

HOUSING AND HOSTELS - GAUTENG

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Sandton rates boycotters using old struggle tactics

By Suzanne Daley

WHEN Carol Burrell of Sandton stared at her July property tax bill and saw that it had gone from R500 to more than R1 500 in a single month, she made up her mind not to pay it.

It's not that she did not want to help South Africa overcome years of discriminatory racial policies. But a 233 percent rate increase to a government she does not believe is capable of spending it properly was just too much.

Sure, the surplus from her area was supposed to help put sewers and paved roads in poor townships. But would the money ever get there?

"This size increase is just evil," Burrell said. "And it's just stealing. If one could see something happening in the townships. If one could see that things are better for blacks."

"But all you see is Government officials driving around in BMWs and wearing flashy clothes."

Across most of South Africa, the bureaucracy of the new democracy has settled in with remarkably little fuss. But in Sandton, the northern suburb of Johannesburg, it may be the country's richest neighbourhood, the citizens are in revolt.

For the last six months, more than half of Sandton's 35 000 households have been refusing to pay their rates bills, calling the increases too big and too arbitrary.

(1A7) *Kowalewski 9/1/97*

The boycott has set off a bitter debate about what whites — particularly rich ones — owe the new South Africa. And it has created a strange irony: wealthy whites using the same crippling weapon of mass non-payment against the new Government that blacks used to "make the townships ungovernable" under the old regime.

Devastate

The boycott could devastate the budget of Greater Johannesburg, which was counting on a R400-million surplus from Sandton to pay for deficits in poorer neighbourhoods.

But on a larger scale, it is still another symptom of a real crisis for the Government, huge numbers of taxpayers of all races are not paying their local tax bills.

The payment rate varies widely throughout the country. In some white neighbourhoods, it is more than 40 percent. But in Alexandra, a small crowded township inside Sandton, it is only three percent.

In Soweto, the rate is 25 percent, and the Government's Masakhane campaign is vigorously trying to persuade blacks to resume paying their taxes.

Since 1994 ratespayers have failed to pay about R5 billion. Some local governments are barely squeaking by. A survey last June found that 95 of the country's 800 local govern-

ments did not have enough cash on hand to cover one month's wages. In Sandton, local officials say they are losing about R18 million a month to the boycott.

Meetings between local officials and representatives of the taxpayers have so far ended only in name-calling. Local officials talk of cutting off water and attaching houses. Homeowners say they are ready to sue.

Commercial property owners already have. Last month, several big landlords, including Liberty Life, Sanlam and Commercial Union, went to court challenging the Johannesburg metropolitan area budget on several fronts.

The businesses said the Sandton increases were far higher than anywhere else, that it would drive away investors and that the increases were unlawful on procedural grounds.

The new rates stem from the Government's decision to even out property rates. Some neighbourhoods actually got reductions.

But Sandton, which was previously an independent municipality, did not. The rates were set without amenities like parks and a bus service to keep rates low.

That was possible because most homeowners belong to country clubs and have cars. It was hit hardest by the new plan. Government officials have little



Flashback ... Deputy President Thabo Mbeki giving a Masakhane Award to Mayor Anthony Bam for a R2 million arrears reduction within two months. Now Sandton residents are refusing to pay up.

sympathy. They are particularly outraged that Sandton's powerful inhabitants did little to protest during years of apartheid and have only now started a boycott.

If people care about South Africa, they must understand where we have come from and the effects of apartheid which did not give some people a fair chance," said Stanley Khabile, who heads the team negotiating with the taxpayers.

Feel blameless

In any Sandton residents feel less for apartheid. They say that they never voted for the National Party and that they were active in anti-apartheid activities.

Some Sandton residents have been meeting for updates on the conference room at the Inanda Country Club was paid for out of a car evening and the talk under the crystal chandeliers was of hardship.

No matter that the parking lot was filled with Mercedes-Benzes and at least three Rolls-Royces.

Several people stood up to say that in any of the area's residents were on pension and could not afford such increases.

One woman, wearing enough jewellery to pay for a year's worth of most rates bills, said people in the neighbourhood would soon have to let their domains go.

"Now that certainly isn't what we want," she said, her threat clear. Arlene Ewing, a real-estate evaluator said, "The ANC has put out that we are destroying democracy. But what we are doing is fighting for survival."

Khangile says the Government wants to negotiate, but is having trouble accepting Sandton's hardship plea. "These old windows can't pay, let them come forward," he said. — *New York Times News Service.*

Task team in new bid to break boycott

Jacob Dlamini

(127) 10/13/1997
THE task team set up to resolve the Sandton rates boycott is to meet on Thursday in yet another attempt to resolve the dispute that has raged since July when residents stopped payments in protest against increases of up to 300%

The meeting, to be held at the eastern metropolitan substructure's offices in Sandton, will be attended by representatives from provincial and local authorities, ratepayers' associations and business.

