes were collected in the course of the day.

Initially sceptical about the development of the steel mill, they have come to accept it.

"The Saldanha Steel project is okay, but they must assure us that they are looking after the environment," said Sharleen, who is considering a career in marine biology - or possibly art, drama or psychology.

Added Cindy: "And this is a good start. I was quite suspicious when Saldanha Steel came up with this project and I thought they would just destroy the ground they are to build on. We all thought that."

"But, after they explained it to us, we wanted to go ahead with removing the animals," said Sharleen.

"Well, we don't want cockroaches," her friend said after unearthing scores



**LUCKY LIZARDS:** Riaan Mouton cuddles the scaly lizards he has saved.

of the insects crawling under rocks.

For 20 minutes they searched and finally, on the edge of a green belt, Shaleen announced her find and held it aloft with glee. It was a tiny, beautifully-marked tortoise that had disappeared into its shell for protection from the strangers.

"I love tortoises!" She looked down at her muddied jeans and announced that the dirt didn't worry her. "I rescued a tortoise so I feel like a hero," she said.

By that stage, the school children had dispersed to all corners of the site and it was impossible to keep track of progress in general, although frequent whoops of joy announced another animal uncovered.

Nearby, Kobus Gous and Riaan Mouton from Vredenburg High revealed a box with geckoes and lizards, while Elize Brandt and her crowd of friends from Weston Secondary had managed to collect about 10 small tortoises.

Their delight was self evident. "I feel happy, though this is the thanks I get," joked Sharleen as she looked at her dirtied jeans - two tortoises now in her box.

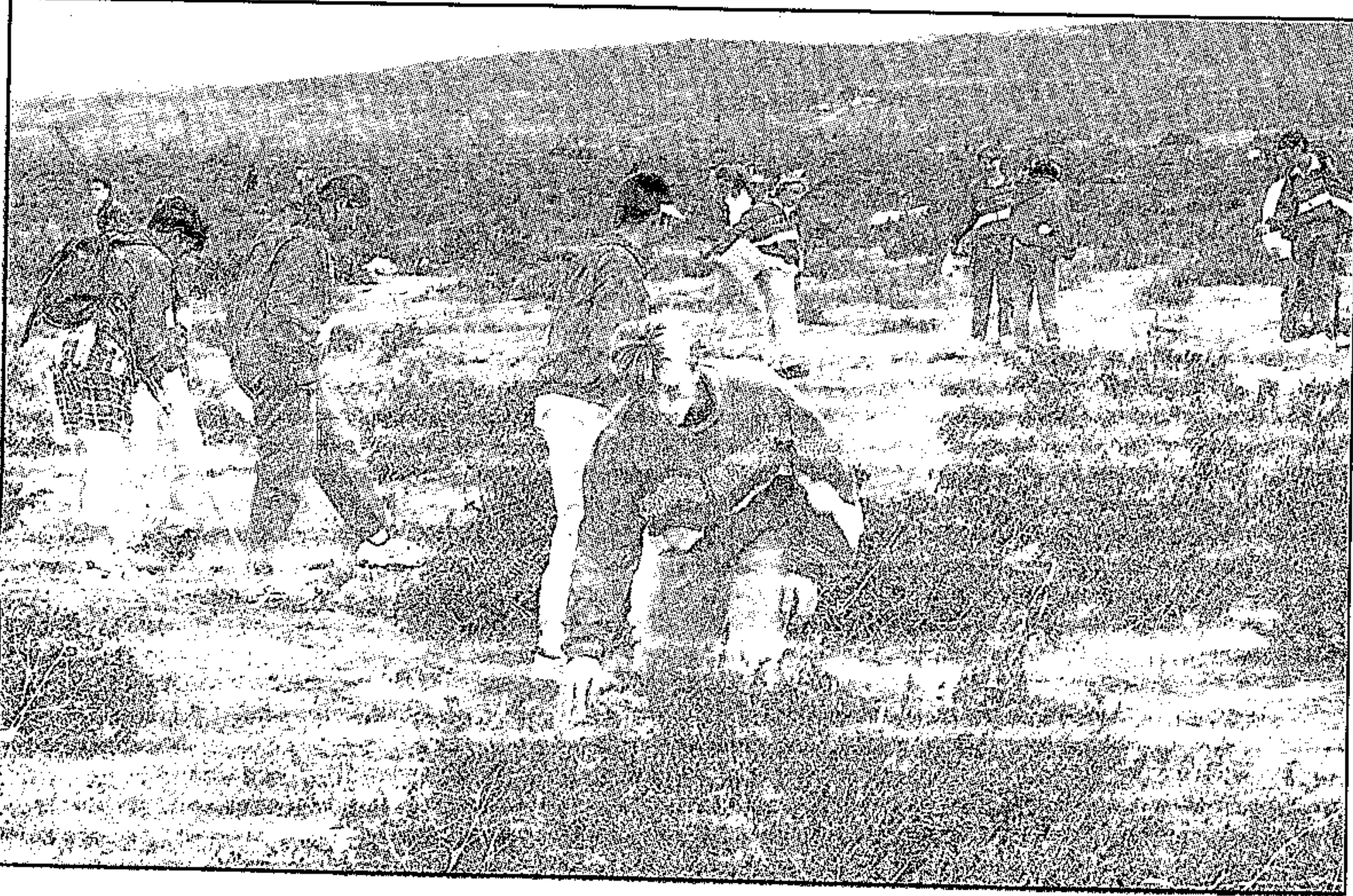
Cindy had a small lizard in hers and, surprisingly, its tail was intact. "It's been worthwhile. If I find anything at all, it is worth it," she said.

A short distance away, Emelia Roode from the University of Stellenbosch's department of botany had her hands full with some maermanbol bulbs.

"It's a lot of effort digging them up, but I have enjoyed it. We have done a lot of good work here."

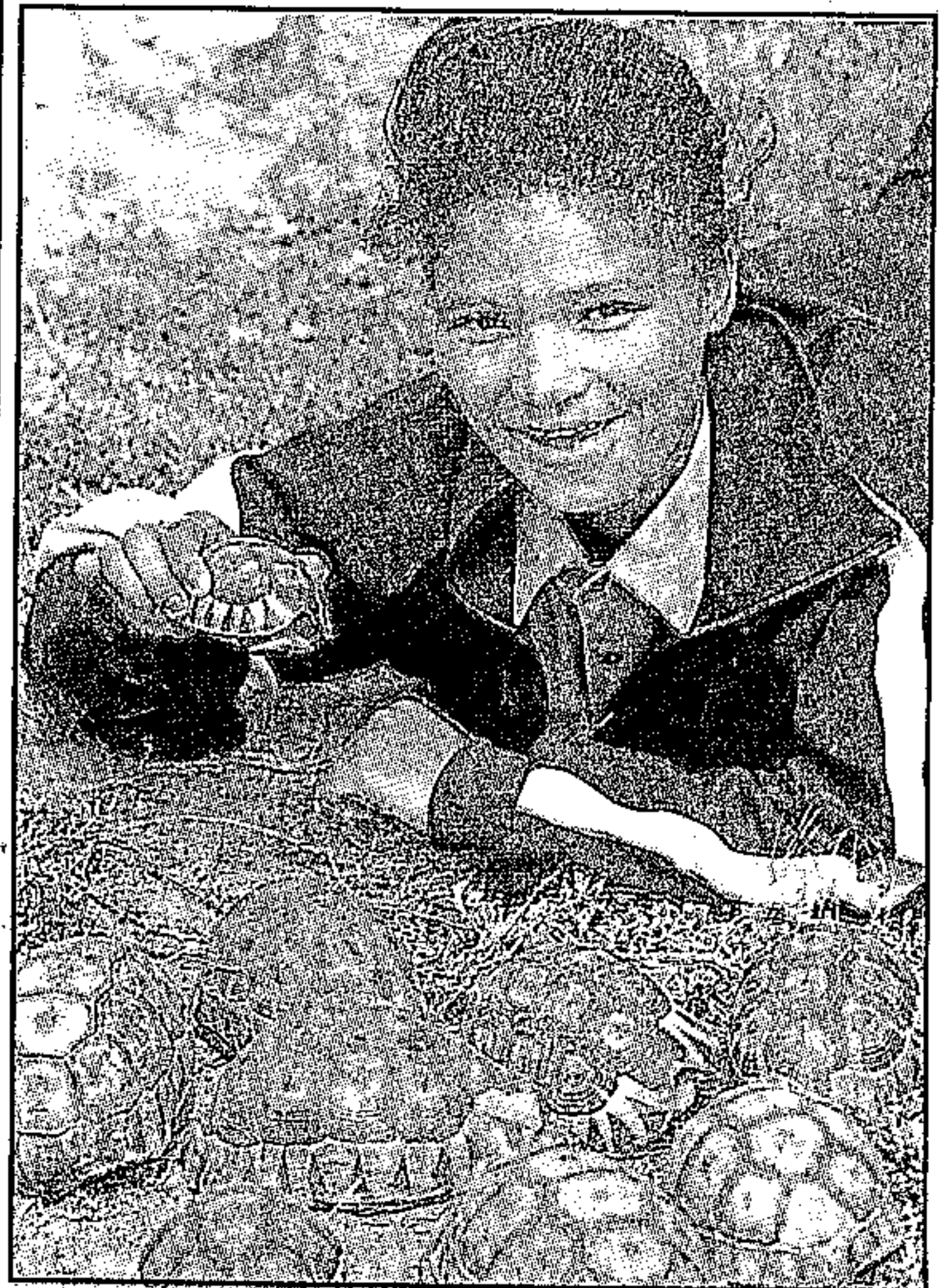
In the previous week, members of the Indigenous Bulb Growers' Association collected a fair amount of bulbs to be removed and replanted on the flats.

"We've managed to conserve the vegetation on those two koppies," she said, pointing to the areas which were to be fenced off for their own protection. Also found nearby was a colony of the rare aloë distans, which is to be saved.



Pictures: BRENTON GEACH, The Argus.

**HUNTING FOR ANIMALS:** Schoolchildren fan out, looking for animals that will have to be relocated before the building of the new Saldanha Bay mill can go ahead.



**IN HIDING:** This collection of tortoises was discovered by Elize Brandt and her friends in the West Coast strandveld where the Saldanha Steel mill will be built.

# Controversial site to be fenced off to keep out 'squatter aliens'

ANDREA WEISS, Municipal Reporter

THE Century City site near Ysterplaat airforce base is to be fenced off to prevent squatters from occupying the land and to stop illegal dumping of rubble.

That is the word from Martin Wragge, managing director of Monex, the company which applied to provincial government for the site to be rezoned from residential mixed use.

Mr Wragge was speaking at the first meeting to discuss an environmental impact assessment for the site which contains sensitive wetlands, including a large bird breeding area.

Although the 192-ha site is heavily infested with alien vegetation, two scientific studies have indicated there are environmentally important features. There are seasonal pans which are a threat-

ened plant habitat and the permanent vlei known as Blouvllei is home to thousands of breeding birds.

In response to a question about the current management of the site, Mr Wragge said the company was in the process of erecting six kilometres of fence to stop "aliens of another kind with metal sheets on their heads" from coming on to the site.

The meeting at the Bothasig town hall was attended by representatives of a number of environmental organisations who had petitioned Environmental Minister Lampie Fick over the sensitivity of the site.

The Western Cape cabinet has approved the rezoning conditional upon an environmental impact assessment being done in line with the principles of integrated

environmental management.

Monex has also been instructed to involve the public in the study which is being carried out by the CSIR.

Participants at this week's meeting expressed concern about a wide variety of issues, including the impact of the proposed development on nearby Rietvlei, which is recognised as being of international importance, as well as Zoarvlei near Paarden Eiland and the Milnerton lagoon mouth.

They also expressed concern about the social impact of the development and said the environmental impact assessment brief was too narrow.

An ornithological study and botanical study have elaborated on the wetland features worth conserving.

ART 22/2/96

(56)

(307)

# Farmers take legal action against SANDF

BD 22/2/96 (56)

BD 22/2/96

PIETERSBURG — Use by the military of poisons to remove an impenetrable sisal hedge on the northern border had caused Northern Province's worst ecological disaster, says a report handed to authorities last week.

Herbicide contamination was detected in soil in the Limpopo valley and in water from Messina to the Kruger National Park, prompting complaints by Mozambique and calls from local farmers for compensation.

A 26-member Herbicide Task Group appointed last year to investigate contamination along the 130km Madimbo Corridor sisal hedge handed its report to agriculture MEC Tienie Burgers

last week. The task group established herbicides had been used on the sisal hedge without written consent from farmers and spread to affect vegetation on the banks of the Limpopo.

Herbicide concentrations had also been found on the riverbed and in neighbouring irrigation land. Tests showed crops had been damaged. The task group recommended crop production cease in some affected areas.

Task group chairman Gerrie Schoeman said yesterday "the shocking magnitude of the contamination of one of Northern Province's most important natural assets" showed the importance of managing natural resources respon-

sibly. The sisal fence was planted about 20 years ago by the military as a security barrier and to curb illegal immigrants. The military decided a few years ago to replace it with an electric fence and put contracts for its removal out to tender. Contractors began spraying the fence with herbicides, prompting an outcry by farmers and conservationists.

The task team found traces of bromacil (Hyvar X), tebuthiuron (Spike) and ethidimuron (Ustilan) in particularly clay areas where boreholes are drilled for irrigation. Removal of the

Continued on Page 2

## Poison (56)

BD 22/2/96  
Continued from Page 1

sisal hedge has since been stopped, to prevent further contamination.

Farmers, however, say the contamination has already affected crop production and reduced the value of their land. Transvaal Agricultural Union president Dries Bruwer said farmers had suffered severe financial losses. Legal action was being taken against the SANDF, with demands for millions of rands in compensation.

"Their land is now virtually worthless because nobody would be willing to buy contaminated land with limited production potential," Bruwer said.

Contamination of the Limpopo, Nkomati and Olifants rivers had led to complaints by Mozambique.

"I was informed vegetation on the banks of the river had started dying as a result of the contamination."

Water affairs regional director HBHJ Rossouw last year told the task group herbicides had made Limpopo's water less fit for use by farmers. Agricultural Research Council member Ralph Mynhardt said land in the area was no longer suitable for tomatoes and other fresh produce.

An SANDF spokesman said yesterday the sisal hedge had last been sprayed in 1994. The military had a copy of the report and would comment after it had been studied, she said. — Sapa.

FM 23/2/96

**HIGH NOON SOON?**

(56) (56)

A final government policy decision on the future of St Lucia is expected at next week's Cabinet meeting.

St Lucia has been the subject of heated public debate, with environmentalists fighting the pro-mining lobby. St Lucia's coastal dunes are rich in titanium and zircon minerals.

The ANC backs the environmental option for the 250 000 ha conservation area, following a recent report commissioned by Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom.

But Mineral & Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha has reservations. He is concerned about possible legal claims by the holders of the prospecting rights in the area, Richards Bay Minerals (RBM). RBM public affairs GM Barry Clements says the St Lucia ore body of about 5 Mt titanium dioxide could add five years to RBM's mining operation.

But, with RBM's prospecting licence expiring in July, Botha's problem may be heading for a "natural" solution. And RBM has enough ore for decades of profitable mining. ■

# R20m bid to save Kruger's elephants

(56) MF G 23-29/2/96

**Eddie Koch**

**S**OUTH AFRICA'S conservation organisations have split down the middle over a controversial offer by two international animal rights groups to give the National Parks Board (NPB) some R20-million in an effort to stave off this country's elephant culling programme and its traditional support for the international ivory trade.

David Barritt, representative of the United States-based International Fund for Animal Welfare (Ifaw), told the *Mail & Guardian* his organisation had been holding sensitive negotiations with the parks board for more than a year about using the R20-million to purchase land for expanded elephant wildlife habitat.

Ifaw and the Humane Society of the United States are each offering US\$2,5-million for the expansion of

elephant reserves in an effort to deal with arguments from the parks board that the annual cull of Kruger's elephant population is necessary because the country's existing protected area estate is not big enough.

A coalition of local wildlife NGOs — including the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Africa Resources Trust (ART) and the local branch of the World Wildlife Fund — are vociferously opposed to this because they believe that the survival of conservation areas in Africa depends on the right to hunt animals and sell their products on local and international markets. They say this will allow parks to receive a financial return.

ART representative Victoria Hylton told the *M&G* that the American groups are imposing an external agenda on African issues: "A draft of the contract being negotiated stipulates that South Africa will not cull ele-

phants for the next five years or land bought by this funding and that it will submit no elephant [trading] proposals to Cites [the Conference on International Trade in Endangered Species] in the next five years. We believe this is in an infringement of South Africa's sovereign rights."

Hylton added that the Humane Society has stipulated its share of the proposed grant be used for research into elephant contraception, mainly the development of a pachyderm "pill", that can be used as an alternative to culling the animals in wildlife reserves.

She said Art's information is that conservation agencies will not be able to manage elephant populations on land purchased with the two groups' funds unless they retain the right to control herd sizes through culling.

"South Africa already has a policy on elephant management [that includes culling], which the parks board has

placed under review. If these contracts are signed now, they will preclude a full review process from taking place. All policy in South Africa has been opened to full public scrutiny — why has the parks directorate done the same?"

Barritt said recent research had indicated that very little money from the "consumptive utilisation" of animals found its way to rural communities, as is often claimed by the proponents of culling and trophy hunting.

He said most of the revenues were appropriated by hunt organisers and conservation agencies — and that South Africans stood to gain more from the expansion of wildlife areas that cater for the current tourism boom than from culling and hunting.

"This is a fight for the soul of conservation in South Africa. It is between those who want to preserve animals and those who want them as utility animals that can be killed and their

parts sold" he said. "It will have repercussions for years to come. Our organisations are willing to put hard cash on the table and have a vision for a huge increase in wildlife areas."

Representatives of the NPB were not available for comment at the time of going to press. But it is believed that the organisation is caught in the crossfire between the lobby that wants game reserves to protect animals from all forms of hunting and the NGOs that insist African countries must have the right to trade in animal products if conservation is to survive on the continent.

The parks board has recently adopted a flexible position on the debate and appears to have suspended its culling programme in Kruger, as well as its previous support for other Southern African countries that are lobbying Cites to relax its international ban on trade in ivory and other elephant products.

It is believed that the debate will be dealt with at an NPB board meeting at the end of March.

## AFRICA

## African countries in move to lift ivory ban

TOKYO — Four southern African countries are calling on Japan to co-sponsor a proposal to lift the ban on the ivory trade, a Japanese newspaper said yesterday.

Government and private-sector representatives from three of the four countries — Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi — visited Japan earlier this month to discuss the issue. The fourth country is Namibia.

They approached Japan because it is one of the world's largest consumers of ivory, where the material is often used in making personal seals.

Japanese ivory dealers say they also want the ban lifted.

The African officials came here to attend a meeting to discuss Japanese legislative control of the internal ivory trade, said Yoshio Kaneko, a lecturer of wildlife conservation at Keio University who attended the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by officials from the Japanese international trade and industry ministry, the foreign ministry and the en-

BD 23/2/96

vironment agency, as well as from the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species secretariat.

"It is a well-known southern African nations would like to sell ivory and use the money to protect elephants. So they may have raised the issue with Japanese officials too," said Kaneko.

International trade in African elephants and their parts has been banned under the convention, since its signatories implemented the ban in 1989.

The African nations asked Japan to co-sponsor the proposal to lift the ban which will be presented at the next meeting of the convention signatories in Zimbabwe in June next year.

If the ban is lifted, the countries would start exporting ivory kept as stock only, and would not immediately begin taking ivory from living wild elephants for export. —Sapa-AFP.



Odeveho Numpau, president of the House of Chiefs of Ghana, left, and Ashanti Goldfields CEO Sam Jonah, centre, are escorted on the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange by chairman Richard Grasso. Ashanti, based in Accra, Ghana, became the first African operating company to trade on the New York bourse when it listed on Wednesday.

Picture: AP

# 'Attention needed on nuclear spill'

## The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — A nuclear spill exposed in Sunday Weekend Argus should not be cause for alarm although the problem required "urgent attention", Minister of Energy and Mineral Affairs Pik Botha has said.

His comments spring from confidential reports by the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) leaked to Sunday Weekend Argus which showed that a nuclear storage site — located within the tight security perimeter of the Atomic Energy Corporation's (AEC) Pelindaba complex — was illegally excavated last year and contaminated material, including uranium 235 and carbon 14, was released into the environment.

Mr Botha said in a statement yesterday that the situation in itself was not serious, but events of this nature should not occur. "Although the danger is not significant, there are inadequacies and shortcomings which require urgent and earnest attention."

The excavation in May constituted a violation of AEC's licence and resulted in the CNS officially terminating the disposal activities in any old or new trenches at the site known as Radiation Hill.

ARCT 26/2/96

A CNS report stated it was "always concerned ... with the possible contamination of the human food chain" but said radioactive contamination in the issue at hand was localised to a few trenches, which were in a fenced-off area in the middle of the Pelindaba site.

As far as the CNS was concerned "these occurrences are indicative of a degradation of safety culture at the AEC".

The AEC has strongly denied there is a poor safety culture in the organisation, saying its safety statistics are "comfortably below" the national average for the chemical industry. But it said top management was "also concerned about the incident and had already launched an in-depth investigation some weeks ago into the general management of all its facilities that operate under a CNS license".

The AEC went on to say there was no danger of contaminating the rivers and dams in the area as reported in Sunday Weekend Argus.

Mr Botha said the cabinet had appointed new boards of both the CNS and the AEC at its meeting last week. Talks would be held soon to discuss preventing a recurrence of the incident. (56) (51)



# The greening of Valkenberg

ARG 26/2/96

(56)

JENNY VIALI, Health Reporter

**H**IS vision is to create a garden - with a little help from the patients - that will support the upgrading of Valkenberg Hospital. His philosophy is "no more talking, time for action".

And in two months Gary Glass and his co-workers have taken a giant step towards realising this vision, creating a garden that is producing enough vegetables to sell to staff at the hospital.

Visiting the food garden is like being out in the country. Rows of tomatoes, aubergines and beans alternate with gem squash and courgettes. Parsley and lettuce are abundant.

Other areas have been cleared of rubble, and planting has just begun. "It's time to plant potatoes," says Mr Glass, whose organic garden is free of pesticides and poisons.

He is a volunteer worker for the Valkenberg Farm Project, part of the Friends of Valkenberg group. Working closely with him is James



**RURAL IN THE CITY:** Daniel Armoed and Gary Glass with some of the vegetables they've grown in the garden in Valkenberg Hospital's grounds. Picture: JENNY VIALI, The Argus.

Smith. The occupational therapy department is supporting the project.

There are plans afoot to get a horse and cart and to use a dilapidated old building to raise chickens. Mr Glass wants as many patients as possible to get involved.

"We'll be building a stable and there'll be chickens to look after. We want to offer a

variety of projects to keep people interested and involved.

"We want to rejuvenate the old farm and make it beautiful again. We want to establish an infrastructure to support funding the upgrading of the hospital.

"We want to go rural in the city," he said. His vision is easy to imagine seeing his energy for the garden ..

## Hypnotic talk by an expert

**J**ACK GIBSON, a well-known medical doctor who has used hypnosis instead of anaesthesia on more than 4 000 patients, is in Cape Town for a few days. He has produced tapes on using hypnosis to stop smoking, reduce stress and help asthma patients. For more information on his public talks, tel 788 7586.

# 'No-blacks' school drops court plea

**Staff Reporter  
and Own Correspondent**

POTGIETERSRUS. — The governing body of Laërskool Potgietersrus has dropped its Constitutional Court action to prevent the admission of black pupils and has pinned its hopes on a national forum proposed by President

Mandela.

The decision came as the opposition to black children at the school began to crumble and more than 100 white parents sent their children back on Friday.

Northern Province premier Ngoako Ramatlhodi said the matter would be dealt with by the fo-

ARG 26/2/96 (56)  
rum in the next two weeks at a national summit meeting because similar situations were arising elsewhere.

The idea of the forum was tabled at a meeting with Mr Ramatlhodi, Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen and CP leader Ferdie Hartzenberg on Friday.

# Give your views on mountain 'use-zones'

(56) ARG 26/2/96  
Environment Reporter

PUBLIC comment on a draft "use-zone" map of the proposed Table Mountain National Park is being called for at meetings in the Peninsula this week.

The map is one of the critical steps in achieving the Western Cape government's stipulation for approving the new park, namely, that "significant progress" is made by July.

"This use-zone map will have no legal implications, but will form the basis on which to prepare a management plan for the Table Mountain park," said David Daitz, who has been appointed by the National Parks Board to co-ordinate moves to establish the new park.

The board had appointed consultants to produce the use-zone map and they had been briefed to complete their task by June.

"The study area is defined as the current extent of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE), and it is intended that a series of use-zones will be established for this area," Mr Daitz said.

"This will allow for different levels of public access to, and activities on, the Peninsula mountain chain while at the same time protecting its diversity and uniqueness."

Much of the background work had already been done, and the so-called Fuggle Report in particular would be an important source of information.

"As the parks board and their consultants are keen to ensure that the public work with them in preparing the use-zone map, a series of meetings has been planned for tomorrow, Wednesday and Thursday," Mr Daitz said.

The meetings, all starting at 7.30pm, are at the SA Museum's lecture hall in Queen Victoria Street tomorrow, at the Alphen Centre in Constantia on Wednesday, and at the Fish Hoek town hall on Thursday.

# White House developer in a world of his own

(56) ARG 26/2/96

## GREEN SCENE



John Yeld

the city council has a legally valid option of cancelling every 10 years. But these are really red herrings. The main point is that although Mr Jones's proposed development may well be "environmentally friendly" - and not everyone is going to agree with that - it is only that if you consider his property in isolation.

There is exactly the same problem with the proposed development on the Fish Hoek sand dunes: the planners have done an excellent job with the detail, but the development has to be viewed within the context of the Silvermine Valley and the CPPNE.

The same applies to all the undeveloped land along the coast between Bakoven and Llandudno. Rezoning was approved by an authority (the Western Cape Regional Services Council) that did not enjoy political credibility, and although the rezoning application may well have been advertised in

three newspapers, this was almost certainly done in the usual "unfriendly" way: a tiny, single column buried among legal notices.

Most important, neither the approved rezoning nor the new negotiation process with the Cape Metropolitan Council, which Mr Jones initiated after December 1994, took place within the context of moves to develop a new Cape Peninsula national park - and it is in this context that the current wave of objections is entirely justified.

Efforts to protect private assets are morally and legally sound, and Mr Jones's concerns are understandable, but there are also times when the interests of society take precedence, which is why there is provision in the National Parks Act for expropriation.

That is why the issue of any development at all between Bakoven and Llandudno needs to be revisited - and why appeals to Dr De Villiers are quite appropriate.

ONE has to feel a measure of sympathy for developer Steve Jones. Not only has he had to contend with the occupation of his White House property at Oudekraal by a decidedly unconventional group (does their New Age world-view make them more or less difficult to deal with?), but he's also been picking up flak from the public at large for his plans to develop a luxury hotel on the site.

In the sense that development proposals for this particular property have, in one form or another, been in the public domain for years, Mr Jones has reason to feel somewhat aggrieved at being singled out as the bad guy wanting to trash this lovely section of coastline.

For his own particular proposal, he has apparently fulfilled all the required legal and bureaucratic conditions and is indignant at the prospect of public sentiment getting

his development stopped at the 11th hour. But that's where the sympathy ends. Mr Jones launched a hard-hitting attack on the Wildlife Society for its open letter to Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers, in which it claimed developers and property owners were exploiting the "unfortunate and unrealistic" conditions placed on the National Parks Board's run-up to taking over the management of the Cape Peninsula's natural environment.

"I have no idea why the Wildlife Society would write a letter to a minister not supporting a development that is sound in principle, is environmentally friendly, and in particular, is replicating a landmark. The facts and history have obviously not been obtained and no homework has been done," Mr Jones thundered.

To a degree, he appears guilty of the same offence of which he accuses the Wildlife

# Wetlands seen as crucial for birdlife

(51) ARG 26/2/96

SALINE pans, a key part of the Blouvllei wetlands in the heart of the proposed R3-billion Century City development in the Montague Gardens area, are among the rarest natural features of the Cape Flats and are the last remaining examples of their type.

The Blouvllei wetlands - although degraded - have conservation value for waterbirds, and the large number of birds on the site constitute "considerable" recreational and educational value.

These are among the findings of two of the four specialist studies completed as part of an overall environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the mega-project being planned on the 195ha site north of Ysterplaat air force base.

A key geo-hydrological specialist study still has to be completed. The EIA was one of the conditions of approval specified by the Western Cape government when granting rezoning approval for the proposed development which includes a theme park and office and housing components.

One of the conditions is that developer Monex must undertake "an adequate and appropriate environmental impact assessment, which shall include public participation, focusing on the wetland system with a view to incorporating a wetland and bird sanctu-

Two new specialist studies of the 192-hectare site of the proposed R3-billion Century City development at Montague Gardens have turned up significant conservation funds. The studies are a key part of a full environmental impact assessment of the site, demanded as part of the province's conditional rezoning approval. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD looks at some of the studies' conclusions.

any" in the development.

A specialist vegetation study by Clive McDowell said the most outstanding natural features of the site were eight saline pan wetlands.

"These have remained intact, despite the prevalence of artificial inflows and limited alien (plant) infestations."

Such inflows had impacted on plants only in one part of the Blouvllei complex.

Seasonal wetlands were now extremely scarce in the Cape's lowland fynbos vegetation systems, Dr McDowell said, and saline pans were even more rare.

"In fact, since the unfortunate demise of the seven pans at the adjacent Summer Greens housing development, the pans under discussion represent - with one exception on the other side of the N1 - the last remaining of their type on the Cape Flats.

A total of 85 indigenous plant species - 21 associated with the pan wetland system and

64 on the sand plain - had been found.

"Despite the high density of alien vegetation in the field ... there is still a very significant indication of indigenous diversity," Dr McDowell said. An excellent opportunity existed at Blouvllei to avoid the type of environmentally unwise development that had taken place at Summer Greens.

"This (Summer Greens) venture resulted not only in the irretrievable loss of seven natural pans, but also caused excessive off flows of surface water."

These external impacts had now become the "unfair problem" of the developer of Century City, Dr McDowell said.

According to the specialist bird study by ornithological consultant Jane Turpie, the character of Blouvllei had changed as far as its birdlife was concerned, and various factors had led to the establishment of a large heronry and a large number of birds in

the area.

In its pristine state, the original wetland was unlikely to have supported the heronry. More than 5 000 waterbirds of 52 species were counted in about 20 hectares of wetlands.

Although the site did not support any bird species listed as "highly important" in a provincial context, three species were listed as being of "intermediate conservation importance".

The Painted Snipe and Ruff were listed as being of special conservation importance among birds of inland water habitats in the Western Cape, and the Painted Snipe was one of four of these "important" species that are restricted to this habitat.

Blouvllei was regionally significant in terms of its seasonal wetlands and associated bird life - particularly Painted Snipe - and its large heronry and its function as a breeding/roosting site for birds feeding at Rietvllei, Dr Turpie said.

The heronry would be likely to move if the present habitat at Blouvllei was lost, but its subsequent location could not be predicted or "directed" with any certainty. Birds associated with the seasonal pans were unlikely to be relocated successfully.

Birds were a potential danger to aircraft using Ysterplaat air force base, and there were

about five strikes last year, Dr Turpie noted. Most of these had been within 500m of the runway. The current impact on aircraft using Ysterplaat air force base by Blouvllei birds was negligible, but could increase if the heronry moved south of Ysterplaat.

"Without intervention, Blouvllei would eventually decline in importance as a bird habitat," Dr Turpie concluded. "With active management, the existing avifauna could be sustained and improved as a locally valuable resource."

"Incorporation of Blouvllei into the Century City project would almost certainly lead to the loss of some of the more significant components of its avifauna."

Attempts could be made to retain part of the heronry within the development or to provide a suitable site for a heronry in a disturbance-free habitat elsewhere, but the success of such ventures could not be guaranteed, Dr Turpie said. "If intensive development proceeds in the area, then an attempt should be made to provide a supplementary site for a heronry close to Rietvllei."

A specialist study of aquatic ecology found no significant species, but recommended further monitoring. An archaeological study found Later Stone Age implements where a road had been graded.



Picture: JOHN YELD. The Argus.

**THREATENED ENVIRONMENT:** One of the saline pans of the Blouvllei wetlands in the heart of the proposed R3-billion Century City development. The pans are among the rarest natural features of the Cape Flats and the last remaining examples of their type.

# Contaminated spill from Pelindaba nuclear storage site no cause for alarm, says Pik

(56) Star 26/2/96

## STAFF REPORTER

A nuclear spill exposed in The Sunday Independent should not be cause for alarm although the problem requires urgent attention, Minister of Energy and Mineral Affairs Pik Botha has said.

His comments spring from confidential reports by the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) leaked to The Sunday Independent which show that a nuclear storage site within the tight security perimeter of the Atomic Energy Corporation's (AEC) Pelindaba complex was illegally excavated last year and contaminated material, including uranium 235 and carbon 14, was released into the environment.

Botha said yesterday "the situation in itself is not serious" but admitted that events "of this nature" should not occur, adding: "Although the danger is not significant, there are inadequacies and shortcomings that require urgent attention."

The excavation in May constituted a violation of the AEC's licence and resulted in the CNS terminating disposal activities in all trenches at the site. As far as the CNS was concerned, "these occurrences are indicative of a degradation of safety culture at the AEC".

The AEC has strongly denied this, saying its safety statistics are "comfortably below" the national average for the chemical industry.

# Environmentalists, residents oppose housing estate

Star 26/2/96

Battle looms over major residential project to border Witwatersrand Botanical Gardens as developer refuses to reveal environmental impact report

By TASSER DE GREEK

A massive residential development planned to border the Witwatersrand Botanical Gardens below the Roodetrans Ridge in Krugersdorp has met with strong opposition from environmentalists and residents. But the proposed 845-unit Featherbrooke Estate Township already has the support "in principle" of the Krugersdorp Transitional Local Council, said chief town planner Manda Smit, although a final decision would only be taken on Wednesday when the executive committee makes its recommendations to the council.

The 150ha development has also been given the go-ahead by the Cape Town board of the National Botanical Institute and by Peter Chaplin, curator of the neighbouring 300ha botanical gardens.

Chaplin said there were no further objections to Featherbrooke after developers Plan Survey SA made certain concessions, including the donation of 19ha of land to the gardens for conservation below the Roodetrans ridge, and the preservation of certain environmentally sensitive areas. Featherbrooke is a residential

complex with unit stands ranging from 500 to 900sq m and includes a clubhouse, a swimming pool and squash courts. It could also border a proposed casino to the north-west, acting as a buffer between the complex and the botanical gardens.

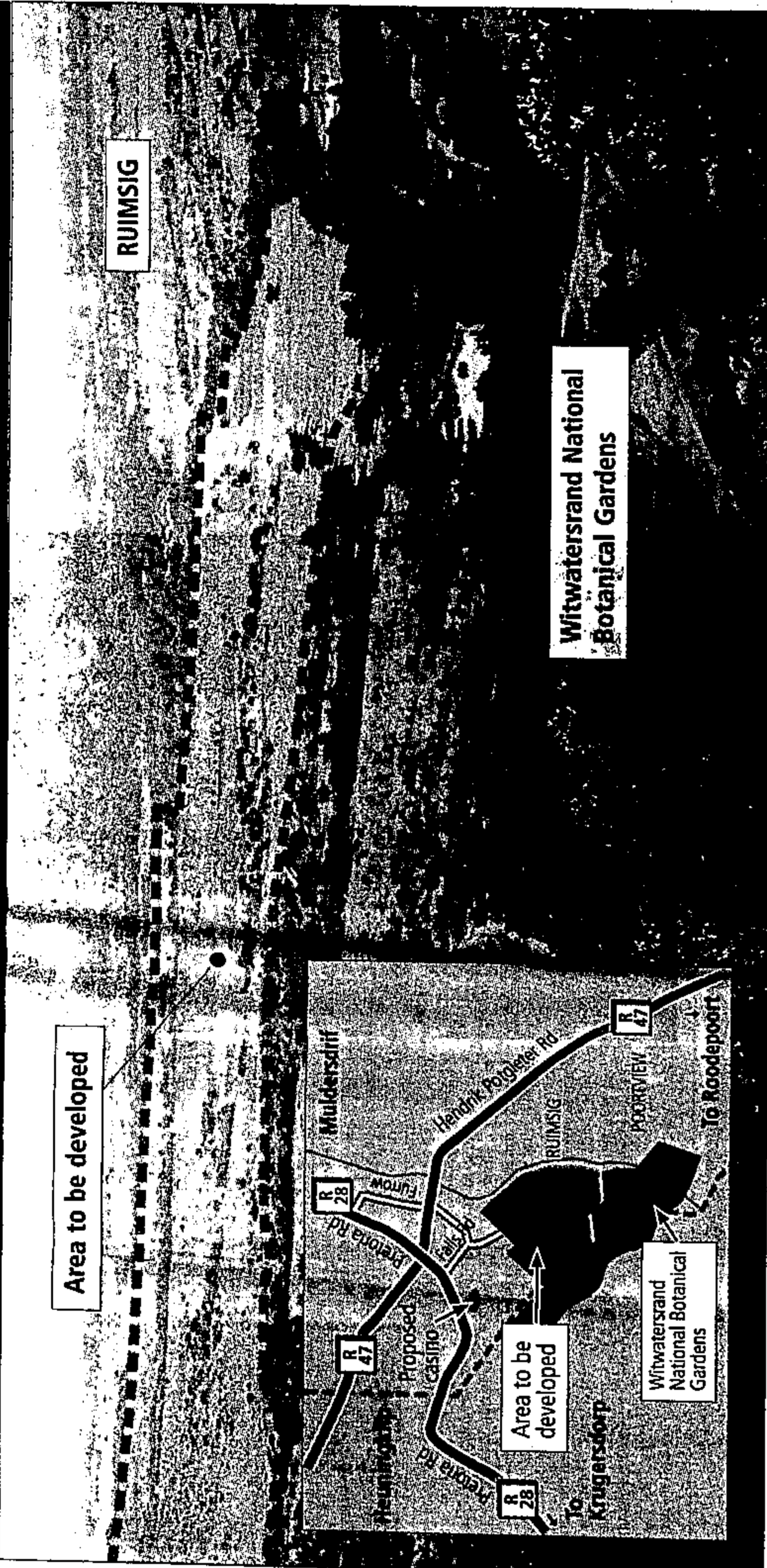
The Greenbelt Action Group (GBAG) has proposed a metropolitan open spaces system for the area, linking greenbelts for hiking trails, and is one of the township's staunchest opponents because sections of the riverine area would become inaccessible.

At a heated Krugersdorp town planning and townships ordinance hearing last week, Greenbelt Action Group spokesman Marion Blignaut was vehement in her objection to Featherbrooke, saying the development was precisely what visitors to the gardens, including foreign tourists, were trying to get away from.

An estimated 90 000 people have visited the gardens since April last year.

Objector Stefan Joubert voiced the concerns of residents of the Ruimsig and Poortview areas lying across the valley from the proposed complex, saying the visual impact would be disastrous, and an estimated additional 2 500 cars on the congested Hendrik Potgieter

## PROPOSED FEATHERBROOKE ESTATE



Temper flare ... over a proposed new estate that developers bill as a new concept in living style and environmentalists call a potential eyesore.

eter Road would be intolerable. Tempers flared after the hearing when developer Kevin Kritzinger of Plan Survey SA refused to hand over to Blignaut and other objectors the findings of an environmental impact assessment conducted by the company's landscape consultants. Objectors were given until Wednesday to submit a response to the document to the council.

Kritzinger said he was not obligated to reveal the findings of the assessment.

Featherbrooke has been billed as a new concept in living style, with residents living in park areas, and a minimum of fences and walls within the access-con-

trolled complex. Kritzinger said it would be marketed as an exclusive, unmarket area and constructed in six phases with landscaping at each phase to blend Featherbrooke into its surroundings.

Despite claims by residents and environmentalists that Featherbrooke would have a negative impact on the botanical gardens, Chaplin said sensitive woodland would remain intact on the garden's border and act as a visual buffer, while the lower areas of the gardens would not be affected at all.

Ninety percent of the vegetation along the riverside due for development was exotic wattle,

attracting little birdlife, he said. But he added, the decision to condone the development had been made by the institute's board in Cape Town, and was "out of my hands".

"We have accepted that development must take place in the west and this is a secure form of development," he said, adding it would prevent land use alternatives such as subeconomic housing or light industrial development in the future.

The provincial government might become involved in the debate if an appeal is lodged through the Townships Board by either party after the outcome of Wednesday's council decision.

Almost a million people who visited the Witwatersrand National Botanical Garden over the past 12 months regard the 300ha reserve as a getaway, a haven of tranquility less than half-an-hour from Johannesburg's CBD. One of eight gardens under the umbrella of the National Botanical Institute, it is also the newest and the only one boasting solely indigenous plants under

the quartz and granite cliffsides where the Witpoortjie waterfall drops 70m to the pool at the source of the Crocodile River.

Curator Peter Chaplin has presided over much of the development of the 16-year-old facility since his appointment in 1982 to Roodepoort's fledgling equivalent of Cape Town's Kirstenbosch.

Today there are 500 indigenous plant species including the huilboom, so-named after Voortrekker women and children had

## A short hop from the city centre there's a welcome breath of fresh country air

went under these trees when they believed their husbands and fathers who had gone on an expedition to Mozambique would never return.

Among the 170 bird species is the only pair of black eagles on the Witwatersrand.

Regular afternoon picnic concerts are held in winter, indigenous plants are sold, meals are served at the restaurant and regular tours are available for pupils and special groups.

By SUMMAY WOODGATE

Almost a million people who visited the Witwatersrand National Botanical Garden over the past 12 months regard the 300ha reserve as a getaway, a haven of tranquility less than half-an-hour from Johannesburg's CBD.

One of eight gardens under the umbrella of the National Botanical Institute, it is also the newest and the only one boasting solely indigenous plants under

# Work on Saldanha Steel starts within a week

Samantha Sharpe

CAPE TOWN — Construction on Saldanha Steel is to start within a week when consulting engineers Murray & Roberts turn the first soil at the site of the controversial R6,8bn steel mill, executive chairman Bernard Smith said at the weekend.

The project was put on hold in September after Iscor pulled out of the joint venture because of "inordinate delays" over site rezoning permits.

However, the steel producer returned to the party late last year in a restructured deal, which brought with it a surge in fund-

ing requirements to R6,8bn from an original R4,6bn.

Smith said contracts worth about R1,7bn had been awarded to various parties. "We have already signed contracts for the provision of hardware for the corex iron-making plant, along with contracts for the arc furnaces, the castor and rolling mills, and have ordered the air separation plant."

The Saldanha plant has twice the capacity of the existing corex plant at Iscor's Pretoria works and is only the fourth corex facility to be installed worldwide.

"We are in the course now of negotiating lump-sum turnkey contracts with German-

based Mannesman Demag and Voest Alpine of Austria," Smith said. These should be finalised by the end of March.

In terms of the lump-sum turnkey contracts, the two companies would be subcontracting to a large number of players, which, in the main, would be South African.

Smith said the construction process was expected to employ about 7 000 people. While some critical items of equipment would be made offshore and international experts needed for their supervision, the majority of workers would be local.

"Once the plant is operating we will employ about 600 people," he said.

**M&R boss**  
6/11/2000  
26/12/1996

# On the whale trail

(56) ARG 28/2/96

JOHN YELD

Environment Reporter

"THAR she blows!"

The circumstances leading to the traditional cry of the whale hunters of old have, mercifully, changed, but the excitement of spotting one of these gentle giants of the sea remains as intense as ever.

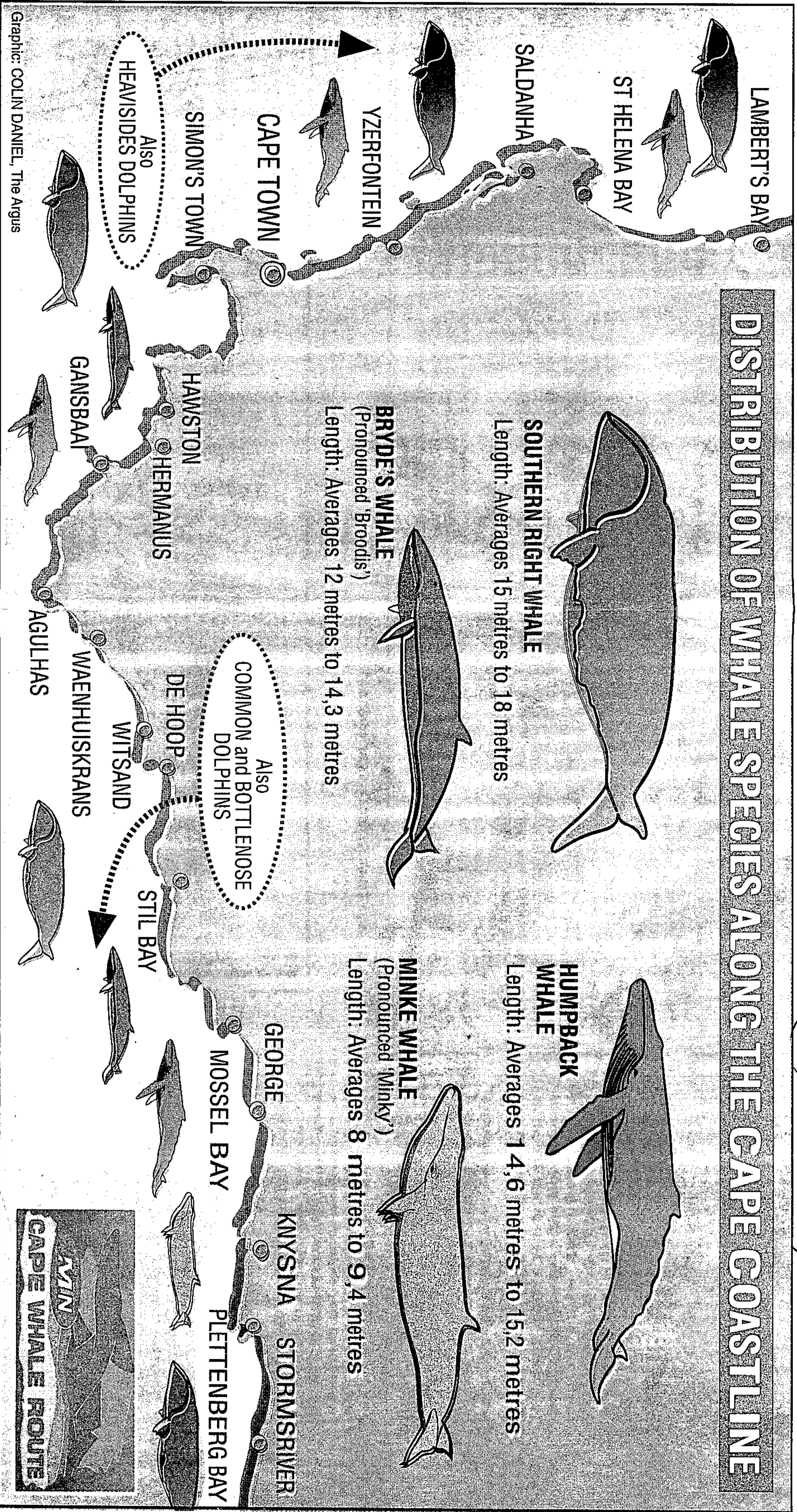
And because the southwestern Cape coast offers (arguably) the best land-based whale-spotting in the world, every season the excited cries of tourists and locals alike punctuate the air along the coast like the calls of so many seabirds as they respond to yet another whale or dolphin sighting.

Now, a new initiative has been launched - the MTTN Cape Whale Route - which plans to bring Cape whale-watching and other eco-tourism opportunities together and to market them as a single major international, national and regional tourism attraction, to the benefit of local communities along the route through job creation and tourist spending.

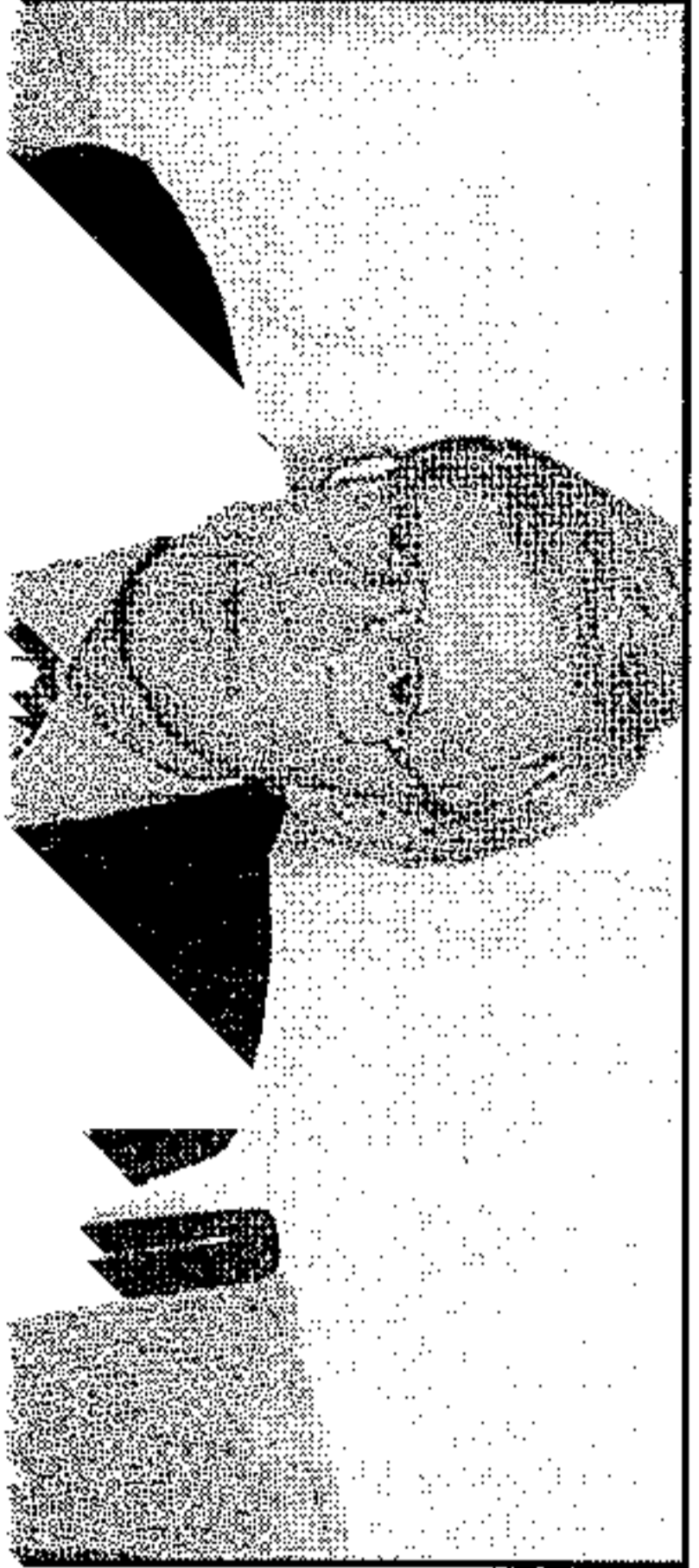
The aims of the new initiative, launched by Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers and supported by the cell-phone network operator MTTN, are to combine research on whales with tourism in a package, and to market both whale-watching and other eco-tourism attractions of the route which include unique cultural, scenic, floral and animal attractions.

Other aims are to ensure that the Cape Whale Route meets the highest standards of international tourism, and to promote economic empowerment and sustained financial independence among local communities through reconstruction and development at all levels.

It includes a new Whale Hotline, operating from June to December, which tourists can call for the latest information on the route.

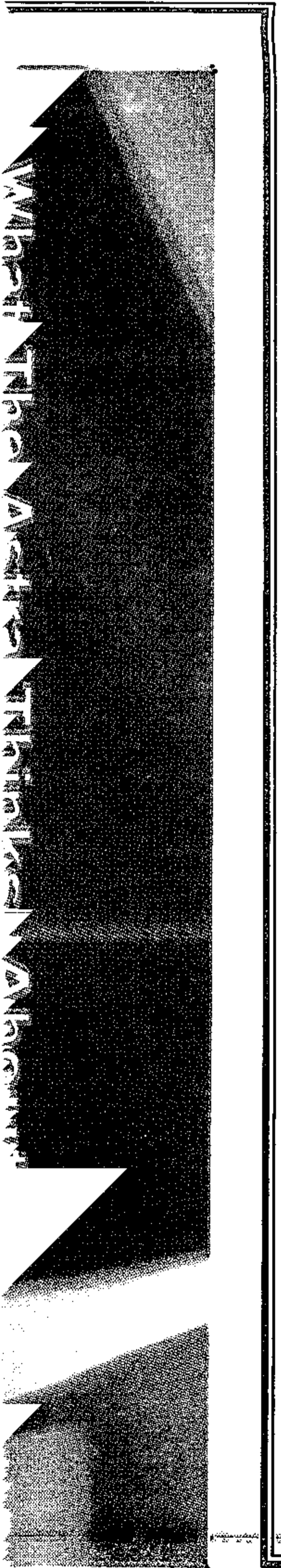


Graphic: COLIN DANIEL, The Argus



along the route through job creation and tourism," Dr De Villiers said.

Worldwide, the commercial whaling industry was estimated to have generated indirectly some \$317-million (about R1,22-billion) and was estimated to be growing at 49 percent a year in certain areas, he pointed out.





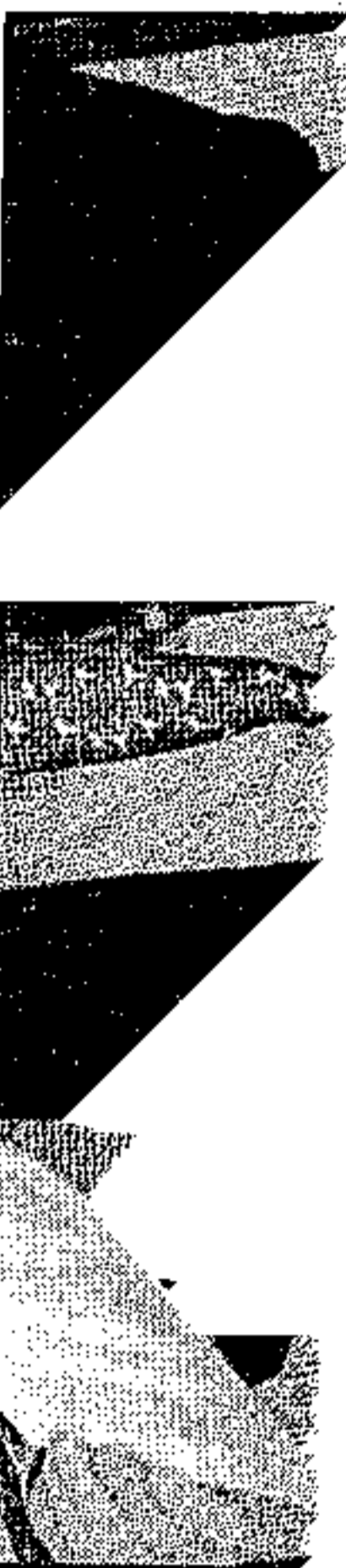
watching sites. At the opening, Dr De Villiers said whales had become a powerful symbol of the ocean.

"And tonight is testimony to South Africa's commitment to these beautiful creatures created by God."

Some 37 species of cetaceans (whales and dolphins), ranging from the mighty blue whale to the smallest, the endemic Heavies dolphin, occurred in South African waters, although many were seldom seen.

Last year, the South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (San-cor) had initiated a research programme to investigate whale-watching tourism in South Africa. Dr De Villiers said.

"Up until now, whale-watching has centred on southern right whales, with whale-watching being man-



**DAWIE DE VILLIERS** ... "testimony to South Africa's commitment to these beautiful creatures of God".

aged and marketed on a localised basis within a number of communities in the region."

Both a presentation to the Western Cape Tourism Board by Jim Weeper of Hermanus and an informal meeting between Westgro and interested and affected parties in Hermanus in May last year had identified the development of a regional whale route as a suitable co-operative venture to manage and market whale-watching along the Western Cape coast, Dr De Villiers said.

"Subsequent to these meetings a series of 'road show' presentations was carried out by the South and West Coast Publicity Associations to discuss whale-watching and community participation in such a route."

"This had been followed by a regional workshop, sponsored by the cell-phone network operator, in October.

Revenue was estimated at \$504 million (R1.94 billion), although by this year the overall growth of the global industry had declined to 16.6 percent as certain regions had reached capacity.

"Despite this decline in overall growth rate, there was a 62 percent increase in the number of nations or island states offering whale-watching as a tourism attraction," Dr De Villiers said.

"Totals of 44 million and 5.1 million people went whale-watching in 1992 and 1994 respectively, and whale-watching had transformed local economies in certain regions of the world, such as Kaikoura in New Zealand.

"However, Africa, Asia and Antarctica accounted for less than 0.5 percent of tourists."

The Whale Hotline is 083 212-1074 or (021) 418-3705.

## Pressure for SA to condemn Japan for 'scientific' whaling

Environment Reporter

THE new Cape Whale Route initiative comes at a time when Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers is under increasing pressure from marine conservationists to condemn Japan for its continued "scientific" whaling in the Southern Ocean whale sanctuary.

Japan's killing of minke whales in this area is in defiance of an International Whaling Commission (IWC) resolution.

The Dolphin Action Group told Dr De Villiers that a formal letter should be sent as soon as possible to the Japanese Ambassador to South Africa, objecting to his country's "continued defiance of majority IWC decisions and resolutions".

Group secretary Nan Rice has also expressed concern that financial aid from both Japan and Norway should not have "strings attached" relating to South Africa's not voting against these two countries at the IWC meetings. "It has happened in the past - and could quite pos-



**NAN RICE** ... concerned that aid from Japan and Norway should not have strings attached.

sibly happen again - that 'cheque book diplomacy', with the whales being the pawn in the political game, has taken place when countries have injected funds for aid and development in Third World Countries," she said.

In response, Dr De Villiers said South Africa's whaling policy needed to be revised as part of new envi-

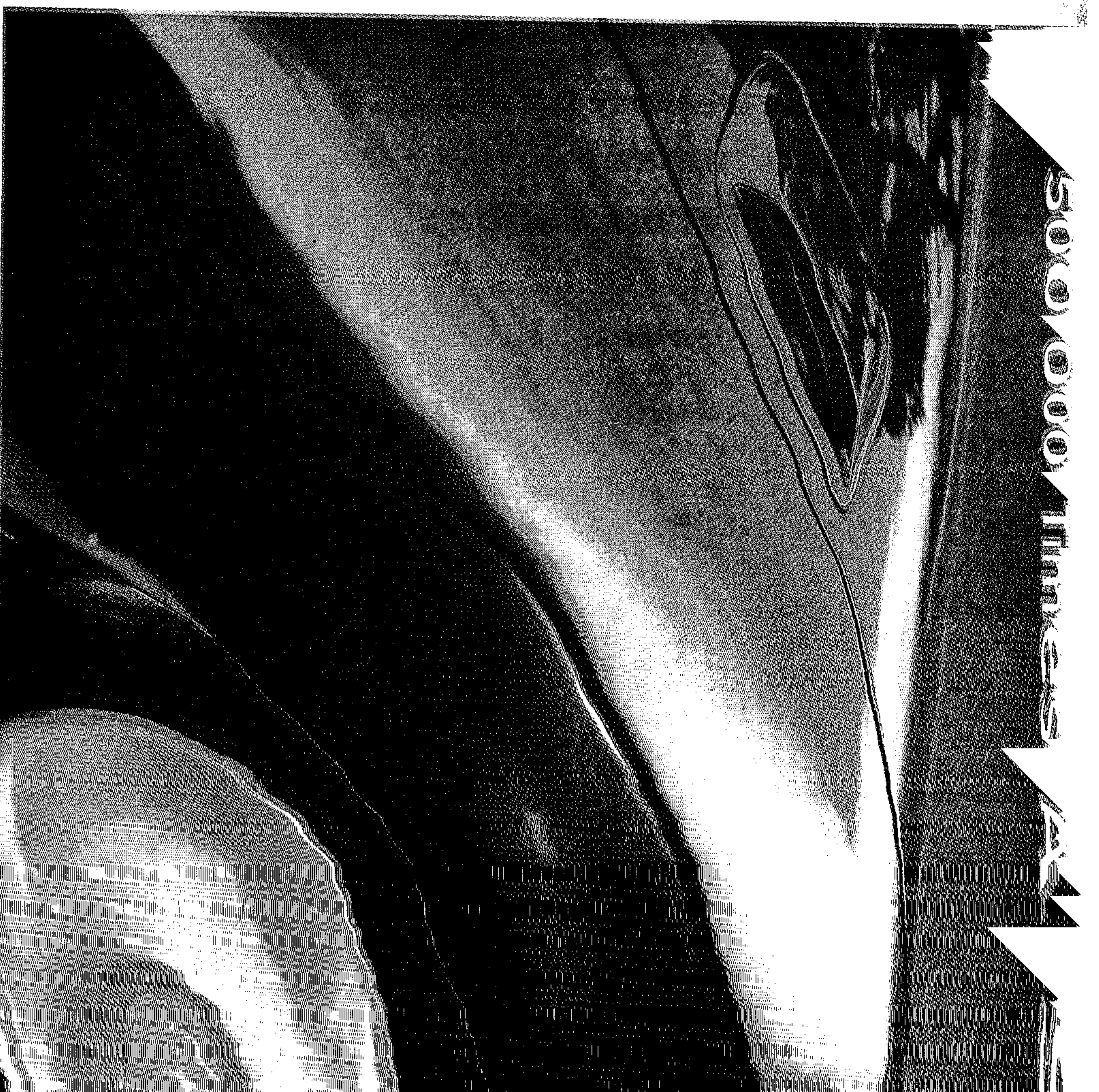
ronmental management initiatives such as the development of a new fishery policy.

"Whaling is in need of being revisited and discussed in broader forums in order to obtain endorsement before the next IWC meeting. This does not mean that one should expect major changes. However, I do not

believe that it is in South Africa's best interest at this delicate stage of policy debate to take too prominent a public stand on this particular issue, as such action prematurely may have counter-productive effects for the endorsement of our whaling policy in general."

Mrs Rice said Australia, Britain, France, Chile and New Zealand had all formally objected to Japanese whaling in the sanctuary area, and United States president Bill Clinton had recently laid the groundwork for a series of high-level negotiations aimed at ending such whaling before the end of this year.

"South Africa's voting record has been praised by numbers of organisations and others at IWC meetings in recent years, and I must warn you that if this voting pattern changes at the forthcoming IWC meeting in June to the detriment of the whales, South Africa is bound to come under a great deal of adverse international criticism," she told Dr De Villiers.



Power, performance, economy and emissions. Millions of crucial read this far. Samples of air-flow rate, engine load and temperature a dynamic driving experience that matches the levels of comfort and about the range. A level of technology that leaves you to think only about

Multi-point fuel injection: Lead-free fuel compatible: Dual side impact protection Bars: Tri-axle front anti-rattle front and rear: Front and rear door pockets: Driver's footrest: Rear seat back anti-corrosion warranty: Assist Plus complete driver support.

THE OPEL ASTRA RANGE COMPRISES: 140i, 140S, 160i, 160Si, 160i Estate, 160iE, 180iE, 180iE Auto, 200i, 200iE

## Decision on Elsie's Peak postponed

THE Fish Hoek Council postponed a decision yesterday on the Elsie's Peak housing development.

The two-month postponement on the sub-division application for Elsie's Peak was made pending the holding of a public meeting on the issue and a report from the National Parks Board.

For the past three years, residents

(56) (24)  
have opposed a proposed scheme to sub-divide the 4,1ha plot for housing.

"Our main objection is that Elsie's Peak is one of the most scenic sites in the Peninsula. To cover it with houses is like building flats on Table Mountain's Tafelberg Road," a Fish Hoek Residents' Association spokesman said. — Staff Reporter

CT 28/2/96

# Greens see Games bid as environment threat

ARG 28/2/96

(56)

## Games will benefit all - Ball

The Olympic Bid Company was aware of concern that had been expressed about who would benefit from the games should Cape Town host the event, company chief executive officer Chris Ball said.

Concern about whether the games would contribute to the sustainable development of the city was also expressed.

"We are committed to a process that leads to a (Olympic) games that will be part and parcel of the reconstruction and development programme," Mr Ball said.

"Our bid must be people-focused and it must address the needs of the citizens of Cape Town", he said. - Sapa.



CHRIS BALL

As the official deadline for submitting Cape Town's bid to host the Olympic Games in 2004 draws rapidly closer, prominent local environmentalists - including the influential Wildlife Society - are growing increasingly concerned. Despite their best efforts, they say, the environment - one of the three pillars of the modern Olympic movement - has not featured sufficiently prominently in Cape Town's bidding process, and the rush to host the Olympics may have a significant negative impact on efforts to promote the sustainable development of the Cape Metropolitan area. Are these criticisms valid? In the first part of a two-part series, Environment Reporter **JOHN YELD** looks at some of the environmentalists' concerns. In Part Two tomorrow, he considers the response of the Cape Town Olympic Bid Company.

**T**o host or not to host the Games? That is the question taxing the minds of many Capetonians, including its environmental community.

One of the most influential members of this community, the Western Cape branch of the Wildlife Society, has made its decision, and last night hosted a meeting of environmental and developmental organisations under the banner "Olympics: An environmental threat towards a collective and co-ordinated solution".

In a flyer sent out to publicise the meeting, the society said it could not support Cape Town's bid, "as we believe that it will fail to contribute to the sustainable development of the city and its people".

The environment was the third pillar of Olympianism - the other two being sport and culture - but this had not been addressed adequately in the bid process, the society charged.

"The structures and the process for decisions in bidding have not been participatory and civil society has been afforded no real influence in the process or the development of the concept plan," the society said.

"The involvement of environmental non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations at the appropriate level is paramount to the Cape metropolitan environment being accorded its rightful place, on which all future development is dependent.

"At this stage, the environmental pillar of the Cape Town 2004 bid has no foundation, and we therefore see the current efforts of the bid company to engage organisations in looking at details of Olympic sites as co-option into a flawed process."

The society's Western Cape ecologist, Marlene Laros, who attended a "Sport and the Environment" conference at the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, Switzerland, last year is deeply concerned about the

- The compressed time-frame of the planning process, "which could lead to environmental considerations being compromised";

- The possibility of inadequate environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of sites and facilities, and associated public involvement, due to the time frame;

- The lack of multi-disciplinary input into conceptual planning thusfar, and

- Time restraints which have led to the lack of integration, in the concept planning process, of the sites with the surrounding environment and communities.

Ms Laros said she considered the biggest potential environmental impact of hosting the Games was related to appropriate land use and the way the city functioned, the movement of people and goods, transport efficiency and energy.

"The Olympic Bid Company's planners have stated that they are using the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF), which recommends certain development nodes and corridors as a means of transforming the city to make it work more efficiently.

"The MSDF is a spatial development framework - it's very important to remember that - and deals with land use, but on a very large scale, and it's always been a concern that the MSDF needs to be translated to a local level with greater local participation.

"I'm really concerned that we're committing ourselves to the bid document, committing ourselves to some things that we haven't thought through properly. That's our biggest fear."

The bid company would not confirm to environmentalists how environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of the proposed sites would be used, Ms Laros said.

"Will EIAs be decision-making tools or reports on the mitigation of environmental impact?"

"And will a strategic environmental impact assessment, or global EIA, inform the decision of whether or not to host the Olympic Games?"

"Such a strategic assessment would



CAPE TOWN  
2004  
CANDIDATE CITY



Wh  
0% int  
1

year is deeply concerned about the environmental implications for Cape Town and, in a wider context, for Africa.

"It really revolves around the amount of time left in the bidding process, and people feeling they haven't been involved at the right levels," Ms Laros said.

"As we indicated in our meetings at the Civic Centre in May and June last year, we were worried about this lack of involvement and we wanted to initiate something. That's been a concern of the NGO (non-government organisation) sector all along.

"We feel the environment is a priority in terms of the Olympic Bid, and sufficient attention should have been given to this right from the start.

"There was supposed to be an environmental taskforce, and we don't know whether it exists and, if it does, who's represented on it.

"We believe we have made an effort to focus the process on the environment and on the sustainable development of Cape Town.

"However, we want to engage you at a level at which we feel we are making a difference and having an input to decision-making. But, people believe our questions aren't being answered and it seems as if the whole environmental aspect isn't being taken seriously."

Ms Laros described the the IOC as a "multinational company", and said her experience in Lausanne had made her aware of the contrast between the priorities of the Olympic movement and those of reconstruction and sustainable development.

"It's a franchise you buy into, and the question is whether we should be buying into this in the first place. Fundamentally, commercial and public money is going to the Olympics instead of elsewhere."

Ms Laros said she was also deeply concerned that the social environment did not seem to be getting sufficient attention.

"My perception is that the IOC's definition of the environment is limited to the biophysical. Basically, it doesn't stretch the concept of the environment beyond that which influences the athletic ability of the Olympic competitors - clean air, clean water, and so on."

But what are the principal environmental threats posed by hosting the Olympics?

Ms Laros points to a statement of environmental concern that followed a meeting in November of a multidisciplinary group of scientists and planners who visited some proposed Olympic sites.

The group expressed enthusiasm at the potential for enhancing and upgrading environmentally disturbed sites, and the restructuring of an inequitable and inefficient city, which the staging of the Olympic Games could afford.

But it also expressed a number of concerns about environmental and planning issues. These related to:

"Such a strategic assessment would incorporate all aspects of the environment."

Is there any way in which the environmentalists who have withdrawn from the bid can be brought back?

An environmental charter is needed to define the conditions under which the Olympics could go ahead in Cape Town in an environmentally sustainable way, Ms Laros says.

"The charter must be legally binding on all the signatories - on the city, on the NGOs and on the bid company and its successor. That is a precondition for critical engagement."

The bid company had suggested parallel processes, doing site assessments and drawing up an environmental charter at the same time, Ms Laros said, but the environmental charter and policy frameworks had to be in place before site assessments could be addressed.

"We need to establish what the principles are and establish first the policy framework for the Olympics from an environmental perspective - for example, habitats which are threatened or which have high diversity will not just simply be developed."

What about the Olympics as a catalyst for change?

"You've got to be sure that it's going to benefit the people you want it to benefit, and I really don't think we've got that sewn up.

"The small business sector suffers - that is documented through research by the Development Action Group - and perhaps there are all sorts of ways to ameliorate that, but our concern is sustainability."

There will be a huge rush of people looking for jobs if the Games are held here, Ms Laros predicts.

"There will be internal migration as well as illegal immigrants from outside Cape Town and South Africa.

"It's a more acute problem here because of the environment we have and the diversity of the Cape Peninsula.

"You have to understand we're sitting on one of the most species-rich areas in the whole world, and we've lost such a lot.

"The habitats of the Cape Flats are hopelessly under-represented in formal conservation areas."

The NGO (non-government organisation) environmental sector had been working towards an environmental policy in partnership with the Cape Metropolitan Council and the Cape Town City Council, Ms Laros said.

Local Agenda 21 - the sustainable living framework developed at the Earth Summit in 1992 - and its implementation in metropolitan Cape Town were seen as a priority by the Western Cape branch of the Wildlife Society.

"Clearly, addressing the problems of poverty and environmental degradation in our city is the only rational priority.

"Efficient, equitable and sustainable land-use defined through public-participation can therefore not be compromised," he said.

00%

Ret:  
Dep  
Inte  
Ter  
Mor  
Sav

The chart at proposition Midge has a the Mazda M

■ FALSE BAY

# Elsies Peak gets reprieve

*Development decision postponed for two months* (56)

**PETER GOOSEN Staff Reporter**

A FINAL decision on the sub division of Elsie's Peak, Fish Hoek, one of the False Bay coast's most controversial development proposals ever, has been postponed for two months.

This follows a heated debate at a meeting of the Fish Hoek/Kommetjie/Noordhoek transitional metropolitan sub-structure.

The sub-structure's executive chairman, Vic Kabalin, was successful in introducing a motion that the Elsie's Peak decision be put on hold and that a public meeting be held at which the developer would be asked to explain his proposals.

The National Parks Board would also be asked for its input on the development.

The sub structure would then ask for comment on the development before coming to a final decision.

The controversial decision to allow the sub division on Elsie's Peak, the mountain slope that soars above the Sunny Cove area of Fish Hoek, was first taken in 1992 amid a storm of protest from across the country and even from overseas.

The owner of the property was given the go ahead to sub divide the 4,1 hectares of Elsie's Peak into 40 plots.

With the permission went a list of 14 stringent conditions. The owner has now made a new application to change the sub division into 21 plots.

At Tuesday's meeting Mr Kabalin said his motion to hold up a decision in the development was in the interests of transparency.

The sub structure was being rushed into taking a decision on a major development without taking into account previous objections to the original proposal which, among others, included a petition with 2 000 signatures.

There were also late submissions and late objections which should also be taken into account.

The sub division application had been advertised on December 12 when a lot of people were on holiday and did not get a chance to see the advertisement.

"In Bellville no council notices are published in December or January for exactly this reason," Mr Kabalin said.

There was also no environmental impact assessment.

"We are following the letter of the law but not the spirit," he added.

Town Clerk Harold Chapman told the meeting that he had always maintained a neutral stance on the Elsie's Peak application.

It was his duty to warn the council that should they take too long over a decision, the developer could legally return to his original sub division proposal.

The council at the time the decision was taken in 1992 had obtained a R45 000 legal opinion on the 14 conditions that had been imposed on the Elsie's Peak development.

They had been condemned as "void for vagueness."

This meant that it was possible for the developer to sub divide into 40 plots without conditions.

Councillor Roy Andersen said all the developer wanted was to alter the 40 plots to 21 plots.

He pointed out that without council permission the developer could build a 1 000 square metre dwelling with no provision for on site parking. There was an inherent danger in alienating the developer.

Deputy mayor Pat Landon agreed that the substructure should take a firm stand and insist on full public participation before coming to a decision. Councillor Ian Brownlie said every member of the sub structure was responsible to the people of Fish Hoek, Kommetjie and Noordhoek.

"I dare anybody here to agree to this application without going to the people first."

# 'Focus on people crucial for bid'

NEWS TO ARG 29/2/96 (285) (56)

## 'Green Team' concerned over environmental controls

AS the official deadline for submitting Cape Town's bid to host the Olympic Games in 2004 draws rapidly closer, prominent environmentalists have come out against the bid saying the environment has not featured sufficiently. But, the Bid Company insists there will be proper environmental controls. This is the second in a two-part series by Environment Reporter JOHN YELD.

WHEN the organisers of the 1994 Winter Olympics, held in the small Norwegian town of Lillehammer, decided they wanted to build one of the new facilities in a bird sanctuary, local environmental groups threw their proverbial toys out of the cot.

The end result?

The disputed facility was moved to a less sensitive site.

The infrastructure for the Norwegian Games, considered one of the most successful yet, was developed according to strict environmental principles, and the environment was elevated to the status of one of the three pillars of the modern Olympic movement, along with sport and culture.

These days the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has a fully-fledged Sport and Environment Commission, headed by one of its four vice-presi-

dents. President of the National Olympics Committee of South Africa (Nocsa) Sam Ramsamy is one of its members.

Sydney is acknowledged to have won the nomination to host the 2000 Games primarily because of its "green" bid.

It is ironic, therefore, that none of the Lillehammer sites was subjected to an environmental impact assessment (EIA) before being chosen, says Mary Jane Morris, the environmental scientist who has been seconded from Caltex to work for the Bid Company under Peter de Tolly, Cape Town's deputy city planner, who heads the bid company's Planning and Environment Section.

A town of only some 24 000 inhabitants, Lillehammer was crammed with up to 100 000 visitors a day and a total of about one million for the 16-day event.

It is experiencing some post-Games problems. For example, the community struggles to maintain some of the more specialised facilities, such as the bobsleigh course, and the big arenas are seldom full. But, overall the impact has been minimal.

In Sydney, some social impact assessments are still being done, three years after the city won the bid. One of the equestrian sites may be moved because of environmental concerns. "A lot of the decisions are being made in the post-bid process, which is



CAPE TOWN  
2004

CANDIDATE CITY



surprising," Ms Morris says.

The message from Lillehammer and Sydney is clear, she suggests: Nothing is cast in stone, in spite of the notion that the Bid Document is a binding contract with the IOC and that all the guarantees given in it are legally binding on the host city. Also, environmental planning is a process that extends through and beyond the handing in of this document.

"The standards of a planned facility can't be renegotiated, but the actual site can, that is, you have to produce the same 'product' for them. There is a degree of flexibility," Ms Morris said.

Ms Morris, who has just returned from Lillehammer where she attended a Sport and Environment conference, is

responsible for co-ordinating Theme Four of the IOC's Manual for Candidate Cities, which deals with the environment.

"The IOC has been saying that the Games need to be scaled down, but what does that actually mean in practical terms? It's not so easy," she told The Argus.

Sydney was taking a significantly "hi-tech" approach to the Games, she noted.

"But, there is no sensitivity to the fact that this technology may not be appropriate for developing countries like those in Africa, and that is of deep concern."

Cape Town's focus on people and on the social upliftment process was crucial to its bid, Ms Morris suggested, and it was this aspect that set it apart from other cities in the 2004 race.

"There is a huge amount of interest in Games' circles overseas about South Africa, and people are looking at Cape Town to put some of the human values back into the bidding.

"One of the key messages to come out of Africa in terms of sustainable development is that of simplicity and of the strong ties between people and the land.

"The message from this continent is the need to be less resource consumptive, to live within the carrying capacity of the ecosystems, or Mother Nature, or whatever you want to call it."

Continued

# Lawyer here to prepare case against Thor

(56) (10/21) MTG 1-7/3/96

A substantial damages claim against the Thor company in South Africa will be heard in a British court, writes **Eddie Koch**

**E**NGLISH lawyer Richard Meeran arrived in South Africa this week to prepare a multi-million-rand lawsuit in the British courts against Thor Chemicals for damages suffered by 20 workers, exposed to high levels of mercury toxins, at the multinational's subsidiary in KwaZulu-Natal.

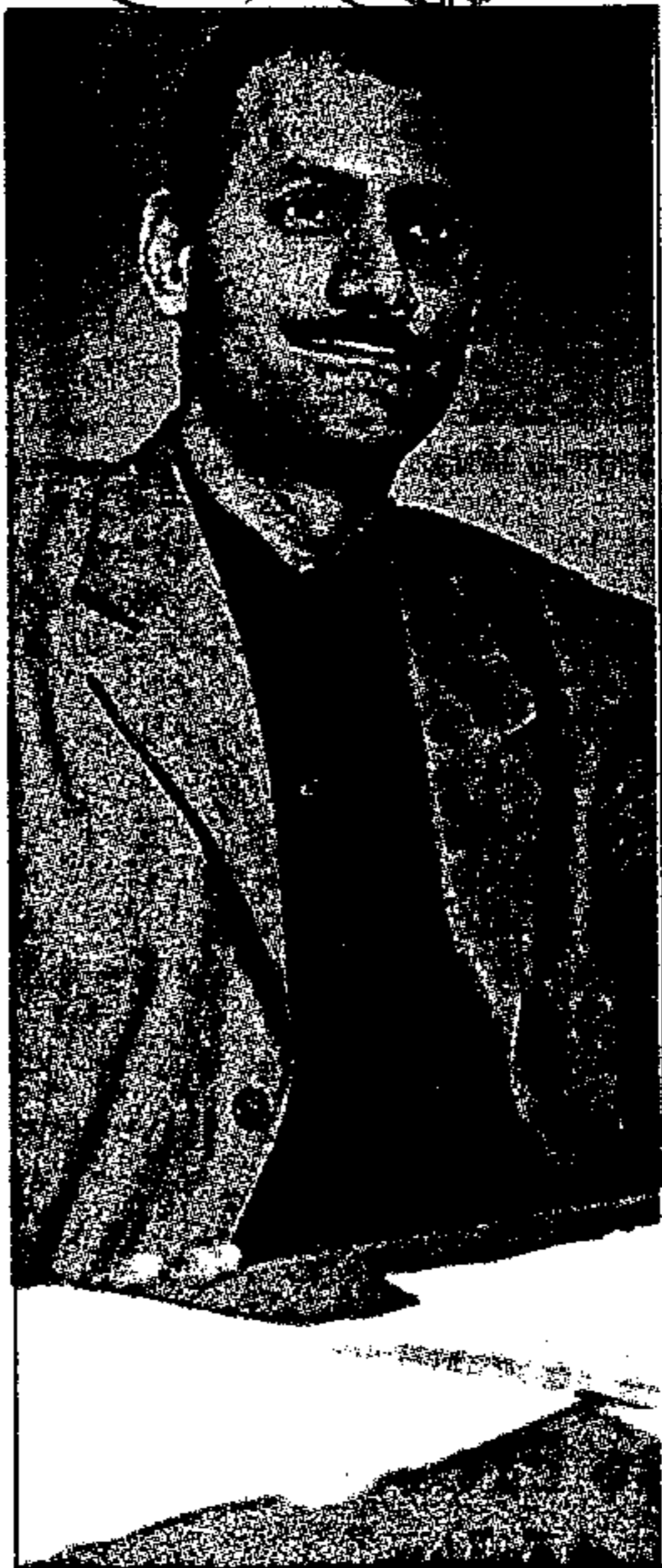
The case is a landmark one because it is poised to help ensure that British companies operating in South Africa and other developing countries are forced to apply the same strict health and safety standards, which apply in their home country, to subsidiary operations in the Third World.

The opportunity to sue in British courts arose when the House of Lords, the highest court of appeal in England, this month refused to entertain an appeal by Thor for the litigation to be heard in South Africa where the health and safety legislation is less advanced than in Britain.

Meeran originally sued the parent company in mid-1994 on behalf of three workers whose health was seriously damaged after being exposed to high levels of mercury at a Thor plant in Cato Ridge that was importing toxic waste from the United States and other countries, which refused to process the material because of its dangers.

Two of the workers, Peter Cele and Engelbert Ngcobo, died while the third victim, Albert Dlamini, is permanently disabled at the age of 28.

It was this case Thor appealed against, arguing South African courts were the most appropriate forum for it to be heard. The House of Lords's rejection of that appeal this month cleared the way for



Preparing case: English lawyer Richard Meeran in South Africa

PHOTOGRAPH: CAROLINE SUZMAN

South African victims of Thor to litigate in England.

The milestone decision encouraged Meeran to come to South Africa and prepare a case for another 17 workers whose health was seriously impaired, allegedly by chronic exposure to mercury toxins at the Cato Ridge plant.

He is currently collecting information to quantify the extent of the claims these workers will bring against the company.

An official commission of inquiry has been appointed by President Nelson Mandela to probe why the previous government allowed Thor

to bring such dangerous waste into the country — and the company has since been forced to shut down its mercury recycling plant.

Meeran believes civil claims lodged in England by the victims of British subsidiaries will help force multinationals operating in the Third World to abide by the same health and safety standards that apply in their home country.

He has gathered evidence which shows Thor moved part of its British plant to South Africa in the 1980s after that country's health and safety executive, which monitors health standards in local firms, expressed concern about the high levels of mercury in blood and urine of workers in England.

Meeran argues the parent company should bear major responsibility for the damage caused to its South African employees because Thor management in England played a strong role in the design of the Cato Ridge factory and moved some of the British plant and its personnel to KwaZulu-Natal.

The lawyer has not completed an assessment of the damage caused to the South African workers through loss of income, pain and suffering but estimates their claim will come to a total of £1-million. The British company has a turnover of about £50-million a year.

Thor management in South Africa argues the health of the first three workers was caused by acute exposure to mercury from an act of sabotage rather than bad company practice at the Cato Ridge plant — a claim which Meeran says was refuted by Dr Lazlo Magos, an internationally-renowned toxicologist, who examined the victims' medical and work records in preparation for the case and found they suffered chronic exposure over an extended period of time.

The company also refuses to accept the health of the other 17 workers is in any way related to mercury exposure.

## Hotels pledge to protect nature

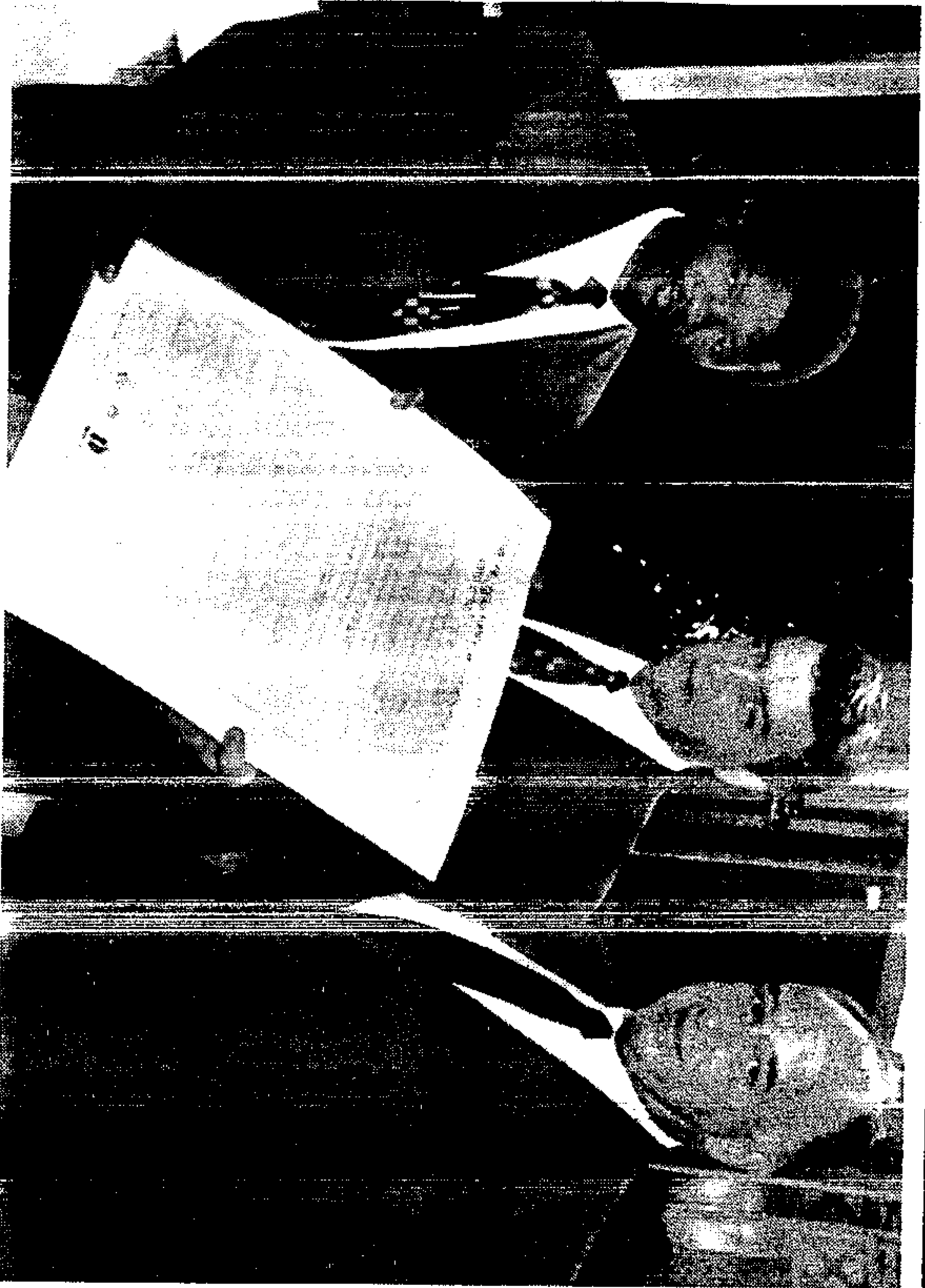
Theo Rawana

2015/196

HOTELS needed to manage the environment efficiently and help in the drive to market SA ecotourism, Environmental Affairs and Tourism Deputy Minister Bantu Holomisa said yesterday.

Holomisa told a function at which hospitality industry companies and organisations signed the Hotels' Environmental Charter in Johannesburg, that hotels could make or break the hospitality industry.

"If we really want to achieve our vision of establishing SA as the world's most desirable ecotourism destination, something must be done immediately." The charter reads: "We recognise that our business has an important role to play in protecting and enhancing the environment ... and to help secure the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry."



Deputy Environmental Affairs Minister Bantu Holomisa, left, holds the hotels' environmental charter signed in Johannesburg yesterday by top companies and organisations in the hospitality industry. With him are Satour standards promotion director Greg MacManus and Diversey MD Terry Challengo. Picture: ROBERT BOTHA.





Pictures: JACK LESTRADE.

**GREEN FINGERS:** Prince Philip plants an Alberta Magna tree in the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

## Prince supports fund for mountain

(56) AAG 2/3/96  
Staff Reporter

THE Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, has planted a tree at the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens in support of the conservation of Table Mountain and the Cape Peninsula.

Prince Philip, the international president of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and honorary custodian of the Table Mountain Fund, was taken on a helicopter tour of the proposed national park on the Cape Peninsula yesterday.

At the tree-planting ceremony, Brian Huntley, patron of the Table Mountain Fund, said it had reached the R6 million mark. It was launched just under three years ago by Sir Edmund Hillary.

The latest boost came from Cape of Good Hope Bank, whose managing director Mike Thompson yesterday handed a cheque for R250 000 to Prince Philip, following a licencing agreement with the WWF for a range of banking products.

An exhibition of international natural history paintings and sculpture at the Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg also raised R130 000 for the fund.

Interest from the fund already is being used for important local conservation work.

# Pik's public probe of contamination scare concludes there was no danger

Star 2/3/96

Pelindaba - Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha yesterday grilled executives of the country's nuclear agency over a radioactive contamination scare but concluded that no one was in danger.

Botha invited reporters to the session at the headquarters of the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) at Pelindaba to investigate an incident at the plant in March last year which nuclear regulators described as "a serious degradation of safety culture".

In the incident, revealed by *The Sunday Independent* last weekend, AEC workers using a mechanical excavator tried to unearth a condenser believed to contain up to 2 tons of depleted uranium.

The excavator did not find

the condenser, buried in 1990 in a waste dump dubbed "Radiation Hill", but unearthed other radioactive waste, leading to fears that the surrounding area was at risk of contamination.

Botha grew frustrated yesterday during technical presentations by AEC chief executive Waldo Stumpf and senior manager Brian Hambleton-Jones on groundwater migration and other factors they said had a bearing on contamination risk.

"If you show that to the public they'll be frightened," Botha said.

"Am I right in saying there is no harm to human beings or animals as a result of the excavation; as far as the future is concerned, nobody in this whole area needs to fear anything?" Botha asked.

"Correct," replied Hambleton-Jones, who added he had been approached by worried representatives of neighbouring municipalities reporting that millions of rands in potential investment in the area had been placed in danger by the scare.

Jeff Leaver, head of the independent Council for Nuclear Safety, said the AEC's safety consciousness could be jeopardised by reduced state funding and the poor image it had developed in the years when it was involved in making nuclear weapons.

Pelindaba is the site of a research nuclear reactor and was the place where South Africa designed and built six nuclear warheads, all of which have been dismantled under international supervision. - Reuters

# Oil facility a 'threat to ecosystem'

(56) ARG 4/3/96

*A draft report outlining how a comprehensive environmental impact assessment of the proposed expansion of the Saldanha Bay oil loading and offloading facilities should proceed, has been published for comment. The report suggests at least 12 specialist studies will be required – including one to assess the potential impact of oil spills on the Langebaan Lagoon and coastal ecosystems – and that five options for the proposal should be assessed, including a mooring buoy for oil transfers from tankers outside Saldanha Bay, and moving the entire Strategic Fuel Fund Association's oil storage facility. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD looks at the report.*

**T**HE loading and off-loading of dangerous cargoes such as oil pose a serious threat to the Saldanha Bay-Langebaan Lagoon ecosystem, and the expansion of tanker traffic and oil transfer operations at the Strategic Fuel Fund's oil terminal pose unacceptably high environmental risks to the environment.

So says the National Parks Board in its response to the draft scoping document that will form the basis for an environmental impact assessment report on the proposed expansion of the oil terminal.

A scoping exercise identifies the key "interested and affected parties" and the main issues which need to be examined in specialist studies.

The Strategic Fuel Fund Association (SFF) is considering an oil storage agreement with Iran, in terms of which the Middle East country would be able to use some of the spare capacity at the association's vast oil storage facility at Saldanha Bay.

Should this agreement be concluded, Iran will initially store about 15 million barrels of crude oil in two of the facility's six tanks. Iran will also have an option to lease a third tank, bringing its total storage capacity to 22.5 million barrels.

The association has stated that it will not conclude the agreement with Iran before it can "make an informed assessment of the environmental consequences associated with the various alternatives", according to the draft scoping document.

"In this respect, the potential increase in the risk of oil pollution and the impacts on the Langebaan wetland ecosystem, as well as other elements of the biophysical and human environments, weighed against the

potential benefits of the project – mainly financial – is a major consideration which will influence the project decision."

Five project alternatives have been identified for assessment. They are:

- Expanding oil tanker traffic and oil transfer operations to within the capacity of the existing facilities;

- Expanding oil operations with a doubling of the existing jetty and pipeline facilities;

- Expanding oil operations and replacing the existing jetty facilities with an off-shore Single Buoy Mooring (SBM), so that tankers don't come into the bay;

- Maintaining the existing status quo, which is about 25 supertankers a year; and

- Closing the SFF oil facility at Saldanha Bay.

The Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been commissioned to undertake an environmental impact assessment of these proposed alternatives, and an independent firm of consultants has been appointed to manage the process of getting comment and consulting the public. An assessment review panel will be appointed to consider the final report and recommend which alternative should be adopted.

The SFF has undertaken to accept this recommendation, according to the scoping report.

It suggests at least 12 specialist studies will be required for the overall environmental impact assessment.

These include a technical study to identify potential single-buoy mooring sites in the vicinity of Saldanha Bay; an assessment of the impact of dredging activities; a



**OIL DISASTER:** An oiled guillemot from the Sea Empress disaster at Milford Haven is cleaned at the RSPCA Wildlife Hospital at West Hatch near Taunton, Devon. Fishermen were banned from catching fish from a wide area of the South Wales coast for the next 28 days due to pollution from the oil spill.

study to assess the potential impacts of oil spills on the Langebaan lagoon and coastal ecosystems, including the effects on birds and the salt marsh area; and a study to assess the impacts of ballast water disposal (ballast water discharged when a cargo is loaded).

Sarel Yssel, the National Parks Board's environmental manager, said there was no doubt that any sizeable oil pollution incident would cause serious environmental damage to the marine environment of Saldanha Bay and Langebaan Lagoon and would have a severe impact on the sea bird and wader populations of the area.

"A similar oil pollution incident off-shore will certainly cause much less environmental damage."

"Although the risk of an oil spill might be higher at a single buoy mooring off-shore than in Saldanha Bay, a spill off-shore will have much less impact than a spill in the bay."

"It is accordingly felt that the study should focus on investigating possible locations for a single buoy mooring."

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader

Asmal said he supported the proposed environmental impact assessment procedure, but that the proposed expansion of the oil facilities could not be seen in isolation.

"The incremental effect of the envisaged expansion of the oil handling facility on the water quality of the Bay, over and above the water quality of Saldanha and the Langebaan Lagoon, must be considered thoroughly," Professor Asmal said.

"This includes proposed projects such as the expansion of the general cargo quay and the Saldanha Steel Project, together with its associated industrial development."

"Although the environmental impact assessment is only dealing with the expansion of the oil handling facility, it should rather be regarded as an opportunity to question and assess the entire oil handling facility."

Professor Asmal also said his department had not had any monitoring results of ground water quality at the oil tank farm, although this facility had been in operation for 14 years.

"The possible long-term effect on the water quality in the bay also needs to be

assessed," he said.

"Should it become known that the ground water is already affected, remedial procedures should be implemented immediately, and the situation must be disclosed to all interested and affected parties."

In its response, the environmental organisation Earthlife Africa (Cape Town) said the Western Cape government's recent approval of the rezoning for the Saldanha Steel Project, contrary to the recommendations of the Steyn Board of Inquiry, did not bode well for the assessment of future projects such as oil terminals.

"We no longer wish to be co-opted on to environmental impact assessment processes where the exercise is basically a public relations one or an absolute 'Greenwash'."

"We are therefore seriously considering withdrawing from the process, as we see no value in allowing a developer to use our name to endorse a totally manipulated procedure."

● The closing dates for comments on the draft scoping report is March 12. For further information, contact Jonathan Crowther at 461 1118/9.

# More probing due on 'green' side of 2004

JOHN YELD, Environment Reporter

ONE of the down-sides of this amazing transition of ours to a fledgling democracy – and we can be grateful there have been so few – is that debate in areas other than straight politics has been stifled.

Or perhaps “stifled” is the wrong word. A better way of putting it probably is that it distracted attention away from, or drew the energy out of other debates. And one such debate which should have been enjoying centre stage because of its huge potential impact, at least in Cape Town, is the bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games.

In particular, debate on the possible environmental consequences of winning the bid has been too subdued. Consequences could include being able to develop a more sus-

tainable, equitable and environmentally friendly city – or the further destruction of the Cape's already greatly reduced natural heritage. We have to debate, discuss, argue and talk if we are to achieve the former and avoid the latter.

The most crucial question is whether Capetonians actually want the Games, and whether – before they make such a decision – they are fully informed of the potential positive and negative impact it could have in the area.

You might think it's an odd time to be asking such a question, with the deadline for submitting a bid almost upon us. But even the most ardent supporters of the bid will have to admit that people of the metropole have not been asked in any meaningful way for their opinion. And the decision to go for

## GREEN SCENE



John Yeld

the bid, at the most basic level, was taken by the Cape Town City Council which was not fully representative – and still won't be until after the local government elections.

Bid company chief executive Chris Ball quotes a poll showing that some 80 percent of the people of Metropolitan Cape Town support the notion of hosting the Games. Let's

see the details of that poll – how the sample was selected, what the questions were, whether respondents were questioned in their first language, and so on. And let's have it peer-reviewed. Then we can be sure it is valid. And why shouldn't there be a full referendum, as suggested by city councillors Clive Keegan and Arthur Wienburg?

Another question which needs to be debated is why we shouldn't avoid the present rush by going for the 2008 Games instead. There may well be a “never-to-be-repeated window of opportunity” now that we need to take advantage of, but we need to be convinced of that.

A third question, and the most directly environmental, is why there are not professional environmentalists or ecologists on the board of directors of the present Bid

Company. Almost all other interest groups are represented – why no Greens?

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) sets great store by the environment. Indeed, with sport and culture, it forms the three pillars of the modern environmental movement. The lack of environmental expertise (as opposed to well-meaning concern) at the core decision-making end is inexcusable, and the politicians need to take corrective steps urgently.

That hosting the Games in Cape Town in 2004 holds huge potential benefits for transforming the currently unsustainable, apartheid-planned city is incontrovertible – but equally so are the potential damages of environmental degradation and the further loss of the Cape's unique biodiversity. The debate must continue.

debate

(56) ~~(56)~~ ARG 4/3/96

# AEC denies radiation danger

Ingrid Saigado

BD 4/3/96

(56) (260)

ATOMIC Energy Corporation (AEC) CE Waldo Stumpf yesterday dismissed as "sensationalist" weekend reports that the corporation's nuclear waste disposal site Radiation Hill was emitting dangerously high radiation levels.

Radiation emission from "a few spots as big as a saucer" had been identified. However, this could be cleaned up in half an hour, as soon as the corporation got the green light from the Council for Nuclear Safety, he said. "It is not emitting dangerously high radiation. It's a storage place with levels you would find at any uranium mine in SA." There was no danger to residents, workers or the environment.

The Sunday Independent reported yesterday that radioactivity levels at the site were 100 times higher than the safety limit, and said nuclear council officials were shocked at contamination levels.

The council's project manager in charge of licensing the AEC, Schalk de Waal, confirmed radiation levels were

higher than maximum safety levels. However, this did not mean the area was dangerous. All work around the affected area had been stopped, and no workers were allowed at the site.

The contamination happened last year when the AEC dug up a container which contained uranium waste levels higher than originally thought, in so doing contravening its licence conditions. Spillage occurred in the process. The corporation has admitted wrongdoing in failing to obtain the council's approval for the excavation.

De Waal said the AEC would not be penalised for contravening its licence. However, the council expected the corporation to clean up the spillage. It was awaiting a report on safety precautions the corporation would take during the clean-up operation. The council rejected an AEC safety report last November and told the corporation to suggest additional precautions. The area could have been cleaned up had the AEC re-submitted the report, De Waal said.

Stumpf, however, said the go-ahead was in the council's hands.

I  
t  
v  
o  
s  
n  
  
t  
i  
v  
o  
a  
t  
a  
j  
c  
T  
a  
d  
  
w  
i  
t  
r  
t  
t  
c  
n  
o  
  
a  
il  
o  
n  
p  
h

# 'Leaking radiation' reports denied

**The Argus Correspondent**

PRETORIA.— The Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) has reacted to "incorrect" allegations made by Sunday newspaper reports of leaking radiation from a dumpsite at the Pelindaba nuclear power station.

In a statement the AEC denied that a nuclear waste dump 20km outside Pretoria posed any threat to the nearby Pelindaba population or to workers at the dump, called Radiation Hill.

It said a nuclear occurrence in April last year involved "only low-level waste and the effect of the spillage was confined to only a few metres around the lip of the trench".

But Sunday newspaper reports said radiation levels at the dump were 100 times higher than the legal limit. The

ARG 4/3/96  
AEC said in reaction it "strongly deplored the sensationalism".

"The misrepresentation of the facts and selective use of only some one-sided data without placing the occurrence in its proper context borders on irresponsible journalism," the statement said.