The task team's last meeting in December ended inconclusively as the warring parties failed to come up with solutions to the boycott, which has seen payments dropping from 98% in June to 64% in September.

The team was set up by Gauteng local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka in October with a 10-day mandate to find ways of ending the boycott. The deadline was extended when it became clear the parties involved were nowhere near a solution.

A Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) spokesman blamed substructure representatives for failing to come up with suggestions on how to end the dispute. "We have asked

them for a proposal ... and we are waiting with bated breath for that as the boycott is intensifying and their cash flow is coming under severe pressure," Brian Stolzenberg said.

Sanfed's proposal was that increases be set at a maximum of 20% and that property evaluations be re-examined. "We are not sure what the basis of the evaluations was and yet we are paying the deficit of other substructures — and we believe that is not fair," he said.

But substructure spokesman Keith Peacock said he was confident that a solution to the dispute could be found. "The focus of discussions has been around hardship cases and we are confident that where genuine cases of hardship exist, mechanisms will be found to alleviate that."

However, he said the application filed by a group of Sandton commercial property owners in December in a bid to have the budgets of the greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council set aside by the Rand Supreme court was inhibiting discussions. The council has until January 22 to respond to the application, but Gauteng local government spokesman Stanley Maysela said the council would oppose it.



Residents of Bluegum View extension 1, Duduza, Nigel, sit outside one of their one and half roomed houses provided by the South African Housing Trust. The area is said to be riddled with corrupt officials who are not allocating houses according to plan. Some of these houses do not even have water supplies.

Allocation mix-up in Duduza

(127) Sowetan 13/1/97

By Steven Moti

RESIDENTS of Duduza on the East Rand are up in arms over alleged corruption in the allocation of houses

One of the complainants, Ms Rose Mkhondwane, said at the weekend that she had applied for a site in either Duduza Extension 3 or Duduza's Bluegum View Extension 1

Her subsidy application for a site at Bluegum View was approved first

But when Mkhondwane went to occupy the house, she discovered that other people were already living there

As an alternative, Mkhondwane went to

the local town council and paid for the other house which she had applied for in Extension 3

But, because the subsidy had been approved for the site and house at Bluegum View, Mkhondwane could not get another subsidy

Both sites are under the jurisdiction of the Greater Nigel Transitional Local Council

Community coordinator Mr Vusi Mashabane refuted the residents allegations of corruption

"Everything is running smoothly in the allocation of our R15 000 houses," said Mashabane

The houses comprise a room and a toilet, with a water tap outside. A fee of R80 is required to connect occupants to the water supply and sewerage system before they can occupy the houses

Another coordinator responsible for Duduza Extension 3, Mr Siphosibanyoni, said "The problem comes when two people apply for a subsidy for the same site"

Mashabane said people paid for houses they did not legally occupy

"Out of 274 applicants, 98 housing subsidies have been approved

"People also move from Bluegum View Extension 1 to Duduza Extension 3," said Mashabane

Residents 'blasted' for non-payment

Council has spent millions on various projects since 1995

By Dan Fuphe

GREATER Benoni executive committee chairman Mr Naweed Hassan at the weekend accused residents of East Rand townships of not paying for services and perpetuating the culture of non-payment in the area.

Hassan said that residents had not stuck to their side of the deal despite a commitment by council to spend millions of rands to improve local infrastructure.

He said since 1995 the city engineer's department had spent R24,65 million on various projects in Etwatwa.

A councillor who spoke to *Sowetan* on condition of anonymity said that the payment for services in Daveyton was discouraging.

Projects started by the council included the construction of gravel roads, concrete and earth canals, tar-ringing of secondary roads, building tax-rank and the upgrading of water reticulation and toilets.

Council's expenditure on projects in other areas was as follows: Daveyton - R27,88 million, Wattville and Tamboville - R20 963 and Benoni and Actonville - R22,42 million.

Greater Benoni councillors have paid tribute to Daveyton pensioners and the aged for being among the few (less than 20 percent) who payed for services.

Good example

Addressing a well-attended Masakhane campaign rally at Sinaba Stadium, ward two councillor Solly Klaas urged residents who did not pay to emulate the "good example" set by pensioners.

Klaas and others said that there was a "noticeable reluctance to pay" for services by the greater majority of local residents, especially those from the affluent parts of Daveyton, such as Extensions Two and Three.

"As councillors, we urge all residents to better or even surpass the example set by our parents."

GARY BERNARD



War zone . . . police used buckshot and stun grenades after people threw stones and fired at them when they moved, in yesterday to evict families which had illegally occupied houses in Eldorado Park. The occupiers claimed that when the houses stood empty and incomplete, they spent money on repairs before moving in.