The reports said recent excavations at Radiation Hill found damaged nuclear waste containers and that the workers who discovered them wore protective clothing. It quoted an AEC spokesman as saying the company "screwed up, made several mistakes and infringed many of our license conditions".

The waste was buried more than two years ago. The residential area of Flora Park is two kilometres away and the densely-populated township of

(56) (5)  
Atteridgeville 10km distant.

The AEC statement said four contract workers, and not eleven as reported, were involved at trench seven where the spillage occurred.

"The radiation doses at the trench were shown to be no threat to the workers, and yet the report makes unequivocal, incorrect statements that they were exposed, based on hearsay, and that cancer could develop in spite of the fact that no contamination has taken place and this has been proven.

"It must be clearly emphasised that Radiation Hill is an essential facility for the disposal of medical and industrial radioactive wastes from outside the AEC.

"Radioactive waste disposed of in the trenches at Radiation Hill is low-level."

## Nuclear leak is 'low level' - AEC

BY TARYN LAMBERTI

The Atomic Energy Corporation has attacked the Sunday Independent for "sensationalism" over its reporting of the Pelindaba nuclear waste site, but confirmed "a low level" radiation leak.

In a statement yesterday, the AEC denied that the nuclear waste dump, 20km outside Pretoria, posed any threat to the nearby population or to workers at the dump, called Radiation Hill.

The AEC said a nuclear occurrence in April last year involved "only low-level waste and the effect of the spillage was confined to only a few metres around the lip of the trench".

But the Sunday Independent yesterday reported that radiation levels at the dump were 100 times higher than the legal limit. Geiger counter readings on Thursday were 2 000 counts per second, whereas the licence limit is 20 counts. A Council for Nuclear Safety official, whose experts visited the site, said he was shocked at the contamination level.

"The misrepresentation of the facts and selective use of only some one-sided data without placing the occurrence in its proper context borders on irresponsible journalism," the AEC said.

56 250  
Star 4/3/96

# 'Too much secrecy' over Radiation Hill

(56) Star 5/3/96

Cape Town - The National Assembly's Mineral and Energy Affairs Committee is hoping to hear evidence from the Atomic Energy Corporation and Council for Nuclear Safety on the AEC's waste disposal site at Pelindaba near Pretoria.

Committee chairman Marcel Golding said he would be writing to the AEC and CNS to ask them to testify before the committee as soon as possible.

A report said that geiger counter tests by nuclear safety officials at Radiation Hill were 100 times greater than the safety limit.

The site is about 2km from the nearest residential area, and it was not known where some of the casual staff, who had helped dig up nuclear waste, were.

Golding said there had been far too much secrecy over this matter, and it was quite clear from

information available to him that the AEC had violated its own licence conditions and not complied with set safety standards.

One of the questions was whether the casual workers had been traced and tested for contamination.

"The committee will certainly consider calling the AEC as well as the CNS before it seeks to provide an adequate explanation about what took place, to air the facts publicly and to reassure South Africans, and indeed the communities around the area, that there are no problems."

CNS had been charged with ensuring that safety and environmental standards were maintained and had brought the breach of licence conditions to the fore.

The committee, he said, would also like to determine what steps

had been taken by the AEC to control the situation and find out who was responsible for excavations at Radiation Hill.

Golding said prevention of similar future incidents would require:

- A review of legislation that regulates the industry.
- Strengthening the powers of the Council for Nuclear Safety.
- Ensuring that a waste disposal and management policy, with respect to nuclear materials, is worked out.
- Properly identifying nuclear waste dump sites.

"This particular incident demonstrates the urgency of trying to come to a solution," he said, referring to the urgency for an inquiry and new policy.

Golding was also attempting to get the matter debated in Parliament. - Sapa.



## Pik has dust problem covered

(56) Star 5/3/96

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha yesterday planted the first grass in a project aimed at putting an end to the mine-dump dust which pervades Meadowlands, Soweto.

Grass does not grow on mine dumps, but a spe-

cial nutrient developed by the Central Energy Fund has now made it possible.

A dust prevention programme is already in place in the 2,8ha area. The dumps could be covered in grass within three months, Botha said.

-Soweto Bureau.

■ FISH HOEK

# Silvermine objections

*More than 2 000 letters collected, says group*

(56) ARL 6/3/96

**JILYAN PITMAN, Staff Reporter**

MORE than 2 000 letters of objection to the subdivision of the area covered by sand dunes at Silvermine were sent to the town clerk of Fish Hoek and as many were sent to the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) authorities, according to the Silvermine Valley Coalition group.

The cause of this reaction was a proposal to build houses on the stretch of dunes in a valley close to Peers Cave and the Clovelly golf course.

Spokesperson for the Silvermine Valley Coalition, Sandy Barnes, said:

"We would like to thank the public for their overwhelming response in rejecting the proposal that our sand dunes, which are part of a protected nature area, should be subdivided to permit houses to be built on them.

"At the recent AGM of the

Fish Hoek Residents' Association the proposal was also unanimously and vigorously rejected.

"This puts in clear perspective the Fish Hoek municipality's claim to Mr Hernus Kriel, premier of the Western Cape that the 'silent majority' supported the proposal.

"Our councillors have yet again been given a very strong mandate from the public they represent to reject any development on the sand dunes and preserve them as an integral part of the nature area.

"This is, after all, a legitimate public expectation arising from the specific ruling of the late John Wiley, former Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and supported by a wealth of investigation over the years."

Mrs Barnes said the group, which was formed in May 1992, had fought hard to prevent this development.

"We believe the land was illegally re-zoned for housing.

"In spite of the inadequate and flawed participation process, in spite of the unjustified overturning of Minister Wiley's decision by his successors in office, in spite of everything else, the time has now come to get on with the job and make a firm and final decision."

She added: "We make a public appeal to our councillors to bear in mind all the facts they have been given, and with the firm mandate from the public they represent, to reject the proposal for subdivision of the sand dunes.

"In doing so they will be seen to honour the democratic process they are committed to uphold.

"At the same time they would help to preserve a unique environmental and recreational asset."

### Building of dams in the Limpopo and Sand Rivers

\*2. Mr A FOURIE asked the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:†

- (1) Whether, with reference to his reply to Question No 24 on 7 September 1994, he or his Department has had a change in viewpoint as far as building dams in the Limpopo and Sand Rivers is concerned; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether any discussions have been held with (a) Zimbabwe, (b) Botswana and/or (c) Mozambique in this regard; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) how many cubic metres of water is it estimated flowed to the Indian Ocean during the Limpopo River flood in 1995 and were thus lost to the Northern Province?

N181E

### The MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY:

(1) No, our viewpoint remains unchanged. As stated in my reply to Question 24 of 7 September 1994 the development of a dam would be too costly for any other use other than urban industrial use, and then only on a very large scale. At present these demands are of insufficient magnitude to warrant a dam on the Limpopo River and other resources, such as the tributaries, are used, and planned for use, for these purposes.

(2)(a), (b) and (c) Yes, discussions have been held with Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. The Limpopo Basin Permanent Technical Committee (LBTC), where all the co-basin states are represented, met on 14 August 1995. Subsequent to the LBTC meeting I visited all three countries. At the LBTC meeting the RSA proposed that a basic study of the Limpopo River be undertaken. The proposal was supported by all parties at both technical and ministerial levels. As a first phase to the study a hydrometric investigation of the Upper and Middle Limpopo River will be carried out to confirm the extent of the water resources still available for development. Funds for the basin study are at present

being sought. Once the basin study is complete it will enable firm guidelines to be provided to all four co-basin states for development of the water resources of the Limpopo River.

(3) The flood peak of the recent flood (February 1996) in the Limpopo River is estimated to be 2 500 cubic metres per second (measured at Beit Bridge). The volume that flowed into the Indian Ocean is not known at this time, but based on previous flow records it could be in the order of 3 000 million cubic metres.

The advantageous effects of such floods should also not be ignored; the river channel has been scoured and cleaned, there has been a reduction in salinity levels in the lower reaches of the river resulting in improved water quality, and the river has returned to its more normal state after a prolonged drought, with great benefit to the ecology of the river, and therefore this water cannot be considered "lost" to the Northern Province.

Mr A FOURIE: Mr Speaker, arising out of the hon the Minister's reply to Question 2(1), in which he said that he had not changed his mind and that they were not going to build the dam, can I take it that it is not altogether out of the question that consideration is still being given to this issue in terms of discussions with the other three countries?

Can he perhaps tell us whether the other three countries agree with his thinking that water will only be available for agricultural and industrial purposes? Lastly, does he accept that the severe drought that the Northern Province has been subjected to, and the shortage of water that we have suffered from for many years, can be resolved if a dam is built in that river?

The MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY: Mr Speaker, there are many other projects, of course, in the Northern Province, in the Letaba area, but I think what we have to take into account, possibly for the first time, is the matter of the acute sensitivity concerning the interests of the other riparian states, particularly Zimbabwe and Botswana. We have to deal with this matter in a very delicate fashion, because in the end our development must make demands on the water resources of riparian states. For this reason, therefore, they have made it quite clear

that they want agricultural development along the banks of the river which fall in their country, an eminently sensible approach from their point of view.

Their point of view is that if we have to have food, it might be cheaper to import the cheap food from them. They are willing to participate with us when it comes to water which we use for domestic and industrial purposes. For the plain fact of the matter also is that although we treat dams as vast symbols of virility and power, it is very expensive to transport water from the dams to the areas in which it is required. I can assure Mr Fourie, who takes a very close interest in this—and quite rightly—that everything is on the table. Nothing is being ignored, because the decisions we take now, in the next three to five years, will govern the allocation of water resources for the next 40 to 50 years in the Northern Province and the rest of South Africa. So everything will be on the table, and the input of Mr Fourie and others will be carefully taken into account.

### AECI: sulphur fire

\*3. Mr P W SAAIMAN asked the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:†

Whether his Department has carried out any tests to determine whether the sulphur fire that occurred recently at the AECI chemical factory in the Strand and dispersed sulphur dioxide in the area, has polluted any water sources for the use of residents of Macassar; if not, why not; if so, what was the result of these tests?

N182E

### The MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY:

Yes. On being informed of the fire at the AECI premises, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry immediately investigated the matter and made certain recommendations to the company concerned to prevent water pollution. These recommendations were carried out.

The water used by the residents of Macassar for domestic purposes is supplied by the Greater Cape Town Water Supply Scheme and could not be polluted as a result of the fire at the stockpile on the AECI premises. The impact of the sulphur fire was an air pollution problem and could have had, as we know, an effect on the health of residents and agricultural activities in the area. The impact on water sources

was negligible and did not restrict the use of water for normal activities.

Possible uses of the Eerste River in Macassar include irrigation, recreational use or livestock watering. According to the South African Water Quality Guidelines published by the Department (1993) the recommended pH for domestic, recreational and irrigation use, as well as livestock watering, ranges between 6,0 and 9,0. The monitoring done by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in December 1995 showed a variation in pH between 6,0 and 6,5 at all the stations, which is slightly lower than the normal pH of 7,0 to 7,5 (Eerste River at Macassar: pH = 6,5). During the January survey the pH varied between 6,0 and 7,0. (Eerste River at Macassar: pH = 6,5-7,0). These pH values are well within the specified limits of the General Standard as laid down by the Water Act, 1956 (Act 54 of 1956) and therefore acceptable to the Department.

### Katse Dam in Lesotho

\*4. Mr M F CASSIM asked the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:

(1) Whether the filling of the Katse Dam in Lesotho will create a potential for causing seismic tremors and earthquakes in the surrounding areas over the (a) short, (b) medium and (c) long term; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

N183E

### The MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY:

(1)(a), (b) and (c) Yes. Mild local tremors have been observed at a village by the name of Ha Mapeleng, some six kilometres north of the Katse Dam wall. At the same time new cracks in the crust of the earth appeared along a weak zone in the rock that can be observed over a distance of 1,5 kilometres.

The earth tremors are considered to be directly related to the filling of the reservoir at the Katse Dam. The tremors are associated with the release of energy in the underlying rock as it adjusts to the addi-

# Eco victory! St Lucia gets green go-ahead

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

**N**O mining at Lake St Lucia!

That was the unanimous cabinet decision announced yesterday which brought to an end South Africa's longest-running environmental controversy.

Instead of mining, the cabinet wants to push ahead with exploiting the huge tourism potential of the region, and it decided that an application to register St Lucia as a World Heritage Site would be made urgently.

A task team, which will include officials from the central government and the regional KwaZulu-Natal authority, is to be appointed to produce urgently an integrated development and land-use planning strategy for the Eastern Shores area, previously earmarked for mining, and for the entire Greater St Lucia region.

Yesterday's cabinet decision follows a recommendation by a multi-party cabinet committee consisting of the ministers of Environmental Affairs, Dawie de Villiers; Water Affairs and Forestry, Kader Asmal; Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom; Mineral and Energy Affairs, Piko Botha; and Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Ben Ngubane.

In a statement, the committee

said the no-mining decision would enable various sectors, such as nature conservation, agriculture, ecotourism, forestry and existing mining, to "work collectively toward the common goal of eradicating the region's poverty and thus promoting sustainable development".

The news has been greeted with joy by conservationists.

"We've worked very hard for a very long time to get here, and we're very pleased this has now come to an end and we have a clear mandate for ecotourism," said Nolly Zaloumis of the Working Group for St Lucia.

"But there's an enormous job ahead of us, and we've got to use this as a new model for conservation. We've got to modernise our thinking.

"This is a major job - we have to develop it for the nation and people have to have jobs - and we will need a lot of help, including the full force of private enterprise and the management skills of the conservation authorities."

The proposal by Richards Bay Minerals to mine heavy metals from the coastal dunes on the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia led to an outcry from the public and many environmentalists - and included overseas protests.

Initial recommendations in favour of mining following a

lengthy environmental impact assessment were rejected by a Review Panel, headed by retired judge Mr Justice Ramon Leon, in 1993.

More recently, the Land and Agriculture Policy Centre research group released a report which concluded that ecotourism, not mining, was the best land-use for the area.

If mining went ahead, the report said, the loss of tourist rands would at least equal and possibly exceed mining revenue. This was accepted by the cabinet committee.

Its statement said the ministers had recently met the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government and the Amakhosi (traditional leaders) of the region, and had discussed its development proposals fully.

"The Amakhosi of the area also responded favourably to the decision. It was agreed that acceptable alternatives to the restoration of the land would be further explored with the affected Amakhosi."

Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) had accepted the cabinet's decision and would not seek to mine the Eastern Shores, although its existing dune mining operations would continue, the statement said.

"It was also agreed that, in the unlikely event of a future government decision to allow mining

on the Eastern Shores, any existing RBM mining claims would be honoured. In addition, the government would assist RBM to obtain alternative mining rights elsewhere should the opportunity arise."

At a press conference to announce the decision, Dr De Villiers said: "The beauty of this is that all the parties co-operated to make this possible. It is a win-win situation for everyone."

Many studies had been done on the tourism potential of the St Lucia region.

"And I think it goes without saying that there is enormous potential, but we don't want development to proceed in a hazardous manner, so we are looking at an integrated approach," Dr De Villiers said.

Asked about existing land claims to the proposed mining area, Mr Hanekom said a claim had been lodged and referred to the land claims court.

But there had been "very positive" discussions about the issue and the claimants had agreed that restitution need not involve a physical return to the land and that alternatives could be explored, he said.

Professor Asmal, who described St Lucia as "the jewel of South Africa", said it was significant that all the parties involved - including the KwaZulu-Natal regional government

ARL 7/3/96 (56)

-had agreed with the decision.

"I think constitutionally that is a very important development."

The decision was also an important challenge to the ecotourism industry, Professor Asmal said.

"They will have to act with expedition and not on the basis of expectation. And that's very important because central to our discussion was the need to meet the needs of the community. The very poor of South Africa cannot live under some vague expectation."

Dr Zaloumis said St Lucia had "enormous potential" for empowering people economically and developing jobs.

"There will have to be a lot of training, and there is a very good ecotourism model at Kosi Bay."

Declaring St Lucia a World Heritage Site would open it to tourism internationally. Experience in Australia had shown that such a declaration could lead to 10 times the numbers of visitors arriving there within a decade.

The cabinet's decision was also important for conservation because the Eastern Shores area was a "vital interface" between the lake and the sea, Dr Zaloumis said.

"Those water sources are unique - they're the only ones that won't be affected by poor catchment management."

# Farmers give SANDF damages ultimatum

Louise Cook

(56) BD 7/3/96

FARMERS along the Limpopo River have given the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) a week to settle a R60m claim for herbicidal damage to crops, or face court action.

However, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Association of SA, representing the agricultural chemicals industry, said the March 14 deadline was too soon for a proper investigation.

Transvaal Agricultural Union representative Gert Ehlers confirmed that a group of vegetable farmers along the river held the SANDF responsible for damage to crops when herbicides were sprayed in a fight against bush encroachment in a sisal hedge.

The farmers refused to comment because, they said, they were negotiating with the SANDF about the matter.

Chemicals association executive director Jan Kleynhans said a joint probe into farmers' complaints by his organisation, the Agricultural Research Council and the poison working group of the SA Endangered Wild Life Trust had started. However, the matter could end in a legal battle because more time was "probably" needed for the probe.

Kleynhans said abuse of chemicals or herbicides was a criminal offence.

Sapa reports at least 10 farmers along the Limpopo said labels of three types of herbicides found in soil samples on their farms and along the river specified that the herbicides should not be used near water or irrigation lands.

# St Lucia safe from mining threat

Government rejects plans and will make urgent appeal for area to be declared a World Heritage site

By Patrick Bucan  
Cape Town

The Cabinet drew a line in the dunes of St Lucia yesterday, forbidding an expansion of mining and giving the nod to massive eco-tourism development in one of South Africa's and the world's foremost environmental sites.

The Government will now make an urgent application for the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park - described as "a jewel of South Africa" - to be declared a World Heritage site, ministers who served on a five-member inter-ministerial committee said after yesterday's regular fortnightly Cabinet meeting.

Mining of titanium dioxide slag at a site north of Richards Bay on the north coast of Kwazulu Natal, will continue for about 20 years, but St Lucia's eastern shores will now be safe from mining.

The decision ends seven years of controversy and running battles between environmentalists, the Government and the mine owners, Richards Bay Minerals (RBM).

The cabinet committee - consisting of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers, Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal, Arts and Culture Minister Ben Ngubane, Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom and Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha - said in a statement the decision was needed to end uncertainty on the fate of the area.

RBM, the owners of the eastern-shore prospecting lease, has accepted the decision. The company is jointly owned by Rio Tinto Zinc of London and Canon. Plans have been made by



Spared ... St Lucia's Eastern Shores are safe from mining following the Government's landmark decision yesterday. Environmentalists have described the ruling as a massive victory.

RBM to cater for this decision by the Government and current operations, job security and customer service will not be affected for many years into the future, RBM said in a statement.

The cabinet decision was hailed by opposition parties' spokesmen on environment.

Democratic Party spokesman Errol Moorcroft said the decision "not only protects one of our greatest natural assets for posterity, but will have far-reaching implications for the protection of other threatened natural areas of great beauty and value".

The NP's Nick Koorhof said it was a landmark decision.

The cabinet ministers stressed that the decision had been taken entirely on the merits of the issue and that it was felt that the development of eco-tourism would have greater long-term benefit to the country and to the surrounding communities.

It was not a decision directed at discouraging foreign investors or at promoting one form of development over another in Africa.

A task team under the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and including national ministers and provincial representatives will co-ordinate the development of a land use strategy for the area, which had accepted the issue with the KwaZulu Natal government and with the chiefs of the area, who had brought a massive victory for the environment, said Hanekom.

Conservative leader and former minister, Hanekom said the country hailed the decision as a massive victory for the environment and a welcome signal that the Government was prepared to take environmental concerns seriously.

(51) (15)  
Rw 7/3/96  
RICKY TAYLOR

# Farmers give SANDF damages ultimatum

Louise Cook

(56)   
BD 7/3/96

FARMERS along the Limpopo River have given the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) a week to settle a R60m claim for herbicidal damage to crops, or face court action.

However, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Association of SA, representing the agricultural chemicals industry, said the March 14 deadline was too soon for a proper investigation.

Transvaal Agricultural Union representative Gert Ehlers confirmed that a group of vegetable farmers along the river held the SANDF responsible for damage to crops when herbicides were sprayed in a fight against bush encroachment in a sisal hedge.

The farmers refused to comment because, they said, they were negotiating with the SANDF about the matter.

Chemicals association executive director Jan Kleynhans said a joint probe into farmers' complaints by his organisation, the Agricultural Research Council and the poison working group of the SA Endangered Wild Life Trust had started. However, the matter could end in a legal battle because more time was "probably" needed for the probe.

Kleynhans said abuse of chemicals or herbicides was a criminal offence.

Sapa reports at least 10 farmers along the Limpopo said labels of three types of herbicides found in soil samples on their farms and along the river specified that the herbicides should not be used near water or irrigation lands.

# Cabinet outlaws mining at St Lucia and backs ecotourism

Wynndham Hartley  
and Michael Moon

CAPE TOWN — The Cabinet decided yesterday no mining would be allowed on Lake St Lucia's eastern shores and urgent steps would be taken to declare the area a world heritage site.

The decision brings to an end SA's most drawn-out environmental controversy, which resulted in the most comprehensive environmental research yet conducted in the country. Integrated ecotourism development

is to begin as a matter of urgency.

Claims by a local traditional leader to land on the lake's eastern shores had been resolved on the basis that alternative land would be found to satisfy the claim, Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom said at a news briefing.

A joint statement by Environment and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers, Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha and Hanekom indicated that Richards

Bay Minerals had accepted the decision and "will not now seek to mine the eastern shores".

Asmal said no legal action to secure compensation for the withdrawal of mining rights was anticipated. Government would oppose any such action.

The statement said the unanimous Cabinet decision was based on the belief that the decision on titanium mining could no longer be delayed.

"The uncertainty had a detrimental effect on development. The Cabinet also took the view that mining on these

shores and development of tourism were not compatible. The great tourism potential of the region can now be exploited fully."

It was announced that De Villiers would head a task team, which would include other national ministers and provincial representation, to coordinate the development of a land use strategy for the greater St Lucia area.

It was stressed that before making a decision, the Cabinet committee headed by De Villiers met the KwaZulu-Natal government and local chiefs,

who agreed to the proposals.

It was also agreed that in the "unlikely event" of a future government allowing mining on the eastern shores, RBM's claims would be honoured, giving it first option. In the interim, government would help the firm obtain mining rights elsewhere. Its operations south of St Lucia would continue.

Asmal rejected as "thumbsuck figures" estimates how much foreign exchange would be lost through banning

St Lucia

Continued from Page 1

mining on the eastern shores. Studies showed the job creation, economic advantage and multiplier effect of ecotourism development would all be greater than the profit from mining. Campaign for St Lucia co-ordinator

Cliff D'Oliviera said effort would now be put into lobbying for legislation to give the St Lucia area full legal protection to stave off similar threats in the future.

The Wetlands Conservation Bill tabled in Parliament would provide such protection for all wetland areas.

He urged the KwaZulu-Natal authorities to move quickly to formulate a final ecotourism strategy for St Lucia.

Continued on Page 2

Projects



THURSDAY  
MARCH 7, 1996

CONSERVATIONISTS JUBILANT

# Govt praised for protecting St Lucia

(56) et 7/3/96

**DURBAN:** Conservationists around the country have hailed the government's decision to allow no dune mining at Lake St Lucia as a victory for the environment and a signal that it is willing to take environmental concerns seriously.

**J**UBILANT conservationists heaped praise on the government last night for its decision to protect Lake St Lucia from dune mining.

"The cabinet has decided that no mining will be allowed in the area," were the words that finally put an end to the efforts of Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) to mine heavy minerals from the dunes on the lake's eastern shores.

Conservationists around the country hailed the decision as a victory for the environment — and a welcome signal that the government is prepared to take environmental concerns seriously.

The cabinet also said an urgent application would be made to register St Lucia as South Africa's first World Heritage Site. UN heritage site status acts as a powerful magnet to eco-tourists.

RBM issued a statement accepting the outcome.

Natal Parks Board chief George Hughes said: "This is a great day for our country. The board notes with appreciation RBM's gracious acceptance of the outcome and looks

forward to continued positive relations with the mining company."

Veteran conservationist Dr Ian Player also praised the decision, and Campaign for St Lucia chairman Tony Pooley said it was a victory for environmental organisations at home and abroad and members of the public.

The cabinet said it had concluded that the final decision could be delayed no longer.

"The uncertainty had a detrimental effect on development and the cabinet took the view that mining on these shores and the development of tourism were not compatible ... The great tourism potential of the region can now be fully exploited."

The government said it recognised the substantial contribution made by RBM to the national economy, and noted that its existing mining operations south of Richards Bay would continue.

"It was agreed that in the unlikely event of a future government decision to allow mining on the eastern shores, any existing RBM mining claims would be hon-

oured. In addition, the government would assist RBM to obtain alternative mining rights elsewhere should the opportunity arise."

RBM spokesman Barry Clements said: "Plans have been made to cater for this decision by the government, and our current operations, job security and customer service will not be affected."

The cabinet's unanimous decision to ban mining was fully canvassed with the amakhosi (chiefs) in the St Lucia area and with the KwaZulu-Natal legislature.

NP Environment Affairs Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers said after the cabinet meeting yesterday that he and ANC Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom, ANC Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal, Inkatha Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Dr Ben Ngubane, NP Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha met IFP Premier Dr Frank Mdlalose and ANC Economic Affairs MEC Jacob Zuma and the chiefs before the announcement.

Ngubane said his party accepted the ban in the context that mining continued at existing sites "and jobs will not be lost".

Inkatha also backed the "integrated development strategy" to promote eco-tourism, he said. — Own Correspondent

## 'No radiation' on Radiation Hill staff

(56) Star 8/3/96

Tests conducted on workers employed on Pelindaba's Radiation Hill last year confirmed they had been exposed to such low levels of radiation that no radioactivity was found, the Atomic Energy Corporation said yesterday.

The AEC said the four men, "and not 11 as stated by The Sunday Independent", were tested on May 12 last year.

It said it had measured two components of the radiation dose received by the workers - radiation breathed in and radiation which may have penetrated their bodies from an outside source.

"All the measurements confirm that the maximum doses to the workers were less than the limit for non-occupationally exposed persons, which is one millisievert per year. The dose limit for occupationally exposed persons (radiation workers) is 50 millisieverts per year.

"No further tests were necessary because the results were so low - in fact the statement can be made that no radioactivity was found. These results were accepted by the Council for Nuclear Safety, the national nuclear regulator," the AEC said. - Staff Reporter.

# St Lucia set for a boom

By CRAIG DOONAN

NORTHERN Kwazulu Natal is getting ready for an ecotourism boom following this week's cabinet decision to protect Lake St Lucia from dune mining.

(56) ST 10/3/96  
Investors and conservation bodies have been waiting to pour millions of rands into the St Lucia wetlands area — which could become South Africa's first World Heritage Site.

Environmentalists and tour operators said this would lead to a tourism boom in Maputaland.

The chairman of the Natal Parks Board, Pat Goss, estimates that ecotourism will generate as much foreign exchange as mining (about R8-billion), provide three times as many permanent jobs and generate more tax.

But there are several obstacles to ecotourist development. Tony Pooley, the chairman of the Campaign for St Lucia, said a law to protect the area was needed. The Wetlands Bill, brought before Parliament a year ago, has not yet been passed.

Mr Pooley said St Lucia had to be set aside as an area of international conservation importance in terms of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands.

South Africa also had to apply to the UN to register the St Lucia wetlands as a World Heritage Site, he said.

Red tape is hindering private-sector investment in parts of the region. Largely rural, the region is controlled by several authorities, including the Natal Parks Board, the Department of Forestry, various tribal authorities, the Department of Nature Conservation and the Department of Land Affairs.

This week the government announced an "integrated development and land-use planning strategy" to draw together the various sectors involved in developing the area.

It also agreed to set up a task team under the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Dawie de Villiers, to co-ordinate the development of a land-use strategy for the greater St Lucia area.

The Natal Parks Board said it planned to build several new camps, luxury camps and bush lodges.

# Will tourism chase wilderness areas off the face of

ARTS 11/3/96

IS wilderness set to become the rarest commodity on Earth during the next century, being chased by the world's biggest market, tourism? And if we even suspect that this prediction may prove accurate, should we not be working flat out now on the "precautionary principle" - one of the key principles of environmentally-friendly living - by ensuring that we take all possible steps to maximise our wilderness resources?

This musing has been prompted by the delighted response of Noel de Villiers, founder of the Open Africa Initiative, to the government's decision last week not to allow dune mining on the Eastern Shores area of Lake St Lucia.

He, for one, is convinced of the accuracy of the above prediction, calling it "probably the safest one can make for the 21st century" because of the general global environmental condition, coupled with the constant shrinking of natural areas and the accelerating rate of species extinction.

"Based on the simple equation of supply and demand, this is why Open Africa proclaims that Africa's nature and culture resources could be turned into the most valuable product on Earth."

The Cabinet accepted the finding of the Land and Agriculture Policy Centre that the economic potential of ecotourism in the Greater St Lucia region was significantly greater than the predicted mining revenues and - as important - that the financial loss to tourism would be greater than the income from minerals if mining was allowed.

And the cabinet decision suggests to Mr De Villiers that a new dream for Africa - a

## GREEN SCENE



John Yeld

series of contiguous game parks stretching from the Cape to Cairo - could become a reality.

Such a development - a culturally-correct and environmentally-friendly version of Cecil John Rhodes's grand colonial dream, if you will - could be internationally significant, he adds.

"With St Lucia saved, the prospect of a networked system of parks, stretching from the KwaZulu Coastal Reserve to Ponto do Oura, via the Tembe Elephant Reserve, through a corridor to the Maputo Elephant Reserve, all alongside the Kruger National Park, to Gona re Zhou, the Save Valley Conservancy, to Chimanmani and Gorongosa is no longer a figment of the imagination.

"With these as core areas linked to the many smaller reserves along the way, this would comprise a system of global significance that would, in its turn, be the genesis of something even bigger in a future phase." Food for thought, indeed - and something that all our politicians should be dining on regularly.

For there is the suspicion - confirmed

suspicion, some would argue - that all too often the decision-makers of the region and of the country fail to see past the hors-d'oeuvres on the developmental menu, overlooking the more substantial, more savoury and ultimately more nourishing dishes further down the page because they are slightly more remote, and not as immediately satisfying to the appetite.

The ability to develop tourism and, particularly, ecotourism resources and attractions in the future, when they will almost certainly be commanding huge premiums, demands that we act now to safeguard our natural and wilderness areas on which these opportunities will be based.

Let's show the next generation that we had the foresight to have recognised this - and to have acted appropriately.

the earth?

# Plans for Peninsula national park are forging ahead

AKG 11/3/96

(51)

IT'S "full steam ahead" for a Cape Peninsula national park, and the Western Cape Cabinet will probably be asked soon to lift the onerous conditions it imposed in December when approving the formation of the park.

This is the assessment of Western Cape regional Environmental Affairs Minister Kobus Meiring, after a meeting last week with his national counterpart, Dawie de Villiers.

Also at the meeting were National Parks Board chief executive Robbie Robinson, the board's co-ordinator of the new park, David Daitz, Environmental Affairs director-general Colin Cameron, Western Cape conservation chief Johan Neethling, the chairman of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) management advisory committee, Douglas Hey, and Brian Huntley, chief executive officer of the National Botanical Institute and chairman of the Huntley Committee, which recommended a Peninsula national park.

The meeting was convened to discuss ways of establishing the most effective liaison and advisory body to further the process of establishing the new park.

"Presently, a number of bodies are involved and it was agreed that a more representative and united body should be created to facilitate the process," the two ministers said in a joint statement afterwards.

*Moves to establish a Cape Peninsula national park are well under way, according to politicians who attended a high-powered meeting on the subject last week. Harsh conditions imposed on the approval of the new park by the Western Cape regional government may be lifted soon because of the good progress, according to regional Environmental Affairs Minister Kobus Meiring.*

*The Argus Environment Reporter JOHN YELD spoke to him.*

"While the Huntley Committee has not been disbanded, its role has come to an end and there is uncertainty about its future role."

The meeting had decided unanimously that the Huntley Committee should be asked to advise on guidelines for establishing a new advisory body to help run the new national park. One of the conditions of approval set by the Western Cape government in December was that a liaison council, chaired by Mr Meiring, had to be established "to act in an advisory, consultative and monitoring capacity regarding the management of the proposed park".

Another condition was that there had to be "significant" progress by July.

In an interview after last week's meeting, Mr Meiring said those conditions had been set by the regional Cabinet.

"And the Cabinet itself will have to remove them. But we discussed this, and as things

where else - and manage these in its own way - this was going to be a unique situation, and there are things it will certainly have to adjust to.

"So it will be of the utmost importance and in the parks board's own interests to co-operate very closely and in a very transparent way.

"From the side of the province, we will certainly undertake to give it our fullest co-operation."

The meeting with Dr De Villiers and the others had been highly positive and everyone present had been committed to the best possible solution for the mountain chain, Mr Meiring said.

"We also said at the meeting that if it (National Parks Board) want to take responsibility tomorrow, we are happy.

"But we did make the point that the board would have to take responsibility for the whole CPPNE. It would be easiest for it just to take care of that part of the mountain chain that is owned by public bodies, but there are also 170 private owners within the area and we felt it would not work practically for us to retain responsibility for just that part which, percentage-wise, is negligible but which carries many problems."

Was any indication given at the meeting of when the parks board would take over? "No, everyone is looking at the practicalities of that right now," Mr Meiring said.

"The feeling was that while the National Parks Board could manage parks that were hundreds of kilometres from any



Picture: BRENTON GEACH, The Argus.  
**VITAL LINK:** Lee Jones, co-ordinator of the Botanical Society's "search and rescue" project, stands at the site between Zeekoevlei (in the background) and Rondevlei which conservationists say should be acquired to link the two reserves. The property includes an indigenous plant species listed as "endangered" in the Red Data Book.

## Bid to preserve vlei link

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

**A PRIVATE** property linking the Rondevlei nature reserve and which includes an endangered Red Data Book plant species, should be acquired for conservation purposes as a matter of urgency.

So says the Botanical Society's "search and rescue" project, which has asked the Cape Metropolitan Council to step in as a matter of extreme priority.

"We are requesting the council to organise the permanent transfer of this piece of land to be managed as part of the permanent reserve area of Zeekoevlei, to guarantee the long-term security of a terrestrial link between the Rondevlei

and Zeekoevlei aquatic habitats," project co-ordinator Lee Jones wrote in a letter to the council.

The owner of the land - Cape & Transvaal Land and Finance Company - is sympathetic to the idea and would consider a land swap, says chief executive Desmond Cox.

Although infested with alien vegetation, the property still supported a wealth of indigenous flora and fauna and was the last remaining undeveloped link between the two vleis, Mr Jones said.

"We believe that statutory conservation of this site is vital for the long-term viability of Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei specifically, and for Cape Flats vlei systems generally.

This last link would be a grave, irreversible error on the part of any local or provincial authority," Ms Jones said.

Botanists checking the site believed it contained the largest surviving population of an endangered indigenous plant species, *Passerina paludosa*.

This species appeared to be restricted to just three populations, in the immediate vicinity of Rondevlei.

"The site contains wetland habitats which 'link' with the Rondevlei wetlands only few metres away inside the boundary fence.

"These wetlands would be filled in' in order for development on the site and this infilling will very likely directly impact adversely on the existing reserve," she said.

# 'Let's get rid of roadside rubbish'

LINDSAY BARNES, Staff Reporter

IS it the fairest Cape or the foulest? That is the question on the lips of foreigners and locals alike.

Visitors driving on the N2 in the vicinity of Cape Town International Airport are treated to a charming panorama of roadside rubbish.

But things have improved considerably since the erection of a concrete palisade that separates the road from informal settlements, said head of the department for Transport and Public Works Roy Petersen.

The task of cleaning that

stretch of N2 was tackled by a team of 12 workers.

The fence cost an average of R30 000 a month to maintain as pedestrians constantly removed or damaged poles to be able to cross the N2.

But there was no intention of scrapping it, said Mr Petersen.

"Although the fence is still damaged at various points, the situation has stabilised," he added.

Sites of future pedestrian bridges had also been identified, but planning was put on hold pending further investigations. These projects also depended on funds becoming

available, he said.

A pedestrian bridge built recently cost between R2 million and R3 million.

While there was no doubt that better solutions to the problems of the N2 existed, these were restricted by financial and other restrictions, Mr Petersen said.

Captour chief Gordon Oliver said it was in Cape Town's interest to keep the city clean.

He regularly heard comments from visitors as well as Capetonians about the state of the N2, he said.

"People are concerned about the litter. They stop me in the

street and ask what I'm doing about it."

He said a big clean-up held before the Rugby World Cup was successful and appealed to the provincial authorities to carry out regular clean-ups.

"I actually wonder about the garbage removal in those areas and suspect it may be a management problem," he added.

Part of the problem could be blamed on apathy towards cleanliness.

"I often see people throwing cigarette butts out of car windows. I don't know why they do it as the vehicles all have ashtrays," he said.

ARG 11/3/96

(56)

# Mining better than eco-tourism

(56) CT 11/3/96

**MIKE MENTIS**  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**T**HE opportunity to mine the eastern shores at St Lucia is to be foregone in favour of tourism. It is claimed that tourism — eco-tourism specifically — generates revenue, creates employment and drives social upliftment, supposedly better than does mining.

There is one obvious anomaly in these claims. The St Lucia region boasts among the oldest parks (or eco-tourism destinations) in the world. The practice of setting aside parks because it is supposedly good for us is as tried and tested in the St Lucia region as anywhere. And yet the neighbouring people are among the most destitute on earth.

In response to this evident failure of eco-tourism to deliver, it is claimed that, whatever the historical evidence, eco-tourism is now blossoming and is the industry of the future.

If that is indeed so, then the facts should show it. But do they?

The Natal Parks Board's (NPB) growth in income from eco-tourism and trading was 7,7% in 1992-93 and 9,4% in 1993-94 — an average annual of 8,6% (calculated from NPB's annual reports).

The figures are nominal and ignore inflation (just under 10%). In short, NPB's eco-tourism business has not grown, let alone blossomed.

Plainly, claims about eco-tourism don't match the facts.

Perhaps the figures since April 1, 1995 will show an upturn (that has not been calculated yet). But supposing there has been an upturn, are we to sacrifice R12-billion in mining forex earnings on the basis of a few months' flash-in-the-pan eco-tourism?

The comparative weakness of Afro-tourism is shown up by a global survey of tourism in 1995, published in *The Economist* of February 17, 1996. Among regions of the world, Europe is at the top with R744-billion. Africa is second last, earning

R27-billion. Tourism in the Middle East grew by 30%. Africa was second-last again, with 7% growth.

Among 24 developing nations listed by *The Economist*, South Korea grew the most (50%) while South Africa

*The comparative weakness of Afro-tourism is shown in a 1995 global survey in which Africa earned the second-least.*



**NO MINING:** Ian Player was one of the many conservationists who welcomed the Government's decision last week not to allow dune mining at St Lucia.

came 11th for growth, with 12%. The little territory of Hong Kong earned R35,6-billion from tourists — more than did the whole of Africa. SA earned R6,3-billion, placing us 19th among the 24 other learners.

It seems that, among developing nations, the high earners from tourism are not marketing the likes of "the big five" and "the wide open spaces". They are trading on high-intensity operations.

Given that our tourism is now growing at 12% per year, what is its basis? Is it business?

We are, for example, a

nation of miners. In 1994 our miners produced goods worth R53-billion. I guess the figure is now near R60-billion (10 times more than tourism).

□ Dr Mentis is a consultant for Envirobiz Africa.

**RADIATION  
HARNESSING THE POWER**

GRAPHIC ADAPTED FOR THE STAR BY DAVIDA TANCHIEL  
The phenomenon of radiation was discovered one hundred years ago. We are exposed to radiation from space, air, rock, food, soil and water - even our own bodies are radioactive

# Waste of concern on Radiation Hill

Star 11/3/96 (56)

Despite assurances from the Council for Nuclear Safety, public disquiet exists about possible radiation dangers from dumping at the Atomic Energy Commission's Pelindaba waste disposal site

By Anita Allen  
Science Writer

**W**hat is happening at the Atomic Energy Corporation's radioactive waste disposal site at Pelindaba that is a danger to people and the environment?

In recent weeks there have been reports of activities at the disposal site known as Radiation Hill which started in April last year and are ongoing.

These activities are not endangering the public or the environment, according to the public's nuclear watchdog, the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) and the AEC.

"It is a non-event in terms of danger to the public. There was never any risk to the public. It would not be notifiable under international reporting systems," Jeff Leaver, general manager of CNS, told The Star.

"However, from the CNS point of view, it is of concern because procedures were not followed. In this instance, the AEC wanted to retrieve an item from a waste trench.

"This is regarded as a modification in terms of the existing licence. Therefore, the AEC should have approached the CNS before embarking on the work."

In compiling inventories for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) following the closure of the old uranium enrichment plant at Pelindaba, a shortfall of 2 tons of depleted uranium was discovered.

It was thought that this uranium would be found in a conden-

sor used in the plant and subsequently buried in Radiation Hill's Trench 7.

The trench contains mainly uranium-bearing waste but also low-level radioactive waste from medical facilities and scrap metal and bits of machinery from buildings at AEC.

According to Brian Hambleton-Jones, AEC senior manager: nuclear waste management, it was decided to recover the condenser. Depleted uranium is under IAEA safeguards, and should be accounted for.

Excavations started in April 1995. CNS was not notified until May when senior personnel at the AEC realised that it was necessary in terms of its licence.

At that stage on May 11 1995, excavations for the condenser were halted by AEC, before being instructed by the CNS to do so. During the excavations drums buried at the site had been ruptured and the contents spilt. As a result a few metres of soil in the immediate vicinity of the trench were contaminated.

"Regular environmental monitoring since the excavations has shown that this radioactive contamination remains in the immediate vicinity of the trench and no releases to the environment in air or to ground water have been detected," Hambleton-Jones wrote in a letter hand-delivered to 3 000 local residents.

"Personnel including four casual workers hired to work on the excavation were monitored by means of sophisticated body counting of radioactivity and the analyses of urine samples. No radioactivity was found," he said.

"The CNS has accepted these results," Leaver said.

After the excavation had been halted by AEC in May and the CNS notified of the breach in safety procedures, the two organisations began what has become a long process of deciding how to go about remedial work at the trench.

The AEC has had to make proposals on how to proceed. In turn, the CNS assesses these proposals and either agrees or asks for more information. The CNS does not prescribe. It evaluates submissions in the light of existing safety regulations.

The CNS conducted its first site inspection as late as October 1995. At that stage, a more serious violation of the licence was discovered. Small 50ml vials which had contained radioactive Carbon-14 were found, as well as spots of yellowcake - a uranium compound as received from mines.

Neither AEC nor CNS knew that sources such as Carbon-14 were in the trench. Carbon-14 should have been handled separately. This raises the question: what other materials are there?

Radiation Hill has been used since the 1960s. It is one of only two national disposal facilities for radioactive waste and is for AEC's waste and waste from its clients.

The waste arrives in metal drums, which are not opened for safety reasons. The criteria for accepting the waste is the amount of radioactivity as measured on the outside of the drums.

The current rumour started when a confidential CNS report

dating back to the October site inspection was leaked to the press. The radioactive materials uncovered in the excavations are still lying in the open.

Radioactivity 100 times higher than safety limits was detected at Trench 7.

"Yes, radioactivity 100 times higher than safety limits has been detected, but only in isolated spots. Taken in the full context the total radiation is negligible."

Neither AEC nor CNS knew that sources such as Carbon-14 were in the trench. Carbon-14 should have been handled separately. This raises the question: what other materials are there?

Radiation Hill has been used since the 1960s. It is one of only two national disposal facilities for radioactive waste and is for AEC's waste and waste from its clients.

The waste arrives in metal drums, which are not opened for safety reasons. The criteria for accepting the waste is the amount of radioactivity as measured on the outside of the drums.

The current rumour started when a confidential CNS report

### THE ATOM

The nucleus of every atom is made up of protons and neutrons. Electrons whizz around the nucleus like planets around the Sun.

### RADIOACTIVITY

Nuclei of some atoms are unstable and release invisible radiation - particles which can damage the body. There are three kinds of radiation: alpha particles, beta particles and gamma rays.

- Alpha particles** are streams of protons and neutrons. They can be stopped by a sheet of paper.
- Beta particles** are streams of fast electrons. Beta radiation can penetrate living tissue.
- Gamma rays** are similar to man-made X-rays. Only thick metal or concrete can stop them.

### NATURAL SOURCES OF RADIATION

50% Radon gas from uranium that occurs naturally in rocks and earth.

11.5% From food and drink

10% Cosmic rays

14% From buildings and soil

0.2% Radioactive fallout

0.1% Nuclear discharge

0.1% Consumer products

0.3% Workplace

14% Medical

### MAIN MADE SOURCES OF RADIATION

Outer space: About 500 000 cosmic rays penetrate the body every hour

The air: 30 000 atoms disintegrate in our lungs each hour

Food and drink: Over 15 million radioactive atoms disintegrate inside the body every hour

Buildings and soil: 200 million gamma rays penetrate the body every hour

### THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR EVENT SCALE

7	MAJOR SERIOUS
6	WITH OFF-SITE RISK
5	NO SIGNIFICANT OFF-SITE RISK
4	SERIOUS ON-SITE
3	WORKER EXPOSER
2	ANOMALY
1	BELOW SCALE NO SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE

ACCIDENT: RADIATION HILL: Beyond the authorised safety procedures

INCIDENT

DEVIATION

CONSUMER PRODUCTS: Radiation is produced by smoke alarms, urinary watches and gas mantles

RADIO ACTIVE SENSOR

"Everyday articles, such as a gas lamp mantle, or a smoke detector, would give similar radioactive counts. But exposure to these items is so infrequent that they are considered under safety regulations to have no impact on our lives.

"Such articles, like a piece of scrap machinery at Trench 7, contain radioactive substances.

"As measured on the surface, the radioactive count is beyond safety limits, but step back a metre or so and the radioactivity

is negligible."

The CNS agrees with Hambleton-Jones's above summary, Leaver said.

One could dismiss the publicity on Radiation Hill, except for the fact that everyone downstream of the AEC and Hartbeespoort Dam has the impression that their crops, livestock and the entire environment and inhabitants are now under threat of radiation pollution.

As one businessman said at a public meeting at AEC this week, his overseas clients for glassware from his factory have the impression that his products are now radioactive.

Hartbeespoort Town Council is concerned investment in its area will stop and property values will fall.

A headmaster of a local school indicated parents want to withdraw their children.

We are all surrounded by radioactivity. It is in our bodies, the

air we breathe, the food we eat, the buildings we live and work in, the soil we walk on, and even the water we drink - 85% of the radiation we encounter daily comes from these natural sources.

The rest of the radiation comes from man-made sources, mostly medical, such as X-rays, radiotherapy for cancer and diagnostics.

AEC is vitally involved in manufacturing radioactive products for these applications for

local and international markets.

The technology by which a facility such as AEC shares the benefits of the power of the atom is intricate. So are the safety procedures.

To take one example - the alleviation of chronic pain from bone cancer: A doctor injects radioactive Samarium, produced at AEC's Saffari reactor, into his patient. Radioactive particles bombard the infected area with the immediate relief of pain.

The doctor takes the used vial which contained the Samarium, together with all needles, swabs and gloves, and is supposed to throw it into a specific container destined for a trench at AEC's Radiation Hill.

If by mistake or in haste he throws them into an ordinary rubbish bin, these radioactive contaminated materials may land up in a municipal landfill site for domestic waste.

Would this constitute a nuclear threat?

"Hardly!" was how the CNS commented.

Such radioactive substances add a negligible amount to background radiation levels.

Casual contact would not exceed acceptable exposures. However, it would be an infringement of nuclear safety regulations.

These standards are intended to ensure the risks of exposure to radioactivity are kept at acceptable levels, as balanced against the benefits.

But nobody knows at what level radiation causes no injury, and it is assumed that any exposure to radiation carries with it some detriment.



# Developers hit back on dunes

*'Objectors don't represent the majority'*

(56) ARG 12/3/96

**JILYAN PITMAN Staff Reporter**

THE developers who want to subdivide a stretch of land, including some dunes, adjacent to Clovelly golf course have disputed several claims made by the Silvermine Valley Coalition group opposing the scheme.

The group claimed last week it had sent "well over 2 000 letters of objection to the town clerk, and a similar number to the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) authorities ... rejecting the proposal that our sand dunes, which are part of a protected nature area, should be subdivided to permit houses to be built on them."

Bev Mitchell, project consultant for the developers, Fish Hoek Land and Estate, said: "Our sand dunes were on private property and the public had never had free access to them."

"The Fish Hoek Extension Zone C property does fall within the nature area, but the landowner has challenged, and continues to challenge, the process that determined the boundary of the nature area."

"The public should be aware that while they have a right to object to the present subdivision

proposals as part of the participation process, the objections need to be substantive."

In response to other comments put forward by the environmental group in Southern Argus on March 6, Mr Mitchell said the 2 000 photocopies of a standard letter of objection was a standard tactic of petitioners, but missed the point in that they did not comment on, or object to, the proposed development but merely challenged the development rights of the landowner.

Only 26 of those objectors had been part of the public participation process for the previous 15 months.

"Therefore one can only conclude that the remaining majority of objectors did not have a real interest or concern in the proposals."

He disputed the reference to the decision by the then Minister, John Wiley, not to permit development in the area. The environmental affairs and tourism department of that time had never published reasons for his decision.

"We have been informed that even his departmental officials had not been consulted. There was, and still is, no published

scientific data which in any way justifies the incorporation of this area in the CPPNE."

The Fish Hoek Residents' Association had claimed a clear mandate from ratepayers, comprised 150 ratepayers of a total of about 4 000, so "this can hardly be considered the majority view", said Mr Mitchell.

The participation process was not inadequate and flawed, as the group claimed, he said. "This process was under the direction of one of the top environmental professionals in the country, Dr John Raimondo of African Environmental Solutions."

Mr Mitchell said: "Following the necessary advertisements, a total of 10 legitimate comments and objects were received. These have been dealt with comprehensively in a report by the landowner's planning team, and this report is a public document."

He said "positive results" from the approval of the proposals would include handing over 60 percent of the site free of charge for public use, a positive cash balance for the local authority and upgrading of the Silvermine River corridor on land owned by the local authority.

JAN

ME

# Health fears over Athlone power station reopening

(56)

ARC 13/3/96

**ANDREA WEISS**  
Municipal Reporter

PEOPLE living near the Athlone Power station fear their health will be threatened when the power station returns to full operation during the next three years.

The Legal Resources Centre (LRC) has asked for a special interview with the Cape Town City Council's amenities and health committee to present the views of the Athlone RDP forum and the Langa development forum.

In a memo addressed to the council, the LRC says that the coal-fired power station is "virtually surrounded by residential neighbourhoods, including Athlone and Langa, both areas with a perceived high rate of tuberculosis, asthma and other

respiratory problems".

The council had "admitted" to not consulting the public when deciding to recommission the plant, and had not undertaken any environmental impact assessments.

The LRC said that coal-burning power plants emitted three main pollutants of concern to human health, namely particulates (PM-10), sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide.

Sulphur dioxide reacted with moisture in the air to form sulphuric acid which caused mucous secretions in the lungs, reduced lung function and increased the risk of infection.

Nitrogen oxides caused acid rain and ground-level ozone (also known as brown haze).

The LRC states that the emissions from the power sta-

tion will exceed international pollution standards.

It points to concerns raised by Pinelands residents around the removal of asbestos at the power station.

After meeting the city electrical engineering and health departments, the LRC decided to ask for a meeting with the amenities and health committee on April 1.

In addition, the medical officer of health, city electrical engineer and the city legal adviser have been asked to comment on the concerns laid out in the LRC's memo.

The council wants to use the power station to cut down on the amount of energy bought from Eskom at peak times.

■ FISH HOEK

# Big row over Elsies Peak <sup>(5b)</sup>

*Jeers and insults at meeting on plans* <sup>ARG 13/3/96</sup>

**FEROZA MILLER, Staff Reporter**  
EMOTIONS ran high when about 500 people packed the Fish Hoek Civic Centre for a presentation of the controversial development proposed for Elsie's Peak.

Beverley Jansen, the mayor of the Fish Hoek/Kommetjie/Noordhoek transitional metropolitan substructure, assisted by town clerk Harold Chapman, presided at the meeting described by Ms Jansen as an information session.

However, the proceedings were repeatedly punctuated with insults and jeers and the audience had to be called to order on many occasions.

Residents claimed the council was incompetent and demanded that Ms Jansen and Mr Chapman sit down.

Mr Chapman replied to this by saying: "I'm not here to be laughed at and cajoled. I will not be put on a pedestal and insulted. I would rather be at home with my family."

When Andy Gubb, head of the Western Cape branch of the Wildlife Society, said that community rights outweighed the individuals rights Mr Chapman insisted that he ask a question and not make a statement.

Ms Jansen gave David Daitz of the National Parks Board two minutes to make his statement.

She asked that he present only the facts and not engage in any emotionalism.

A "proud" owner of two plots in Cliff Road asked that residents be reasonable and allow him to exercise his freedom of choice.

Residents also asked how much money the developer had put up in guarantees, what residents would gain from the developer making an alleged R8-million profit and if the developer would consider swapping Elsie's Peak for another piece of council-owned land.

The controversial decision

to allow the sub-division on Elsie's Peak, the mountain slope above Sunny Cove, was initially taken in 1992.

The owner, Trevor Shaw/Trevlar Investments, was given the go-ahead to subdivide the 4,1 hectares of Elsie's Peak into 40 plots, later changing this to 21 large erven.

Residents fear that the development will desecrate what they say is one of the leading tourist attractions on the False Bay coastline.

In what was described as a layout designed to minimise environmental impact, the developer said he would provide the necessary access roads and service connections.

Development will be confined to below a 152-metre contour line and single-storey houses will be of natural materials and colours, with a maximum building height of 4,5 metres and a maximum roof width of 5,5 metres.

# Nuclear emergency test

Staff Reporter

56  
A NUCLEAR emergency exercise being held today was due to affect thousands of people living within a 20 km radius of the Koeberg nuclear power station.

Koeberg officials warned that the siren and public address systems installed in Duynfontein, Melkbosstrand, Atlantis and adjacent farming areas may be used.

Koeberg staff have to show the Council for Nuclear Safety (CNS) that they could contain any nuclear disaster at the plant effectively.

The exercise forms part of the CNS's annual licensing of the plant.

The exercise is also being monitored by observers from Hong Kong and Slovenia.

Phil Metcalf, a senior manager at CNS, said that while Koeberg took emergency precautions, these could not al-

ARG 13/3/96  
ways be guaranteed.

He said the objective of the exercise was to evaluate the plant's major disaster management programme.

The aim of such a programme was to prevent acute health effects and to limit long-term effects of a nuclear disaster.

Every disaster management programme has on-site and off-site facilities.

The Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) is responsible for the off-site emergency plan covering the area within a radius of about 16 km around the plant.

The exercise involves the CNS simulating a nuclear disaster to activate the emergency centre at Koeberg.

The plant does not know what time the simulated disaster will occur or what form it will take.

## Spruit's pollution by gasworks probed

By SHIRLEY WOODGATE

The Northern Metropolitan Substructure has appointed consultants to investigate the pollution of the Braamfontein Spruit by the gasworks at Cottesloe, and to recommend solutions before the 14ha site is sold off and redeveloped.

Redevelopment is scheduled for July next year, when ambitious plans to change the entire nature of the area, within a stone's throw of the CBD, could include a shopping centre, townhouses and a greenbelt linking with the spruit.

Established in the mid-1920s near the spring at the source of the spruit, the gasworks has been the scene of refuse, rubble and waste-product dumping since before

World War 2, says Johannesburg administration water and gas director George Keay.

Coal and coke stored on site for the processing plant contributed to pollution of the fill material, and the spruit water has been polluted by increased salt levels.

The pollution is not considered dangerous but it may have harmed aquatic life and animals drinking the water.

Solutions proposed to prevent water running through the polluted site include encapsulating the material, immobilising it by adding grout, introducing a form of bio-remediation (bacteria to attack the pollutants) or - the least cost-effective - removing about 100 000cu.m of rubble.

(56) Star 13/3/96

# Tankers on trial

*Tough measures set to keep oil carriers far from the coast*  
(56) AR 9/14/3/96

JOHN YELD

Environment Reporter

SOUTH African proposals forcing laden oil tankers to stay at least 20 nautical miles off the coast are likely to be accepted soon by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and should be in force by December.

This was revealed by IMO Secretary-General William O'Neal during the opening of an International Oil Spill Response meeting at the V&A Waterfront.

The meeting, the first of its kind in South Africa, is discussing oil-spill response capabilities in sub-Saharan Africa, and ways in which these can be improved.

About 180 delegates from 38 countries are attending the meeting which is being held under the auspices of the IMO and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, assisted by the SA Oil Industry Environment Committee.

It comes at a time when the spotlight is focused sharply on possible oil pollution of the South African coast - the fully-laden supertanker Kraka is lying immobilised in False Bay and a ship-to-ship transfer of its 345 000-ton cargo of crude oil appears likely.

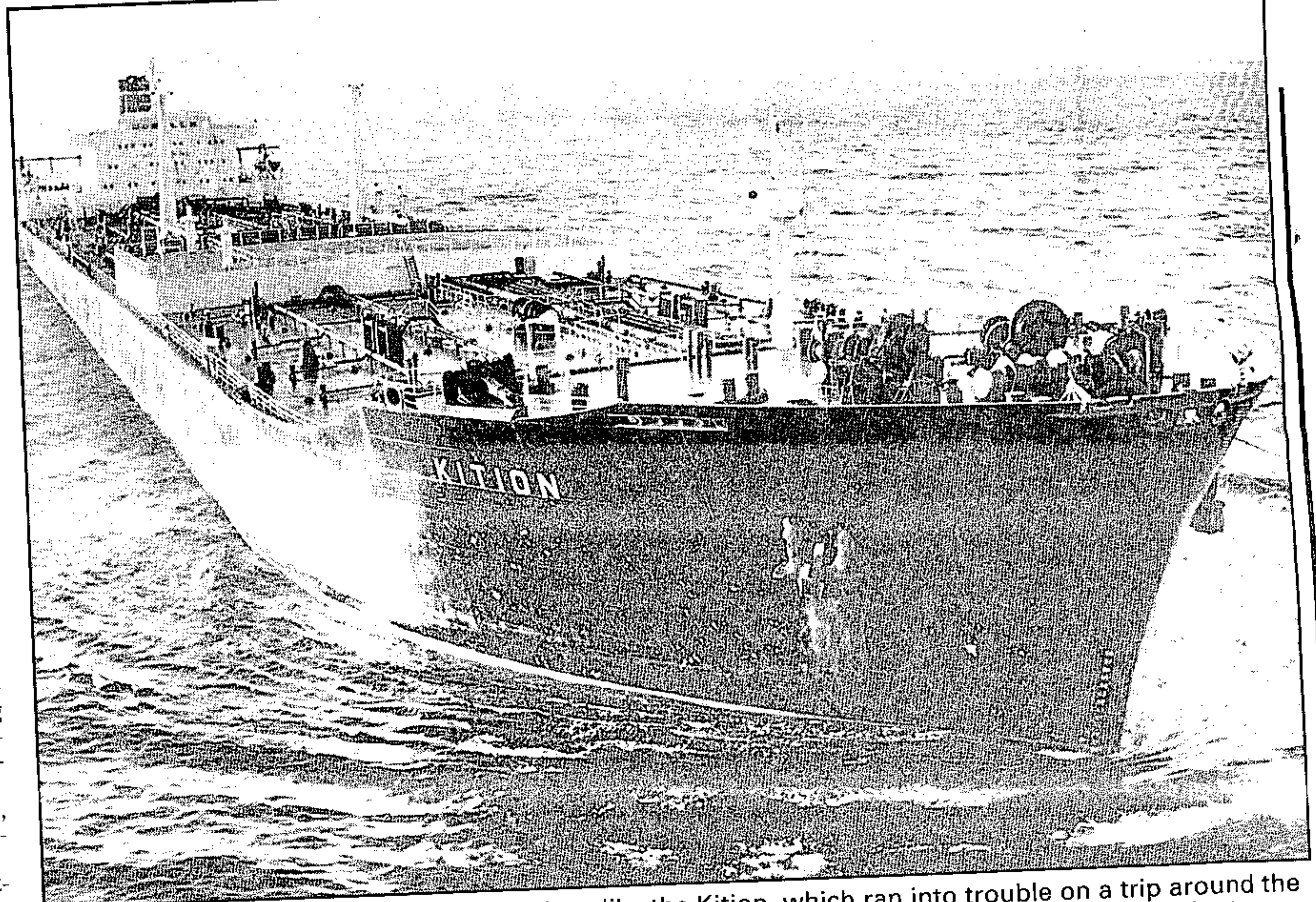
An environmental impact assessment is underway of the Strategic Fuel Fund's proposal to trade big quantities of oil in and out of Saldanha Bay.

Mr O'Neal told delegates there was a keen awareness that southern Africa was at risk from, and vulnerable to the environmental and economic consequences of oil spills.

The International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation estimated that about 32 percent of the world's seaborne crude oil passed the African coastline at some point. During the past 20 years, there had been 30 oil spills involving amounts greater than 5 000 barrels from ships plying the seas around Africa.

"The region is especially vulnerable because of the co-location of a large oil production and transportation industry with tourism-based economies that rely on the quality of the environment for their existence."

The IMO was concentrating its



**TONS OF TROUBLE:** Heavily-laden tankers like the Kition, which ran into trouble on a trip around the Cape several years ago and had to be towed out to sea by salvage tug John Ross while she awaited parts to control a flooded engine room, are causing increasing concern, not only to environmentalists.

efforts on preventing oil spills and had put into place an effective package of conventions and regulations aimed at preventing accidental and operational spills. It had also taken other steps, such as setting aside the policy of "grandfathering" - not requiring existing vessels to upgrade - in key areas.

This meant tankers had to be converted to new double-hull standards within 25 years of being constructed.

"Most 1970s vintage VLCCs (Very Large Crude Carriers) will be affected by this. It is estimated that about 50 percent of existing large tankers will be phased out or upgraded before the year 2000."

The IMO's sub-committee on safety of navigation had responded positively to the South African government's proposal to adopt rules of navigation for laden tankers off the South African coast, Mr O'Neal said.

He had no doubt the committee would adopt these rules at its next meeting and that they would be in force by December.

"Effectively the rules, which have

been designed both for safety and pollution prevention purposes, require that laden tankers maintain a minimum distances off the coast of 20 nautical miles when west-bound and 25 nautical miles when east-bound, with the exception of tankers calling at South African ports."

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said oil pollution of the marine environment was a global problem and needed to be addressed on a global scale. South Africa had developed an oil spill contingency capability that was recognised internationally.

"We will gladly discuss how this capability can possibly be made

available to our friends in Africa, and how we can co-operate to enhance the solutions to oil spills and their sometimes devastating results."

Mr Maharaj said his department was preparing a draft Wreck and Salvage Bill likely to be presented to this session of parliament.

"The acceptance and promulgation of this bill will not only play a significant role in giving domestic force to the International Salvage Convention of 1989, but will provide for assistance to be rendered to distressed ships and compensation to salvors who protect the environment." The meeting ends tomorrow

# Koeberg alert put to test

(56) ARG 14/3/96

## Emergency services through paces

BY BARNES, Staff Reporter

Life in most parts of the Western Cape continued normally, a major exercise at Koeberg, simulating emergency response to a disaster, had at least 200 highly skilled people in its

The exercise was carried out yesterday by Koeberg nuclear station in co-operation with all emergency personnel within a wide radius of the site of a potential nuclear disaster. It every 12 to 16 months this exercise is repeated, and minor exercises are carried out four to six times a year, said emergency officer Geoff Laskey.

The operation was controlled from Cape Town where an emergency control centre in a building in Wale Street was manned by people looking calm but alert, and ready for action.

The board in front of them was a large map indicating the danger site around Koeberg, showing wind direction and the nine evacuation zones containing 1 600 people that needed to be evacuated.

Clearly marked were the immediate danger zones within a 10 km radius of the nuclear plant and from which residents would have to be evacuated.

Within the 10 to 16 km radius were standby or "shelter" areas such as Atlantis where residents would be warned to stay indoors, shut all windows, but ultimately, would also have to be evacuated.

The danger zone is the 16 km radius and to a much lesser extent outside of that," said Steve van Rensburg, head of emergency planning, training and marketing for the Cape Metropolitan Council Civil Protection.

The exercise was controlled from Cape Town where an emergency control centre in a building in Wale Street was manned by people looking calm but alert, and ready for action.

The department, international observers, an Eskom technical adviser, traffic officials and the fire brigade.

People in the red zone would be evacuated in 30 buses to a designated area. Prior to this they would be alerted to the levels of radiation, contamination, and containment.

People with "heavy" contamination would be taken to a unit at Tygerberg Hospital.

Mobile emergency control centres on a bus were stationed at various locations in the area.

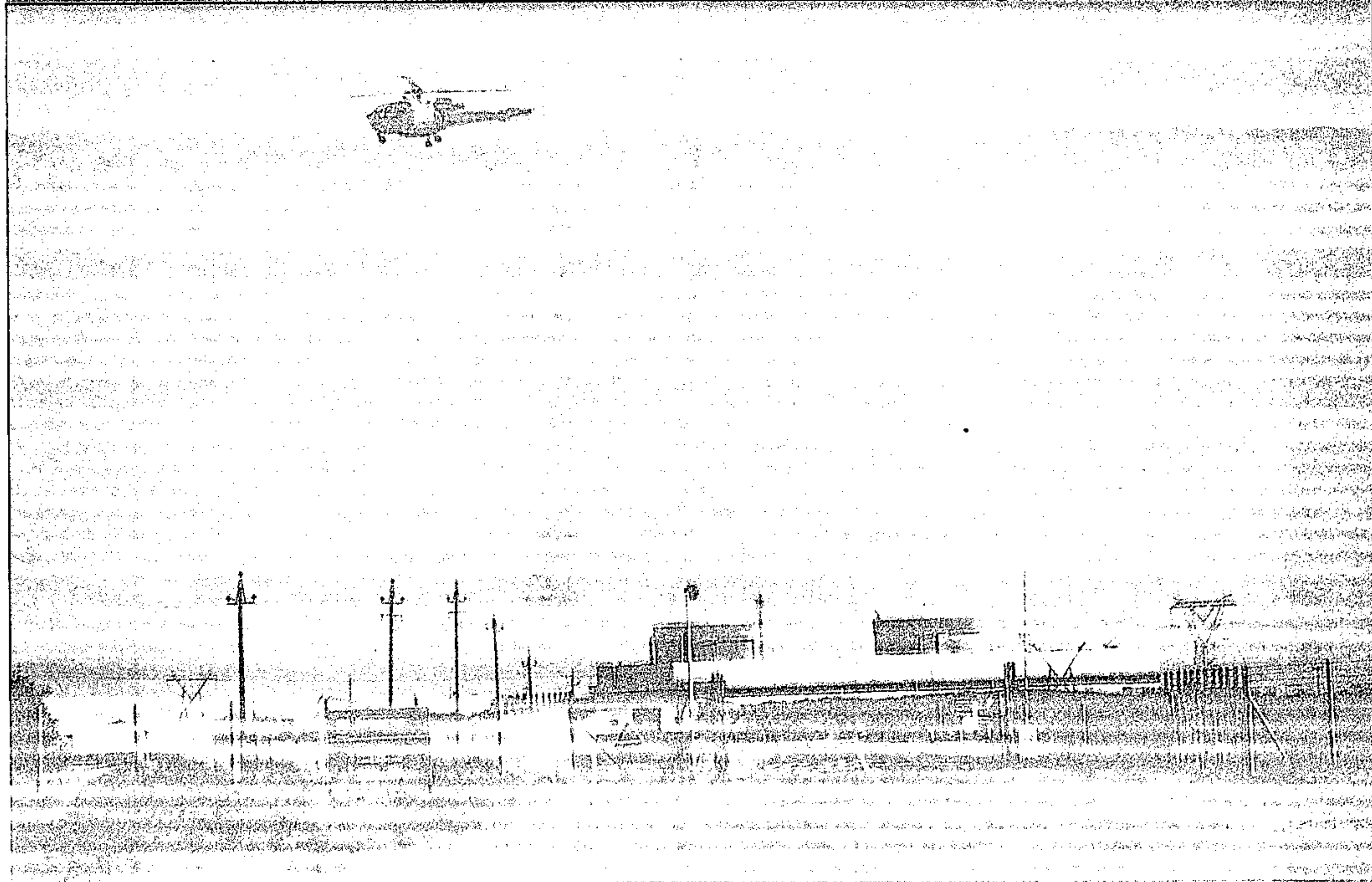
The exercise would be organised to test the response of emergency services.

The exercise began at 7.20 am with a soft north-north-west wind blowing.

By 11 am it had swung to easterlies, making it necessary to reconsider strategy in the event of isolating the affected area, said Mr Laskey.

However, the drill was not conducted on real conditions but on a worst-case scenario in which gentle winds would carry the plume over a residential area, and the concentration diminish at a slow

At 1 pm the exercise was declared a success by the officials involved, declared Mr Laskey.



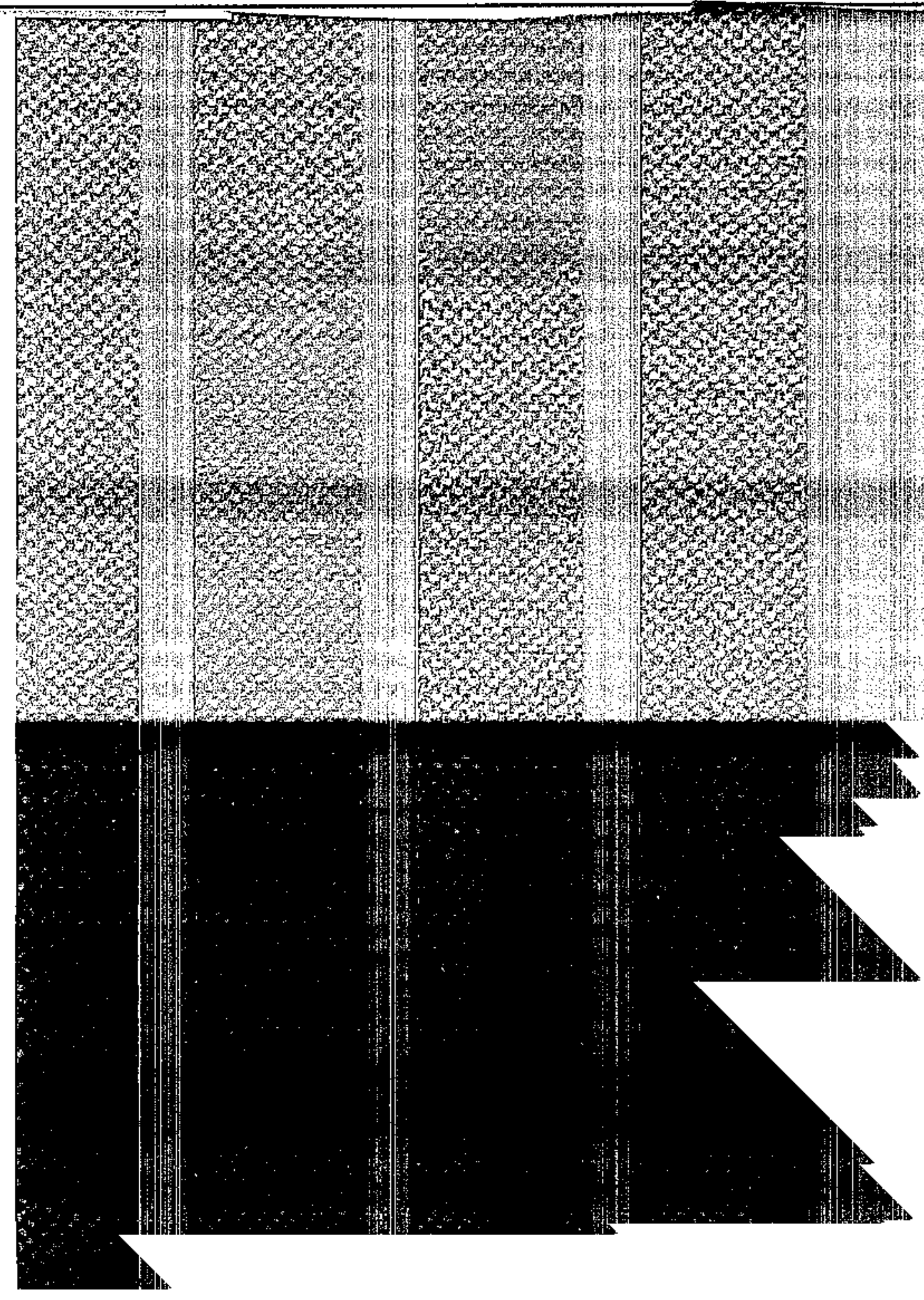
**RED ALERT:** A helicopter circles over Koeberg Nuclear Power Station before landing during an exercise to fine tune reactions by emergency operations personnel.

Pictures: ROY WIGLEY, The Argus



**ABOVE:** Steve van Rensburg of emergency planning, training and marketing for the Cape Metropolitan Council Civil Protection, and Schalk de Waal of the Council for Nuclear Safety, go over the plans for mass evacuation in the event of a crisis at Koeberg.

**BELOW:** Traffic personnel man a mobile control centre from which the roadblocks preventing cars from entering the danger zone would be co-ordinated.



# Bold new venture for top nuke research site

(56) ARG 16/3/96  
PRETORIA. — The Atomic Energy Corporation's high-tech facilities at Pelindaba west of Pretoria are to be used to breed and preserve endangered animals, the AEC said here.

In a statement yesterday, it said the site would serve as the new headquarters of the Wildlife Breeding Research Centre.

"The tranquil environment with a theme of nature interspersed with technology makes Pelindaba an ideal site for the new WBRC facility," said the corporation.

Opening its new offices at Pelindaba yesterday, the WBRC said in a statement it would be able to develop a regional bank of endangered wildlife sperm, egg cells, embryos and other biological material.

The WBRC, a working group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, uses reproductive techniques for the conservation of threatened

species.

Since its inception in 1988, it has been working from the Tompi Seleka Agricultural College in Northern Province.

The organisation collects sperm and egg cells from live or recently dead animals and uses them for in-vitro fertilisation or artificial insemination.

"In this way, animals of an endangered species that die suddenly still can be used to contribute to the genetic diversity of the entire species long after it is dead," said the statement.

The WBRC also breeds disease-free African buffalo.

Although not endangered, most buffalo inhabit certified foot-and-mouth and Theileria disease areas, leading to a great demand for healthy animals.

The WBRC in 1994 produced the world's first in-vitro fertilisation embryos from six African wildlife species. — Sapa.



# Coastal land battle

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

A MAJOR battle is looming over grandiose plans by a developer to build luxury apartments below an elevated four-lane highway on the mountainside on the Peninsula's scenic Atlantic coast.

The plans entail raising Victoria Drive between Bakoven and Llandudno for about three to four kilometres and turning it into a four-lane freeway, below which 100 units would be built, project architect Vernon Head, said yesterday.

A final proposal for the development, between Bakoven and Llandudno could be ready for public scrutiny by late April, Devland Group representative Neill Bernstein said from London yesterday.

But the property group's plans have run into immediate resistance from the National Parks Board, which yesterday warned of a "massive battle" to have the land included in a park extending from Signal Hill to Cape Point.

Devland's latest plans for the Oudekraal land replace an earlier proposal — which they say has been scrapped — for a marina which would have been excavated at a cost of millions of rands, and an artificial island midway between Bakoven and the landmark White House, which is at present being demolished to make way for a multi-million rand hotel and conference centre development.

Citing copyright and confidentiality, the development group's attorneys threatened legal action against the Sunday Times if details of the scrapped plan were published.

"The marina plans are three years old and have no relevance," Mr Bernstein claimed. But, a copy of a proposal for a resort harbour at Oudekraal leaked to the Sunday Times, revealed cost estimates for the scheme dated September 12, 1995.

Costs were an estimated R215,9-million for a 13 000m<sup>2</sup> excavation, or R601,6-million for a 20 600m<sup>2</sup> excavation.

Mr Bernstein said the contract entailed four portions of land with township rights for 960 single dwellings between Bakoven and Hottentotshuisie.

But according to the Cape Metropolitan Council and the Parks Board, only the portion abutting Bakoven has township development rights.

"Devland is playing betting games. If they lose the bet I have no sympathy. They believe they are buying rights which are not in dispute," Mr David Daitz, Table Mountain project co-ordinator for the Parks Board, said yesterday.

He said immediate developments in the area have been "kaiboshed" by a National Monuments Council proclamation this week declaring all but the Bakoven township provisional National Monuments.

"The developer's plans are totally ridiculous. The only way to try to do anything is for the developer to start with an integrated environmental management process that explores all options, including that of no development. There is a massive battle ahead," he said.

Mr Bernstein said: "The plan is to keep 90 percent of the development off the mountain by elevating the road into a scenic drive. As a Capetonian, I'll not go ahead with a project that is not endorsed by the community."

Once finalised, the Oudekraal plans would be put to the public for comment by late April.

"The solution is win-win. It's not often that you get a developer like Devland which gets control of attractive land that large, which is not driven by corporate greed.

"Until there's an environmental solution, I'm not prepared to go ahead," Mr Bernstein said.

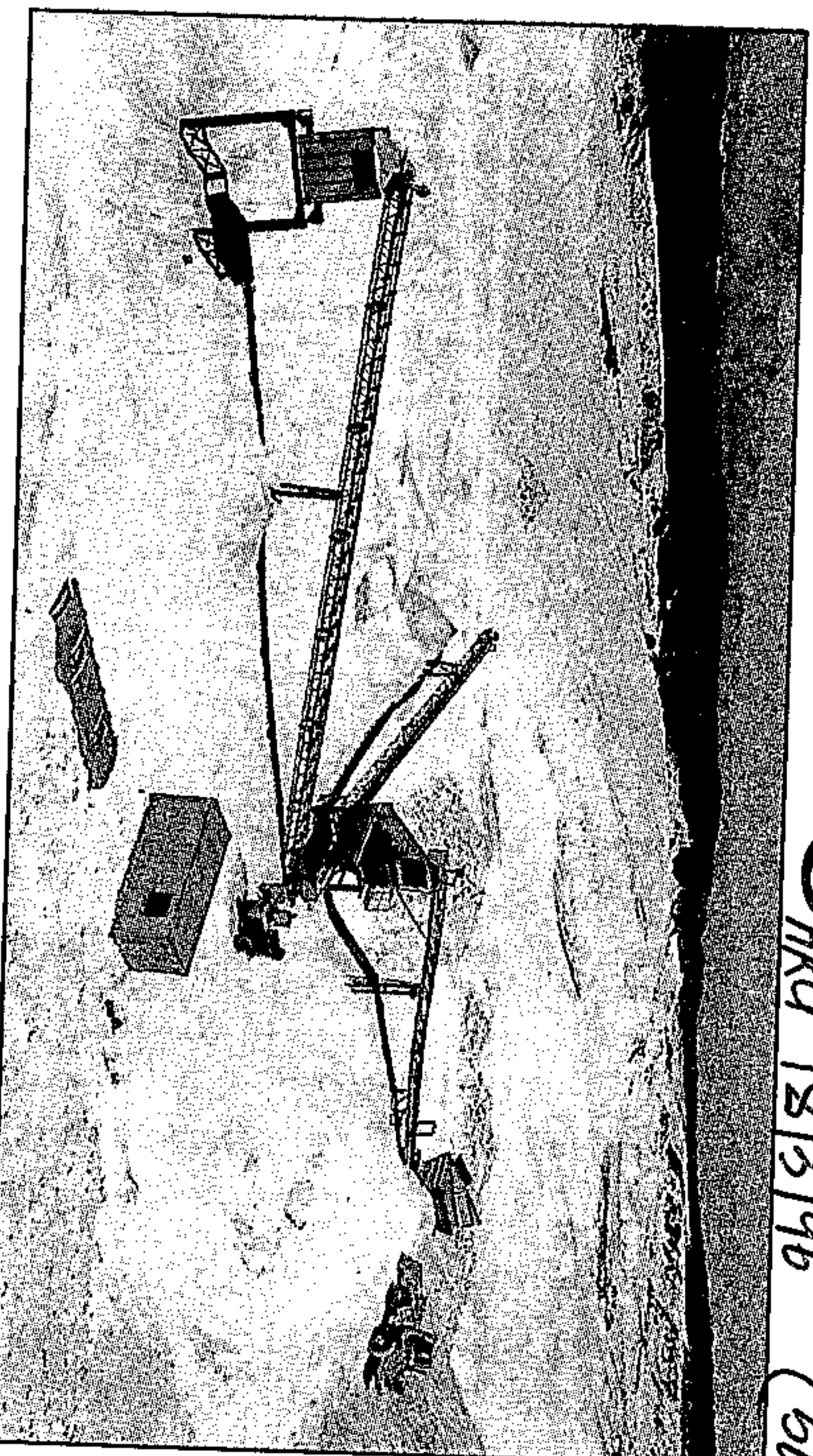
96/9/11 (M)LS (25)  
ST(M) 17/3/96  
Looms

# Sand issue goes against the grain

AKG 12/3/96

56

Macassar residents are unhappy that the state has granted permits to mine huge quantities of sand from the sensitive coastal dune system in their area, despite a draft structure plan that demarcates this as "nature area". Now, the residents have demanded a moratorium on any further sand mining until a joint management committee for the dunes has been established. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD looks at the issue.



**DENUDED DUNES:** Macassar residents are unhappy at extended sand mining operations in the nearby coastal dunes.

Picture: JOHN YELD, The Argus.

**T**HE Macassar coastal dune system is one of the most special dune systems in the Cape, and a draft structure plan demarcates most of it as "nature area", environmentalists say.

But angry Macassar residents accuse the state of allowing new large-scale sand mining in the dunes, despite the structure plan, and they have called for a proper management plan and a full environmental impact assessment of mining operations.

The structure plan was drawn up after an intensive public participation process, and the residents have demanded a moratorium on the granting of any further mining authorisations until a joint management authority has been set up to manage the dune system.

Through the Macassar Com-

munity Development Forum, they have told the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs they do not accept mineral rights being awarded to big "outside" companies in the face of their objections. Although the department says there is agreement to establish such an authority, the residents are concerned that nothing has been done yet.

Environmentalists point out that the dune system between Macassar and Monwabisi is essentially a single system and stress it should be managed as such, but at present some of it is under the jurisdiction of the Lingeletu West transitional metropolitan substructure, and another section falls under the Macassar substructure.

A huge area in the Lingeletu West section of the dune was mined for several years and operations are still

continuing in an adjoining section, while three sand mines are operating in the Macassar section and several other applications to mine sand on state land in this area have been lodged.

Nazeem Braaf, vice-chairperson of the Macassar Community Development Forum, said large-scale mining in the area deviated from the proposed structure plan which was drawn up following an

extensive public consultation process with various stakeholders in the area.

"As a community we accept there is a need for sand and that there has to be some sand mining. There was an existing mine and another is working in the corner of the proposed

Khayelitsha town four area (Lingeletu West), but since then three other mines have opened, contrary to the structure plan proposals.

"Also, local people have applied for permits to mine sand, but these have always been rejected," he said. The residents wanted a balance between sand mining operations and development on one hand, and the environment on the other.

"In other words, we are not opposing the mining since it is a product of national interest, but we object to the large-scale transformation of the area into

a mining town."

Requirements put forward by the community included:

- Adequate rehabilitation plans for mined areas and the proper implementation of such plans;
- A full environmental impact assessment;
- A proper consultative process and the establishment of a management team consisting of all role players from central and local government, environmentalists and representatives of local RDP forums;
- A critical assessment of how local entrepreneurs could also be accommodated in the specified mining operations;
- A sustainable mining plan for the area; and

● A programme to be agreed binding contractors to the development of the greater Macassar and Khayelitsha area, in the form of a social investment programme in line with local RDP initiatives.

The forum raised the sand mining issue in a letter to Minister and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha in October last year. In response, acting director-general of Mineral and Energy Affairs Gert Venter said the department operated on a "first come, first served" basis when considering applications to mine minerals on state land.

where inquiries have been rejected outrightly in the past, as stated in your letter. I would appreciate information on such incidents so that they can be followed up. In fact, with the current emphasis on the role of the small miner, the department would generally welcome greater involvement of this sector."

Dr Venter said that apart from legal provisions which obliged his department to consult with other state departments, it had been decided recently that the Macassar dune system should be managed by a committee.

Members of this committee would be drawn from all the relevant state, provincial and local authorities - including the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs - as well as the Macassar community through representative forums.

"Your request for a moratorium on the granting of mining authorisations has therefore already been accommodated, although in a different way."

But this committee has not yet been constituted, and the Macassar residents are querying the delay.

Botanist Barrie Low of the National Botanical Institute has found more than 210 indigenous plant species on the dunes, of which two are threatened.

## Mine resumes work in 'sensitive area'

~~PIETERSBURG~~ (56)  
PIETERSBURG — Madimbo Diamond Co has obtained a court order to start alluvial diamond mining and prospecting in the Madimbo corridor along SA's border with Zimbabwe from today.

Northern Province environmental affairs and tourism minister Maris-Stella Sexwale-Mabitje had used the Environmental Conservation Act to stop the mining, which was to have resumed on March 11. The National Parks Board has appealed to the mineral and energy affairs ministry to have the mining permit reviewed.

The area encompasses Mashakati-ni, recently declared a nature reserve, which is part of a migration route for elephant and buffalo.

Environmental affairs spokesman Danny Msiza said the Madimbo corridor was an ecologically sensitive area which should be used for ecotourism. It also contained archeological sites which had yet to be explored.

Stakeholders met several times in the past week, but were unable to resolve the dispute. Sexwale-Mabitje is expected to announce further steps this week. — Sapa.

BD 18/3/96

HOUSING PROJECT OPPOSED

# Hanekom joins fight to save vlei fynbos

(56) CT 18/3/96

**BATTLE IS ON** to save a land link described as "ecologically of immeasurable importance for long-term conservation of a number of indigenous plants and animals". Environmental Writer **MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**L**AND Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom has thrown his weight behind environmentalists fighting to save a stretch of land between Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei — earmarked for housing development — which contains some of the most threatened plant species in the world.

Botanists say there is less than five square kilometres left of this vegetation type — strand plain fynbos — which used to cover the whole of the Cape Flats and extend up to about Mamre.

At a meeting in Zeekoevlei on Friday attended by green NGOs, scientists, residents and representatives of local authorities, Hanekom said: "This is essentially a local issue, but it is also of national interest because of our obligation to protect the country's biodiversity. Housing is important and obviously we don't want to stop all development. The challenge which

faces us is finding suitable land for development where the environment won't be threatened."

Ms Lee Jones, who heads the Botanical Society's search and rescue plant project, said there were 294 threatened plant species in the Cape metropolitan area.

The society, backed by scientists and NGOs, has called on the Cape Metropolitan Council to have the stretch of privately owned land incorporated into the Rondevlei Nature Reserve.

"It is the last remaining undeveloped land link between the two vleis. It's ecologically of immeasurable importance for long-term conservation of a number of indigenous plants and animals that are dependent on free access to both water habitats.

"Small animals like otters and antelope, as well as amphibians, birds and insects use the land link and in no circumstances should

they be cut off from the plants that they pollinate, spread, control by grazing or use for shelter," Jones said.

The land also supports the largest remaining population of an indigenous plant species, *Passerina paludosa*, which Jones says, is "one step from extinction".

A spokesman for Cape Metropolitan Council's town planning department told the meeting there were three options to save the land from development:

- Get the developers to re-design the scheme avoiding the highly sensitive areas.
- Get the CMC to buy the land from the developers.
- Swop the land for appropriate state land.

He said CMC funds for buying conservation-worthy land existed, but were limited.

Spokesman for the developers Mr Mike Gaussen said his company had received a letter from the local residents but had had no approach from government at any level.

His company would "not be averse to discussing a land swop".

# Plans for rowing course get into environmental

JOHN YELD, Environment Reporter

FUNDS required to dig the proposed 2,2 km rowing course at the Olympic village in Wingfield - estimated by the bid company at between R26 million and R37 million, but queried by senior city council officials - would be enough to rehabilitate all the Cape Flats vleis and maintain them in a healthy state for several years.

So says University of Cape Town freshwater ecologist Jenny Day, who has also expressed concern about the effects of the proposed rowing course on the water

table of the underlying aquifer and on the surrounding vegetation.

The course could end up as "yet another expensive management headache" for the city council, she warned.

The Wildlife Society has also hit out at the rowing course which forms the central feature of the Olympic village site at Wingfield, saying the proposal has not been properly evaluated on environmental grounds or alternative courses considered.

Also, the society says the proposed course is completely at odds with the bid company's stated object of having a low-

key, developmental Games in line with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

Dr Day said the proposed Olympic development as a whole could change the face of Cape Town.

"As far as the public is aware, there is still no overall environmental policy for the bid in general.

"Regardless of the reasons, this gives the appearance of disregarding the issue.

"If the International Olympic Committee (IOC) accepts Cape Town's bid in the absence of appropriate environmental planning, then there should be an

international outcry."

Dr Day has posed a series of questions about the proposed course, including whether a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) is being done.

She also asked:

● If an EIA is being done, what are its terms of reference? What is the difference between an EIA and an "environmental critique" which the bid company says it has conducted?

● What alternative sites are being considered and how are these being assessed?

● What will be the cost of "rehabili-

tation" after the Olympic Games to make the rowing course a recreational facility?

● What will it cost to maintain this huge water-body during the next decades, and who will pay? - "The long-suffering ratepayers of Cape Town?" and

● What can be predicted about water quality in the canal and effect of water quality on the aquifer?

Regardless of the cost of 'construction', there seems to be no estimate included for the cost of rehabilitation or management after the Games," Dr Day said.

Hot water  
ARG 19/3/96

# Stage set for legal battle as prospecting along Limpopo starts

(56) (248) STW 19/3/96

Dispute over whether diamond company is damaging environment

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

Madimbu Diamond Corporation (MDC) has begun prospecting in the Madimbo Corridor along the Limpopo River despite a written instruction from the Northern Province ordering them not to go ahead.

Dr Greg Knill, chief director of Northern Province's department of environment, said yesterday: "They have now said that unless we get a court order, they intend to go ahead with prospecting. In fact it started this morning."

The issue is set for a legal battle which will be a test case for the protection afforded the environment under section 31a of the 1989 Environment Conservation Act.

At issue is whether open pit and trench prospecting for alluvial diamonds will damage the environment. A Department of Environment and Tourism (DET) report in 1995 concluded that prospecting in the area could result in an arid moonscape.

"No sustainable development of land use would be possible" and prospecting would negate a Northern Province development plan for the Madimbo area," it said.

The latest flare-up started on March 8 when Northern Province Environment MEC Maris-Stella Sexwale-Mabitje was informed that MDC intended to start prospecting on March 11.

Parties opposing the prospecting were caught short. They had lodged an objection against the granting of the permit by the regional director of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs (DMEA), and had assumed the objection would halt prospecting.

"Apparently there are a number of precedents where an appeal cannot stop prospecting because it is not a court order. But, on legal opinion, we are contesting this," Knill said.

In addition, Sexwale-Mabitje notified MDC on March 8 that she was exercising powers granted to her under section 31a of the Environment Conservation Act. Ac-

ording to this, as an MEC, she may in writing direct any person to stop an activity that damages, endangers or is detrimental in any way to the environment.

MDC, which is jointly owned by two South African directors and the Australian mining company Moonstone, have decided to challenge the section 31a instruction.

"The purported directives are vague and therefore unenforceable. And in any event our actions will not seriously damage, endanger or detrimentally affect the environment," MDC general manager Dennis Wilkins said.

Advocate Duard Barnard, who drew up the objection to prospecting on behalf of the National Parks Board, said section 31a denied the right to any prospecting.

"It is my opinion that the NPB appeal suspends the permit, and no prospecting should take place until a decision is made by the mineral and energy affairs director-general," Barnard said.

Hennie Taljaard, director of mineral rights at the DMEA, said that until a decision was made by his director-general, prospecting could not be stopped.

Barnard said the defence force, which currently manages the Madimbo Corridor, would be obliged under section 31a to stop any prospecting.

Col Seakle Godschalk, senior officer SANDF environmental services, said: "We cannot deny MDC access, but we have informed them they may not carry out activities that could seriously damage, endanger or negatively impact on the environment."

The Madimbo wilderness area along the Limpopo River Valley has been identified by every relevant conservation authority as a vital link in long-term subcontinental protected-areas planning.

Despite this, in what has been described as a series of bureaucratic blunders, the DET raised no objections to granting a prospecting permit when consulted by the DMEA. As a result, MDC's application was approved by the Northern Province regional director of the DMEA.

# Koeberg 'expensive and unnecessary'

~~56~~ (56)  
**EUNICE RIDER**  
STAFF WRITER

ET 20/3/96  
THE Koeberg nuclear power plant is "probably an expensive and unnecessary source of power", a British scientist said in a report released by UCT yesterday.

Nuclear economics expert Mr Steve Thomas, of the University of Sussex, said a detailed analysis of the plant's operating performance showed it was "unreliable" by international standards and had about 30% less output than similar plants elsewhere.

This unreliability could have serious implications for the safety of the plant if it reflected poor standards of maintenance.

His report, released by the UCT Energy and Development Research Centre (EDRC), raised questions about whether South Africa should be devoting scarce resources of skilled labour and finance to nuclear technology when the returns were so poor.

Coal power plants would be cheaper for South Africa, he said.

Mr Tony Stott, Eskom's generation nuclear assurance manager, said yesterday that Eskom, which runs Koeberg, had not yet seen the report and so could not comment.

Eskom had been trying to get a copy of the report since last week to establish on what grounds Thomas made his claims. EDRC promises to fax him a copy in Johannesburg had not been kept.

He said, however, that Eskom was surprised at allegations that the plant was "unreliable". Koeberg was part of the Eskom network of power stations — not an isolated station — and so was operated to conform to the requirements of the network.

"We consider it highly unprofessional of a research organisation such as the EDRC to publish and publicise a paper such as that of Mr Thomas, without verifying the facts, which they could very easily have done by approaching Eskom," Stott said.

# Madimbo prospecting runs into legal flak

Written instructions in terms of Environment

Conservation Act have been violated, says MEC

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

A charge has been laid against Madimbu Diamond Corporation (MDC) for going ahead with diamond prospecting along the Limpopo River in Northern Province.

Capt Dolf Botha of the Messina police station confirmed yesterday that an urgent investigation was under way and would be completed as early as tomorrow.

"We are not in a position to stop the prospecting, because Madimbu are in possession of a legal permit issued by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs," Botha said.

(56) Star 21/3/96  
The charge was laid by Northern Province Environment MEC Maris-Stella Sexwale-Mabitje for violating her written instruction in terms of section 31a of the Environment Conservation Act of 1989.

"It is not my competency to say which of the two laws (the permit or section 31a) is right," Botha said. "We will complete our investigation and forward it to the state attorney."

MDC started pit and trench prospecting for alluvial diamonds in the Madimbo Corridor on Monday. At least 20 labourers and earthmoving equipment have been moved in and several trenches have already been dug.

Dr Greg Knill, chief director of Northern Province environment affairs, said the province was taking out an interdict to halt the prospecting.

MDC general manager Dennis Wilkins said prospecting had gone ahead after legal advice indicated that section 31a would be unenforceable.

The Madimbo Corridor has been identified as a key area in long-term ecotourism plans for a transfrontier peace park linking four countries - Mozambique, Zimbabwe, SA and Botswana.

The permit was granted last year in what is described as "an astonishing series of bureaucratic bungles".



## Farmers to sue SANDF

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL summons will be served on the SANDF today or early next week for damage caused by herbicidal contamination of irrigation lands in the Madimbo corridor on the Limpopo River. Farmers are claiming millions of rands.

Spokesman Johan Duvenhage said a fair opportunity had been granted to the SANDF to react for crop losses caused by herbicides used by the military to combat bush encroachment. Research conducted by the Agricultural Research Institute had indicated that the herbicides had spread to the Limpopo river bed. Through irrigation it had then spread to the lands.

22/3/96

(56)

# New environmental ethic urged

Nomavenda Mathiane

BD 22/3/96

(56)

A NEW environmental ethic involving government, raw material manufacturers and the consumer was required to formulate an environmentally acceptable and economically sustainable solution to the problem of packaging, Environmental Affairs and Tourism Deputy Minister Bantu Holomisa said on Wednesday.

Addressing the packaging waste workshop held in Midrand, Holomisa said packaging, after use, was a major contributor to solid waste and litter.

Recent statistics, he said, indicated that due to the rate of waste generated in urban areas, SA had to get rid of 65 000 tons of refuse a day, or about 25,4-million tons a year.

Holomisa decried the absence of waste management standards, which he said had led to environmental degradation in the entire country.

There was litter in the suburbs and unmanaged waste and litter in the

townships. These two worlds converged in the CBD areas, bringing untold harm to tourist industry potential.

The country was running out of sites to dispose of man's unwanted residues in an environmentally friendly way. And evidence was mounting that landfills were capable of causing both air and water pollution, however well they were designed or operated.

Since the consumer was not necessarily at the end of the chain, nor had control over environmental damage, packaging manufacturers had to assume responsibility for their products from the cradle to the grave, he said.

Holomisa suggested the responsible industry be asked to accelerate research into provision of more environmentally acceptable products.

Where appropriate and feasible, results of such research could be made known to the public. Also, he said, government should consider tax concessions for technological achievements and advancement in this connection.

sed to  
issue  
1996.  
  
Care  
  
to its  
  
ustrial

GOVERNMENT AUCTION

# Dam builders await environment study

PIETER MALAN  
Staff Reporter

A DECISION to go ahead with the construction of the Skuifraam Dam near Franschhoek could be taken before the end of the year should an integrated environmental study indicate that the benefits of the project outweigh the costs.

A workshop to clarify issues surrounding the proposed construction of a dam on the upper

reaches of the Berg River will be held in Franschhoek next week.

The department of water affairs' proposal is currently the focus of an integrated environmental management (IEM) study to explore the major negative and positive impacts of the dam proposal before any decision is taken to build it.

Facilitator David Shandler, responsible for the public participation process, said the IEM

study was scheduled for completion in July this year.

He said the IEM process would form the basis for a decision on proceeding with the dam which needs to be taken by parliament.

"If the results of the study indicate that the benefits of constructing the dam outweigh the costs, the department of water affairs will prepare a White Paper for submission to parliament in August this year.

Only once parliament takes a decision in the latter part of this year can the next steps of land expropriation and construction be initiated.

The dam, in the La Motte State Forest about five kilometres downstream from Franschhoek, is seen by water engineers as a possible means of meeting the Cape Metropolitan area's water needs for a four to five year period after its construction, possibly in 2002.

ARC 22/3/96

(56)

MAG  
22-28/3/96

Local people say they weren't consulted

# St Lucia's

**P**EOPLE living in the Dukuduku forest on the outskirts of St Lucia are threatening to blockade the holiday town in peak season over the Easter weekend in protest against the Cabinet's move this month to ban titanium mining in the nearby nature reserve.

Local plans to organise a "strike" over the government's decision could embarrass African National Congress ministers Derek Hanekom and Kader Asmal, along with National Party minister Dawie de Villiers — all three have committed themselves to consulting widely before taking important government action.

On March 6 a ministers' committee — made up of Hanekom from Land Affairs, Asmal from Water Affairs and Forestry, De Villiers from Environment Affairs and Tourism and Ben Ngubane from Arts, Culture, Science and Technology — issued a statement saying dune mining would not be allowed so that "the great tourism potential of the area can now be fully exploited".

A broad alliance of some 200 environmental organisations under the umbrella of the Save St Lucia Campaign has waged a protracted battle — probably the longest and biggest green protest in the country's history — to stop Richards Bay Minerals from strip-mining the rare coastal dunes north of St Lucia dunes.

They are delighted at the Cabinet's move, saying mining would have devastated a rare combination of ecosystems and that nature-tourism is bound to bring in more jobs.

But representatives of the two Dukuduku communities told the *Mail & Guardian* that the government made its landmark decision without speaking to them — even though their livelihoods will probably be the most seriously affected.

Some of the elders who live in the Dukuduku forest were forcibly removed from the proposed mining site on the eastern shores in the mid-1950s and feel they should especially have been consulted as formal claims for restitution have been lodged by their representatives.

These people live a marginal existence in the forest, growing bananas and other crops illegally. They are among the poorest communities in KwaZulu-Natal and claim that nature conservation and tourism have always been detrimental to their lifestyles (see accompanying story).

A few of the residents told an M&G team, who joined two community meetings in the forest over the weekend, that the government's announcement was no different to that of old apartheid decrees despite cabinet claims that "amakhosi" from the region discussed and agreed with the move.

We can be happy if this govern-

ment can take us back to the land. We should be part of the decision on whether Richards Bay be chased away from there or if we are to have nature conservation and tourism. We are the owners of the land," said an old man named MS Gumede at a civic meeting held on Sunday this week in a settlement called Dukuduku Two.

The hostility expressed towards Cabinet over its St Lucia move appears to derive from a general perception among the forest communities that a top-down decision was made about how local peoples' land should be used — thus preempting the outcome of formal land claims by two groups who say they used to live on the eastern shores.

"It is all the same story," said Raymond Nkuni at the civic meeting. "We don't know if we would have benefited from mining.

We don't know if we would benefit from tourism and conservation. All we know is that nobody has spoken to us. Now that we have applied to get our land back, they are telling us what to do with it."