Evictions spark racism

accusations (127) Nov 24/1997

BY MIKE MASIPA AND PATRICK PHOENIX



The Southern Metropolitan Sub-structure (SMSS) has dismissed accusations of racism made by the Brown People's Movement (BPM) following the evictions of illegal occupants of houses in predominantly coloured townships of Eldorado Park in Johannesburg and Boksburg's Reiger Park.

BPM president William Volrunk told protesting Eldorado Park residents yesterday that the eviction of 15 families in the area, 18 others in Reiger Park and Wednesday's power cut in Nigel's Alra Park and Mackenzieville were aimed at Coloured people.

Residents clashed with police in the four townships across Gauteng this week in protest against evictions and power cuts. Police said the areas were calm overnight after fears that residents might damage evacuated houses in retaliation.

The clashes started at Alra Park and Mackenzieville in Nigel on the far East Rand on Wednesday morning when hundreds of demonstrators barricaded streets to show their displeasure over electricity cuts. The Greater Nigel Town Council had switched off the supply to 432 houses.

The defaulters hit back by vandalising meter boxes, resulting in a blackout of the townships.

Police used stun grenades, teargas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters.

Hotel housing for the workers

(127) mg(Bm) 24-30/1/97

Jim Day

THE bar in what used to be the Guirinale Hotel, with its zebra-striped walls and languidly spinning fans, lies quiet and empty. Gone are the hotel's notorious days of pulsing musical acts that played on the elevated stage, the chance of picking up a prostitute, scoring some coke or rubbing shoulders with agents from some of the old government's most notorious hit squads.

Today, the former bar hosts monthly meetings of the 11-storey building's new tenants, where they can talk of leaky faucets or garbage pick-up. In what used to be the Guirinale's kitchen, workers tap away at wall tiles as part of converting the space into a creche. Tiny toilets that don't reach your knee await the use of tenants' children when the creche opens in February.

Hillbrow's Guirinale Hotel, once the city's most famous den of vice and intrigue, has been converted into a low-cost housing project for hotel and catering workers. The shift from social blight to what some see as a showcase for responsible social investment is an example of how labour union assets can be utilised in ways other than pouring them into the marketplace. Last February, the Hospitality

Industry Pension Provident Fund (HIPPF), which controls about R120-million in assets from the retirement funds of restaurant and catering workers, purchased the Guirinale to convert it to housing for its members. In July, tenants began moving into the 140 flats of what has been renamed Badiri House (Badiri is the Setswana word for workers). Today, 150 people are on a waiting list to move in, said Allan Kolski Horwitz, who acts as principal officer of HIPPF.

Horwitz, who drives a beat-up red-dish car and considers poetry his true calling, began working with hotel and catering workers' unions in the mid-1980s and later became active in the civic association of Johannesburg. In choosing to utilise a portion of workers' assets to meet social needs, Horwitz has taken a different path from many of the labour militants of the 1980s, who have enthusiastically entered the world of big business.

He offers Cyril Ramaphosa as an example of the other breed of labour leaders: a man who shot to prominence in 1985 when he led the biggest strike in South African to protect black miners from mass retrenchment on the mines and now says his New African Investment Limited (Nail) corporation will not invest its assets, including a signifi-

cant chunk of worker savings, in the ailing mining industry because the returns were not likely to be good enough.

"The thrust of unions' work now is no longer the interests of the workers, but to support the growth of the black business class," said Horwitz. In the past, a key goal of the unions was to improve the lives of workers, secure jobs and democratise the nation; now, the goal is to maximise returns, he said.

While investors representing unions ranging from the National Union of Mineworkers to Ikhwezi have chosen to invest their assets in media outlets, breweries and a wide range of other businesses, HIPPF has sunk more than R30-million into such projects as Badiri House, a low-interest housing loan programme and Nhlanguani, a project that will eventually see construction of 400 houses for fund members, in the Diepsloot area north of Johannesburg.

Horwitz sees the union's pension and provident funds, estimated by one analyst at about R50-million, as a great untapped pool for "social investment".

"If every fund put in just 10% of its assets, we'd be talking about a hell of a lot of money," said Horwitz. And a hell of a lot of housing.