Most people spoken to expressed general support for mining because "you can see that we need jobs very badly here" and an overwhelming hostility towards "nature" (the Natal Parks Board) who they blame for arresting people who go into the nature reserve to fish or to visit old ancestral graves.

These sentiments were shared by speakers at another community in Dukuduku One which is made up of settlers who have invaded the forest

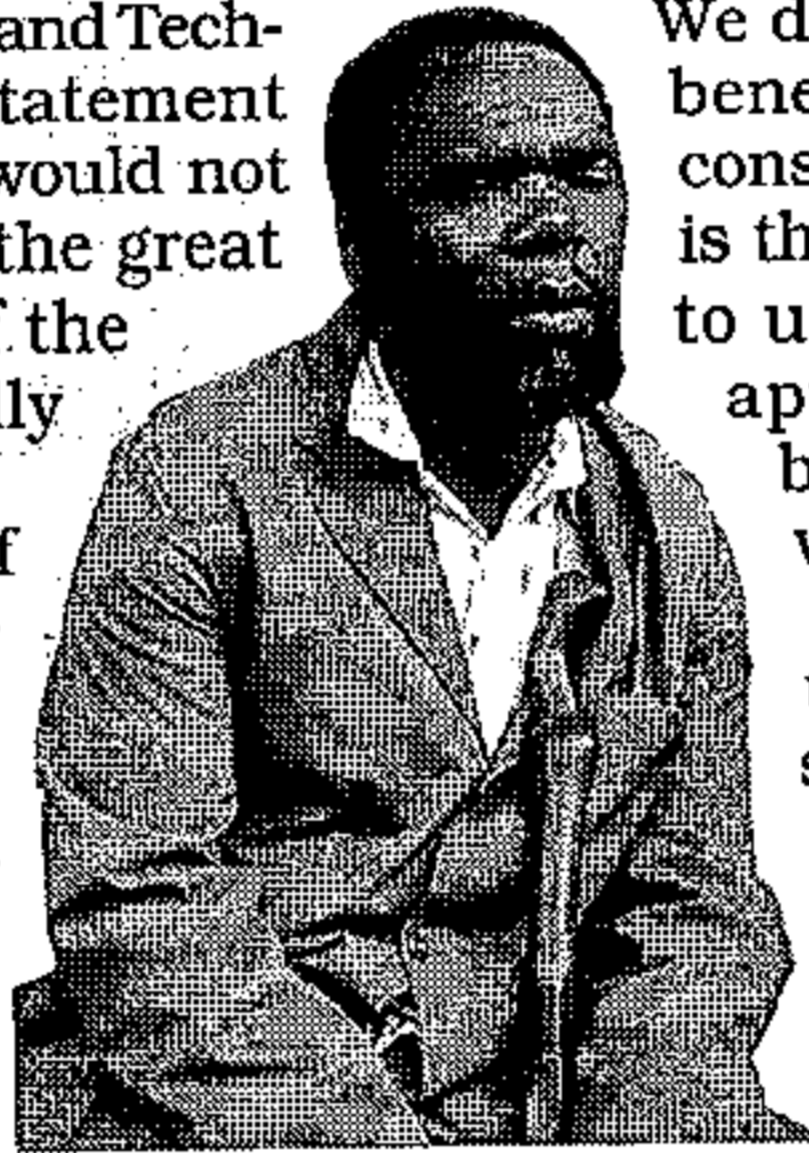
and subsist there by growing bananas and sweet potatoes through slash-and-burn agriculture and by fishing illegally in the St Lucia estuary.

Dukuduku One is an Inkatha Freedom Party stronghold, while people at Dukuduku Two are politically non-aligned. The latter is a more settled area made up of people who agreed to move out of the forest in return for proper housing sites and the promise of development services.

It thus appears that disillusionment in the forest at the Cabinet decision crosses political lines. Speakers from both meetings said they would back an Easter-time blockade during the peak tourist season at St Lucia — although formal threats and plans to organise the protest have come only from the IFP's Youth Brigade in the nearby town of KwaMbonambi.

**T**wo groups of people who claim to be the legitimate owners of the eastern shores, one led by Chief Mineas Mkhwanazi and the other by Chief Phineas Mbuyaze, have lodged official claims for the eastern shores with the Land Claims Commission in KwaZulu-Natal.

The St Lucia area was annexed as



**'We don't know if we would have benefited from mining. We don't know if we would benefit from tourism and conservation. All we know is that nobody has spoken to us'**

CONT...

When the government decided against mining, reports **Eddie Koch**

# Villagers snubbed

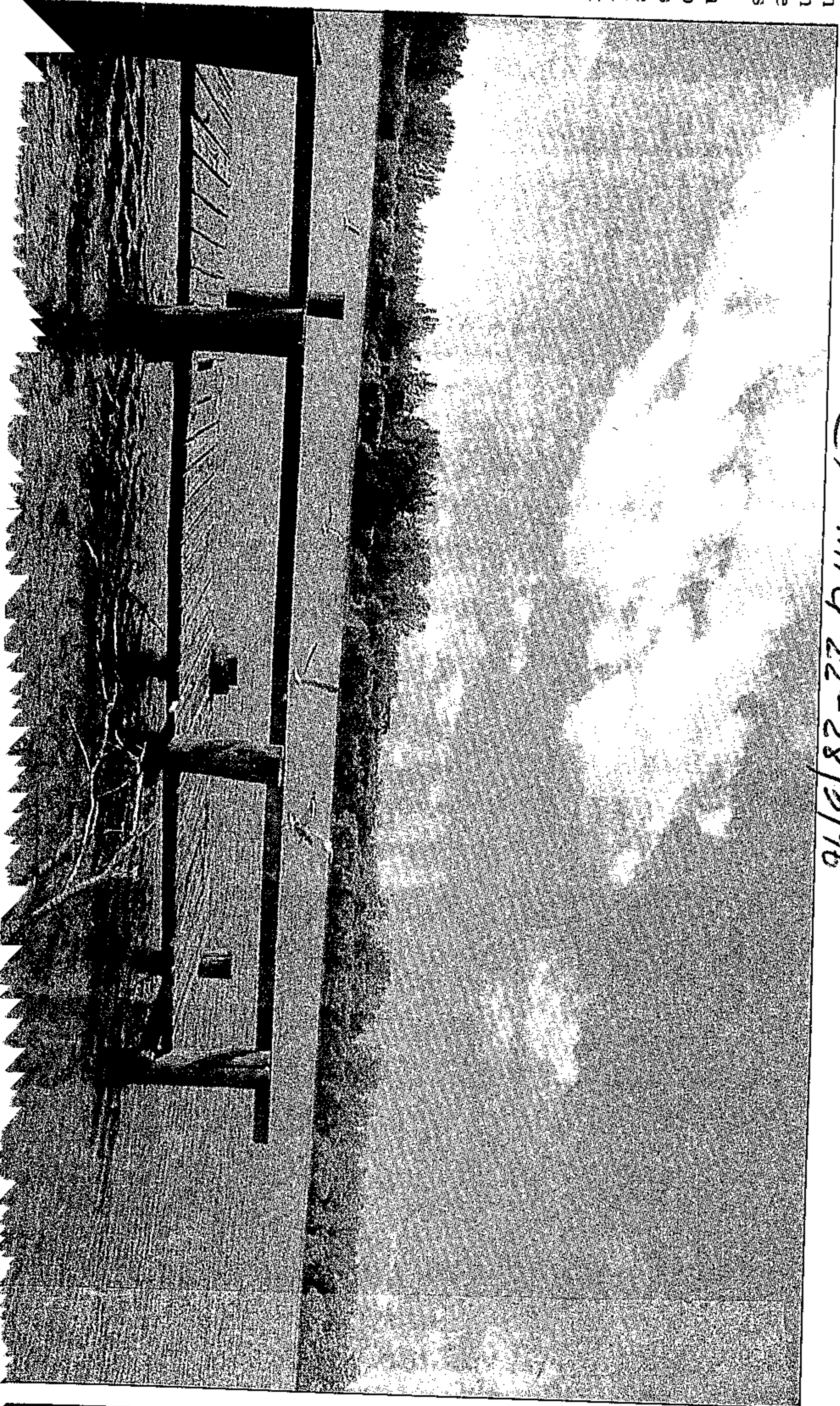
state land to the colony of Natal in 1897. People continued to live in the area and were removed in the mid-1950s after the area was declared a state forest.

The ministers' committee said in its statement that the decision to ban mining on the eastern shores had to be made urgently because "the uncertainty had a detrimental effect on development" and that it was taken only after discussing the matter fully with the KwaZulu-Natal government and the "amakhosi".

It added: "It was also decided that an application to register St Lucia as a World Heritage Site would go ahead urgently ... The Cabinet also decided that consultants be appointed to investigate and advise on an optimal strategy for sustainable development at St Lucia ... It was agreed that acceptable alternatives to the restoration of the land would be further explored with the affected amakhosi."

**H**anekom's office failed to comment at the time of going to press when asked about the apparent discrepancy between his committee's claim that it had consulted the chiefs and popular attitudes expressed at the community

(56) MTG 22-28/3/96



meetings. Asmal's office referred similar queries to the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism. De Villiers's office replied by saying: "The debate surrounding the future of St Lucia has dragged on for many years and during this time interested parties and stakeholders had ample opportunity to make an input."

De Villiers's officials, in turn, referred the M&G to NJ Ngunbane, MEC for Traditional and Environmental Affairs in the Kwazulu-Natal provincial government, for details about which chiefs had apparently endorsed the Cabinet decision.

Ngunbane's office had failed to reply to repeated queries by the time of our going to press.

But representatives from some of the environmental organisations that ran the campaign to save St Lucia from mining admit that they found it difficult during the five-year campaign to recruit support from rural communities who have a stake in the future of the eastern shores.

"The only solution is action now with local communities coming into new ecotourism lodges around the estuary as full partners. We need to show in a concrete way that they can benefit more from mining than they would have from tourism," adds Wally Menne, a supporter of the Campaign to Save St Lucia.

.....  
It's a battlefield: The serene shores of St Lucia (top) belie the conflict that has been generated over the prospect of their being stripmined. Villagers (right and above left) object to the Cabinet's decision to encourage tourism and abandon mining the sensitive dunes

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVE BUZZARD

## Nature people, leave us alone!

**T**AKE one of the dirt roads that run off the main tar road to St Lucia into the dense undergrowth of the Dukuduku and visit one of the settlements that have been carved into the forest. It will be a salutary lesson in how the poorest of the poor in this country experience nature conservation.

Kwazulu-Natal's northern region was richly endowed with coastal lowland forests — a mosaic of indigenous hardwoods, herbs, shrubs, ferns, vines and cycads — until sugar-cane farmers and commercial forests chopped them down in the early part of this century.

The 3500-hectare Dukuduku Forest is the last remaining ecosystem of this type in the province. Conservationists want to preserve it at all costs and have, according to the people who live there, sometimes sided with police and officials from the Natal Provincial Administration in taking harsh action against the "squatters".

The residents have a litany of allegations: their houses have been burnt down, fishermen caught in the lake have been assaulted, fridges have been confiscated, crops have been destroyed and, in one case, a man was buried alive by these groups of outsiders.

The result is that white men drive around in government vehicles and sometimes been shot at and community has earned a reputa-

tion for being a group of wild men who cannot be easily visited or consulted by representatives of officialdom.

We drove in and found, instead, a group of old men waiting next to a spaza shop made of cheap planks to hold a meeting with their councillor — and very keen to explain their point of view to outsiders.

"You ask how we feel about being told to leave the forest. We look around and see people over the river in St Lucia have cut down trees to build their big homes. Farmers up the road have cut the forest to grow eucalyptus," said one of the elders who did not want to be named.

"They have destroyed the forest. Now they say we are the ones who are destroying it. Yet we stay here because we like trees. We like to live among them because we can grow bananas here, we can grow two kinds of *madumbes* (sweet potatoes), paw-paws, cabbages and the wild trees give us all kinds of fruits. So why should we destroy it?"

**O**thers said the local chief and his councillors had instructed people not to cut down trees unnecessarily and that members of this forest "government" were planning to institute punishments for people who did.

Another of the elders provided a list of indigenous fruit species that supplement peoples' diets: *umuthuwamini* (a small brown berry); *amahlala* (monkey apples); *amabunga* (a large yellow fruit); *amabhurzi* (that divides into parts like an orange only it is much sweeter) and *izinduni* (berries that go black when they are ready to be eaten).

The official version is that the forest dwellers are "invaders" or "squatters" who have come into the area from the outside. At least three of the old men in the gathering at the forest spaza shop said they had been forcibly moved from the eastern shores of St Lucia in the 1950s.

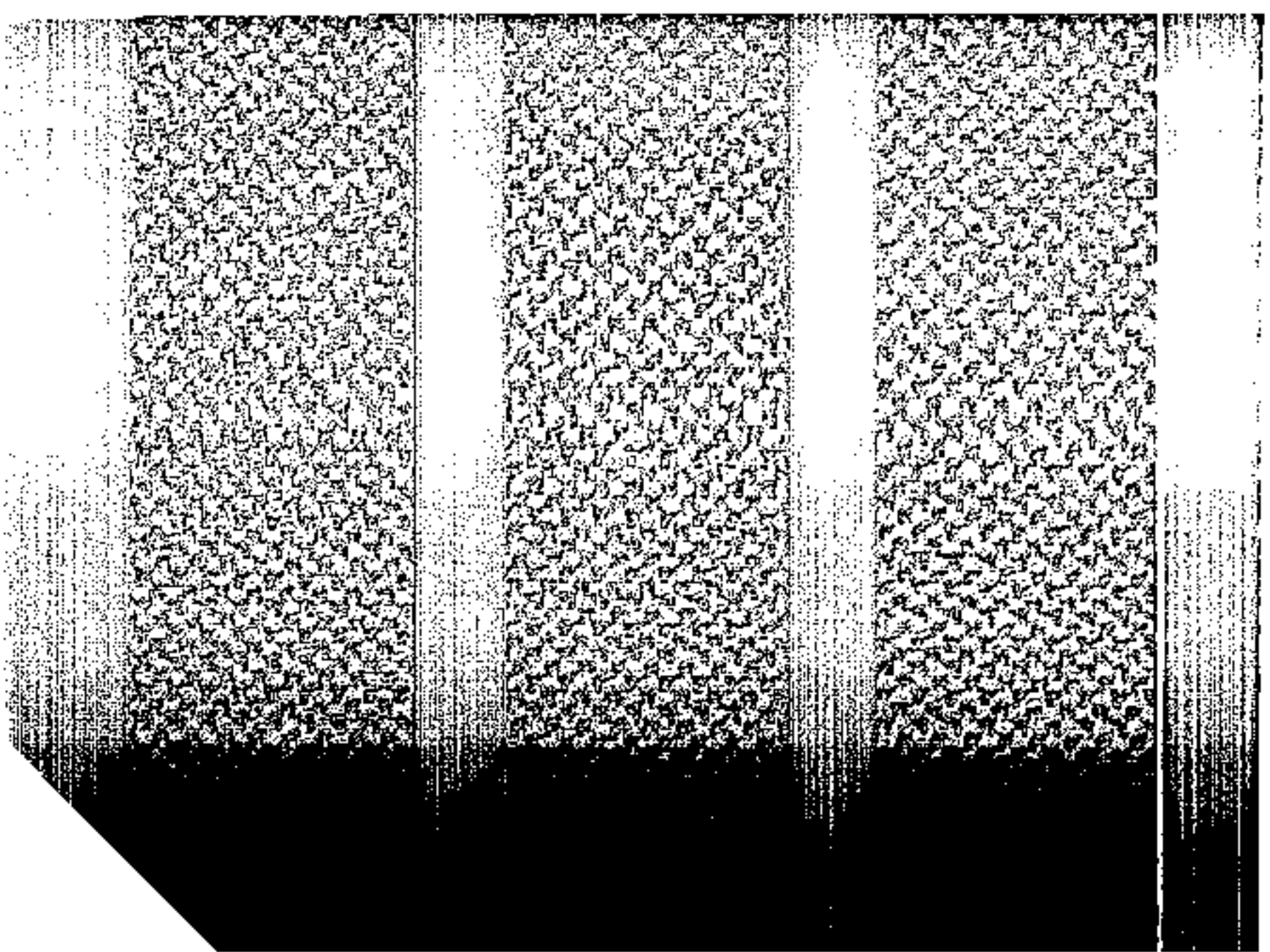
Across the tar road, at Dukuduku Two, people have agreed to move from the forest in return for receiving formal housing sites. The Campaign to Save St Lucia has subsidised a local community project that is trying to organise electricity, water and other services in an effort to lure more of the "settlers" out of the forest.

"But to move people needed money in the first place. You need cash to build a house on the other side of the road. The people who stayed here are the poorest ones. Most have no jobs. We live by fishing [illegally], by selling *madumbes* and bananas or by fishing in the lake," said an unofficial spokesman.

"People live here because they have been moved from their old homes. We live in limbo. That is why we build with planks. We have no money and we may have to move at any time. But at least here we are independent. We don't have to rely on anybody to give us anything."

What did they think about the argument that tourism is a fast-growing industry and that they stand to benefit if they leave the forest and allow it to attract a vibrant ecotourism industry to the region?

"The nature people are *izigebengu* [criminals]. They arrest us and they destroy our homes. They will never agree with us. It is better that they leave us alone and in peace."



# Asmal vows not to dam the Palmiet

**ANDREA WEISS**  
Municipal Reporter

PRECIOUS fynbos that abounds in the Palmiet River valley has been given a reprieve – for now – by Water and Forestry Affairs Minister Kader Asmal, who has promised to explore all other avenues of water management before considering a dam.

Mr Asmal gave this undertaking while inaugurating a R350 million water purification plant at Faure, built by the Cape Town City Council to serve metropolitan Cape Town's needs until 2007. The plant is part of the Riviersonderend/Palmiet River water scheme and involves transporting water from a variety of sources via pipelines to Faure for treatment.

Mr Asmal said that while a politician should learn "never to say never", he hoped that with "sensitive and participatory planning, such an eventuality need never come".

His said his department was working with the Cape Town City Council on a Western Cape System Analysis aimed at finding the best way of ensuring sufficient water supply for greater Cape Town.

The results of this project are currently the subject of a public participation exercise.

"I do not wish to pre-empt the results of this evaluation, but I will listen without prejudice to

ARG 23/3/96 (56)

Water and Forestry Affairs Minister Kader Asmal has promised not to dam the lower Palmiet River valley while there are other ways of managing the water supply to metropolitan Cape Town. His promise came on World Water Day as he opened a R350 million water purification plant at Faure.

the voice of the public in this matter,' he said.

"Without pretending that I have the gift of second-sight, it would not surprise me if, amongst other things, the people agree that we should preserve our natural assets, such as the lower Palmiet River valley as a resource for future generations.

"For as long as I am minister of water affairs and forestry, such a dam will not be permitted while there are other ways we can use water more efficiently."

Mr Asmal said the decision about the Palmiet would have to be made within a year or so, and would have to be made on a long-term basis "however difficult and controversial".

Mr Asmal said that although

the seeds of the Palmiet 1 Scheme were already going into the ground, he was not aware of any real progress being made in the area of demand management.

"In the past we have focused too much on managing the supply of water. It is time now to polish up the demand side of the coin."

Possible measures to lower consumption included tariffs and excess surcharges, repairing leaks and meters and water audits, consumer oriented strategies such as dual flush toilets and lower-flow shower heads, scheduled irrigation, industrial process modification, the use of water efficient appliances and educational strategies.

He said the culture of abundant entitlement was as unfortunate as the culture of non-payment "which we hear so much about from those who have plenty".

"When I hear that the average consumption of water in affluent areas of greater Cape Town reaches as much as 1 750 litres per person per day, and yet millions of South Africans have no access to even 30 litres a day, I realise how much work we still have to do," he said.

A water board to manage water supply for the greater metropolitan area was on the cards.

He said boards were better placed for planning and raising funds.

# Oudekraal gets a stay of execution

56

ST 24/3/96  
By CHARL DEVILLIERS

THE National Monuments Council has potentially slammed the lid on any new developments on the Peninsula's mountainous Oudekraal coast for up to five years.

In a major damper to a developer's proposals for the area, the committee this week said it had notified the Oudekraal Property Group that it intended declaring most of its land a provisional National Monument.

"The land had not originally been declared a National Monument with the rest of Table Mountain but, given possible threats in the area and the high conservation priority of the land, we have provisionally declared it as protected," spokesman David Hart said.

The committee's notice to the Wiehahn Family Trust, which represents the Oudekraal Group of companies, comes amid startling disclosures of proposals to develop private land which the National Parks Boards wants included in the Cape Peninsula national park.

The Devland Group's proposals have included an excavated marina and artificial island between Bakoven and Llandudno, and an elevated four-lane highway running above apartments along the coast.

Meanwhile, the surveyor-general and Cape Town Deeds Office have agreed to exercise "extra diligence" when processing land transfers and sub-divisions in and around the Peninsula's protected area, National Parks Board Table Mountain project co-ordinator David Daitz said.

While NPB believed in negotiation and adequate compensation for private landowners whose property was bought for the park, it had approached the surveyor-general and deeds office in the face "of a run on the bank by developers".

"It's a matter of trying to get the maximum amount of assistance in a very important battle. We believe property rights are indivisible, if inconvenient," he said.

Commenting on tension between the parks board and developers in the Peninsula, SA Property Owners Association Western Cape chairman Jan van Dijken said the creation of the Peninsula park had to be finalised quickly to remove uncertainty which had the effect of depressing prices on the property market.

According to informed sources, only Portion 7 at Bakoven was a zoned township and it could possibly take a Supreme Court ruling to settle any dispute about the rest of the land.

Mr Hart said the NMC notice applied to three portions of land beyond Bakoven which have rural zoning. It did not include Portion 7, nor the adjoining White House property.

Leading Cape Town architect Revel Fox confirmed this week that he had held preliminary discussions with Devland on methods of drawing conservationists into any planning proposals for the Oudekraal coast.

## Builder heeds SOS call

By TOM HOOD

DEMOLITION work has halted at the White House at Oudekraal, the scene last month of an unsuccessful, highly-publicised "new age hippy" protest to stop it being knocked down to make way for a R45-million five-star hotel.

The building, now roofless, is shown as an admiralty beacon on naval charts, and the organisers of two international deep-sea angling competitions from Hout Bay persuaded developer Steve Jones to keep the landmark standing for a few weeks.

The White House enabled any boats in distress in the area to give their exact position.



# Environmentalists look to our cities at awards function

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

Urban environments will be the focus of this year's premier Environment Day event on June 5 organised by the combined science, technology and engineering professions in the country.

The annual event, where winners of the Environmental Planning Professions (Eppic) awards are announced, attracts top speakers in the environmental field.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the symposium and the buffet supper which follows.

This year's keynote address on the theme "Urban open spaces: space to breathe" will be given by Dr David Fig, director of the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) and a member of the board of the National Parks.

GEM has been in the forefront of extensive research and investigations into environmental issues as they affect previously disadvantaged communities.

Fig has chosen the topic "The right to urban open spaces".

Other speakers are:

■ Ivan Kadungare, town planner for Soweto and a member of the RDP unit with the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council. He will speak on "City planning for the future".

■ Dr Steve Lennon, research manager of Eskom's technology group which has pioneered air pollution monitoring especially in the Vaal Triangle and

the Eastern Transvaal. He will speak on "Clean air in the urban environment" and

■ Dr Pat Condy, director of Johannesburg Zoo, who has chosen the title "An old urban space: a new space to breathe in".

The symposium takes place on World Environment Day on Wednesday June 5 at the Volkswagen Conference Centre at Halfway House.

The fee of R85 includes copies of all papers, tea and the buffet supper.

Inquiries to Yvonne Poole at (011) 942-3450.

## Keynote address on urban open spaces

(56) Star 26/3/96

# Zeekoevlei is being

# choked to death

*Drastic measures are needed to save wetland*

Southern Reporter

A LOWERING of the water level in Zeekoevlei, to allow the build up of phosphates, other nutrients and dead weed to be mechanically removed, has been suggested as a means of saving the vlei, which is said to be under dire threat.

The expanse of water has become so polluted, according to Ivan Groenhof, a member of the Zeekoevlei Environmental Forum (ZEF), that unless something drastic is done to ensure it is properly managed, Zeekoevlei as we know it could disappear in the next 20 years.

Of major concern to ZEF, which was formed last year following the dumping of raw sewerage into Princess vlei, is the amount of toxic and waste matter that is entering the vlei system. Mr Groenhof, who is also the

spokesperson for Earthlife Africa, said the two main threats to the vlei and its environs were pollution, which is seriously affecting the water quality, and residential development, which can upset the ecological balance of the wetlands.

High levels of nutrients in the water are promoting uncontrolled growth of weed which covers large sections of the vlei.

These huge masses of weed de-oxygenate the water and in parts block entry to the vlei for fish.

Tests carried out at the end of last year by Scientific Services showed the inflow of phosphates and other chemicals (fertilizers from the Phillipi farmlands) to be way over the accepted norms.

The total microbial count was found to be "too numerous to count at several of the sample points and random tests for the presence of e.coli were positive."

Water flowing into the vlei from the Groot Lotus River has also been badly polluted as a result of broken sewerage pipes in Langa and Khayelitsha.

Theo Stock, an executive member of ZEF said more than 10 tons of phosphates were deposited in the vlei each month during winter.

"ZEF is proposing a multi-pronged approach to saving the vlei by firstly controlling the quality of water flowing into it and, secondly removing the build up of silt and nutrients already in it," he said.

"This will prevent the rampant growth of weed which is currently experienced.

Contributing to the problem is a weir, built in the 1940s to regulate the water level, which is effectively preventing the vlei from flushing itself on a seasonal basis.



Picture: TWEET GAINSBOROUGH-WARING  
**CHOKED WATERWAY:** This weir, built in the 1940s to regulate the water level in Zeeko-evlei, is said to be contributing to pollution by preventing the vlei from flushing itself on a seasonal basis.

APR 28/3/96  
(56)

# CMC backs formation of biosphere reserve

(56)

ARG 28/3/96

*Protected area combining conservation and use of resources*

ANDREA WEISS  
Municipal Reporter

THE Cape Metropolitan Council has agreed to support the formation of a biosphere reserve on the West Coast between Saldanha and Koeberg.

A biosphere reserve is a protected area which combines conservation and sustainable use of natural resources to conserve a characteristic ecosystem in one of the world's natural regions.

The designation "biosphere reserve" is awarded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) on the basis of

nominations from 110 participating countries.

To qualify, a site must contain an effectively protected, minimally disturbed core area of value, and should include additional land or water suitable for research on and demonstration of resource management.

The CMC proposal would entail creating conservation areas between the existing West Coast National Park in the north and the Witzand Nature Reserve and surrounding state farms in the south.

At its monthly meeting yesterday, the CMC agreed to support the principle of the reserve and to nominate an official to

serve on a working group for environmental planning.

It also agreed to write to the director of land affairs in the province to ask that state farms not be alienated or developed until their conservation value had been determined.

The attention of the director is to be drawn to a report by the National Botanical Institute which has indicated individual areas worthy of conservation along the West Coast.

The farms, however, are being damaged by dumping, hunting of wildlife, four-wheel drive vehicles and encroachment of alien vegetation.

Principles which would have to be adhered to would include

a strong need to concentrate resort development in nodes, rather than strung out along the coast.

Small farming and existing agricultural activities would be accommodated within the reserve, while development would be directed towards proposed corridors in terms of the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework.

State farms around the Atlantis area are being considered as part of the biosphere's core conservation area, but the boundaries of the proposed reserve have not been determined because of outstanding environmental studies.

# Analysis paralysis in 'green' lobby

Star 28/3/96

(56)

By ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

South Africa's environmental lobby is in the grip of analysis paralysis, says Professor Charles Breen, director of the Institute of Natural Resources (INR), who visited The Star in a mood for straight talking.

"It doesn't matter what we talk about in regards to the environment. We are managing without a clear objective. As a result, we are unlikely to know when we eventually achieve what we want. We could be going forwards or backwards for all we know.

"What common objectives do we have? What is it that we ought to be doing to pull us out of conflict with each other?" he asks.

The newly independent INR has just come through a year-long process of cutting the apron strings with the University of Natal and becoming a nonprofit Section 21 company. In this, all INR programmes have come under the spotlight. One of these is the institute's 20/20 project, aimed at achieving sustainable development by the year 2020.

"Sustainable development by 2020 is something to strive for. But goals have to be set. Long-term



**Straight talker ... Professor Charles Breen is striving for long term planning.**

planning is required - and it cannot be addressed by the INR alone. There has to be a coming together of environmental planners."

Isn't this "coming together" what Connep (the Consultative National Environment Policy) process is supposed to achieve?

"It's too drawn out," he shoots back. "At the moment, there's a concentration on process, so much so that everyone is in the process and not producing.

"We either get embroiled in the politics of the environment or too involved in 'feel-good' issues."

Breen is an ecologist. For 10 years he has co-ordinated a national estuarine research programme. He is also managing director of the Kruger Park Rivers Programme.

He says the place to start is to

have measurable goals and, to make the point, picks up the 300-page Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's (DEAT) report on South Africa's wetlands: "Take wetlands. We say we need to list them. Then we want to list all the animals in them, then all the plants, then all the goggas, then all the micro-goggas. But we never set any goals.

"It is analysis paralysis, that is what it is. The trouble is, it's comfortable because you never have to measure it."

So what does he suggest?

"Produce a state of the environment report. That could pull the environmental lobby together. It is bigger than all of us and it could be a catalyst for synergy.

"At the moment, every decision is ad hoc. We can't wait for the DEAT to produce such a report. It does not have the expertise in-house. They have been at it for years and where are we?"

He dismisses any suggestion of the DEAT's efforts being limited by budgetary constraints. "The DEAT will never have funds, so it will have to look for partners. Industry has a responsibility to contribute to the preparation of a state of the environment report."

The harsh reality, I suggest, is

that the environment has been devolved to provinces where expertise is haphazard."

The professor is one step ahead: "One thing the DEAT could do to mitigate some negative aspects of the devolution of environmental powers to the provinces, would be to find a common core programme. With a state of environment report every province would have to conduct its own audit.

"There's a lot of random, unco-ordinated activity and we need a way of harnessing this towards a common objective. A state of the environment report would achieve an effective direction of human and financial resources."

The DEAT believes it can produce a state of the environment report - and Breen questions this.

"I'm not debating that it's the DEAT's responsibility, I'm debating the way it is happening.

"There's inertia in the department, it looks inward. They need to say: the kudos is not from doing it ourselves, it comes from getting the job done."

Are you sure you want to say all this? I ask.

"Yes, why not? It has to be said."

# Cableway plans get green light

ANDREA WEISS  
Municipal Reporter

AKG 29/3/96

THE TABLE Mountain cableway upgrade came a step closer when the full Cape Town City Council gave provisional approval for plans for the R60 million project at its monthly meeting – but only after several councillors expressed reservations.

Clive Keegan, an independent candidate in the May election, suggested the matter should be referred back until environmental studies had been fully completed.

Mr Keegan said nobody questioned the need for a “very expensive, very radical and very far-reaching upgrade” but this was being planned in an a very sensitive environment and studies should be of international standard.

“I can’t help feeling this matter is being rushed through,” he said.

Mr Keegan said he believed the public was entitled to more responsible and closer scrutiny than the council was willing to give it.

The most important entity in the debate was not the financial books of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, or the planning prerogative of the Cape Town City Council, but the mountain itself.

“That is all we should be concerned with. We are being bulldozed into this decision by commercial interests.”

Urban planning committee chairman Siviwe Matika said the council had a responsibility to make a decision because the matter was being discussed at provincial level.

Ruth Ortlepp said she believed the upgrade should be facilitated as speedily as possible so as to look after the city’s tourists.

She was backed by Leon Markovitz, National Party candidate for the election, and Chris Joubert, Democratic Party candidate, who both urged that the council get the project moving.

But Mzukisi Gaba, of the SA Communist Party, said there was public concern about the mountain.

Mr Gaba said a decision taken on a project of this magnitude at this stage would be treating the new council, to be elected on May 29, with contempt.

Clive Justus, of the National Party, also expressed his reservations against the upgrade on the basis that an integrated environmental management (IEM) procedure had not been completed.

He said the IEM procedure was a critical, accepted practice, which although not binding in law, was used by all leading developers in the country.

# SA man appointed to UN environment job

Business Day Reporter

INDUSTRIAL Environmental Forum of Southern Africa director Jonathan Hobbs has been appointed to the UN Environment Programme's industry office in Paris. He will head the cleaner production and eco-efficiency division for a two-year period.

The UN programme encourages business and governments to focus more on providing incentives to improve production and reduce pollution and waste at source, rather than using costly "end-of-pipe" pollution control.

(56) 30 29/3/96  
Hobbs said he was committed to improving links between SA and the UN, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Chamber of Commerce and other international agencies focusing on eco-efficiency issues.

He said he would promote SA expertise in the area internationally and provide support for the growing network of business and environmental associations in Africa.

The Industrial Environmental Forum is the leading voice of SA business on environmental issues.

# Sanccob flexes wings with new constitution

(56) ARG 29/3/96

JILYAN PITMAN  
Staff Reporter

**BITTER** in-fighting which has developed at Sanccob (the South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) is expected to be resolved when the first draft of a new constitution for the organisation comes up for discussion at a workshop tomorrow from 2pm in the Milnerton library lecture hall.

A special meeting will be held on Monday, April 29 from 6pm at the same venue to adopt

the amended constitution.

Acting chairman of Sanccob Brian Bacon said David Prieland of UCT's Postgraduate Diploma in Organisation and Management (PDOM) would be the facilitator at the workshop.

"Once the constitution has been approved at the workshop then it goes to the special general meeting for adoption. Then all members will be expected to abide by the decisions taken at the workshop and embodied in the new constitution," said Mr Bacon.

"Those who have been snip-

ing at Sanccob for years will be expected to terminate their activities and allow the organisation to get on with its work. We have learnt from the Apollo Sea disaster in 1994 and it's time stop harping on the past.

"The so-called Penguin Action Group, which has been anti-Sanccob, has been asked to be as transparent about its organisation as Sanccob is about its organisation.

The issue of proxy votes has fallen away and most of the changes have been to plug legal loopholes and to take account

of changes in the organisation."

Mr Bacon said the organisation now needed a strong committee "all pulling in the same direction."

Mr Bacon said he apologised for taking so long to set dates for the workshop and the meeting.

"I take full responsibility for the delay in presenting members with a proposal for the new constitution."

Everyone is welcome to attend the open meeting.

Only paid-up Sanccob members may vote.

# Cableway upgrade approved

CT 29/3/96 (56) (23)

## STAFF WRITER

THE full Cape Town City Council granted its conditional consent yesterday to the R45-million to R60m upgrade of the Table Mountain Cableway and its facilities.

Mr Clive Keegan opposed yesterday's decision because he felt it was being rushed through with "undue haste".

He said too much attention was being paid to "commercial interests" which wanted to bulldoze the application through before the required studies had been made in enough detail.

No other landmark had to be treated with as much sensitivity as the Western Table, he said.

The environmental impact study was "woefully inadequate", and it had been much criticised. Final proposals for the upgrade had not been subjected to proper public scrutiny, he said.

According to reports before the council, the upgrade involves replacing the existing cable cars with larger, faster and more stable ones.

This will mean more than twice as many people will be taken to the top of the mountain, which in turn means more toilet facilities will have to be provided there, among other things. The existing toilets have septic tanks, but in future sewage will probably have to be taken off the mountain by pipe or in containers. Their issue has not yet been finalised.

Fewer than half-a-million people a year go up and down the cableway at present, but soon after the upgrade, the million-a-year mark is expected to be reached. On peak days, more than 8 000 people could be taken to the top.

Urban planning co-chairman Mr Siviwe Matika said the council would be abdicating its duty if it sent the report back to his committee.

"Either refuse, or give the go-ahead, but don't send it back. We know there are inadequacies, which we want addressed before we give full approval." These points had been addressed in the conditions, he said.

He noted that the final approval would be granted by the provincial authorities.

● See Page 9



CEMENT FACTORY 2KM FROM BAY

# Saldanha developer to consider impact

CEMENT FACTORY developers at Saldanha say the "no build" alternative is possible if the environment is adversely affected. Environment Writer **MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**A**R745-MILLION cement factory and four quarries are on the cards for Saldanha — but proponents Alpha Ltd say if the negative environmental affects of the development are too serious they will drop the project.

The cement plant, next to the controversial Saldanha Steel mill currently under construction, is to be built about two kilometres from Saldanha Bay and will produce 700 000 tons of cement and clinker a year. Production is expected to begin in the year 2000.

Before the project can proceed, Alpha will need approval for:

- Rezoning of the factory site from agriculture to heavy industry.
- Rezoning of the quarry areas from agriculture to mining.
- Mining licences to operate the quarries.

The main limestone quarry will be on Prospect Hill, north-east of Diazville. Two smaller limestone

quarries are planned for Oranjevllei and Jacobsbay. A fourth quarry at Holvlei, north of Jacobsbay Road, will be used for mining clay.

The limestone and clay will be transported to the cement plant by an 8km overland conveyor 2,5m high, which may be partially sunken in places.

The conveyor will be closed to limit dust emissions and all stockpiles will be covered.

No liquid effluents will be produced which cannot be disposed of in the municipal sewers.

The project will create 87 skilled jobs, 93 semi-skilled, and 66 unskilled. During construction there will be about 40 skilled, 120 semi-skilled and 500 unskilled jobs.

Alpha's commercial manager Mr Quentin Dollman said they were investigating the feasibility of siting the cement plant close to the northern border of the site to allow the 2km buffer zone between the

CT 29/3/96 (56) bay and the steel mill to continue across Alpha's land.

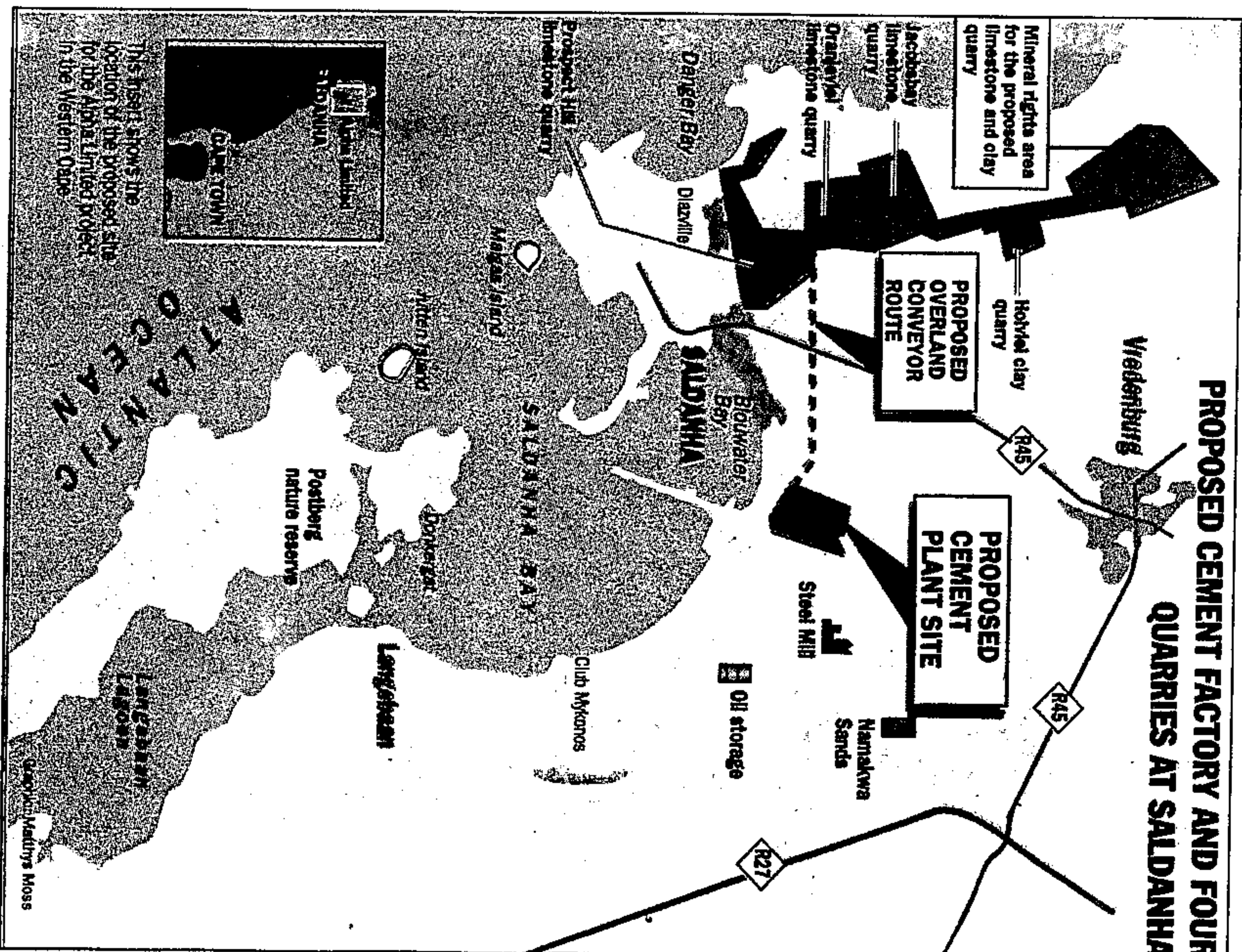
Alpha has commissioned a year-long environmental impact assessment (EIA) on the project. Managing director Mr Johan Pretorius said: "We have committed ourselves to conducting our business in an environmentally sustainable manner. A final decision will not be taken until the results of the EIA have been fully assessed."

A "no-build" alternative was a possibility.

Environmentalists are worried that the cement factory is the start of a flood of heavy industry into the environmentally sensitive region triggered by the Saldanha Steel mill.

They have said the cumulative affects of heavy industry will destroy the "sense of place" of the scenic Langebaan Lagoon and West Coast National Park.

● Anyone wanting to comment on the project should telephone the EIA co-ordinator Mark Wood at (011) 958-1920 or fax (011) 958-1858 before May 1.



# Health risk for some Table View residents

ET 29/3/96

ENVIRONMENT WRITER

(~~48~~) (56)

SULPHUR DIOXIDE released in isolated incidents in Table View and other suburbs near the Caltex refinery was an acute health risk to sensitive individuals, a major air pollution study has found.

These incidents occurred less than 1% of the year, however, and affected only 10 to 20% of the population for short periods. They were not a chronic health risk to the community.

Other findings of the Milnerton Air Quality Project, released last night, were that:

- High levels of benzene were an "unacceptable health risk".
- The level of nitrogen oxides in Goodwood often exceeded Department of Environment guidelines.
- The odour limit of hydrogen sulphides had been exceeded several times in Table View.
- Fungal spore levels were high enough from time to time to cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

The project was a joint undertaking by the CSIR and City Council and arose out of widespread complaints about air pollution — mostly bad odour, followed by dust, smoke and poor visibility.

The public perception was that the Caltex refinery and the Kynoch fertiliser plant were responsible for the pollution, the report said.

The chief air pollution control officer has instructed Kilson Lime Works to install air cleaning equipment before March 31 and a "cat urine" smell was solved by Waste-tech who cleaned up their Vissershoeek site.

# Bombshell ruling on cableway upgrade

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

ST(M) 31/3/96  
IN A devastating blow to Table Mountain's cableway upgrade, the National Monuments Council on Friday ruled against the R65-million project which was due to start tomorrow.

The bombshell decision effectively rules out City Council approval of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company's building plans and may lead to a costly, year-long delay for the project.

The National Monuments Council said it could consider approving the upgrade only once an integrated environmental management (IEM) process had been completed.

The company hit back immediately, saying it would take the decision on appeal to Arts, Science, Culture and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane.

"We'll be speaking to our attorneys on Monday on the grounds that Table Mountain is a national asset, not the buildings on top. We also believe that the procedure we set up in September has been an IEM process," cableway company managing director John Harrison said.

City Engineer David Bradley said the cableway company had stuck to "the spirit" of the IEM process.

But environmental bodies such as the National Parks Board, Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment management advisory committee and Mountain Club of South Africa said the decision of the monuments council supported their view that the IEM process had been flawed.

"Given the significance of Table Mountain as a national monument and potential World Heritage Site, any impact assessments must stand up to national and international review," NMC director George Hofmeyr said.

Expressing disappointment at the NMC's decision, City Council development co-ordinator Rod Young said the council had done its utmost to facilitate the upgrade.

Leading Cape Town architect Revel Fox, who headed a committee to review the cableway company's building plans, said the national monuments council's decision had not come as a big surprise.

The Provincial Administration this week conditionally approved a permit for the upgrade.

Reacting, Mountain Club spokesman Lester Coelen said: "We're setting a dangerous precedent if projects of this magnitude and impact get approved on the basis of a flawed process." City planning official Steve Townsend complained that the Department of Environmental Affairs' IEM guidelines would lead to a "nightmarish" situation if made mandatory.

*Hansford*

## INTERPELLATIONS

The sign \* indicates a translation. The sign †, used subsequently in the same interpellation, indicates the original language.

**Spillage of radioactive material at Pelindaba**

1. Mr M J GOLDING asked the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs:

- (1) Whether any steps have been taken or are to be taken to guarantee the safety of persons in the areas surrounding Radiation Hill near the Atomic Energy Corporation at Pelindaba against the hazards posed by contaminated material: if not, why not; if so, what steps have been taken or are to be taken towards the rehabilitation of the environment and the prevention of hazards resulting from contaminated waste;
- (2) whether any officials have been found to be responsible for not fully complying with the licence obligations in terms of the relevant Act; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what action has been taken against such officials?

## 401E.INT

The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY AFFAIRS: Madam Speaker, before responding to the hon member's question, may I draw members' attention to my answer to Question 22 on today's Question Paper, which deals extensively with the Atomic Energy Corporation and the events surrounding Radiation Hill. In fact, hon members may be interested to know that my response to Question 22 consists of 26 pages, excluding the annexures.

As regards the hon member's question, the safety of people in the area surrounding Radiation Hill against the hazards posed by contaminated material is secured by a number of steps, which are the following: Precautions were taken in setting up the Radiation Hill waste disposal site in the first place, long before the recent incident. Secondly, there has been constant monitoring, ever since Radiation Hill was first used in the 1960s, of both the immediate vicinity and the whole area. Results show that the Crocodile River and the Hartbeespoort Dam have less radiation today than before the AEC started. Thirdly, there was the orderly restoration of the excavations by the

Atomic Energy Corporation under the supervision of the independent Council for Nuclear Safety; and fourthly, tests were performed on the workers who handled the material. There are also the AEC's high safety standards and the general monitoring function of the Council for Nuclear Safety.

In April 1995 excavations were undertaken to retrieve the condenser from among the drums containing radioactive waste. The excavations took place without formal approval from the Council for Nuclear Safety. No wilful neglect was found. The supervisor failed to realise that only burial of waste was approved. Special approval from the Council for Nuclear Safety was required to dig it up. The supervisor did provide the workers with protective clothing and the work was executed under the supervision of a health physics officer. The lack of insight on the part of the supervisor regarding the intricacies of the nuclear site licence was considered a misjudgment by the management body giving the instruction, rather than an error on the part of the supervisor.

An error in communication had also occurred. The health physics officer, seeing the workers in the appropriate protective clothing, assumed that the supervisor had registered the workers as radiation workers. The supervisor, on the other hand, assumed that the health physics officer would tell him if there was anything irregular. Since there was no serious contamination of the environment, the workers showed no intake of radioactive material, the necessary protective clothing had been provided, and the operation had been overseen by a health physics officer, as required, the management body considered that a severe reprimand of the personnel involved was an appropriate sanction. The manager who initiated the excavation as well as his immediate supervisor are no longer in the service of the AEC. [Time expired.]

Mr M J GOLDING: Madam Speaker, as they say, the virtue of democracy is that we are all entitled to our own opinions, but we are not entitled to our own facts.

In this debate I want to raise a few points concerning the matter of radioactive waste and Radiation Hill, the place which, since the 1960s, has been the only national waste disposal facility.

For many years the activities of the Atomic Energy Corporation have been conducted in secrecy. The AEC has been a body that has consumed, over a period of time, a substantial amount of public resources to pursue research in the nuclear area. The fact that public money is used requires accountability, and where activities potentially endanger communities because of inappropriate conduct, it is imperative that steps should be taken to address this.

What is blatantly clear is that breaches of conditions in licences granted to the AEC by the Council for Nuclear Safety have occurred. In compiling inventories for the International Atomic Energy Agency, following the closure of the old uranium enrichment plant at Pelindaba, a shortfall of depleted uranium was discovered. This led to excavations, which started in April 1995, being carried out by people who were not registered radiation workers, but who were employed during the excavation of radiation-active material. This is according to the CNS report. Secondly, a five-day reporting period was ignored, and a month elapsed before the occurrence was first made known. Thirdly, incorrect information was furnished to the CNS by the AEC. Lastly, quarterly reports on waste disposal have not been submitted, nor have records been kept of the nuclear-specific radioactive content of the waste.

Minister Botha says that this was the error of a supervisor at the bottom. I say that this is something that senior management has to take responsibility for. These are only some of the violations that have occurred. In my opinion they are serious, even though we are talking about low-level radiation waste. It is clear that there was, and possibly still is, a lack of management and radiological control.

I know that the Minister said he had replied to the question extensively in an addendum. However, my questions are as follows: Does he condone this corporate disobedience? What steps have been taken to ensure that conditions of licensing are adhered to in the future? Also, will casual employees be monitored, and if not, why are they not monitored; and if so, are they fully aware of the exposure that they had during the day of the excavation? And would he agree that the presence of the yellow cake, which is a long-life liquid, and the uncertainty regarding the radionuclide-content of the waste, indicate that our waste-management programme is deficient and in need of reform? Finally, will he, in consultation with the newly

appointed board of the AEC, initiate a full enquiry and audit into the activities of the AEC? [Time expired.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Hon members, I would like to ask you once again please to lower your voices. There is far too much noise in the Assembly.

\*Mr W A BOTHA: Madam Speaker, the FE is not opposed to the development and use of nuclear energy in South Africa; in fact, we support research and the peaceful utilisation of South Africa's nuclear capabilities. It is precisely for this reason that we are extremely concerned about the possible negative consequences for South Africa as a result of the closure of the uranium enrichment plant at Pelindaba's Z plant. We hope and trust that the Government will do everything in its power to ensure that the approximately 500 highly trained and experienced nuclear personnel, in particular, who are being dismissed, will not be lost to South Africa. It would be irresponsible if we allowed countries abroad to rob South Africa of this precious brainpower.

We are grateful that Radiation Hill was and is not a nuclear disaster. We have taken cognisance of the Minister's press statement in this regard. However, it could well have been a disaster. Even the Minister was clearly upset by the fact that the incident occurred. After this incident the FE is seriously concerned about the management and control of the nuclear industry as a whole.

A further cause for concern is that, according to *Beeld* of 29 February, the Council for Nuclear Safety could still not give attention to the filling in of that area on that date, nearly a year after the incident, and that as a result of 25 more important reports that demanded attention. This is unacceptable, and increases the concern and the suspicion regarding the entire matter on the part of the public. One cannot help wondering what the other 25 atomic energy reports which, according to *Beeld*, were more important than the Radiation Hill blunder, were about.

Commissions of enquiry into disasters, such as those appointed after the Merriespruit disaster, are necessary, but a responsible government must do everything rather to prevent disasters. The Government must get into gear and prevent South Africa and its people from becoming the victim of poor or negligent management with regard to nuclear matters.

The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY

AFFAIRS: Madam Speaker, of course I do not condone what happened there, but I am trying to bring perspective to this whole debate.

An HON MEMBER: But what are you doing?

The MINISTER: That is why, on 4 March, I personally made arrangements and invited the hon member Mr Golding and all the media of this country to spend a whole day attending a background briefing at which questions were put. The result at the end of the day was that there was agreement that no harm or damage had been done to human beings, animals or the environment. Surely the most important aspect was to determine whether what happened at Radiation Hill endangered people, animals or the environment, and the answer was a categorical no.

Naturally, on that same day I urged both the Council for Nuclear Safety and the Atomic Energy Corporation to agree urgently on a process which would ensure that excavations of this nature would never again occur, and I have been assured of that.

With regard to workers, all four of the workers' urine analyses showed levels below the minimum possible detection limit—under 10 micrograms of uranium per litre of urine. This was followed by a body counting test that measures both the natural and the possibly unnatural radiation of a person's body. It confirmed once more that any possible absorption of uranium by the workers was below the test's minimum possible detection limit. The calculated doses they received were much less than one millisievert. Compare this to the limit of 50 millisieverts for radiation workers. [Time expired.]

Mr M T MAFOLO: Madam Speaker, Pelindaba, the Atomic Energy Corporation site 20 kilometres west of Pretoria, has a number of plants situated along a stretch of 10 kilometres. One of those plants is a mere 500 metres away from Ateridgeville, a residential area of more than 200 000 people.

When the drums containing radioactive waste were punctured during an excavation, the 200 000 people in Ateridgeville, and many others using the public road in the area, were exposed willy-nilly to the danger of cancer. When officials from the Council for Nuclear Safety visited the nuclear site, they were shocked to find that while the licensed limit of contamination is supposed to be 20 counts per second on a contamination metre, the officials measured 2 000 counts more per

second. The senior manager at the AEC admitted this and said: "Look, we screwed up, but let us see our way forward."

So this apartheid edifice, built to bolster White supremacy and shrouded in secrecy, where workers were told to tell people that they were building bicycles, is a threat to the health of the people of Ateridgeville and the surrounding areas. In a few years' time we should not be surprised to see many cases of cancer in that area, children born with deformities and people suffering from unexplained illnesses. We need a commission of inquiry into the matter. We need to assure the Ateridgeville people and many others in the area that the AEC is not covering up, and that they are safe. Health and safety measures should be taken as a matter of urgency.

A serious matter related to the nuclear waste is that of the 11 casual workers who worked at the AEC Radiation Hill, four of them for nearly a year, without protection and without being warned of the dangers of radiation. Nuclear safety officials said that these men could face the danger of cancer. [Time expired.]

Mr M J GOLDING: Madam Speaker, if it is true that the Sunday newspapers brought this particular issue to the attention of the Minister, then I am very surprised.

Having listened to the Minister's remarks, I must admit that this incident demonstrates that there is a degree of deficiency in our management of the waste disposal programme. Clearly, this matter deserves urgent attention in respect of policy and legislation.

I am pleased that a major aspect of the transformation programme has been undertaken in this area by the appointment of a representative board of directors for the Atomic Energy Corporation and the Council for Nuclear Safety.

This debate also demonstrates that it is essential to keep the public properly informed, and that we should not tolerate slack management of radioactive waste material. It is not sufficient, as the spokesperson of the Atomic Energy Corporation has stated, that we sensationalise the radiation story.

My final question to the Minister—I may add that he has not answered my other question—is this: Can we expect legislation to be placed before this House? [Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY

AFFAIRS: Madam Speaker, the reply to the hon member's complaint is exactly that the time for responding to his questions had expired. He could hardly put his questions to me in the time available to him. [Laughter.] If I am given half an hour, I will reply to that question and a lot more.

The fact of the matter is that the waste at Radiation Hill does not originate only from the AEC. Waste of this kind cannot be disposed of by each waste producer in the country. Last year, the AEC accepted 116 waste consignments from outside organisations. They had taken the responsibility. The most frequent supplier of waste was not some sinister nuclear organisation, but Tygerberg Hospital, right here in Bellville. When a doctor uses certain equipment, he cannot throw the waste into his basket. If he did that, it would land on the rubbish heaps of Johannesburg, Pretoria or Cape Town.

I am saying to hon members today that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure the safety of the area and we are in line with international standards. The Council for Nuclear Safety sets conditions and standards in the mining industry and elsewhere which are at times ten times more strict than the standards applicable in the United States or Europe.

A new board, as the hon member Mr Golding pointed out, has just been appointed. I have written to the board, and invited them to meet me. We will certainly give serious and urgent attention to ensuring that South Africa remains within the framework of internationally applicable and acceptable norms and standards.

Debate concluded.

#### Broadcasting of national sport activities

2. Mr M C J VAN SCHALKWYK asked the Minister of Sport and Recreation:\*

- (1) Whether he intends introducing legislation or issuing regulations in regard to the broadcasting of national sport activities; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether any sport bodies have been consulted to determine their standpoint on the matter; if not, why not, if so, what was the response of such bodies?

N402E,INT

The MINISTER OF SPORT AND RECREATION: Madam Speaker, I have stated in public that legislation is being considered as one option to preserve public access to major sports events involving this country's sportsmen and sports-women, as well as other national sports events.

I would like to see that the majority of South African citizens have the opportunity to view and listen to major international sports events where South Africans are involved. It is a *fait accompli* that the SA Rugby Football Union has signed a contract, and sold all its rights to Mr Rupert Murdoch's news corporation.

My concern, however, goes beyond the fact that contracts have been signed, and that national federations and even sportspeople could gain financially from these contracts. The reasons for this standpoint are the following.

Since I have been appointed Minister of Sport and Recreation I have recorded on countless occasions the role of sports in uniting the people of our country. I have stressed the conciliatory role of sport, and emphasised the Government's commitment to employing sport as a vehicle to create a stable and productive society. Sport can play a major role in effecting change in our society. Sports events where top sportspeople compete at international level are of national interest. Our country's sports role-models are involved in these events, and they serve as a window of our country to the world.

These events also create pride and a sense of achievement for the entire nation. The role of sport is central to our efforts at building a new South Africa. Therefore, it is necessary to expose our country to the achievements of our elite sportspeople taking part in major international events. The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations serve as examples. Should the selling of the broadcasting rights of such sports events of national interest deny South Africans of their indisputable right to view the broadcasting of such events, measures will have to be considered to safeguard our national interests.

Mr M C J VAN SCHALKWYK: Madam Speaker, we have to find a balance between three interest groups: the sports bodies, which hold the broadcasting rights to sports events; the broadcasters, who are obviously in the business of providing the best service to their viewers; and the public, who regard national sports events as events where the

# Perhaps marina sc

**Y**OU get daft schemes and then some that are even more daft.

In my view, reported plans to construct luxury apartments beneath an elevated four-lane freeway between Bakoven and Llandudno, and a marina at Oudekraal linked to an artificial island, rank firmly with the latter.

That South Africa's engineering and construction professions are capable of making a reality of such proposals is beyond doubt, although anyone who remembers the ferocious winter storms which drove the derelict tankers Antipolis and Romelia aground and sent the unfortunate Apollo Sea to its watery grave will have serious doubts about the wisdom of siting a marina anywhere along the exposed Atlantic seaboard.

The whole scheme - even without the marina part of it - is so at odds with the real-

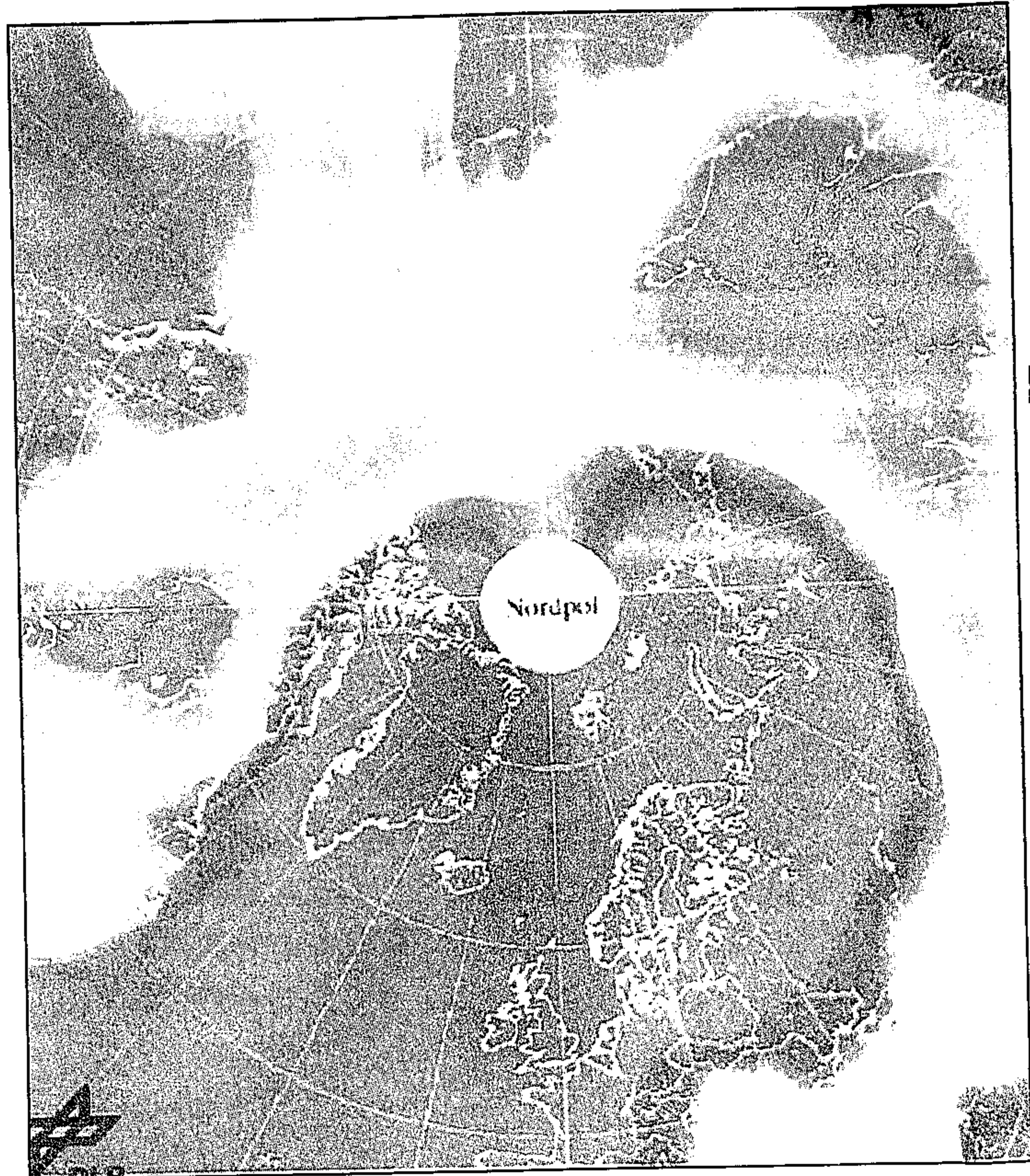
ity of the creation of a Table Mountain national park, the expected declaration of a World Heritage Site and urgent moves to preserve what remains of the Cape's unsurpassed natural heritage to maintain the region's tourism-based economy, that one is inclined to treat the report about it as a poor and slightly premature April Fool's joke.

Apparently, though, plans are being "finalised" and will be put to the public for comment towards the end of the month.

If these reports are correct, one can only conclude either the developer is being badly served by the planners, or that he or she is blithely ignoring the planners' advice.

For all professional planners in Cape Town - and indeed elsewhere in South Africa - are fully aware that the government has expressed its "in principle" support for compulsory Integrated Environmental

Man:  
deve  
read  
Th  
table  
ram  
woul  
huge  
deta  
the a



**STARTLING SIGHT:** This picture shows the ozone hole above the North Pole in mid-February, seen from the European satellite ERS-2. With the help of a new gauge, the Global Ozone Monitoring Experiment, high-quality picture charts will be available this month picturing the concentrations of the ozone. The figures from three days of measuring will enable the German Society of Aviation and Space Travel to produce a global chart. For Europe, for example, a daily illustration of the concentration of the ozone layer will be possible.

# heme is an April Fool's joke

(56) ARG 1/4/96

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



agement (IEM) procedures for all major developments, and has draft legislation to this effect.

at this legislation hasn't actually been passed in parliament yet might have legal ramifications, but the moral course for would-be developers is clear: the days when schemes could be planned to the last minute and then presented to the public and authorities with a flourish and an attitude

of a *fait accompli*, are well and truly over.

If I understand the IEM procedure correctly, any development proposal which is going to impact significantly on the public has to be negotiated from the broad concept stage, and interested and affected parties have to be identified right at the start.

What follows then is a scoping exercise to make sure that all these parties have been informed about the proposal and are given a full opportunity to identify key issues relating to the proposal which will then have to be examined in detail during a subsequent environmental impact assessment (EIA) that includes specialist studies.

A "no development" option and looking at alternative sites and/or proposals are usually among the key issues identified during the scoping process - and would certainly be so in this particular instance.

So why are we having to wait until the end of the month for the proposal to be "finalised" before being presented with details? The planners involved must know that this way of handling the would-be development is no longer acceptable, and that as a result there is likely to be huge public resistance, both to process and substance, to say nothing of opposition from local authorities and statutory bodies like the National Parks Board.

If the planners and the developer are wise, they will host a public meeting immediately at which they announce their intentions and their commitment to a full IEM process.

Personally, I still believe the scheme is so daft it has no chance of success, but at least presenting it correctly would help to avoid much of the likely acrimony and anger.

# Alien vegetation facts speak for themselves

ARG 1/4/96

(56)

**E**XPERIMENTS by fynbos ecologists in the Western Cape mountains have proved that plant invasions by alien species such as pine trees are causing an average loss of more than 30 percent of Cape Town's precious water supply.

In other areas of the country, pine and eucalypt plantations have caused streams to dry up completely.

Fortunately, the experiments also show that the reverse is true, and that removing these alien plants does increase the natural water flow again - often substantially.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, which has initiated a multi-million rand "Working for Water" project linked to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), has released a fact sheet containing details of scientific work, the findings of which justify the project which is already employing more than 6 000 people countrywide.

This is in response to criticism in some quarters about the project.

One of the documented studies is a review of experiments in 94 water catchment areas around the world, published in the *Journal of Hydrology*. This concludes that these experiments provide overwhelming evidence that replac-

*Scientific experiments - many of them by South Africa's leading plant scientists and ecologists - prove beyond doubt that invasive alien plants such as pine trees and eucalypts use more water in mountain catchment areas than indigenous plants, and that the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's innovative "Working for Water" project to remove them is cost-effective and environmentally-friendly. Environment Reporter JOHN YELD looks at some of the details.*

ing a low canopy vegetation - such as the Cape's fynbos - with a dense, taller vegetation - such as pine plantations - causes a reduction in stream flow.

Specific research, the results of which were published in reputable scientific journals, includes:

- In the Western Cape, researchers found that replacing fynbos scrub forest with pines resulted in a streamflow reduction of up to 50 percent;

- In KwaZulu-Natal, replacing grassland in two small catchments in the Drakensberg with pines caused streams to be reduced during a 20-year period by 82 percent;

- In Mpumalanga, replacing natural grassland on the escarpment area with pines and eucalypts in two different catchments caused streams in both catchments to dry up completely; and

- In a water catchment area of the Northern Province, replacing indigenous scrub forest with eucalypts caused the stream in the catchment to dry up completely.

Referring to the effects of clearing, the department's fact sheet notes that if invasive alien vegetation uses significant amounts of water, clearing them from river banks and catchment areas where they grow should cause streamflows to increase.

"Experiments show this is exactly what happens," it states.

Scientific experiments included an examination of several areas, including:

- Clearing a dense canopy of pines and wattle from river banks on a Sappi estate near Lydenburg resulted in a 120 percent increase in the streamflow within a short period after clearing; and

- Clearing pines from an area of 30m on either side of a stream in a small catchment in Jonkershoek resulted in a 44 percent increase in the streamflow per 10 percent of the catchment area cleared.

The invasion of catchment areas by alien plants could result in serious erosion after the inevitable fires which occurred from time to time, the fact sheet states.

"Such invasions are therefore incompatible with sound catchment conservation."

It would take about 20 years to remove most of the alien invasives in South Africa's important catchment areas - an "immense" task which promised to significantly enhance water supplies to towns and cities.

"Conversely, if we fail to halt and reverse the spread of alien invader plants, we shall be courting disaster."

For example, catchment experiments by some of South Africa's top plant scientists had indicated that invasive plants in the fynbos area of the Western Cape resulted in an average decrease of 347 cubic metres of water per hectare per year, leading to an average loss of more than 30 percent of the water supply to Cape Town.

"Clearing such invasions would deliver more water, and would do so at a cheaper cost."

# Cableway lawyers to discuss dispute

ANDREA WEISS  
Municipal Reporter

ARG 1/4/96

THE Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company is taking legal advice today following a decision by the National Monument's Council (NMC) to halt a proposed R60 million upgrade which was to have started today.

The NMC said that an integrated environmental impact procedure would have to be completed before it could agree to the upgrade.

The mountain is a national monument, making the NMC one of three authorities which have to give permission for the upgrade.

The other two - the Cape Town City Council and Western Cape Premier Hennis Kriel - have given conditional approval.

John Harrison, managing director of the company, said their lawyers would be meeting later today to discuss the situation.

A contract with the city council, which was one of the conditions imposed by them, was nearing completion, he said.

Dave Daniels, city planner, said on Friday that the final building plans would also still have to go before the city's urban planning committee.

Kobus Meiring, provincial Minister of Finance and Environment, faxed a letter to the company on Friday giving consent in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act to permit the upgrading.

Mr Meiring said the consent was conditional upon "reasonable modifications" being made to the proposed architecture of the new buildings at the lower and upper cables to satisfy suggestions by the review committee chaired by Revel Fox.

The Fox committee was appointed by the city council to review plans submitted by the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company.

Mr Meiring said an environmental impact assessment would also have to be prepared to the satisfaction of the city council and the National Parks Board.

This would have to cover the proposed waste water and sewerage system, as well as the removal or modification of existing overhead electrical supply cable.



UPGRADE COULD BE DELAYED BY YEAR

# Cableway company seeks urgent meeting

CT 1/4/96  
**THE CABLEWAY COMPANY** wants to persuade the National Monuments Council to allow it to go ahead with its upgrade of buildings, despite the fact that environmental impact studies are incomplete. **PETER DENNEHY** reports.

**U**RGENT talks will be sought today between the cableway company and the National Monuments Council, which last week effectively halted the impending R60-million cableway upgrading.

Chairman of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company Mr Louis de Waal, said yesterday that while the mountain was a national monument the buildings on it were not.

He wants permission to go ahead immediately with proposed alterations to buildings on the mountain while the required environmental impact studies on the sewage, water and electricity, and other issues continue.

The NMC met on Friday, listened to a half-hour presentation by the cableway company, asked a few questions about whether the environmental studies had been

completed and then sent a fax to the company saying the impact assessment must stand up to national and international scrutiny before the upgrade would be given the go-ahead.

A report to the Cape Town City Council last week said council planners had criticised the environmental studies commissioned by the cableway company, saying they had not considered enough alternatives — "such as directional drilling".

This drilling, which would incur high costs, would require mining company experts to shift their equipment to the top of the mountain to drill a 70mm-diameter hole through the mountain.

The shaft would start out going vertically downward, but gradually curve so that it came out horizontally at the bottom of the mountain, where it would be connected

(56) (56)  
to the city's sewerage pipes.

Sewage from the toilets at the top of the mountain would have to be mulched before being sent down the drilled hole to minimise blockages.

City planners stressed that they wanted to stick to the principle that "what goes up must come down". They do not like the existing septic tank and soak-away system.

De Waal said his company had looked at the alternative of bringing the sewage down in the tanks under the proposed new cablecars, but rejected the idea.

"You drop a handful of sewage and it smells for a week."

A meeting with the NMC will be sought today. If the impact studies have to be completed before any engineering work is done, which includes installation of the cable machinery at the lower station instead of the upper station, the cableway upgrade will be delayed for at least a year.

The NMC's Mr George Hofmeyr could not be reached for comment yesterday.

# Tour operators hit at cableway delay

(56)

ARC 2/4/96

## Staff Reporters

BIG TOUR operators have expressed disbelief over the National Monuments Council (NMC) decision to delay the upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway.

But the Wildlife Society has expressed support for the NMC, saying developments should not take place before all the studies for an Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process have been completed.

The Tour Operators Association of Cape Town, which has about 50 members including all leading tour bus companies, said in a statement that every group in the city had Table Mountain cableway on its itinerary.

Vice-chairman David Munton said in a statement: "People come thousands of miles to ascend Table Mountain. Since the elections and the boom in tourism, the old cableway cannot cope with the tourism traffic.

"It is in desperate need of upgrading. To delay the upgrade now will put tourism back years."

Mr Munton said this year would probably be the last winter that the cableway could

close for eight months for upgrading because of the growth in tourism.

Mr Munton said his organisation believed there was a balance to be achieved between the environment and nature conservation issues.

However, his organisation's members were astounded "that after all the effort expended", the NMC should pronounce that the upgrade could not proceed.

The Wildlife Society told the chairman of the city council's urban planning committee, Siviwe Matika, that Table Mountain's facilities "should be of an international standard and any proposals considered should follow an environmental process of international standard".

"The most important aspect of an environmental impact assessment - the involvement of the public in the decision-making process - must still be completed.

"It would be a grave mistake to take a decision to allow construction to commence until such time as these requirements have been met," the Society said.

The NMC has jurisdiction over Table Mountain as a declared National Monument.

# Cleanup campaign involves residents

Reports by Michael Moon

(56) BD 3/4/96

A R12m campaign to help municipal authorities set up waste management systems in townships and informal settlements was launched in Johannesburg yesterday.

The Clean and Green project is a tripartite initiative between the public works department, SA Breweries and Keep SA Beautiful.

It is expected to create more than 700 jobs in the next year and is aimed at getting communities to start paying for refuse removal and civic cleanup operations. The campaign is aimed at setting examples in certain selected townships over the next year, with some 20 communities, covering 167 000 households, throughout the country being targeted.

The communities will be asked to appoint their own waste removal contractors, each of whom will be responsible for servicing 250 households a week. Contractors will be paid from a government allocation of R10,8m until residents can be persuaded to pay a service fee of R6,50 a house per month.

Keep SA Beautiful CE Raymond Byrne said money earned in this way would stay in the community and give residents a stake in ensuring the service remained viable.

Rallying community groups behind environment enhancement projects and waste awareness also formed part of the campaign.

Byrne said it was intended that local authorities would take over management of the waste collection after the start-up period of a year. The programme would then be rolled out to other areas.

## CSIR probes plant's emissions

(56) BD 3/4/96

EMISSIONS from a medical waste incinerator at Aloes, near Port Elizabeth, could be harmful to the health of people in neighbouring communities, a CSIR investigation has found.

The CSIR has called on operator Waste-tech to try to eliminate problem pollutants, look at increasing the plant's stack height, review management procedures and consider using a gas cleanup system.

Waste-tech, a spokesman said yesterday, welcomed the opportunity to put forward an action plan.

d  
cash  
d as  
wing  
al of  
end.  
isted  
es in  
al of  
end.  
isted  
es in  
es in  
hare-

1563/E

INCE

30-year-old technology 'a legal risk'

ANDREA WEISS  
Municipal Reporter

THE continued use of a 30-year-old electrical system and technical difficulties around evacuating a cable car if it was stranded over the upper cliff of Table Mountain, could have serious consequences for the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, a Canadian firm of engineers has warned.

The firm was commissioned by the Cape Town City Council to evaluate the safety aspects of the cableway more than a year ago. The report surfaced again this week amid a heated dispute between the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company, which wants to proceed with a R61-million upgrade, and the National Monuments Council, which has called a halt to the project pending the finalisation of all relevant environmental studies.

While the report, by Robert McLellan, a retired cableway operator from Vancouver, Canada, did not predict any impending disasters, it warned that there could be "ample grounds for a lawsuit" in the event of an accident on the ropeway.

John Harrison, managing director of the company, said the report was refuted in recent court actions.

"The system clearly needs to be upgraded but there is no question of safety being compromised," he said.

# Monuments council hits back

Row heats up over cableway upgrade

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

THE National Monuments Council (NMC) has hit back at critics of its decision to insist on the completion of an environmental impact assessment before approving the Table Mountain cableway company's plan to upgrade its facilities.

The company had hoped to start work this week. There had been strong support and political pressure from the provincial government and the Cape Town City Council to allow the cableway company to "bend the rules" of the Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process which it had been following for the proposed upgrade.

But at its meeting last Friday, the NMC insisted that an impact assessment had to be completed first.

Table Mountain is a declared national monument.

In a statement, NMC director George Hofmeyr said it was not its intention to delay the proposed upgrade unnecessarily.

"The onus is on the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company to complete the environmental impact study as soon as possible. Reports of delays of more than a year are unfounded as far as the Monuments Council is concerned."

There was a misconception that the upper and lower cableway stations were not protected in terms of the National Monuments Act, Mr Hofmeyr said.

A spokesman for the cableway company had alleged that the company's delegation had been allowed only 30 minutes to make a presentation at the council's meeting on Friday.

"The facts are that the council agreed to have an extraordinary meeting at the request of the (cableway) company," Mr Hofmeyr said.

"Unfortunately this necessitated a relatively short meeting to fit in with flight arrangements of members from all over the country."

"The council's decisions were not only based on the presentation, but on all relevant information sent to members, as well as the advice of other organisations and senior staff."

# Ball plays the game with the anxious greens

ARG 3/4/96

56

JOHNYELD  
Environment Reporter

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS** are to meet Cape Town Olympic Bid chief executive Chris Ball today to discuss their further participation in the city's bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games.

The Olympics Environment Working Group is a coalition of representatives of the Wildlife Society, the Habitat Council, Captrust, the Khayelitsha Environment and Tourism Forum, Earthlife Africa, the Botanical Society and the People's Dialogue.

The group has compiled a list of "minimum requirements" for its future involvement, which it wants to discuss with Mr Ball at today's meeting.

The move follows widespread unhappiness in the "green" lobby that environmental issues have been downplayed in the bid process.

This is an allegation rejected by the bid company, although it acknowledges there have been unfortunate delays in dealing with some environmental issues.

The bid company's head of planning and the environment, Peter de Tolly, told a recent workshop on environ-

mental issues that the company was working under "terrific constraints".

"The environment still has to get off the ground in the way we would like," he said.

Top of the environmentalists' "minimum requirements" list is likely to be a demand for an Environmental Charter to be negotiated as soon as possible, and for this charter to be a documentally binding on all the parties involved.

The environmentalists have also asked whether environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of the proposed Olympic sites will be effective decision-making tools which could be used to rule out some sites - or whether the EIAs will be used only to determine mitigatory measures.

This concern may be reflected in the "minimum requirements".

Also there is no professional environmental voice on the bid company's board of directors.

The environmental lobby may insist on such representation.

Its list will be released publicly a few hours before the meeting and a joint Press conference has been scheduled for later.

## R12m campaign to clean up townships

(52) CT 3/4/96

JOHANNESBURG: Public Works Minister Jeff Radebe yesterday launched a R12-million Clean and Green Campaign to remove litter and waste from neglected townships and informal settlements.

The result of collaboration between his department, SA Breweries and Keep South Africa Beautiful, the campaign also aims to create jobs, improve local government and encourage communities to pay for municipal services.

About 20 pilot areas have been selected where projects will run for a year, among them Umtata in the Eastern Cape and Stanger in KwaZulu-Natal.

"The absence of formal waste management systems in most of South Africa's townships and informal settlements has led to a massive build-up of litter and unmanaged waste in these areas," Radebe said. — Sapa

## Govt wages war on pollution

THE war against pollution of the land, seas and skies is to be fought "with renewed vigour", the Department of Environment Affairs announced yesterday.

(56) CT 3/4/96  
The government has created a new chief directorate to deal with the problem. Its main functions will be to create a holistic approach to integrated pollution control and environment quality management and to promote the control of air pollution.

The move follows an investigation by the Public Service Commission into the department's chief directorate of environmental management. The probe was called for by Environment Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers. — Environment Writer

# Greenbacks versus green on cableway

CT 3/4/96

(56) ~~(56)~~

**MELANIE GOSLING**  
ENVIRONMENT WRITER

THE Table Mountain cableway debacle has evolved into a battle between the environment and economics.

An urgent meeting scheduled for yesterday was postponed to today as the National Parks Board could not attend.

At today's meeting the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC) will try to press the National Monuments Council (NMC) to revoke its decision not to let the R61-million upgrading go ahead until the integrated environmental process has been completed.

The NMC has said it will not back down and that it is up to the company to complete its environmental process before it gives the green light for the project.

The TMACC is backed by City Council and provincial politicians and by the local tourism industry. The NMC is supported by the National Parks Board, green non-government organisations, several academics and the management advisory committee of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment.

Those who want to protect the environment say it is essential that the project should not go ahead until the environmental impact

assessments have been completed.

Those in favour of starting construction say the city cannot afford to lose out on next summer's tourist takings. They argue that the possible environmental impacts of sewage, electricity, water and other elements should be sorted out as construction progresses.

TMACC's director Mr Louis de Waal said yesterday: "Some people say we don't care about the mountain. That is hogwash. We've cleaned up the mountain more than anyone. The integrated environmental management process for upgrading the cableway has already cost us R100 000.

"Province and the City Council have said we can go ahead provided we sort out ... the sewage system, the electricity cable, the water supply and the control of parking. We've agreed to do that while we start construction of the cableway and restaurants."

The NMC's director, Mr George Hofmeyr, said his council and its environmental advisers did not believe it was possible to start a section of the project while the impacts of others were being studied.

"The onus is on the TMACC to complete the reports. It started the IEM process and then it seemed to peter out. The (NMC) council has taken a decision and it is definitely not going to overturn it," he said.

# Campaign to clean up townships gets under way

(56) (437) Star 3/4/96

One of the aims of the community-driven project is to teach township residents to treat their surroundings and the environment with respect

**By HOPEWELL RADEBE**  
City Reporter

The Government has joined forces with business and non-governmental organisations in the launch of a R13,8-million Clean and Green Campaign aimed at improving the removal solid waste material in informal settlements around the country.

Addressing about 200 environmental and business delegates at the campaign launch in Johannesburg yesterday, Public Works Minister Jeff Radebe said the campaign's objective was to select areas swamped by litter in each province and to finance the provision of services in solid waste removal together with local authorities.

He said the campaign, which had received overwhelming



Jeff Radebe ... massive buildup.

support in all nine provinces, had been prompted by the disheartening situation in the townships, where people were "forced to drive over floods of sewage spilling from burst pipes and witness mounds of dumped

waste piled up along the streets".

"There is a world of lavish wealth with all the characteristics of the First World and a painful world of abject poverty, squalor and iniquity existing side by side in South Africa," Radebe said.

But through the Reconstruction and Development Programme, the Government was determined to "bring together strategies to harness national resources in a coherent and purposeful effort which will be sustainable in the future".

Radebe said his department was happy to be associated with South African Breweries Beer Division and Keep South Africa Beautiful, a group concerned with environment issues, to encourage environmental cleanliness in informal settlements.



**OWN CORRESPONDENT**

Cape Town - Major tour operators have expressed "total disbelief" at the National Monuments Council (NMC) decision to delay the upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway.

But the Wildlife Society has

# 'Disbelief' over delay of busy cableway upgrade

Star 3/4/96

(56)

expressed support for the NMC, saying developments should not take place before all the studies for an Integrated Environmental Management

(IEM) process have been completed.

The Tour Operators' Association of Cape Town, which has about 50 members - including

all the major tour bus companies - issued a statement saying every group in the city had Table Mountain cableway on its itinerary.

Vice-chairman David Muntton said in a statement: "People come thousands of miles to ascend Table Mountain. Since the elections and the

boom in tourism, the old cableway cannot cope. It is in desperate need of upgrading. To delay the upgrade now will put tourism back years."

He said this year would probably be the last winter the cableway could close for eight months for an upgrade.

## Red tape hits plan for statue

Tim Cohen

CAPE TOWN — The R50m project to erect a 23m-high "freedom monument" of an opened hand hit a snag yesterday when it was decided to refer the project to the parliamentary arts and culture committee.

This decision was taken following a meeting between President Nelson Mandela, businessman Abie Krok and the proposed artist Danie de Jager whose previous works include the Strijdom head in Pretoria.

The meeting concurred with the president's proposal that an issue of such national importance should be handled by the committee, which could conduct public hearings on whether such a project was needed. If built according to the current plans the sculpture would be about half the size of the Statue of Liberty but would be the world's largest cast bronze structure. The project would be a private and not a state initiative and would be situated near the Voortrekker Monument.

Stephané Bothma

SIMON'S TOWN — The SA Navy was "slowly but surely going down the drain" because of the small portion of the defence budget allocated to it every year, navy chief Vice-Adm Robert Simpson-Andersen said.

The majority of the navy's 24 vessels were moving into "the injury time" of their lifespan

# Polluters should bear costs — green paper

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — The principle that those who cause pollution should bear the costs should guide SA environmental policy, says the green paper on the environment released yesterday.

The document, called Towards a new environmental policy for SA, was released by Environment and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers.

It stated that environmental protection was in a chaotic state — six main-stream ministries, provincial and local government had various responsibilities. This confusion had reduced environmental management effectiveness.

It stressed that current environmental management was too reactive, and recommended a "proactive approach" in terms of which action would be taken on possible environmental threats even when there "was no clear supporting scientific evidence".

A "conflict-of-interest principle" was also suggested as one of the pillars of future policy. Government departments with a responsibility to promote industry or other interests should not be required to protect the environment from that industry.

"Subsidiarity" — the location of authority for environmental control at the most appropriate level of government — was stressed as a fundamental policy principle.

For example, water quality was best managed at catchment level, while greenhouse gases had to be dealt with on a national basis.

The green paper also identified root causes of SA's current environmental problems: the failure of environmental regulatory institutions to work together in the "holistic" management of environmental problems; unsustainable levels of exploitation of natural resources; unequal access to natural resources often forcing human migration and overcrowding; damaged social structures and poor, dispossessed people; and inappropriate and uncontrolled development in most sectors.

Noting SA's poor enforcement of environmental laws, the green paper blamed a lack of professionals; a policy based on punishment, not incentives; penalties too light to deter offenders, and lack of an integrated policy.

The document warned that failure to implement policies needed could put SA products at risk in an increasingly environmentally conscious world.

De Villiers stressed the document was the start of a process. Public submissions from all interested parties could now be made, to complement the consultative national environmental policy process which had produced the document. A green paper is expected to lead to a white paper, and a new policy by early next year.

## Budget constraints 'forcing SA Navy down the drain'

and large amounts of money would have to be spent to extend their lives, crucial to secure SA's 2 880km coastline.

Briefing military correspondents at the Simon's Town naval base this week, Simpson-Andersen said if the defence

budget remained at its current level, the navy would need between 15% and 18% of the budget, about R1,4bn, to survive, as opposed to the 9,8% allocated to it.

"To expand and improve the navy, we need at least R1 600m a year,"

he said, stressing that the navy needed a proper blue water capability to ensure that SA's waters were safe for the 8 983 merchant vessels which entered SA ports on average each year.

He reaffirmed the navy's commitment to the purchase of four corvettes and also confirmed that it was looking at the purchase of four submarines.

## Document a 'major step for a green SA'

56

JOHN YELD

Environment Reporter

ARG 4/4/96

A DISCUSSION document billed by Environmental Affairs Minister Dawie de Villiers as "the first major step to turn South Africa green" has been released for comment.

The document will now be considered by the provincial governments, non-government groups and individuals as part of a policy-formulation process described by the government as "unique" in the world.

The document, Towards A New Environmental Policy For South Africa, follows the Conepp (Consultative National Environmental Policy Process) conference in Johannesburg last year.

One of its key recommendations is the creation of a Commission for the Environment, reporting directly to parliament, which could review the findings of studies such as impact assessments, offer advice and hear appeals.

All the recommendations in the discussion document are offered with alternatives.

For further information and copies of the document, contact the Conepp Secretariat, (011) 339 2318, fax (011) 339 2382.

# Cableway: NMC stands firm

ET 4/4/96

~~55~~ 56

**MELANIE GOSLING**

THE National Monuments Council has stuck to its guns in not approving the controversial R61-million upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway after a "long and hot debate" yesterday with the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC).

The TMACC has appealed to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane, to have the NMC's

decision overturned.

The NMC's director, Mr George Hofmeyr, said last night: "They (TMACC) hoped we would give approval for construction on the cableway buildings to begin while the integrated environmental management (IEM) process was incomplete. However, there are just too many loose ends for us to give approval."

He said the NMC agreed at the meeting to spell out exactly what IEM processes the TMACC still had to complete.

# SA may get tough green watchdog

(56) ET 4/4/96

**MELANIE GOSLING**  
ENVIRONMENT WRITER

SOUTH AFRICA may soon have an Environmental Protection Agency — a green watchdog, reporting directly to Parliament, and auditing government departments and institutions to ensure they stick to environmental policy.

This is one of the proposals in the discussion document of the Consultative National Environmental Policy Process (Connepp) released yesterday by the Department of Environment Affairs.

Environment Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers said it was "possibly a world first" for a nation's environmental policy to stem from such a broad consultative process.

"This is the first major step to turn SA green. It is a milestone after months of a very broad consultative process... It is still a draft document and now it is up to the provinces, the NGOs, professionals and the public to comment on it."

Comments will be incorporated into a green paper which will be discussed at a national Connepp forum in October. A

white paper will then be drafted which will culminate in a national environmental policy for the country.

Three primary goals of the new policy are:

- A "win-win" alliance of development and environment.
- Sustainable use of environmental resources.
- Effective and integrated environmental protection institutions.

"SA needs all sectors of society to form a partnership for sustainable use and protection of the environment... Without this, sustainable development

will not be possible," the document states.

Deputy Environment Minister Bantu Holomisa said yesterday: "The draft paper is just a skeleton and it needs flesh on it. But it won't be Holomisa or my colleagues who do that, it will be the people of South Africa. I hope every Jack and Jill in this country will contribute."

Anyone who wants a copy of the document, or wants to comment on it, should write to Connepp Secretariat, PO Box 477, Wits, 2050; Telephone (011) 339-2318; Fax (011) 339-2382 or e-mail [christel@wn.apc.org](mailto:christel@wn.apc.org)

# Politicians under fire in cableway row

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

THE row over Table Mountain's stalled cableway upgrade raged unchecked this week amid warnings that politicians were undermining confidence in integrated environmental management (IEM) processes.

Leading UCT environmental scientist Richard Fuggle this week blamed politicians for not ensuring that the cableway company stuck to its public commitment to an IEM process.

The R61-million upgrade, which was meant to start last Monday, is now on hold following a National Monuments Council decision to withhold approval until an IEM process had been completed.

The cableway company has lodged a formal appeal with the responsible cabinet minister, Ben Ngubane.

Western Cape Nature Conservation chief Johan Neethling has also reportedly advised the provincial government to appeal.

Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company chairman Louis de Waal this week told Metro he was not opposed to independent adjudication which could resolve the impasse.

The row over IEM processes flared just as the government released a national environmental policy discussion document which stresses an urgent need for decision-making processes which result in "win-win solutions, rather than ongoing conflict".

But according to Prof Fuggle, there was little confidence in the political processes which were meant to adjudicate integrated environmental management.

"We are finding that critics of development proposals increasingly have to turn to the courts for intervention."

"Instead of being tools which help make decisions, smooth out differences and set criteria for development, IEMs are now just becoming documents which tone down the worst aspects of projects. Nobody is satisfied," he said.

Prof Fuggle, who helped draft the Department of Environmental Affairs' official IEM guidelines and

served on last year's probe into a steel mill at Saldanha Bay, said there was a "distinct gap" between what politicians were saying about the environment, and what they were doing.

He cited the RDP's "hip service" to its environmental commitments, a Western Cape provincial cabinet decision which ignored the Saldanha inquiry's recommendations about the siting of the steel mill and, most recently, the province's approval for the cableway upgrade despite warnings by official advisors and prominent conservation organisations.

"I ask myself, cynically, if politicians intend to preserve South Africa's environmental heritage at all," he said.

GUIDELINES TO ENVIRONMENT CARE

# SA to turn over (green) new leaf

(56) 08/4/96

**THE PRINCIPLES** intended to guide SA into a more environmentally sensitive era are set out in a document published last week.

**MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**S**OUTH AFRICA is ringing in the changes — and the changes are green. Environmental departments, long treated as Cinderella sectors, seem set to move to centre stage following the release last week of the Consultative National Environmental Policy Process (Connepp) discussion document, Towards a New Environmental Policy for SA.

The document's broad aim is to produce a national environmental policy that will achieve sustainable development. This means developing in a way that improves our lives, without harming the lives of those born after us.

It means, the document says, managing our natural resources — such as air, soil and water — in a way that will ensure that their benefits last indefinitely.

How will this be achieved?

The Connepp document spells out guiding principles. Some are:

- The "polluter pays" principle, which means those using resources or producing waste must bear all costs, including environmental and health effects, and the responsibility for any consequences.

A company that does not have to pay for damaging the environment can sell its products more cheaply. Making the company pay to repair the damage would encourage producers to stop the damage or at least limit it.

- The precautionary principle, which allows decision-makers to act on possible environmental dangers of a proposed development — even when there is no clear supporting scientific evidence of the danger.

Proponents of a development will have to show before they start that their actions

will not cause environmental damage.

- The "non-polluter gets paid" principle, which provides that those who consume far less than the national average and contribute far less to pollution will be compensated. This aims to reward behaviour that benefits the environment.

- The integrated principle, which lays down that the effects on the physical and social environment must be considered holistically, not piecemeal.

- The environmental responsibility principle, which holds that every person and organisation has a duty to act with care to avoid damage to the environment.

- The verifiability principle, which provides that all reporting for environmental decision-making should be independently verifiable.

- The conflict of interest principle, which asserts that a body with regulatory responsibilities should not have other conflicting functions.

Some government departments promote the development of a particular industry or sector and also protect the environmental resources used by that industry. The two roles often clash.

- The global responsibility principle, which states that South Africa recognises it has a shared responsibility for environmental effects beyond its borders.

The document is still a long way from being policy, and has to incorporate further contributions from the public.

The next step is the provincial consultation process, in which the Connepp document will be debated.

All provinces will set up steering committees of interested parties to guide the process and contribute to drafting the Green Paper.

Anyone who wants a copy of the document, or who wishes to comment on it, should write to Connepp Secretariat, PO Box 477, WITS, 2050 or telephone (011) 339-2318 or fax (011) 339-2382 or E-mail christel@wn.apc.org

# New commission is main proposal of environment document (56)

Star 8/4/96

By ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

A new, independent Commission for the Environment or Environmental Protection Agency to co-ordinate environmental management is the main proposal in a newly published environmental policy discussion document.

The commission would report directly to Parliament and, through an auditor-general, conduct environmental audits as a regular check that organisations were carrying out their environmental responsibilities. It would also be responsible for hearing all appeals on environmental issues.

"This agency will be outside the civil service. It will have a central structure, provincial branches and local offices to provide professional inspectors and carry out all regulatory functions," the document proposes.

"The central Department of Environment will set overall policy and standards. Through formal agreements it will give other central, provincial and local bodies specific tasks."

"Towards a New Environmental Policy for South Africa", was released for public comment in Cape Town by Envi-

ronment Minister Dawie de Villiers.

It is a synthesis of ideas produced at the first Consultative Conference on National Environmental Policy (Connepp) last year and subsequent workshops held at provincial level. The 100-page document, available only in English, contains the most important ideas that need discussion in making a new policy. A shorter, easier-to-read version is available in Afrikaans, English, North Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa.

The Connepp process was launched last year by a committee of all central government ministers and provincial government MECs dealing with environment and conservation.

In the next stage, provincial workshops will be held until June, aimed at producing a green paper. This in turn will be discussed at a national forum in October. A draft white paper will be produced by October, followed by public hearings until February 1997. The aim is to have the final white paper ready for submission to the Cabinet by May 1997.

To obtain the discussion documents and to find out about workshops in your area, the Connepp secretariat is at (011) 339-2318, fax (011) 339-2382, e-mail: [christel@wn.apa.org](mailto:christel@wn.apa.org).



# Oliver calls for cableway compromise

AKG 9/4/96

Municipal Reporter

CAPTOUR has added its voice to the Table Mountain cableway debate, expressing concern over the impasse reached over the upgrade plans.

Captour has some 1,400 member organisations and businesses in the tourism industry.

Chief executive Gordon Oliver said Captour was concerned about the delicate natural environment of the mountain,

which, he said, had to be protected.

However, the cableway was the city's most popular tourist attraction.

"Clearly, both considerations are paramount.

"As tourism is a major contributor to the economy of the Western Cape, we must do everything possible not to thwart its role, but to actually promote and encourage it," Mr Oliver said.

"Of course, not at the expense of the natural environment, which makes our region such a popular holiday and business destination.

"Captour appeals to all the relevant authorities to find a way to permit the cableway redevelopment plans to go ahead while simultaneously requiring the environmental impact studies to be completed.

"We are totally confident that the Table Mountain Aerial

Cableway Company has every intention of fulfilling its obligations to the community as required by the National Monuments Council.

"There is no question of principles being sacrificed or subverted and we do appeal to the NMC and the National Parks Board to reach a healthy and constructive compromise with the company in the interests of a win-win situation," Mr Oliver said.



# Green issues agreement after Games bid talks

JOHN YELD  
Environment Reporter

REPRESENTATIVES of key environmental groups and the Cape Town Olympic Bid Company have reached agreement on a wide range of "green issues" surrounding the city's bid for the 2004 Games after a meeting described as "extremely constructive".

Moves which will flow from the meeting include an "in principle" decision for an independent poll to test the opinion of residents of greater Cape Town on whether the city should continue its bid.

They also agreed to the urgent drawing up of an environmental charter to set criteria for the bid, and a request to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for clarity on why a city's bid document had to be confidential.

The meeting yesterday between the bid company and the Olympic Environment Working Group - a coalition of representatives of the Wildlife Society, Habitat Council, Captrust, Khayelitsha Environment and Tourism Forum, Earthlife Africa, Botanical Society and People's Dialogue - had been postponed for a week because bid company chief executive Chris Ball had been called urgently to another meeting at short notice.

His absence last week was sharply criticised by the coalition, but after yesterday's meeting coalition spokesman Marlene Laros said Mr Ball had sent them a letter of "apology and regret".

"We accept the apology and we've moved forward from that quite positively," she said. Mr

Ball attended yesterday's meeting, as did representatives of the Cape Town City Council.

Only three minor changes - two of them because of IOC requirements - were made to a set of 10 "minimum requirements" which the coalition had set for the future involve-

ment of the environmental sector in the bid process.

Requirements accepted without change included those of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the short- to long-term social, demographic, environmental and financial costs.

They agreed to an independent environmental commission to monitor the implementation of the environmental

charter, to assess the findings of environmental impact studies and to review the poll results.

Another requirement is that the bid document submitted to the IOC in August must include concerns raised by the environmental sector, "with respect to the time constraints and the limited participation of residents in the bid process".

But the last sentence of this requirement - that the bid document had to be available for public comment before being submitted to the IOC - was dropped because of IOC rules.

Mary-Jane Morris, the bid company's environmental coordinator, said the Cape Town situation was different to that in other Olympic cities because environmental issues had come "a lot earlier" in the bid process.

Said Howard Firth, the city council's legal representative: "You don't win a bid unless you're extremely environmentally focused."



CAPE TOWN  
2004  
CANDIDATE CITY



# Dune development gets go-ahead

(56) ARLT 10/4/96  
Staff Reporter

THE controversial plan to subdivide a portion of land including some dunes adjacent to the Clovelly Golf Course for a housing development has been accepted by the Fish Hoek/Kommetjie/Noordhoek Transitional Metropolitan Sub-structure.

However, the council has

included a long list of stringent conditions.

These include detailed engineer's designs for civil services, a detailed architectural design manual with specific parameters for the various identified zonings, the formation of a Home Owners Association to control the aesthetics, a body corporate being formed in terms of the Sectional Title

Act, a fire break around the proposed subdivision and the developer appointing a suitably qualified person to upgrade the Silvermine River corridor.

There have been vociferous objections over a long period by the Silvermine Valley Coalition Group and the Fish Hoek Residents' Association to the development on the dunes. Both

groups say the sand dunes are part of a protected nature area and houses should not be built on them by developers Fish Hoek Land and Estate.

Other conditions imposed by the council include the large dune area being rehabilitated by the developer at his expense before the completion of the installation of the services.

## Waste control in SA 'chaotic'

DURBAN — State control of hazardous waste imports had been characterised by chaos and inadequate legislation, a commission of inquiry into Thor Chemicals heard yesterday (5b)

Commissioner Francis Petersen said one hand of government did not seem to know what the other was doing. Commission chairman Dennis Davis suggested there was "complete chaos" and certain departments were not doing their jobs properly.

The commission, appointed by President Nelson Mandela last year, is examining ways of disposing of almost 3 500 tons of mercury waste and sludge stockpiled at Thor's Cato Ridge chemical factory.

William Scott, the environment department's deputy director of hazardous materials and acting director of pollution control, said there was a lack of capacity in the department. There was only one pollution control officer in KwaZulu-Natal. — Sapa.

DD 11/4/96

ANGER APPEASED

# Development council to be opened to greens

CT 11/4/96

(56)

**THE NEW** Provincial Development Committee should use newspaper advertisements and other measures to ensure public participation, Western Cape DP leader Mr Hennie Bester has proposed. **CHRIS BATEMAN** reports.

**E**NVIRONMENTALISTS, angry at being excluded from drawing up the draft constitution and bill of the Provincial Development Council (PDC), have been given a chance to have their say.

The chairman of the Western Cape's standing committee on developmental affairs and housing, Mr Hennie Bester, proposed at a meeting of the committee yesterday that specific measures should be implemented to allow aggrieved environmental organisations to be nominated onto the PDC.

This comes after numerous green organisations, who heard by accident that the draft constitution and bill of the PDC were developed at a workshop in Worcester last month, called for an extension of the date for the public to con-

tribute. The PDC aims to guide all development in the province into the next century. It will not have the power to veto or approve any development, but will provide a common vision by which all local authorities will be guided.

Bester proposed that special measures should be implemented to enable interested bodies and environmental organisations to be nominated onto the Provincial Development Council.

Bester had received many angry submissions from numerous green organisations who claimed to have been excluded so far.

The bill — still in its infancy — proposes the formation of eight regional councils to promote and co-ordinate development in the province.

The biggest unresolved issue to emerge yesterday was whether to include the 170 RDP forums — none of which, Bester claimed, had been officially accredited — in the decision-making process of the development councils.

Debate raged around whether the bill should by-pass them altogether, given the recent dismantling of the RDP office at central government level.

Green bodies complained they had been "completely" by-passed by the current interim management committee — whose members responded that most complainants were affiliates of umbrella bodies with which they were in constant contact.

Bester proposed the management committee bid for "maximum transparency and participation", with newspaper adverts inviting comments.

He promised that a "clear signal will go out to everyone before the formal setting up process begins".

---

# Govt control of waste imports 'chaotic'

~~(56)~~ (56) CT 11/4/96

DURBAN: The South African government's "nightmare" control of hazardous waste imports had been characterised by chaos, confusion and inadequate legislation, the commission of inquiry into Thor Chemicals heard yesterday.

Commission member Professor Francis Petersen said the one hand of government didn't seem to know what the other hand was doing, and commission chairman Prof Dennis Davis suggested there was "complete chaos" and that certain departments were "not doing their jobs properly".

The commission, which was appointed by President Nelson Mandela last year, is examining ways of disposing of nearly 3 500 tons of mercury waste and sludge stockpiled at the Cato Ridge chemical factory.

The commission heard evidence in Umhlanga yesterday from several witnesses, including Mrs Ina Cronjé, head of the KwaZulu-Natal portfolio committee on the environment.

Mrs Cronjé expressed concern that hazardous waste management policies were either "non-existent,

inadequate or fragmented".

Because of this, it was extremely difficult for authorities to monitor offences or enforce the law.

Government departments were short-staffed, there was no Class 1 disposal site for highly hazardous waste in the province and laws on waste management were scattered over at least 39 separate pieces of legislation.

Mr William Scott, the Department of Environment's deputy director of hazardous materials, admitted there was a serious "lack of capacity" in the department.

---

# National Parks Board faces elephantine question in \$2,5 m culling 'solution'

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Johannesburg—In the first edition of *The Origin of Species*, Darwin made one small mistake. To illustrate how quickly animal populations could grow, he calculated the speed at which a group of elephants would expand if it were left unchecked by outside influences.

As it happens, he got his arithmetic wrong, but he made his point. Elephants are one of the world's slowest-breeding animals; yet when left to themselves, their population can double every 15 years.

South Africa's National Parks Board knows this. Though elephant herds in countries farther north have been depleted by poachers, those in South Africa—where poaching is kept under much better control—have thrived.

So to keep the elephant population stable in the country's largest national park, the Kruger, its herds have been culled annually for the past 28 years.

To many onlookers such culling seems cruel and unnecessary and, as a consequence, groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare have been searching for ways to stop it. In practice, this means either

moving surplus elephants to other places, or buying new land adjacent to the parks to let them wander farther afield.

Indeed, the fund has offered \$2.5 million to the National Parks Board for such land purchases.

It is a tempting offer.

Culling is expensive. Until the worldwide ban on the ivory trade began in 1989, the revenue that it brought in from sales of tusks, hides and meat helped cover the costs. Now, however, culling is a drain on the board's resources.

But there would be a significant string attached to the fund's money: elephants (and other animals) on the land that it had paid for could never be culled.

Whatever decision the board makes will generate enormous controversy in South Africa.

The Africa Resources Trust, a non-profit group that promotes the sustainable use of wildlife, fears that accepting the money would, in a few years, aggravate the problem of too many elephants. Since there would be no physical separation of elephants on the new land from those on the old, the deal might prevent culling across the whole area—should it again become necessary, as the trust expects.

The trust argues that as long as the elephant population continues to grow, it will inevitably reach the carrying capacity of the environment and start to harm the land.

And that harm can be enormous. Elephants are able to eat just about every plant there is. When the going gets tough, they simply turn to less desirable plants.

A large elephant herd can convert a paddock into a wasteland in next to no time: any animal that is a bit more picky about its vegetables than a pachyderm is likely to find them gone and to die of starvation.

Barbara Maas, a biologist with the International Fund for Animal Welfare, disagrees with this analysis.

She argues that the size of the elephant herd in the Kruger Park (roughly 7 500 animals—one for every 2 sq km) was set arbitrarily, and that the herd could easily become bigger without significant environmental damage.

Yet nobody knows if this is correct. The Kruger Park is now in good condition with plenty of dif-

ferent animals and plants. There is, indeed, a chance that this is thanks to the elephants: their clumsy ways with trees help to stop the forest from closing in everywhere and thus promote diversity.

On the other hand, there must surely be an upper limit to the number of elephants the park can comfortably accommodate.

## Animal welfare groups are finding tempting ways to save excess elephants from the gun

Anthony Hall-

Martin, one of the directors of the National Parks Board, suggests, as a stop-gap, testing the carrying capacity of the Kruger Park by allowing elephant numbers to rise in some areas. If a problem were to emerge, and there was nowhere to move

the surplus to, culling could begin again.

Eventually, though, if the population in the Kruger Park is to remain stable without culling—or, indeed, if the numbers in other parks reach densities that are too high—many more elephants may have to be moved out every year. Even ignoring the large amount of money this would cost, it is not a

soft option. Moving elephants can be quite traumatic.

Until recently, shifting adult elephants, which can weigh up to four tons, was impossible—the equipment could not stand up to their objections.

So only the younger elephants could be transported and even today moving adults is difficult.

But elephant society is tight knit. If an entire family group is not moved together, the calves that do move can end up as juvenile delinquents. A bunch of dysfunctional, latchkey adolescents with no social graces and serious attitude problems can be troublesome for a park. They form gangs; they terrorise other wildlife; and, to cap it all, they hide from the tourists.

### Matriarchal

There is now a way around this problem: move some adults too. In particular, moving a few fully grown females, even if they are unrelated to any of the youths, soon restores law and order.

Elephants are matriarchal and their herds are organised around females, who issue instructions and co-ordinate movements. Mature males tend to leave the

herd and live alone.

For the moment, though, the arguments of humans are drowning out any throaty rumbles from elephants.

Many people agree that extending the boundaries of existing parks and creating new ones would be a good idea. Fewer want to risk taking the animal welfare money and running.

According to Frank Vothies, an environmental economist at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in Geneva, the South Africans in any case run the risk of selling out too cheaply to animal welfare groups.

If there are too many elephants, they should, he suggests, be sold to the highest bidder. What the International Fund for Animal Welfare is seeking to buy is the right not to kill elephants.

If game hunters offered more to buy the elephants and shoot them, that offer should be considered as well.

Revenue generated from such sales could be used to buy land that would carry fewer constraints than the International Fund is seeking to impose. It might, however, echo to the sound of protests louder even than elephant guns.

(56) CT (BR) 11/4/96

# Cableway boss lashes council

By CHARL DE VILLIERS

ST(M) 14/4/96 (56) (238)  
CAPE TOWN'S beleaguered cableway company may have to scrap its upgrade completely following ministerial delays in handling the operators' appeal against a National Monuments Council decision against the R61-million project.

"We have to make a decision this week if the upgrade goes ahead at all," Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company managing director John Harrison said yesterday.

He was reacting to a statement by Arts, Science, Culture and Technology Ministry spokesman Frans Basson that Dr Ben Ngubane would not be able to decide on the company's appeal this week.

The Monuments Council, which refused to approve the project because of inadequate environmental studies, had also laid down "impossible" new conditions on Friday, Mr Harrison added.

The NMC had called for another five studies before making a final decision.

"This means at least another year's delay to do the impact studies, and only then will the NMC review the project," Mr Harrison said, adding that the company wanted a retired judge to arbitrate on the deadlock.

Mr Harrison said the company had put up R260 000 for an environmental management plan, and an engineer approved by the National Parks Board had already started training construction workers.

He added: "Not going ahead with the upgrade is like not repairing a lift in the Eiffel Tower. Do the NMC and its advisors understand the implications of what they are doing?"



# Rejuvenated monuments

“COMETH the hour, cometh the organisation!”

With apologies to MCC cricketer Cliff Gladwin who uttered the original version of these immortal words as he strode out to bat for the MCC in the first test against South Africa in Kingsmead, Durban in the 1948/49 series, the National Monuments Council can take a bow.

Presumably, the council will be among the first to acknowledge that its reputation as an environmental champion has been somewhat muted up to now.

Not that the spirit wasn't willing, but the flesh – in the form of the necessary financial and staffing resources – was decidedly weak.

I remember an occasion several years ago when the chairman, Judge M R de Kock, remarked sadly that the council's entire annual budget was less than the cost of con-

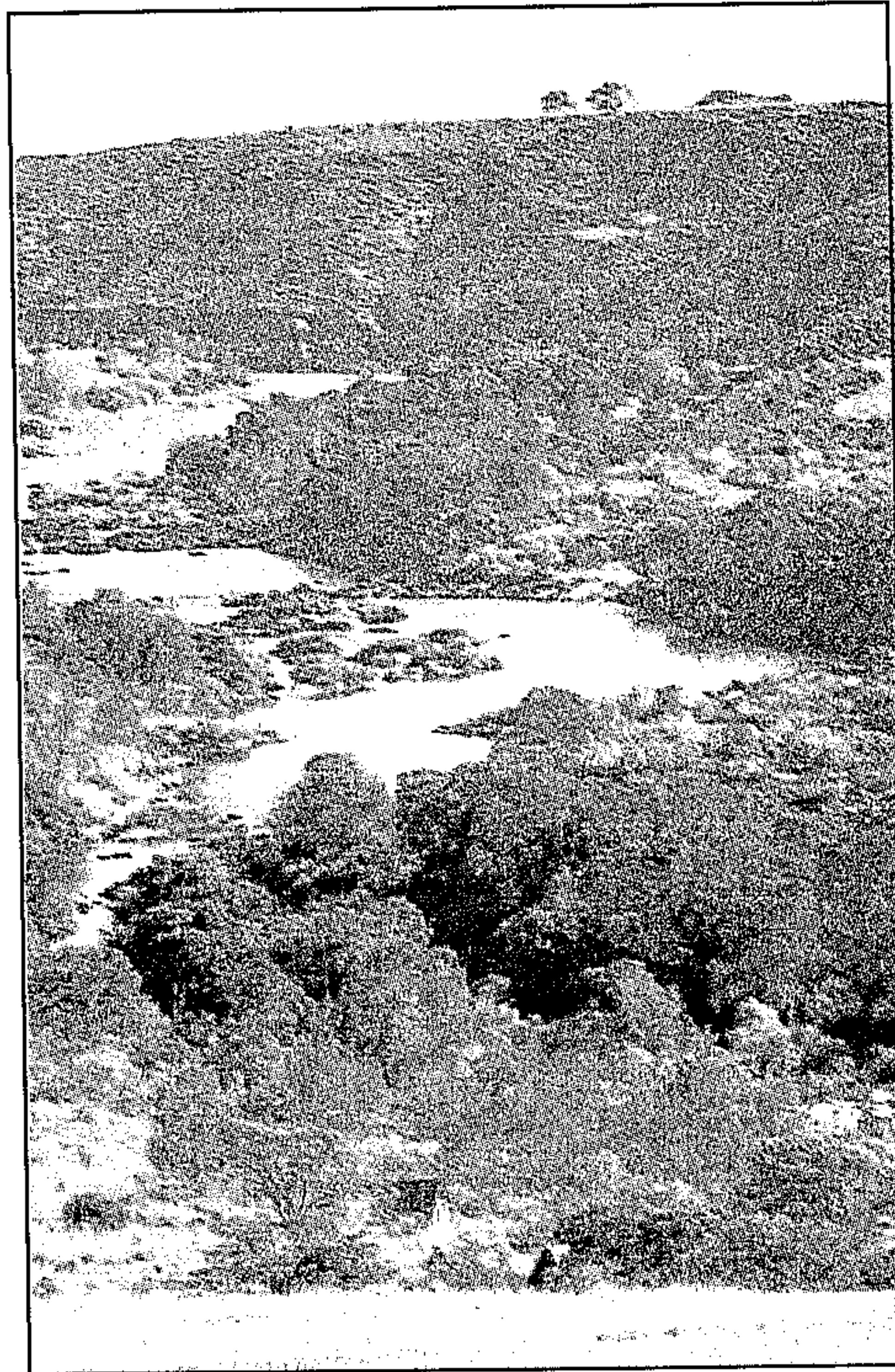
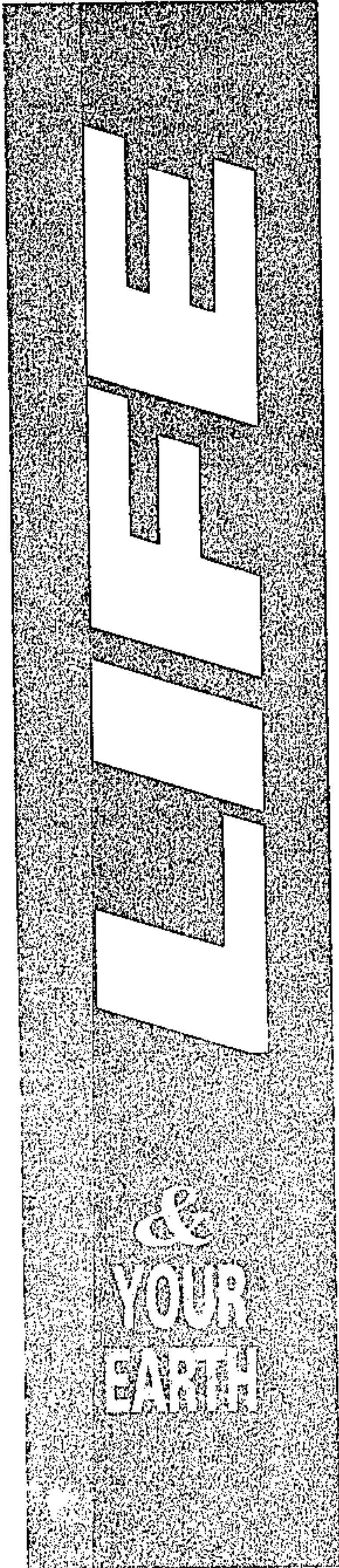
structing one kilometre of modern highway.

But in the past year or so, the council seems to have been given a new lease of life, and – much to the delight of conservationists – has started flexing its muscles.

Recently, it used those muscles in an unexpected show of strength by refusing to sanction the proposed upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway until the Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process that had been initiated had been completed.

In cricketing terms, it was the equivalent of a number 11 coming in and unexpectedly slamming the ball out of the ground for a six – even more of an achievement than Gladwin's hitting a four during the last over and then scampering a leg bye off the last ball to win the test by two wickets.

In this case, the hapless “bowler” was



**BREEDE RIVER SCENE:** David Fuggle is concerned about the future of South Africa's environment.

## Lead

SOUTH Africa's “environmental garden” is decidedly unrosy and politicians who should have been tending through a carefully structured process have instead allowed to degenerate into an environmental weed patch through hoc decision-making and administrative muddling.

This is the message from University of Cape Town environmental science professor Richard Fuggle.

He told a recent meeting of the Institute of Citizenship that all three levels of government had, since 1982, failed to appropriate legal rules which, among other things, would effectively have controlled development on the fringes of the Peninsula's natural areas.

The dominant environmental problem of the Peninsula, Fuggle suggested, was this interference between the urban and remaining natural areas of the mountain chain.

Development was “squeezing up” against these natural areas. Examples included Zone C housing project on Fish Hoek sand dunes, the Oukraal hotel developments and the proposed sub-division of the Elsie Peak mountains, also at Fish Hoek.

The National Parks Board was negotiating a national

# 56) council begins flexing some muscle

ARLT 15/4/96

## GREEN SCENE

John Yeld



to have instituted such a process.

But, to its credit, it did – and announced this in a press release in September.

The documentation by its environmental consultants – volume one of the draft summary environmental impact assessment report of January – confirms this: “In September 1995, following discussions with members of the Peninsula Mountain Forum, TMACC committed themselves to undertaking an IEM process for their proposed upgrading of the cableway.”

The point is that an IEM means precisely what it says – it is an integrated process, and you cannot start removing from the study those areas which are proving more time-consuming or problematic – like sewerage, or overall carrying capacity, for example – while continuing with others.

That simply defeats the entire objective of

IEM.

If you are indeed committed to the process, (which should be mandatory, in any event) you have to see it through, even if it costs you money, in this case through loss of ticket sales.

Besides, some environmentalists would argue this is not revenue lost as such but merely profit forgone from the use of something that is ultimately a public asset – and that the potential cost to Cape Town’s most precious natural asset following a botched or incomplete assessment must always take precedence in the decision-making.

By delaying the game while others sought to rush ahead, the National Monuments Council has done us all a favour.

● This column will appear irregularly while John Yeld reports on the Truth Commission for The Argus.

the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC).

One feels a measure of sympathy for chairman Louis de Waal and his board.

Because of government apathy and indecision, IEM is not yet a statutory requirement, even for major developments in highly sensitive environments like Table Mountain, and the cableway company was not obliged

# ership cry from ‘weed-patch’

*University of Cape Town environmental science professor Richard Fuggle is one of the country’s most respected environmentalists. Among other achievements, he is the co-author of the definitive South African book on environmental law, he served on the former Council for the Environment, was a member of the Steyn Board of Inquiry into the Saldanha Steel Project, and was co-leader of the UCT team which investigated a future management policy for the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE). So when he confessed in a recent public talk that he was pessimistic about the state of the South African environment and accused the government – provincial and central – of lacking environmental leadership, his words should be sounding the alarm bells in the corridors of power, writes Environment Reporter JOHN YELD.*

in the Peninsula, but its enabling legislation was not competent to deal with the problems on this urban fringe, Professor Fuggle said.

“The board’s legislation makes it difficult, if not impossible, to manage areas where people live. The board has to have individual contracts with every landowner if it wants to exercise any degree of constraint on development – and that’s clearly impossible.

“That is why our UCT report didn’t recommend the national park route for a future management structure for the nature area but instead suggested an entirely new authority.”

But that recommendation was not accepted by the provin-

cial or central government, which had opted instead for a national park.

“So the question of who will deal with the interface of the urban and natural areas has been left in abeyance,” Professor Fuggle said. In terms of South Africa’s interim constitution, the “environment” was now a provincial competence, he noted.

“But there is no clarity in anyone’s mind as to how all the environmental problems are to be dealt with.”

In some provinces, the environment was linked to nature conservation, in others to tourism and even to agriculture.

The rules which governed development needed to be

clear and they had to be legislated, Professor Fuggle said.

“What has gone awry is the process because it isn’t written into law or regulations.”

Integrated environmental management (IEM) procedures were still not legally required, there was no clarity for developers, and there was a “complete administrative muddle” by all the country’s environmental authorities.

“Environmental leaders at all three levels of government have, since 1982, failed to put into legislation the rules by which the interface between natural areas and development must be adjudicated.” Professor Fuggle suggested changing the “rules of the game” by making more use of the courts to

resolve disputes involving development and conservation. This would be a way of obtaining the required guidance and rules which the politicians were not providing.

“South Africans seem to be petrified of going to court and they try to avoid that option at all costs,” he said.

“In the United States and New Zealand people take each other to court and yet remain the best of friends.

“I believe the time has come to give serious consideration to taking issues to court – not for punitive reasons, but to obtain clarity in cases of dispute.

“We are simply not getting leadership when it comes to the division of rights and duties between developers and those who have responsibility for conservation areas.

“There is very little, if any, leadership from the central government, and in the Western Cape it’s just as bad.

“We’re seeing a debacle as one ad hoc decision follows another ad hoc decision. And what happens in that situation is that people inevitably lose energy and run out of steam when it comes to opposing insensitive or unwarranted development.

“And one thing loses out every time – the environment.”

# Looking for a breath of fresh air

BY ANITA ALLEN  
Science Writer

(56) (18) (250) Star 15/4/96

Eskom is winning and losing the battle against air pollution from its coal-fired power stations, according to its 1995 Environmental Report.

On the one hand, emissions of particulate matter – visible smoke – decreased in 1995 despite an overall increase in the amount of electricity generated.

On the other, emissions of the main greenhouse gases have increased relative to the amount of electricity generated.

No explanation for the decline in performance on gaseous emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide was given.

But, the report said: "Research on alternative generation and operation technologies to reduce gaseous emission levels is a long-term strategy receiving continuous attention.

"It includes nuclear and hydroelectric alternatives."

This is the second year that Eskom has produced an environmental report.

The major significance of the 1995 report is that Eskom has been able to quantify its performance against targets set last year.

Emissions of particulate matter showed an average decrease of 7 kilotons, from 122 kilotons in 1994 to 115 kilotons last year.

In the same period, electricity generated increased from 148 000 Gigawatt hours in 1994 to 152 000 GWh last year.

The improved overall performance in terms of air quality shows that in 1994 Eskom's coal-fired power stations produced 0,83kg of particulate matter per Megawatt hour of electricity produced, compared with 0,77kg per MWh last year – an overall improvement of 0,06kg per MWh.

In terms of air quality trends on the Mpumalanga highveld, the report showed that the decline in air quality of the region was continuing its trend from a high in 1984.

Eskom's power stations have also shown improved water consumption for electricity generated, down from 1,41l per kilowatt hour in 1994 to 1,38l per kWh last year.

In terms of meeting Reconstruction and Development goals, Eskom has exceeded targets, supplying electricity from the grid to 313 179 homes in 1995, against a target of 300 000.

In addition 893 schools and 37 clinics were supplied with electricity.

Eskom reinforced its commitment to the environment by appointing a corporate environmental affairs manager to be responsible for co-ordination and balance in addressing environmental matters, chief executive Allen Morgan said in his preface to the report.

"Environmental management is one of five core research areas regarded as critical to the long term health of Eskom and its customers," he said.

Of the R4,2-million allocated to capacity building and training at universities and technikons last year, about 20% went to environmental support programmes.

In addition, of the R10-million allocated to tertiary institutions for contract research, some 30% went to research on environmental projects.

# Hearings to begin on 'illegal cottages'

(56) 8016/4/96  
Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — The Heath commission will shortly hold formal hearings on the occupation of "illegal" cottages erected along the Transkei coastline.

Preliminary investigations had identified about 100 "illegal" site holders who allegedly acquired their land for a song from local chiefs and headmen, the commission's investigating officer Capt Steve Barkhuizen said yesterday.

In a separate development, the Bank of Transkei has been informed that a formal hearing will take place on May 23 to investigate whether the bank overcharged interest on former Transkei government current accounts. Millions of rands were allegedly involved. The commission had completed its preliminary investigations.

This week 15 people who recently erected cottages in the Mnyameni and Sikombe regions in Northern Transkei were served notice of the first hearing in Port Shepstone on June 18-21.

Barkhuizen said the hearings would decide the rights of

the siteholders.

The second in the series of planned hearings, involving 30 people who had cottages in the Manteku and Mapantsana regions, would begin on July 22 in Umtata. Barkhuizen said reports arising from the hearings would be submitted to Eastern Cape premier Raymond Mhlaba and Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom for the necessary action.

Investigations would begin shortly into the seaside resorts of Mboyti, Umgazana and Coffee Bay, where extensive development had taken place.

The commission began investigating the allotment of sites on which coastal cottages were built after receiving reports that sites were sold for "R200 and a bottle of brandy" by local chiefs and headmen.

Acting in conjunction with the environmental affairs department and Eastern Cape nature conservation, it conducted various surveys, and obtained extensive photo and video footage of the cottages in the Transkei "as well as the environmental damage caused during their building".

# Warning on cableway upgrading

56 (108)  
JOSEPH ARANES  
Municipal Staff

ARG 16/4/96

THE Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC) has threatened to abandon its proposed improvement of the cableway network if it cannot get a guarantee that the National Monuments Council (NMC) will approve the upgrade.

John Harrison, managing director of TMACC, said in Cape Town today that although the company was committed to completing the integrated environmental management process (IEM), it could not continue to undertake studies with no guarantee that they would result in approval of the upgrade.

He said the company had asked that Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane intervene and reconsider the NMC's decision that the upgrading could begin only once the IEM report had been fully approved.

"The NMC has set impossible conditions with no guarantee of approval after the conditions are met while we feel that the specialist study can be done in tandem with the upgrade as the issues do not relate directly to the work but to the management of the top of the mountain," Mr Harrison said.

"We have already got conditional approval for the work from the Cape Town City Council and a permit from the provincial minister of finance and environmental affairs and we have put up financial guarantees of R1 million to ensure that further issues in this process can be addressed and the necessary changes made."

Mr Harrison said the company was just as concerned about all aspects of the upgrade.

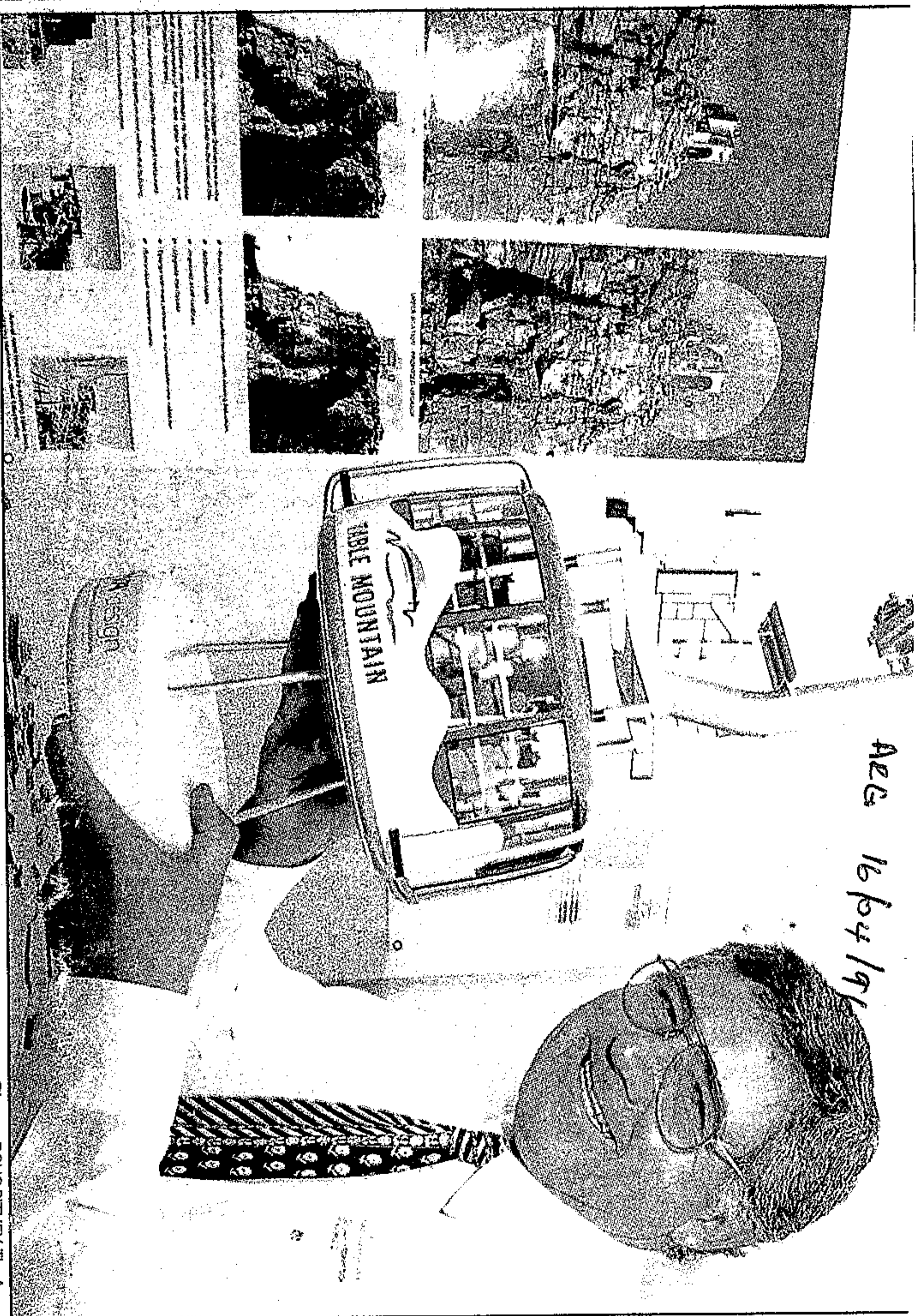
"But we just believe the completion of the IEM study and the upgrade can run simultaneously. We have already involved about 300 interested and affected parties in the IEM and have made many amendments to the original plans following their inputs.

"This new time-consuming process which the NMC is proposing includes further review, further studies and input by specialists advisers to the NMC, who were invited to give input in the initial process.

"We have already lost millions of rands as a result of all the delays and will have to take a decision, possibly by the weekend, whether we will continue with the upgrade."

CONT.

ACC 16/04/97



**MODEL CAR:** Managing director of the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company John Harrison inspects a model of the proposed new cable-car his company intends operating on the mountain.

Picture: DOUG PITHEY, The Argus.

# Century City builders offer wetland plan

ALL 16/4/96 (56)

ANDREA WEISS  
Metro Reporter

THE developers of the Century City pleasureland near the N1 in Milnerton are willing to set aside 16 hectares as a nature area within the proposed development on the 192 hectare site.

This includes islands to accommodate the existing heron site and a surrounding "buffer canal" to protect the birds.

This area would have the added advantage of using natural systems including reedbeds to purify the water used in a further 10 hectare of artificial waterways planned for the theme park development.

This is reported in a draft environmental impact assessment report on management options for the existing wetland where thousands of birds have been breeding in a heronry on the shores of Blouvillei.

The developers, Monex, have been granted a mixed-use zoning on the site, but are required to meet environmental conditions laid down by the Western Cape cabinet.

The 16ha option is one of five possible scenarios in the draft environmental impact report, and falls midway between proposals to set aside 21ha or only 10ha as a nature area.

Whereas the 21ha option would provide enough area to accommodate a seasonal pan, the 16ha option would limit the seasonal pan area.

However, it would still be large enough to accommodate a proposed "multi-purpose wetland", which the 10ha proposal could not.

A multi-purpose wetland is defined

as an area which is "designed to emulate and improve the natural ability of wetlands to treat and purify water".

The wetland would probably consist of a diversity of habitats including open pond areas with a water depth of 0,5 to 1,5m, marsh with reed areas and a water depth of 0,5m, and shallow meadow areas with water depths of 0,1 to 0,2m.

These areas would help to cleanse the water which would be used for a further 10ha of artificial water bodies within the development.

According to the report, the advantage of the proposed "multi-purpose wetland" is that it would not require external energy or chemical inputs, would require very little maintenance and would create sustainable habitats of ecological value.

In addition, the wetland area would provide an opportunity for education and ecotourism and recreation.

The report suggests that a Blouvillei environmental committee be established to monitor and assist the implementation of a management plan to ensure the proposal would be properly executed.

This committee would probably consist of key parties, among them the local authority, Cape Nature Conservation and the developer.

To meet a requirement of the Western Cape cabinet, the plan would have to be given the blessing of Cape Nature Conservation.

In their response, the developers said they would not only re-establish areas of indigenous vegetation on site, they were also planning to create a nursery for indigenous plants.

# Tons of radioactive scrap metal discovered

(56) Star 16/4/96

State is deciding whether to take action, but head of unit investigating the case says contaminated material poses no threat to the community

By DEREK RODNEY

A Free State gold mine could face prosecution for allegedly contravening its Council for Nuclear Safety licence in the handling of radioactive material.

This follows the discovery by police and CNS inspectors of several tons of contaminated radioactive scrap metal at an industrial site near Welkom.

The site, inspected by detectives from the Endangered Species Protection Unit tasked to investigate the sale of 50 000kg of scrap metal from the mine last month, has since been sealed off from the public.

Police yesterday handed the case to a senior state prosecutor for a decision on whether to proceed with it.

ESPU detectives, accompanied by CNS inspectors, visited privately owned premises in the Welkom industrial area on March 14.

After a thorough inspection they discovered a "large" portion of the material, sold as scrap metal, with radioactive levels higher than the accepted 0,04 becquerel, a measure of radioactive intensity.

No action was being considered against the business that unwittingly bought the contaminated material.

ESPU commander Supt Piet Lategan said yesterday it was the first case of this nature the unit had been required to investigate.

He added that once a decision had been made by the senior prosecutor, the unit would be initiating investigations against several other companies.

Lategan said the contaminated material posed no threat to the community, although a safer storage area for the material had to be found.

"This is all new ground being covered by the unit and, as such, we are proceeding tentatively with the investigation," he said.

## Special unit to probe theft of nuclear sources

By DEREK RODNEY

A specialised police unit is investigate the increase in the theft of nuclear sources in South Africa.

International trafficking in nuclear sources - used primarily in medical, scientific, agricultural, commercial and industrial fields - has increased alarmingly in recent years and South African criminals quick to exploit trends on the global black market are now also resorting to the theft of local sources.

Supt Stan Joubert, commander of the SAPS's Explosives Unit, which is responsible for removing illegal nuclear or radioactive sources but not with investigating the cases, said this week the thefts appeared to be unrelated, with many of the sources being passed off as components for nuclear devices.

Although police have found no evidence of the sources being wanted for nuclear devices, there is concern at exorbitant figures in excess of R2-million having been mentioned regarding the sales.

"We have to date found no proof in our investigations that anyone has been able to use the materials for the construction of a nuclear device," Joubert said.

He added that the reported high asking prices was reason for concern.

It appeared at this stage that criminals were stealing the sources purely for financial gain by ripping off unsuspecting buyers.

According to police, numerous "dealers" have asked for prices varying between R20 000 and R2-million for nuclear sources.

At present, investigations into

the theft or trafficking in nuclear sources, said to be in excess of 50 docket with the SAPS, has been fragmented, with members of several units at national, provincial and local levels tasked with finding the radioactive materials.

Until now, investigations have been conducted by a variety of personnel, from police station and detective branch members to Internal Security Division members.

"We are in the process of building up a database of nuclear-related cases from around the country and will soon be handing the bulk of those docket over to a specialised unit," Joubert said.

The unit tipped to take over these docket is the police's Endangered Species Protection Unit, which deals with all illegal environmental matters.



# Cableway company threatens to abandon proposed upgrade

CAPE TOWN — The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company threatened yesterday to abandon its proposed improvement of the cableway if it was not given a guarantee that the National Monuments Council would approve the upgrading.

MD John Harrison said although the company was committed to completing an integrated environmental management study, it could not continue to undertake studies with no guarantee they would result in approval of the upgrading.

He said the company had asked Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane to intervene and reconsider the Monuments Council's decision that the upgrading could begin only when the environmental report had been fully approved.

"The (Monuments Council) has set impossible conditions with no guarantee of approval after the conditions are met, while we feel the specialist study

BO 17/4/96 (56) (28)  
can be done in tandem with the upgrade as the issues do not relate directly to the work but to the management of the top of the mountain.

"We have already got conditional approval for the work from the Cape Town City Council and a permit from the finance and environmental affairs MEC and we have put up financial guarantees of R1m to ensure further issues in this process can be addressed and the necessary changes made."

Harrison said the company was just as concerned about all aspects of the upgrading. "But we believe the completion of the study and the upgrade can run simultaneously. We have already involved about 300 interested and affected parties in the study and have made many amendments to the original plans.

"We have already lost millions of rands as a result of the delays and will have to take a decision whether we will continue with the upgrade." — Sapa.

## Contaminated water a hazard

(56) BD 18/4/96

PIETERSBURG — Vanadium contamination in the Steelpoort River valley in Northern Province and Mpumalanga posed a serious health hazard to thousands of people dependent on water from rivers in the area, Transvaal Agricultural Union president Dries Bruwer said yesterday.

The union had received complaints from livestock farmers in the valley about abortions and births of deformed calves.

Bruwer said some farmers had been forced to sell their stock because of the proven vanadium contamination of water sources. Some might be forced to abandon farming as their land had become almost worthless and many now faced serious financial problems. He called on government to implement legislation to stop the contamination.

Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Dawie de Villiers said the water affairs department had appointed a knowledgeable person to probe vanadium contamination in the Steelpoort valley. — Sapa.

## Ministers' committee to probe cableway plan

CAPE TOWN — The Cabinet had decided that a special ministers' committee would be formed to investigate and decide on the proposed development of Table Mountain facilities, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane said on Tuesday.

He said this followed an appeal to him from the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company after the National Monuments Council blocked its plans to upgrade the cableway before an environmental impact study had been completed.

Since so many interests were involved, he had asked the Cabinet to take responsibility for any decisions involving the cableway. The committee, to be chaired by Ngubane, would consist of ministers Kader Asmal (water and forestry), Pik Botha (mineral and energy affairs), Dawie de Villiers (environmental affairs), and Derek Hanekom (land affairs).

A fine balance should be struck between conservation, preservation of the heritage and encouraging tourism, Ngubane said.

Meanwhile, National Monuments Council director George Hofmeyr said a properly completed environmental impact process was an essential prerequisite for the planned improvement of Table Mountain's cableway. He was responding to a threat by the cableway company to abandon the proposed improvement unless it was given a guarantee the monuments council would approve the upgrading.

MD John Harrison said on Tuesday the company was committed to completing an integrated environmental management process, but could not continue undertaking studies with no guarantee they would result in approval for the upgrading.

Hofmeyr denied the monuments council had set impossible conditions. "The point of the review stage of an (integrated environmental management) process is to assess whether the information available is adequate," he said. The council and its advisers felt justified to request adequate information on which to base their final decision. — Sapa.

BD 18/4/96

## New signs for coastline

Theo Rawana (56)

BD 18/4/96  
THE environmental affairs and tourism department had launched a project to provide a national plan for "interpretative signage" along SA's 3 000km coastline, it announced yesterday.

The coastal management advisory programme was designed to enhance environmental awareness among all South Africans and enrich the experience of tourists, it said.

A pilot project had been launched at the Rietvlei-Table View beachfront — a wetland of international importance and a resource for the surrounding community of Milnerton.

"Interpretative signage is an important means of imparting information about the coastal environment.

"It comprises user-friendly display boards with text and graphics erected at strategic sites along the coast.

"The intention is that these boards will increase understanding of the surrounding environmental elements, features or processes by focusing on the physical and biological environment, as well as cultural, historic and economic aspects," it said.

The target audience was domestic and international tourists, travellers and local communities that could benefit from the educational value of the signage as well as the opportunities created by tourism.

The CSIR had produced a draft plan for the new signs which would "guide the implementation of signage projects countrywide", the department said.

Groups interested in the department's signage projects should contact Cobie Bredenkamp at (021) 402-3208.

R61M DECISION 'TOO COMPLICATED'

# Ngubane asks for help on cableway controversy

(56) (288) CT 18/4/96

**THE FUTURE** of the planned R61-million development of Table Mountain will be decided by a committee of the "St Lucia four" cabinet ministers, Dr Ben Ngubane announced yesterday.

**MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**T**HE Table Mountain cableway controversy has proved too much of a hot potato for Arts and Science Minister Dr Ben Ngubane, who has called on four other cabinet ministers to help him decide whether to give the R61-million upgrading project the green light or not.

He announced yesterday that a special minister's committee — made up of the "St Lucia four" — had been appointed by the cabinet to investigate the issue. The committee members are Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom, Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha, Environment Affairs Minister Dr Dawie de Villiers and Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal — the same four who were appointed earlier this year to make a decision on whether to allow mining

on the St Lucia dunes in KwaZulu-Natal. This comes after the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC) appealed to Ngubane last week to overturn the decision by the National Monuments Council who had refused to give the company the go-ahead for the upgrading until the integrated environmental management study had been completed.

Ngubane said the cableway controversy was too complicated a matter to be the responsibility of one minister alone.

A statement from Ngubane's office said: "Since there are so many interests involved, making it a very complicated matter, the minister is of the opinion that it should be a cabinet responsibility, rather than just a decision for one ministry to make."

Ngubane will head the committee

which is likely to sit for the first time next week. He appealed for patience so that the committee could make a decision which had "the best interests of Table Mountain at heart".

TMACC managing director Mr John Harrison said yesterday: "We trust the committee will get together as soon as possible to bring this matter to an end."

He added that his company might still call off the development before the committee made a finding.

The move has been welcomed by vice-chairman of the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Area Mr John Cobby, who said his organisation believed it was essential that the environmental studies be completed before construction began.

Mountain Club of SA spokesman Mr Lester Coelen said: "I hope the ministers make a decision based on sound environmental considerations only and not politics."

"Table Mountain is a priceless, irreplaceable asset and whatever we do to it cannot be undone later."

## Nuclear council refuses licence

Edward West (56) 30 19/4/96

THE Council for Nuclear Safety has refused an application by the Atomic Energy Corporation to have the Vaalputs nuclear waste disposal site's licence changed to allow for the disposal of long-lived nuclear waste from uranium mining and processing.

Bert Winkler, the council's CEO, said in the annual report: "This proposal (to change the licence) was at variance with international practice and the Council for Nuclear Safety said it could not approve such an option."

In terms of its licence, Vaalputs may accept only low and intermediate level operational waste from Koeberg. A council spokesman said yesterday that small quantities of long-lived nuclear waste from uranium mining containing uranium, thorium and radium isotopes were being stored in protected areas on mines awaiting the eventual change to its licence.

But no action could be taken on a central nuclear waste storage facility for SA until national policy regarding nuclear waste was fully fleshed out by the industry and government, he said.

Winkler said that to date 35 mining and minerals processing facilities and six scrap metal recyclers had been granted licences.

A rehabilitation study funded by the mining industry had been sanctioned in the year to March last year to obtain cost estimates of rehabilitating 47 off-mine sites found to be contaminated. The atomic corporation commenced work on the first site, Katdoringbosch Farm near Potchefstroom, in January last year.

Environmental monitoring on and around the corporation's Pelindaba site had indicated small increases in uranium concentrations in the air in the year to March last year in the immediate vicinity of the enrichment plant, but no increase was detected in areas around Pelindaba where the public had access, he said.

THREE SPILLS IN 10 DAYS

# Peat moss is the new solution to oil spills

(56) 19/4/96

**DEHYDRATED CANADIAN PEAT MOSS**, recently introduced to South Africa, soaks up spills of oils and other hydrocarbons and can be safely disposed of afterwards. Environment Writer **MELANIE GOSLING** reports.

**I**T'S just plain old moss — but it has revolutionised the clean-up of oil spills.

In the past 10 days a wonder substance made from 39 000-year-old Canadian peat moss has been used to clean up a 20 000 litre jet-fuel spill into a vlei in the Free State, an oil spill in Hermannus harbor and an oil spill from an East London factory which flowed into a stream and threatened a nearby fish hatchery.

Mr Ray Long, who has recently brought Peat Sorb to this country, said yesterday: "Nature always has the answer. It's just up to us to find it."

Like many scientific discoveries, the oil-cleaning properties of

peat moss were discovered by accident, when a plastics factory sited on the edge of a peat bog in Canada had a burst pipe which spewed out oil.

"Someone grabbed a load of peat moss and threw it on the spill, and watched in amazement as it just sucked it up," says Long.

Since then, peat moss has been harvested from the Canadian peat bogs and is used to clean up hydrocarbon spills like diesel, petrol or paraffin.

It also soaks up paints, acetone, benzene and other hazardous materials.

After being harvested from the peat bogs, the moss is dried until only 7% of its original 90% mois-

ture content remains. In this state it becomes hydrophobic (repels water), but absorbs hydrocarbons.

Once it has absorbed the substances they do not leach out, making Peat Sorb safe to dump at landfill sites. While the oil is trapped in the peat, micro-organisms gradually break the hydrocarbons down.

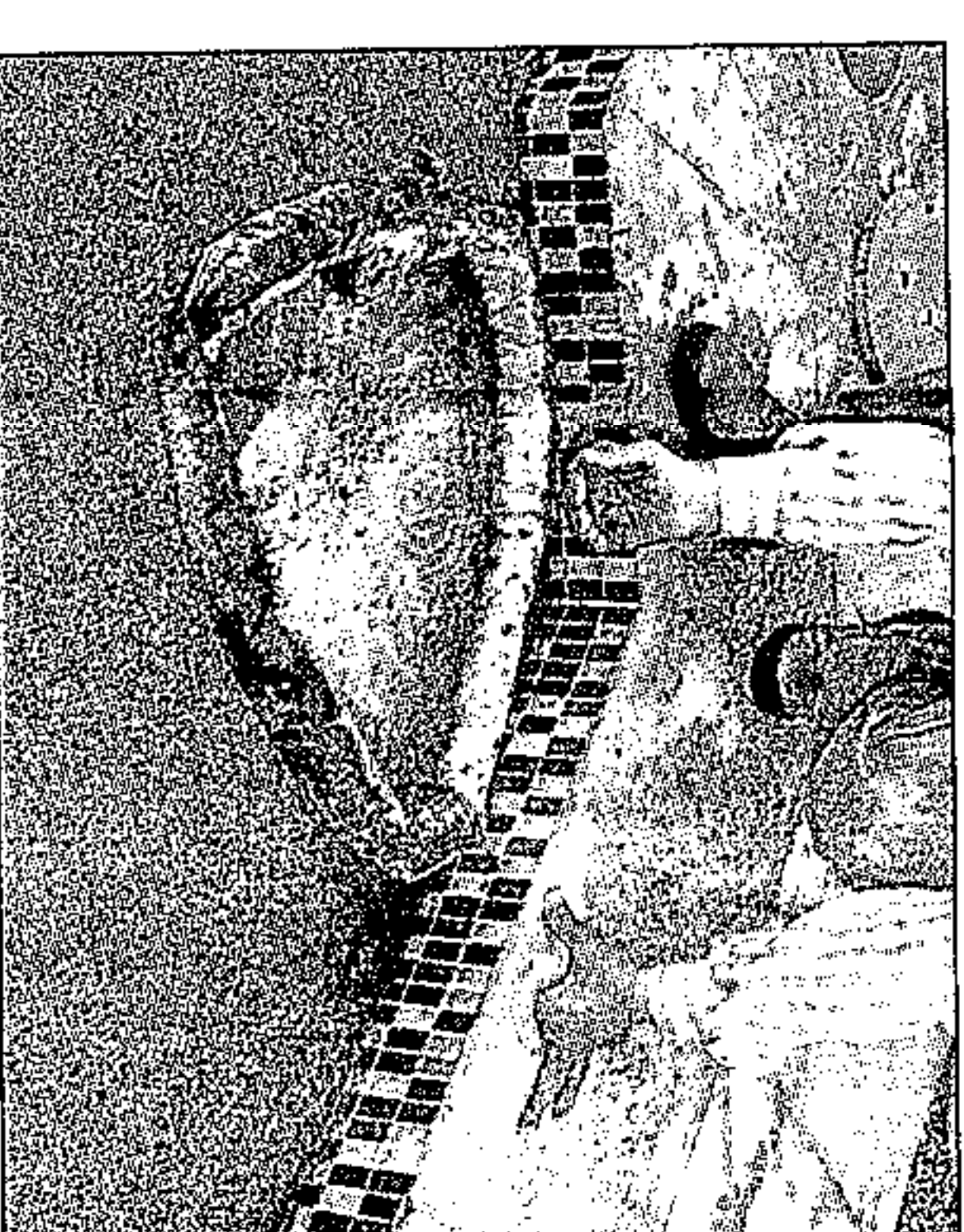
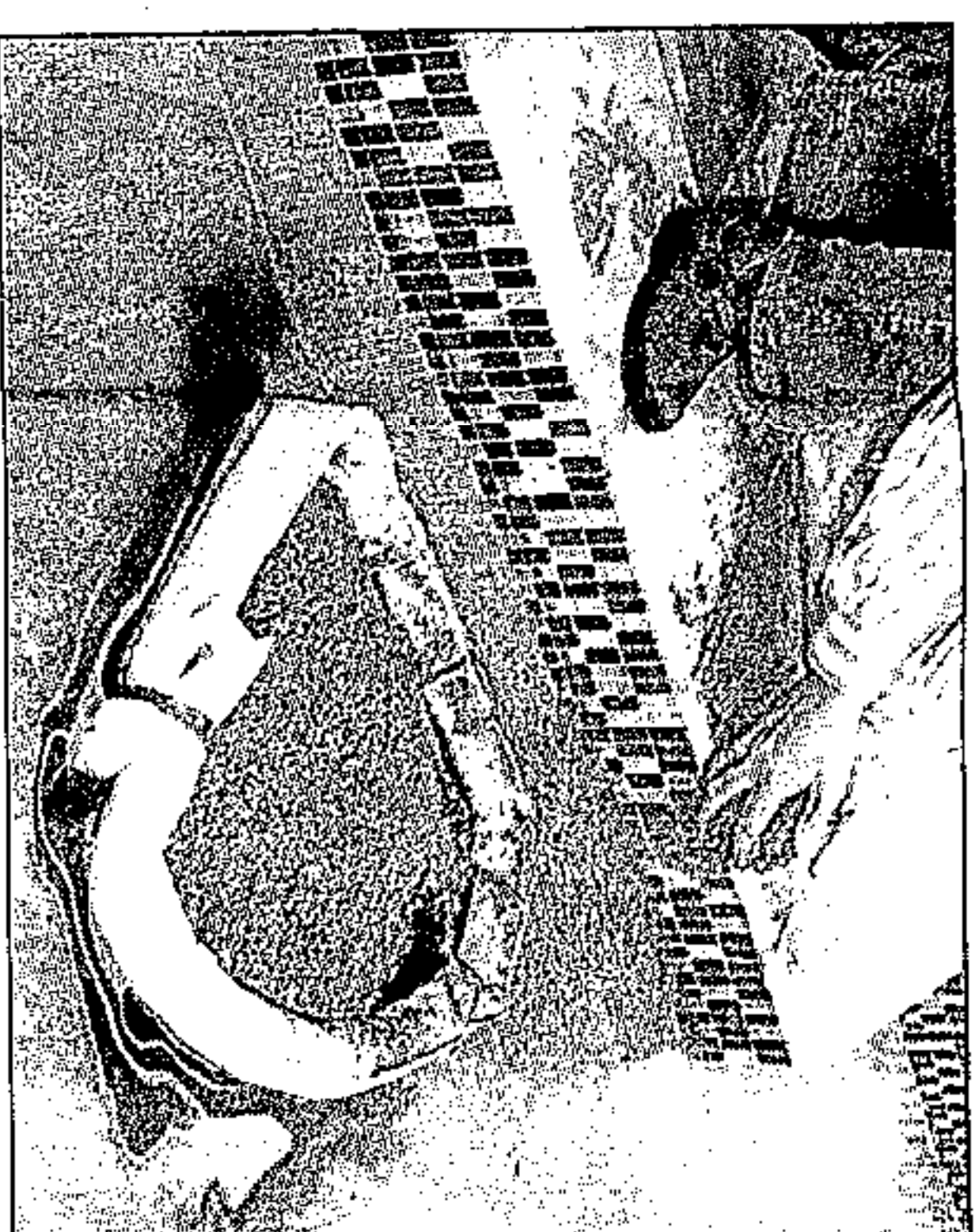
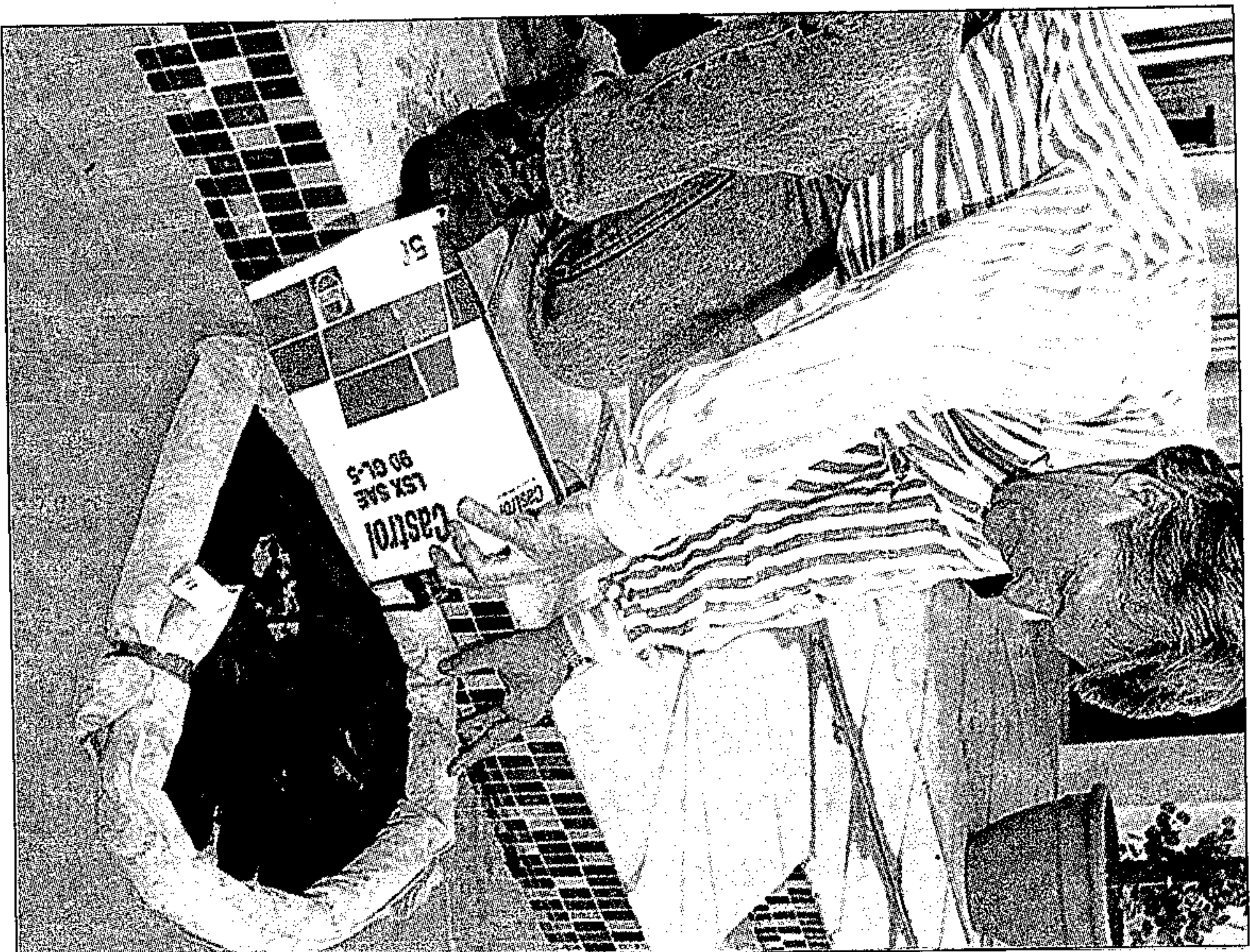
Yesterday the Cape Times watched Long pour four litres of used engine oil into his sparkling swimming pool as a demonstration.

He sprinkled some of the peat moss over the black gunge, stirred it a little until it had absorbed the oil then scooped it out with a pool net and dumped it on his garden.

In just half-an-hour there was not a trace of oil in the pool.

"It will make good compost eventually."

For further information telephone (021) 438-3100.



**ABSORBING:** Mr Ray Long demonstrates how to clean up with Peat Sorb after an oil spill in his swimming pool. First Long pours four litres of used engine oil into the pool (left). He then sprinkles some of the peat moss over the black gunge (top), stirs it a little until it has absorbed the oil and scoops it out (above).

**PICTURES: ALAN TAYLOR**

## Caltex to fit new air filters

TABLE VIEW and Milnerton residents can look forward to cleaner air soon.

(56)  
The Caltex refinery in Milnerton — long targeted by the local community as a source of air pollution — has shut down for six weeks for routine maintenance and the installation of new equipment that will significantly reduce dust emissions.

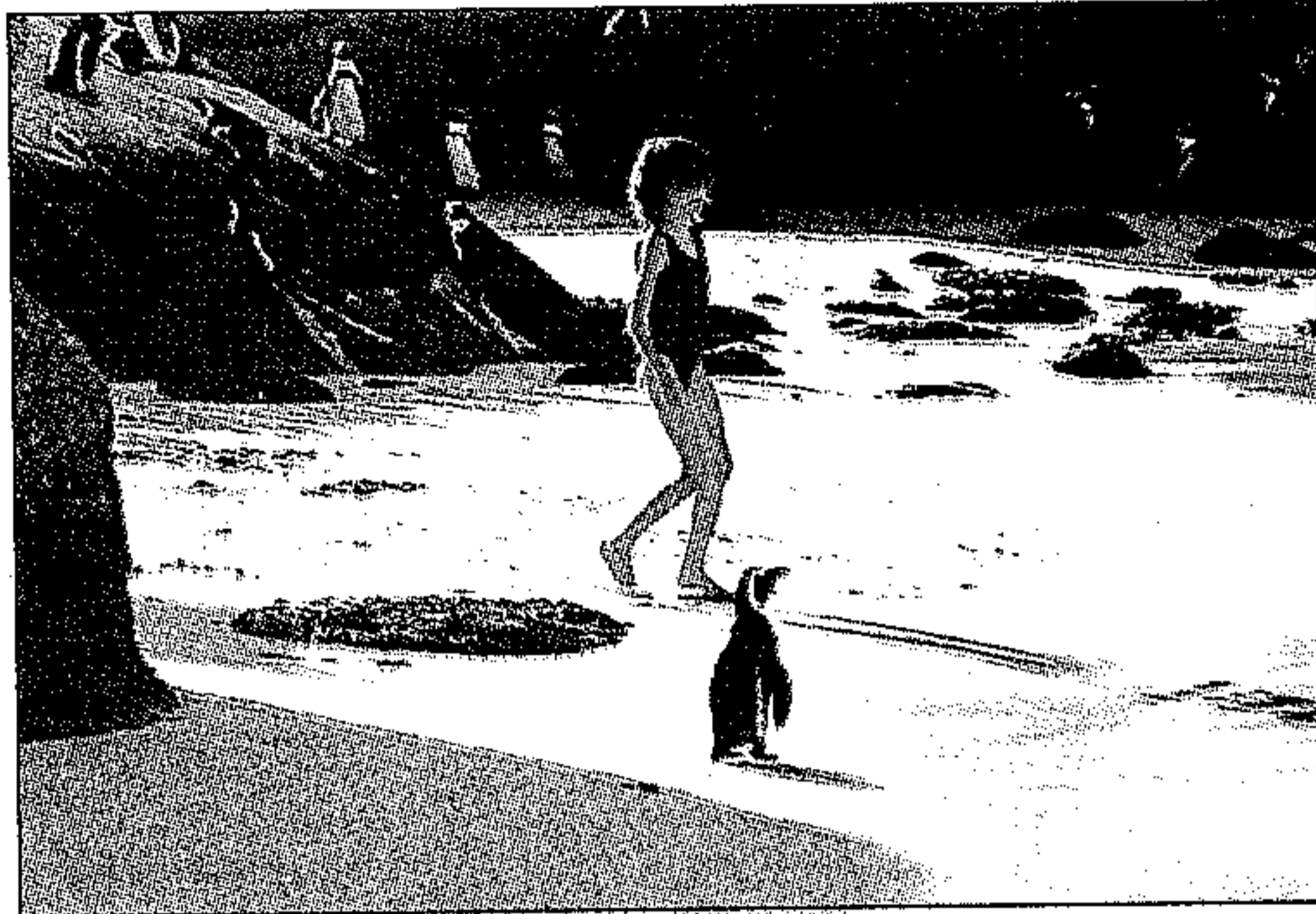
CT 19/4/96.  
But a Caltex spokesman said yesterday there might be short periods during the recommissioning when the refinery would spew out black smoke, a slightly larger flare and "some odour". —  
Staff Writer



# Flap over Boulder penguins

(56)

ST (M) 21/4/96



**DON'T FENCE ME IN:** A jackass penguin strolls with a young beachgoer at the Boulders

**G**REEN critics have been chided by the Mayor of Simon's Town for being more concerned about penguins falling into holes than tourist guides who leave their charges to disturb the threatened birds.

Mrs Pauline van Eck was commenting on claims by local environmentalists that problems caused by erecting a fence to cordon off the burgeoning jackass penguin colony at Boulders would have been prevented by a proper integrated environmental management process.

"Because the IEM process had not been followed, the environmental impacts of the fence had not been identified in advance, and the necessary controls to alleviate the impacts had not been established," the Friends of the Simon's Town Coastline maintained.

They said construction work on a 500m, R80 000 fence had led to threatened Jackass Penguins falling into 80 cm-deep holes dug for fence posts, workers dumping rubble on indigenous vegetation and rare plants being "indiscriminately and unnecessarily" hacked away.

Mrs van Eck said she was aware of birds plunging into the holes, "but some penguins have also actually started nesting in them".

She said the Simon's Town transitional local structure had beefed up supervision at the building site, which involved a project to protect birds which had the same conservation status as white rhinos.

The National Parks Board, due to take over responsibility for the Boulders coastal reserve by June as part of the proposed Cape Peninsula and Table Mountain National Park, was committed to full IEM processes before any major developments there, she added.

Mrs van Eck said the environmentalists should rather be directing their attention at unsupervised tourists, who were causing more distress to the penguins than a fence which was being erected to protect the birds.

"We've had a major influx of tourists.

"I wish tour guides, instead of sitting at their buses and smoking, would take more responsibility for their tourists," she said.

Tourists moved freely among the penguins, disturbing them, instead of keeping their distance and being informed about their ecological value and habits.

Boulders management advisory committee member and Cape Nature Conservation ornithologist, Tony Williams said the problems raised by the Friends of the Simon's Town Coastline suggested poor supervision and should be rectified.

"However, IEM processes should, in principle, precede major developments, but the Boulders fence follows four years of vacillation and exhaustive discussion. It is not a particularly big project," Dr Williams said.

Ironically, jackass penguins were a threatened species, yet the 1 200-odd Boulders penguins had thrived so much that they were becoming a bit of nuisance to their human neighbours, he added.

The fence was being put up to protect both Cape Peninsula's only mainland colony of jackass penguins, as well as property-owners who had to put up with roving birds, their loud braying and droppings.

**CHARL DE VILLIERS**

# Cableway probe starts

By Charl de Villiers

A TOP-RANKING cabinet committee is likely to be faced with the question of whether Cape Town's cableway company had considered an "astronomic" increase in tourism when it decided to nearly treble the capacity of its 67-year-old facility.

A five-man committee, chaired by Arts, Science, Culture and Technology Minister Ben Ngubane, meets for the first time on Wednesday to investigate the R61-million project.

The upgrade was blocked for environmental reasons by the National Monuments Council three weeks ago.

The company says that it has lost R500 000 due to construction delays since mid-March and will have to close the popular cableway over Christmas and during January if it is not given the go-ahead by next Monday.

"If the upgrade is not approved by then, we'll have to decide whether to delay it for a year, or scrap it com-

pletely," cableway company managing director John Harrison said yesterday.

"We hope and pray that the ministers believe that their decision does not have to follow yet another long and drawn-out investigation," he added.

But according to an informed source, the politicians will probably have to consider arguments that the proposed increase in the cableway's carrying capacity would be swamped within five years by a 20 percent annual growth in tourism.

NMC director George Hofmeyr yesterday confirmed that this was one of the issues his council had raised last week with the company when calling for further impact assessments.

A spokesman for Dr Ngubane confirmed that UCT environmental scientist Prof Richard Fuggle had already given the minister a "strong" report on the environmental dispute which erupted when the NMC refused permission for the upgrade.

(56) (56)  
ST(m) 21/4/96

The NMC said it could not consider approval until an integrated environmental management process had been completed and has listed five studies it still wants done to resolve the company's "incomplete and flawed" IEM.

These must also be reviewed by the public, the NMC's own advisors, an internationally-recognised, independent specialist and the monuments council itself.

"A shortcut in this respect is not possible if the (IEM) process is to stand up proper scrutiny. There are just too many unanswered questions about the impact of this project," Mr Hofmeyr said.

The cableway company warned that it would not do outstanding impact studies without guarantees.

The other committee members are Water Affairs and Forestry minister Prof Kader Asmal, Mr Pik Botha (Mineral and Energy Affairs), Dr Dawie de Villiers (Environment Affairs and Tourism), and Mr Derek Hanekom (Land Affairs).

# De Wildt marks 25 years, but threat to species on the increase

(56) ARG 24/4/96

WITH the conservation community set to turn increasingly to captive breeding programmes to save endangered species, the De Wildt Cheetah Research Centre is leading the way. Over the past 25 years and under the guidance of Ann van Dyk, De Wildt has built up an international reputation for breeding cheetah in captivity.

**KIM HELFRICH**  
The Argus Correspondent

PRETORIA. - A sombre note on population explosion was sounded on Saturday amid celebrations to mark 25 successful years of breeding cheetah and other endangered species in captivity at the De Wildt Cheetah Research Centre.

Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) South Africa executive director John Hanks said Africa had the highest population growth rate of any major region in the world and an acceleration of land transformations could be expected in years to come.

Species and their habitats will face unprecedented pressures and there is no doubt the international conservation community will increasingly turn to captive breeding programmes as threats become critical.

De Wildt has done a magnificent job in its first 25 years.

Of Ann van Dyk, variously known by the conservation community in South Africa as The Cheetah Lady or Miss De Wildt, Dr Hanks said: "Under her indomitable guidance, De Wildt has built up a deserved international reputation for breeding cheetah in captivity."

"Ann's modest, self-effacing demeanour hides an inner determination to succeed where others have failed, to continue where others have simply given up. It was this tenacity, coupled with a devotion to her animals which led to the unlocking of the key to captive breeding of cheetah, ensuring the species can be removed from that depressing list of plants and animals threatened with imminent extinction."

From cheetah, her expertise has extended to the suni and serval, to the brown hyena and riverine rabbit and to the enigmatic wild dog, whose peri-



**CHEETAH LADY:** The De Wildt Cheetah Research Centre's Ann van Dyk received a specially struck medal.

patetic habits did not prevent yet another highly successful breeding programme at De Wildt.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) was founded in 1973 with the cheetah spoor as its logo and executive director John Ledger said in a message of congratulations: "One of the early projects supported by the EWT was reproductive physiology research done on cheetah at De Wildt, which was to achieve such spectacular success in later years."

"Our collaboration on the suni breeding project was particularly successful, as well as the transport of wild dogs by air from Etosha to De Wildt."

Gerhard Verdoorn is currently involved in maintaining a captive flock of several species of vulture and he is also undertaking the important Egyptian vulture captive breeding project, which seeks to reintroduce this species to South Africa.

"All of us at EWT salute the work done at De Wildt and congratulate Ann and her colleagues on the 25th anniversary of this fine institution," Dr Verdoorn said.

About 160 people representing conservation organisations, the veterinary fraternity and friends of De Wildt gathered at the centre, west of Pretoria, on Saturday to celebrate its 25th anniversary.



Picture: LEE WARREN

**SAVED:** Bred in captivity at the De Wildt Cheetah Research Centre for the last 25 years, the cheetah is one species no longer on the imminent extinction list.

# Cabinet to be asked to OK probe into AECI sulphur fire

STAFF WRITER

(Sb)  
CT 24/4/96  
A COMMISSION of inquiry into the sulphur fire at the AECI plant in Somerset West in December — which left two men dead and forced the evacuation of thousands of Macassar residents — is to be recommended to the cabinet.

This was announced yesterday after the Deputy Minister of Environment Affairs, Mr Bantu Holomisa, agreed to the request following a meeting with the provincial Environment MEC Mr Kobus Meiring, representatives of the Macassar Crisis Committee and AECI.

In the recommendation for the inquiry, which has been welcomed by the Macassar Crisis Committee, it has been

proposed that the origins and the establishment of the sulphur stockpile at the site be investigated.

It was also suggested that the events leading up to and the cause of the fire be determined, as well as the adequacy of the emergency response plan.

Other proposals are that the impact of the fire on the surrounding communities and the environment be determined, as well as the adequacy of legislation and regulations governing the storage and stockpiling of hazardous substances and the response required in an emergency.

The commission will also seek to make recommendations regarding community awareness and emergency response in areas surrounding hazardous substances.

# Permit to clean up radioactive waste granted

Star 24/4/96 (56)

Council for Nuclear Safety has given corporation the go-ahead to start decontamination at Radiation Hill

By TAMSEN DE BEER

**A** licence to clean up spilt radioactive waste at the Atomic Energy Corporation's Pelindaba site has been granted by the public nuclear watchdog, the Council for Nuclear Safety.

Low-level radioactive waste was spilt by workers at Trench 7 on Radiation Hill last year, when they violated licence conditions stipulated by the council.

A moratorium was placed on excavation at the site while the corporation compiled a licence change requirement document and submitted it to the council for approval.

This document has now been approved.

The council and the corporation have agreed that the exposed radioactive material does not pose a health risk.

The corporation's first step will be to sort the spilt waste from broken containers in the trench, said its nuclear waste manager, Brian Hambleton-Jones. The amount of radioactivity present would then be

assessed.

Meanwhile, Earthlife Africa has withdrawn from the Pelindaba Community Forum after only one meeting.

The environmental group recently attended the first forum meeting, chaired by Hambleton-Jones, along with representatives from local community organisations.

Earthlife spokesman Alan Gardner said a proposal at the meeting that incidents at the Pelindaba site be made public at the discretion of the forum was "against our constitution".

"Earthlife Africa would never submit to this form of censorship," said Gardner.

But a spokesman for the corporation, Lola Patrick, said only minor incidents would be treated in this way.

She said that in terms of a scale of nuclear events ranging from level 1 to level 7 in severity, only incidents at level 1 would be discussed by the forum before being made public.

"We are compelled by law to make public incidents from level 2," she said.

# AECI blaze to be subject of inquiry <sup>(56)</sup> ~~commission~~ commission

Staff Reporter

ARG 25/4/96

A COMMISSION of inquiry is likely to be set up to investigate last December's AECI sulphur blaze at Somerset West.

It allegedly caused the deaths of two Macassar brothers and led to the evacuation of thousands of people from the area.

At a meeting yesterday between Deputy Minister of Environment, Bantu Holomisa, Western Cape Finance Minister, Kobus Meiring, AECI officials and members of the Macassar Crisis Committee, it was decided to ask the Cabinet to consider setting up a commission of inquiry into the disaster.

It would focus on the origins and establishment of the sulphur stockpile, the circumstances leading up to the fire and the effectiveness of the emergency response plan.

It would also include probing the impact of the fire on the surrounding communities and the adequacy of legislation controlling the storage of hazardous substances.

Brothers Ronald and Andrew Williams of Macassar were overcome by sulphur fumes during the fire on December 16 and died soon after.

More than 120 people were taken to hospital and 2 500 Macassar residents were evacuated.

Meanwhile, AECI has started negotiations about compensation and is expected to pay up to R20 million, according to an earlier statement.

A spokesman for the Macassar Crisis Committee said he welcomed the inquiry and described it as "in line" with what had been discussed.

He added that AECI and the Crisis Committee were "committed to a credible inquiry".

## UCT professor head of mountain probe

RICHARD Fuggle of the University of Cape Town is to be asked to head a probe into upgrading Table Mountain, says Ben Ngubane, chairman of the minister's committee on the upgrading.

Professor Fuggle is to head a committee whose brief is to identify and look into all aspects of upgrading the cable car system and facilities as part of the effort to increase the tourism potential of the mountain.

It will have to report to the minister's committee within three months. *(56) (388)*

A decision on upgrading should be taken only after a comprehensive study, rather than on the strength of what had so far been submitted, said Dr Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Science and Technology. - Sapa. *ARLT 25/4/96*

## Sensitive link between two vleis to be preserved

(58)

Metro Reporter

ARG 25/4/96

THE Cape Metropolitan Council has agreed to secure an ecologically sensitive link between Rondevlei and Zeekoevlei, which is currently in private hands and zoned for residential development.

Botanists describe the land as being of high conservation value because it contains the highly-threatened strand plain fynbos, and represents the last remaining undeveloped link between the two vleis.

At a meeting in March, the Botanical Society, backed by scientists and non-governmental organisations, and with the support of Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom, suggested that the CMC be asked to intervene.

Possible action would be to exchange the land for other CMC-owned land, buying the land out or getting the developer to redesign its plans to mitigate against the negative effects.

At its monthly meeting yesterday, the CMC agreed to give its chief executive officer authority to negotiate with the Cape and Transvaal Land and Finance Company to find a solution which would possibly involve a land swap.

If the CMC successfully secures the land against development, it will be incorporated into the Rondevlei nature reserve.

## W Cape under-

ANDREA WEISS  
Metro Reporter

WOMEN in the Western Cape are vastly under-represented in positions of power and influence, two studies on the topic have found.

The studies, one by the Development Action Group focusing on Working Women of the Western Cape, and the other by Idasa, entitled Women at the Periphery of Power, conclude that despite making up half the population, women are marginalised when it comes to positions of influence.

The DAG study found that the position was "dismal" when looking at boards of major companies and senior management in the Western Cape.

Of six large companies with head offices in Cape Town, two had no women board members, and the other four had only one each. Most had only one woman in senior management. The best was eight percent women and 92 percent men in senior

## Proposed street trading by-law approved by Chamber

ARG 25/4/96

Metro Reporter

THE Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry has welcomed the latest draft by-law to control street trading, saying it appears to be "both reasonable and workable".

In the latest Business Bulletin, Chamber president Geoffrey Ashmead describes street traders as "potential new members of the chamber - once they prosper, expand and become able to take the leap from informal business to small business".

The Chamber said it now seemed that the provincial Department of Economic Affairs, headed by Chris

Nissen, was about to announce a by-law which would allow organised street trading to flourish without incurring the wrath of formal trading.

"The Chamber supports the ministry's latest initiatives in this regard and believes that the controls on informal trading which have been set out in a model by-law appear to be both reasonable and workable, and generally to not impose burdens which are unduly onerous," the article said.

The Chamber however, is petitioning for further attention to be given to the issue of shop windows being obstructed by street traders.

## Auction on hold in land claim case

ARG 25/4/96

Metro Reporter

THE Cape Town City Council's estates department has decided to postpone the auction of two erven in Kenilworth, which was due to take place today, because of a land claim against the erven intended for auction.

The council-owned land in College Road was set to be auctioned at noon, but after queries by The Argus, a decision was made to postpone the auction pending the consideration of the land

claim by the commissioner.

Claimant Maruwan Gasant expressed his joy at the decision, saying that if the decision went in his favour, he would build a house there. The land lies behind the original house owned by Mr Gasant's family and had to be sold in 1960 as a result of provisions under the Group Areas Act. Under the land claims law, claimants can be compensated with alternate "State" land, a provision which also applies to council land.



## MOUNTAIN PROJECT PROBED

# Greens block cableway plan

HOPES have been dashed that the upgrading of the Table Mountain cableway will take place this year and the project is under threat of being scuppered. Environment Writer MELANIE GOSLING reports.

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS** have won the first round in the battle of the Table Mountain cableway. A cabinet committee announced yesterday that the controversial R61-million project to upgrade the cableway could not go ahead until a "comprehensive and balanced" study had been done.

This means it is unlikely that the upgrading will go ahead this year and might result in the project being abandoned altogether. The committee has appointed UCT environmental scientist Professor Richard Fuggle to investigate the entire project and submit a report to them within three months. They will take a final decision on the upgrading after he submits the report.

This ends months of wrangling between the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (TMACC) and environmentalists, who have called for a halt to the project until all the environmental impact studies have been completed. Arts and Science Minister Dr Ben Ngubane, who chaired the Cabinet committee, said yesterday: "The committee was unanimous that a final decision on the upgrading should only be taken after a comprehensive and balanced study was done, rather than one taken by the committee mere-

ly on the strength of what has been submitted until now." He said while the committee was unanimous in its support for the need to upgrade the cableway and its facilities as a way to increase the tourism potential of Table Mountain, it also had accepted that there were certain "outstanding matters" which needed to be dealt with before the venture could be undertaken. Fuggle's brief is to identify and examine "all relevant aspects" about the upgrading project.

TMACC chairman Mr Louis de Waal said yesterday he had not been officially informed of the committee's decision. Asked if the delay would mean his company would scrap the upgrading project altogether, De Waal said: "We'll assess it when we get something in writing."

The TMACC said last week they might call off the project altogether if they were not given permission to start construction this month. The cabinet committee's decision yesterday upholds the decision last month by the National Monuments Council (NMC), which would not approve the project until the integrated environmental process had been completed. The company appealed to

(51) (66) Ngubane to overturn the council decision.

While the move has been welcomed by a broad spectrum of environmentalists, Provincial Finance and Environment Minister Kobus Meiring has expressed his "disappointment" in the delay. "The immediate consequence of the decision is that the upgrading will be delayed by at least a year, that costs will escalate, that visitors will still stand in long queues and that it will create a setback in the tourist potential of the Western Cape."

"There is a very real danger that the cableway company will abandon their upgrading project altogether and Cape Town will have to make do with the outdated cableway system," Meiring said.

National Parks Board spokesman Mr David Datz said yesterday that he was "delighted and very relieved" with the committee decision.

Monuments council director Mr George Hofmeyr said: "We're very pleased that such a prominent academic in environmental science will investigate the whole matter and we hope it will result in a win-win situation for everyone."

Mountain Club of SA spokesman Mr Lester Coelen said the move was "sensible". Table Mountain came a step closer to being a world heritage site yesterday when the Cape Metropolitan Council passed a resolution supporting the application to have the Cape Peninsula declared a world heritage site.



**CABLEWAY REPRIEVE:** Environmentalists have welcomed the decision to halt the cableway upgrading project until the environmental impact studies have been done. Giving the thumbs-up to the decision on environmental grounds are Mountain Club of SA spokesman Mr Lester Coelen, Ms Lee Jones of the Botanical Society and Ms Marlene Laros of the Wildlife Society. PICTURE: CLIVE SMITH

# Brilliant Brazil outmanoeuvre Bafana Bafana

**HERMAN GIBBS**  
BRAZIL, 3-2 victors over Bafana Bafana at Soccer City last night, produced the sparkling samba style that has underpinned their reputation as the world's number one footballing nation. The reigning World Cup champions appeared shell-shocked at the end of the first half, when they were trailing 2-0 after glorious goals by Philemon Masinga and Doctor Khumalo. But Clive Barker's charges were soon overwhelmed by the Brazilians' spirited second-half start, which produced goals by Flavio and Rivaldo in quick succession. That double setback marked the beginning of the end for the African Nations Cup champions. The Brazilians appeared unstoppable as the second half wound its course. The home side defence often found itself in disarray as the Brazilians swept upfield in a series of attacks. Finally, four minutes before the whistle, Bebeto — one of the world's most celebrated footballers — hammered the final nail in Bafana's coffin with an acrobatic match-winner. During interval there had been suspicions that Brazil might have been battling with the Higfveid altitude, but their class came shining through after the interval. Instead it was the South African line-up, drawn essentially from foreign-based players who had arrived about 48 hours before the kick-off, that ran out of steam in the second half.

● See Back Page

## TABLE MOUNTAIN CABLEWAY

### ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGE

(56) (200) FM 26/4/96  
The Cabinet committee appointed to decide the fate of the R61m upgrading of Cape Town's Table Mountain cableway must decide whether to relax environmental management procedures to facilitate the much-needed development.

The National Monuments Council has refused the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Co (TMACC) permission to start upgrading until it has completed the R1,4m Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) process it started last September.

Cape Town City Council has compromised by granting the company planning permission to conduct the IEM and the upgrading concurrently, provided certain guarantees are obtained beforehand.

TMACC has appealed against the National Monuments Council ruling to Minister of Arts, Science, Culture & Technology Ben Ngubane, who chairs the Cabinet committee that will decide the matter.

TMACC MD John Harrison says that unless the committee can reach a decision by April 26, work will not be completed in time for the summer season and the project may have to be delayed until next winter or scrapped completely. He says he cannot continue to undertake studies with no guarantee that they will

result in approval.

The upgrading includes the installation of larger, faster and more stable Swiss-made gondolas to increase the carrying capacity from 230 people/hour to 650, improving the vehicular and pedestrian arrival area, building a new restaurant and expanding the upper and lower cable stations.

The National Monuments Council is concerned that insufficient investigation has been conducted into the effect this leap in the number of visitors will have on the sensitive mountain environment.

There's also the argument that, with tourism expected to increase by 20% a year, even trebling capacity will not lessen the nine-hour queues that dent Cape Town's image as a world-class tourist destination.

The IEM process is designed to ensure that environmental consequences of development proposals are adequately considered in the planning process. However, the project was subjected to IEM procedures only once the proposals had reached a relatively advanced stage. As a result, alternative and mitigating measures have not been explored.

Says National Parks Board's David Daitz: "They started with architectural and engineering solutions and approached the IEM as an afterthought." The board wants the project delayed for a year so that environmental considerations can be dealt with properly.

The National Monuments Council says further information is required on water and electricity supply, sewerage and litter removal, parking and traffic management, the building of buildings and restaurants and the bollards that will anchor the cables.

Only a draft environmental impact assessment summary has been completed. It has been reviewed by a wide range of specialists, authorities and nongovernmental organisations. There's broad agreement that it falls short of the mark.

It is unlikely that the Cabinet committee will allow the outcome of the IEM process to be pre-empted because the developer waited too long before embarking on this crucial action. The com-

mittee is made up of the same Cabinet Ministers who ruled against the mining of St Lucia's dunes and it has appointed as its technical adviser Professor Richard Fuggle, an architect of the IEM process.

It should be remembered that Table Mountain is a nature reserve and a national monument as well as a designated national park, which will almost certainly receive world heritage status. It can only be hoped that no environmental compromises will be allowed. ■



Ben Ngubane

# Limiting the hazards of radioactivity

STAN 26/4/96

(56) (6)

---

The cutting edge of research is determining safe levels of radiation in the environment and for humanity

---

**By ANITA ALLEN**  
Science Writer

Every day we are bombarded by radioactive particles, to the point that our own bodies are radioactive. However, as long as radioactivity is there as a natural occurrence, it is not dangerous, says Dr Arnaud Faanhof, consulting scientist at the Atomic Energy Corporation's Radio-analytical Technology Laboratories.

"As soon as you start extracting radioactive substances, it can become a problem. The more you concentrate the radioactive elements, the more chance they will become dangerous," he says.

This happens in all mining and mineral processing, where people working in high-risk areas, for example, in uranium extraction, need to be monitored. According to Faanhof, the only mining operations which need not monitor their workers on a regular basis are those involved with diamonds and oil.

"Every larger mining operation should be using a monitoring

system for the safety of their workers. This includes quarries where young granite deposits are being mined," he says.

At AEC "high-risk" individuals are those in the decontamination teams, which are currently dismantling the old uranium enrichments plants, and people working in the Safari 1 reactor and hot-cell complex, where ra-

## International standards are applied in South Africa

diotopes are produced and assembled.

Determining the radioactivity in humans is part of the daily work at the AEC laboratories. It forms part of a full analytical and monitoring service for any industry where radioactive materials are handled. The major clients are mining and mineral processing companies.

South Africa does not have

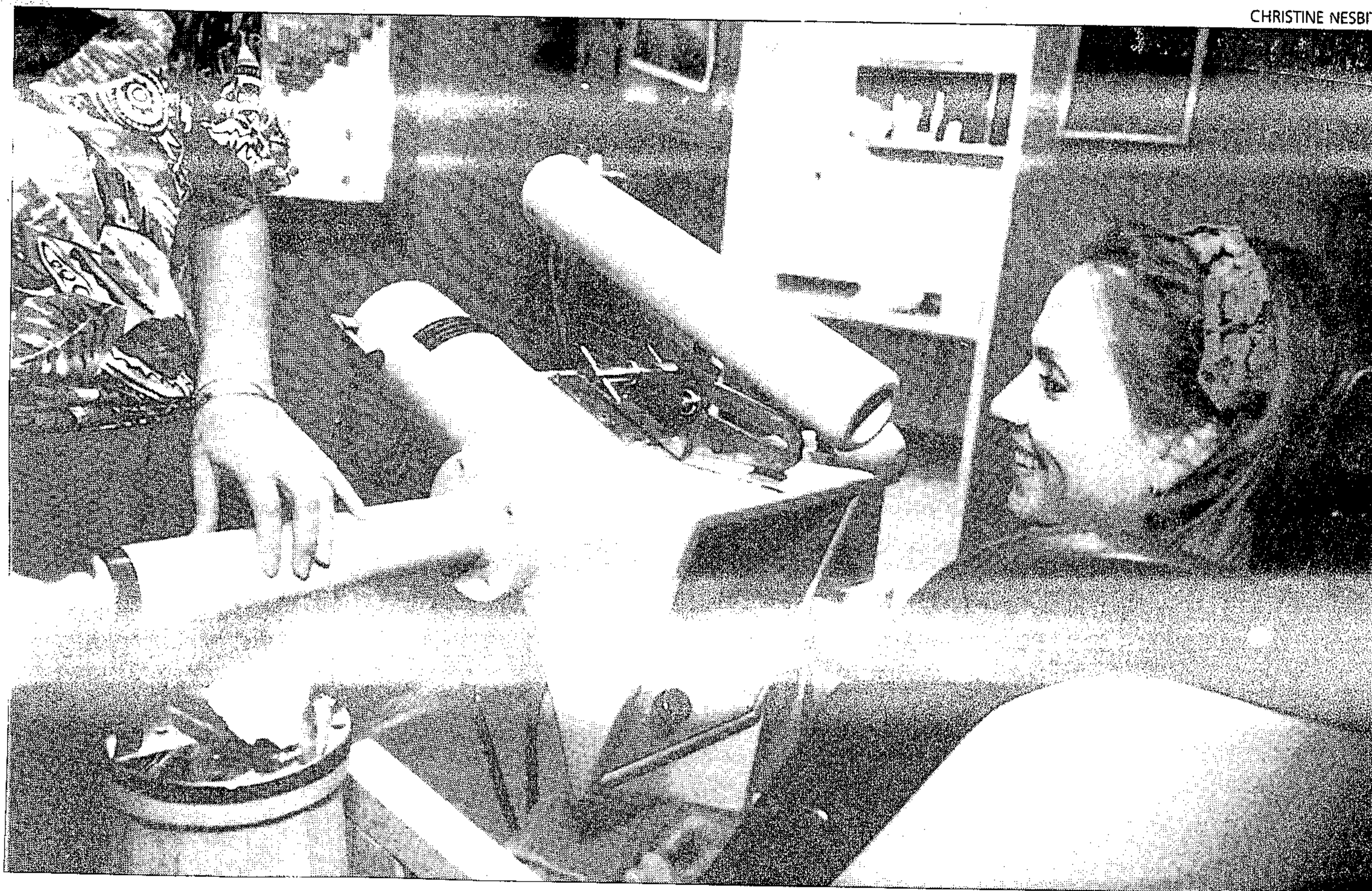
any regulations governing radioactivity in the food we eat or drink, or even in our surroundings. Instead, international standards are applied. The only law governing radioactivity we have is the Nuclear Energy Act, which spells out which activities involving radioactive materials require a licence from the Council for Nuclear Safety.

Faanhof emphasises that all radioactivity has an impact on the human body, which can be monitored via urine testing and whole body and lung counting.

In 1995, about 10 000 urine samples from workers exposed to radioactivity were tested at the AEC labs, as well as 1 100 whole body counts.

"We will not only do an analysis, but discuss the problem, the design of the laboratory or workplace where radioactive materials are to be used, and evaluate the data from the plant, to determine whether it is a hazard in terms of the existing local and international regulations," says Faanhof.

Radioactivity stems from natural radioactive elements. Urani-



A clean bill of health ... after six years of working at Pelindaba, public relations officer Lola Patric is analysed for radioactivity in her body at the Atomic Energy Corporation laboratories.

um, thorium and potassium are the three most abundant of naturally occurring radioactive elements. They are radioactive because their nucleus is unstable and emits alpha or beta particles. These elements and their radioactive decay products are present in foods we eat, the fluids we drink, the air we breathe and the water we wash in.

Analysis of this radioactivity has diverse applications. One recent programme at the AEC labs was the monitoring of radioactivity in water to determine the impact of industrial activities.

"Relatively high total radioactivity content was found, especially around mining and mineral processing areas," Faanhof says. "At this stage we are not able to say that the levels are dangerous."

Another programme for the University of Stellenbosch attempted to establish whether lesser kestrels breeding in South Africa had migrated from Russia or Spain.

Because of Chernobyl, it was thought that, as predators, kestrels originating in Russia would have ingested higher than normal levels of caesium 137 and

strontium, which are the main radioactive elements resulting from a nuclear fallout. The tests did not detect any abnormal levels.

Another type of analysis, known as neutron activation, involves irradiating a given material by bombarding it with neutrons in AEC's Safari 1 reactor. In this way, artificial radiation is induced which produces gamma rays.

About 50 different elements can be identified from their gamma ray spectrum, as well as the amount of each element. This kind of analysis gives a fingerprint of the irradiated substance.

Regular testing at the AEC labs is also done for businesses exporting a range of agricultural products including milk powder, maize meal, peanut butter and sugar.

"One reason for the tests is to establish whether the products originated from Chernobyl-affected areas and are being routed through SA," Faanhof says.

An example of such a test was on a batch of strawberry jam, where a local supplier stuck his label over the original Russian one. The caesium and strontium levels were higher than local

products but still within safe levels. "We are still exploring radioactivity, but the cutting edge of research is determining whether radioactivity is hazardous to the environment or humanity," Faanhof says.

As the effects are better understood, international standards change. In 1995 the International Committee for Radiation Protection put out new standards which lowered the levels for human exposure by a factor of about two. It also allowed for higher concentrations of natural radioactivity in the produce we consume daily.



## Pelindaba radioactive spill site to be cleaned up by AEC

The Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) will begin clean-up operations this month following a spill of radioactive waste last year at its Pelindaba site near Pretoria. The corporation expects to complete the project by January next year.

The Council for Nuclear Safety this week approved a licence change request to commence work on the assessment, clean-up and temporary storage of the low-level radioactive waste.

The company told community representatives at a discussion group yesterday that every precaution had been taken to ensure the clean-up proceeded smoothly.

The corporation would first sort punctured metal drums containing medical waste, natural uranium traces and contaminated equipment.

The drums were broken during excavations of Trench 7 last year, in contravention of the cor-

poration's licence requirements.

The degree of radioactivity at the trench would be evaluated, although it is expected to be minor.

Two boreholes would be sunk in the final stages of the project to ensure no seepage had occurred into lower ground layers.

Four community and media visits are planned during the project but the site will be fenced off and access restricted. - Staff Reporter.

(56)

Star 26/4/96

# Koeberg is safe, says Eskom; no way, says SA anti-nuke lobby

By ADELE BALETA

Ten years ago, on April 26 at 1.23am, the worst nuclear power accident in world history took place at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Ukraine.

A combination of design faults and bad operating practices resulted in a power surge, causing an explosion in the reactor which led to large amounts of radiation being

released into the atmosphere.

Hundreds of people died from severe radiation sickness, and the rising incidence of thyroid cancer in children in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia has been directly linked to the Chernobyl disaster. Plant and animal life as far away as Britain has been affected by the radiation.

The grim anniversary of the catastrophe, with its lethal effects, has rekindled the long-simmering row

over the possible dangers of nuclear power in South Africa.

Environmental and union groups have demanded that South Africa's only nuclear power station, at Koeberg, be shut down before there is a meltdown. But Eskom management says: "Don't worry, we are confident that Koeberg is an asset to the people of South Africa and does not pose any kind of hazard."

They say an accident like the one

at Chernobyl could never happen at Koeberg. The two plants were designed differently and operated with different philosophies.

But the South African anti-nuclear campaign - comprising Earthlife Africa, Eco-Programme and the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action - believe that Eskom's argument for continued operations at Koeberg are spurious.

The campaign agrees there can

be no comparison between the Russian and Western nuclear systems but says the crucial point is that the reactors contain similar amounts of lethal radioactive material.

A campaign spokesman said: "A different set of circumstances can lead to a different set of accidents with equally devastating effects. The risks at Koeberg may be small, but the consequences are the issue."

(56)

Star 27/4/96

## Anti-nuke protesters march in Cape Town

Cape Town - About 30 anti-nuclear protesters marched on Parliament yesterday, demanding the closure of the Koeberg nuclear power station which, they claim, is 50 times more dangerous than Chernobyl in the Ukraine.

The demonstration was on the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl explosion in which scores died and plant and animal life in Europe was harmed.

Green Coalition spokesman Andrew Fielding said Koeberg's nuclear plant

was built in the form of a shell. One bullet could result in the whole of Cape Town being destroyed.

Safety precautions were also not the same as those taken by other nuclear plants around the world, Fielding claimed. Koeberg had emergency plans only for the surrounding 15km.

The hundreds of millions spent on the nuclear industry should be used to find cheaper energy, he added - Sapa

■ See Page 7

Star 27/4/96

(55) (56)



# Poverty hampers wildlife

CT 29/4/96 (56)

**THE GREATEST THREAT** to the conservation of Africa's wildlife was the continent's grinding poverty, conservationist-cum-politician Dr Richard Leakey told **DONWALD PRESSLEY** during his recent visit to Cape Town.

**K**ENYAN conservationist-turned-opposition politician Richard Leakey emphasises that whites in Africa need to embrace the concept that they are African and part and parcel of the tapestry of the continent.

The man who made the national parks of Kenya famous through his international efforts to save the wildlife of his country has turned to politics to change the context in which to pursue his ideals.

He believes the greatest threat to the conservation of wildlife on this continent is the poverty of the people. With hundreds of millions of people who "can't look forward to one square meal a week let alone a day ... we can't ask them to put hand on heart and support our conservation policies".

It was unacceptable for people to put themselves in a secondary position to wildlife under these circumstances. However, if Africa lost this great asset today, "we'll have lost it forever". Africa needed to balance the conservation policies with "the desperate plight of extensive poverty" of people who will vote from the gut "as most of us have done throughout our lives".

Leakey, in South Africa recently to address the Cape Town Press Club, spoke passionately about his country's lack of government and the inherent corruption of the political system which, he said, drove him to launch a political party, Safina. Challenging the Kenyan African National Union, in power since Kenya's independence in 1963, came out "of a sense of deep frustration".

Leakey said he was unable to continue to carry out his work as director of the government's wildlife programme, for which he had raised \$150-million (about R660-million) over 30 years, in an environment "in which the government itself is not governing". While he had been raising the money he had enjoyed government support, but



**RICHARD LEAKEY:** Kenyan conservationist who has turned to politics.

once it was raised he was faced with corruption and interference. He was even branded a foreigner in his own country and faced police harassment.

Pondering the possibility of achieving success in the political field, he said: "Like so many things in life, I don't know ... but I don't think I would be trying to do what I am doing if I didn't believe it could work."

He said his party had failed to achieve registration after 10 months. It faced daily vilification in the state-controlled media which supported President Daniel arap Moi. Safina "is surely the best-known party in Kenya as a result", he said. He believed that Safina had "phenomenal potential support" as it was value-based, principled and believed in accountable government. The fact that he had been roughed up by police was not important. What was critical was the onslaught on the human rights of the people of his country.

His entry into politics also focuses on the rights of animals. Wildlife should be utilised in a sensible way "as part of a package" including some limited trophy hunting and viewing, "while maintaining the genetic bank that is needed for sustainability". In the United States a number of animals, such as

deer, are culled every year "as part of an important economic resource for the fish and wildlife service". There was a totally different scenario, however, in Africa where the lion, buffalo, elephant and sable did not have the size of population to sustain itself and be hunted in an unregulated manner. "I have never been against hunting, but it is a limited source of funds for government," he said. It had to be "but one of many strands" of a long-term integrated management programme taking into account the needs of a nation.

The hunting of the African elephant was one of the most sensitive issues, he said. The number which could be culled did not in any way bear relation to the demand of trophy hunters. "The public relations consequence of culling an animal which is sensitive, intelligent and aware has to be evaluated ... if you can manage them without causing grief and suffering you are ahead of the game." There was no economic reason to continue to cull elephants, he said.

Poverty was incompatible with conservation, neither could conservation alleviate poverty directly. "They are two quite different issues." It was dangerous to believe one could make communities living around national parks rich, on a sustainable basis. "What governments have to realise is that unless poverty is addressed nationally so that people can join the mainstream of economic opportunity, the efforts to preserve national parks and protected areas will ultimately fail."

"We face, as a species, the fact that, over the next 50 years, a projected 50% or so of the living species on this planet will become extinct."

One of the principle problems in Kenya was the potential loss of plants. The key factor was poverty which related directly to the search by about 80% of the population for wood for fuel. As the population grew, the reduction of natural resources increased. This was mirrored across Africa and the world.

Countries need to attribute as much importance to energy as they did to health and education. "I would suggest that one of the things Africa has to do to arrest environmental degradation is to provide a minimum level of energy requirements so that they don't have to cut it down and steal it." □ Donwald Pressley is the political correspondent of the *Natal Mercury*.

# Chloorkop 'to be used as waste site'

Michael Moon

BD 30/4/96 (56)

THE townships board has recommended the controversial Chloorkop waste site in Kempton Park be opened up for the disposal of hazardous waste.

The landfill site, built in 1992 at a cost of about R12m, was never commissioned as a result of public protests and a zoning mix-up.

The townships board upheld an appeal by waste disposal company Waste-tech for the rezoning of Chloorkop from "agricultural" to "special" use.

If approved, the recommendation would allow it to be used as a "class H:H" site. This would mean landfilling of all hazardous waste, as well as high temperature incineration, would be allowed.

The decision follows a protracted dispute over the issue involving residents of nearby Rabie Ridge and Ivory Park, who said their health could be affected by dumping. A final decision on the zoning rests with the Gauteng provincial government.

The board's recommendation calls for 27 special conditions to be laid down governing management of the facility. This was a result of objections raised during the appeal process.

The conditions include establishment of a monitoring committee made up of representatives of nearby councils and communities, with an amount of R500 000 being put up by the operator to cover the committee's expenses.

A six-monthly site audit, a register of loads accepted, the build-

ing of a special rainwater diversion dam, erection of a weather station and ongoing environmental assessment are among the other conditions.

Waste-tech responded cautiously to yesterday's announcement, saying it noted the rezoning "with satisfaction".

The company said it would decide whether or not to commission the site once the legal position had been finalised. It said it had no objection to the conditions, but a study into the practicality and commercial viability would have to be made.

Environmental group Earthlife Africa said it was "very disappointed". A spokesman for the organisation said the speed at which the board had arrived at a decision raised questions about what was "going on behind the scenes".

The spokesman said it was known Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal was in favour of opening Chloorkop to hazardous waste and had urged Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale to back such moves.

She also said Waste-tech had successfully "scared people" by talk of a hazardous waste disposal crisis in Gauteng, whereas the true facts were there was about 30 years' "space" at an existing site at Holfontein, near Springs.

Earthlife Africa would consult the communities of Rabie Ridge and Ivory Park before deciding on further action. The Gauteng government would probably be lobbied to resist pressure to open the site up to Waste-tech operations.

# Residents query 'vague' costs of wetlands plan

Staff Reporter

(56) ARG 30/4/96

A PROPOSED large residential development on a wetland area in Fish Hoek is causing alarm among many residents, who say the assessment of the plan is too "vague" on the financial aspects.

The proposal is to build about 400 houses on the council-owned land between Peers Hill and the northern section of Sun Valley.

Residents say more input is necessary before the council commits itself to spending more money on development consultants.

This is the third such development some residents allege is being rushed through the transitional council before it ceases to function on May 20.

The others are Elsie's Peak, on a part of the mountainside above Sunnycove station, and a controversial development on part of the dunes in the Silvermine river valley.

At the well-attended public meeting held earlier this month to discuss the developments, town clerk Harold Chapman said that residents should submit written comments and criticisms to him or to the council.

An executive member of the Fish Hoek Residents Association, Roy Maugham-Brown, said the association

was concerned about the plan. Mr Maugham-Brown said the matter would definitely be brought up again at the association's meeting on May 16.

"We believe there are too many unknown geological factors at this stage to go along with the estimate of R1 million for stormwater drainage proposals.

"This could turn out to be many times more expensive. Other fears include damage to natural wetlands and scenic degradation."

He said some of the area fell within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment.

Past uses for the land included waste and sewerage works, and the municipal workshops were on the site. In addition, some parts were swampy in winter.

"The town clerk's motivation for the scheme is to raise funds from the sale of the land and use them possibly for Reconstruction and Development projects - also to increase the rates base," Mr Maugham-Brown said.

He added that a town planning group, Urban Dynamics, had done the initial report at no cost to the town.

This was undertaken on the understanding that if the scheme was acceptable, they would be appointed to proceed with it.

# Alien plants to get the chop

(56)

ARG 30/4/96

*Simon's Town residents pull together*

Staff Reporter

A GROUP of private landowners near Simon's Town have launched a major programme to eradicate invasive plants in key areas of the Red Hill private nature reserve.

Ian McDonald, the World Wildlife Fund's South African director of conservation, said although it was not the first time private landowners had embarked on such a programme, it was the first time it was being done on such a significant scale.

The area is a patchwork of private land stretching from Fish Hoek past Simon's Town to the border of the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

The land falls within the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment which is earmarked for inclusion in the proposed new Cape

Peninsula national park.

Dr McDonald said it was hoped that the project would serve as a model for alien eradication on private land throughout the fynbos region.

The first phase of the project will take two months and funds have been obtained, with WWF South Africa's help, from Total South Africa and the Total Corporate Foundation in France.

A team of eight previously unemployed workers were recruited from the Red Hill informal community.

Spokesperson for the 14 landowners, Allda Croudace, said 55 people had applied for the eight positions.

The fynbos project is being undertaken in co-operation with the University of Cape Town's Institute for Plant Conservation.

Priority areas of one square

kilometre were identified and these will be cleared first. Each square was rated on plant bio-diversity, the recent occurrence of fire and the density of alien vegetation.

The priority of each block was determined by adding the scores for the three components, said Richard Cowling of the Institute for Plant Conservation.

He added that the Red Hill area had an unusually high number of threatened plant species.

"The aim of the study was to spend the funds on the most important areas first," he said.

Mrs Croudace said further funding was essential to complete the project, as was the formation of partnerships with ecologists, environmental organisations and other interested people.