Allan Horwitz: 'The thrust of unions' work now is ... to support the growth of the black business class'

PHOTOGRAPH RUTHMOTAU

Randburg rates boycott is easing

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The Northern Metro Council has had "fruitful discussions" with boycotting residents opposed to rates increases of up to 284% in Randburg and other areas under its control

An increase in the rebates for retirement villages has been agreed on and a reduction for pensioners not living in retirement homes is being investigated

A budget review is currently under way by the council in an attempt to find savings

Pressure from residents has elicited a promise from the council to reassess other prickly budgetary issues. These include negotiating for

financial support from the provincial or national government for the development of townships, which had become a concern after the local government elections in 1995

The council has also undertaken to negotiate with the provincial government to reintroduce cancelled intergovernmental grants

A meeting will be set up for residents to meet members of the new valuation board, which will be sitting shortly to consider objections to the valuation roll

Finance strategic executive Mogopodi Mokoena said "Although we have had fruitful discussions, we negotiated many of the concessions directly with the people concerned

"The boycotters constitute only a small number of Randburg residents. The budget review is being done in terms of legislation."

Pippa Wepenaar of the Northern Rates Lobby, the association organising the boycott, said "None of our proposals have been rejected and we have reason to believe that favourable decisions will be given. Considering that the NRL has been established for only about three months, we have made considerable headway and achieved some amazing results

"The council, in most cases, has been very co-operative and we are confident that by the middle of April we will have the answers we have been looking for"

(127) Star 27/1/97

Defaulters bankrupting Gauteng councils

Councils

(127) Mar 27/197

BY KARIN SCHIMKE

The payment problems experienced by Gauteng councils are highlighted by a recent report showing that the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council has "insufficient cash and investment to meet outstanding payments for bulk electricity (and) the manpower bill for one month"

"Project Liquidity", compiled for the Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development by the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, lists councils with too little cash reserve

Johannesburg is the only high-grade council in this category

Dr Chris Kapp, president of the institute, said this information showed Johannesburg was "cash-strapped, but it doesn't mean they're in trouble"

"These are only two indicators of a council's financial position and there are many others"

"Those local authorities that have been identified will be visited by a team of experts to assess what is going on"

Johannesburg Democratic Party councillor Mike Moriarty has, however, come out strongly against the facts contained in the report.

"I ask myself, will the bank readily lend me money to pay my staff if this is my situation or will I start having labour problems with my inability to pay? It is very serious"

Tens of millions of rands are owed in rates and some authorities can't pay salaries or creditors: service cuts likely

BY RODNEY VICTOR,
CECILIA RUSSELL
AND FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA

Cash-strapped councils throughout Gauteng face a crunch week as they juggle their books to pay creditors breathing down their necks while at the same time cracking down on residents who owe millions in outstanding rates

As the rates arrears continue to add up, councils throughout the province have threatened strong action against defaulters, including the cutting of services to communities in which residents have not paid

This could set the scene for ugly confrontation between councils and communities around Gauteng, particularly if electricity and water services are cut and if councils stop collecting refuse

The hardline stance against ratepayers comes in the wake of a growing burden of debt as a result of non-payment throughout various parts of Gauteng

The Springs Town Council currently operates on a deficit of R3-million a month on the accounts it sends out and is investigating the possibility of borrowing R20-million from a bank to save itself from bankruptcy

Boksburg town treasurer Henk Kleinhoog said every town council in Gauteng was facing a major cash-flow problem. In the Boksburg township of Vosloorus, payment levels only were at 21%. They should be at least 80%

"If we don't have the money to pay our creditors, we will have to approach the Gauteng provincial authorities for help," Kleinhoog added

Brakpan Town Council, which is owed R60-million in outstanding rates, reportedly needs to find R10-million urgently just to pay salaries and urgent creditors by the end of the week

Town treasurer Lucas Pretorius said certain projects, funded by the Eastern Gauteng Services Council, would be suspended and the money used to pay salaries and creditors

If the council fails to implement this proposal, it would seek a R10-million overdraft facility, he said

Benoni town clerk Henne Botha said there had been an up-

ward trend in payments, but these were not yet at an acceptable level

"All the local authorities are very much in the same boat. We are dealing with the matter, but we will not be able to do so for much longer"

"Councils have been patient up to a point, but they are starting to take drastic steps now. At the same time we've been working hard to upgrade services so that the people can see they're getting something for their money," Botha said.

The Southern Metro Council also warned residents that the culture of non-payment should stop. The council is Johannesburg's largest and poorest, covering Soweto, Lenasia, Eldorado Park, the southern suburbs and the squatter communities of the south.

The Southern Metro has launched a campaign to get defaulters to pay, offering them two years to settle their arrears

Prema Naidoo, chairman of the council's executive committee, said non-payment of rates was a major problem

"People have been served with notices of demand, and within the next few weeks, defaulters will be given a final warning. Following this, action will be taken," he said

Politicians in Gauteng have supported the tough stand by some local councils against residents failing to pay rates, but warned against punishing the "really poor" who are unable to pay

Ian Davidson, a Democratic Party member of the Gauteng legislature, said the action was overdue. However, he said the culture of non-payment had caused a backlash from residents who had always paid but now believed that they too could escape making payments, as ratepayers are doing in Sandton

Johan Killian, National Party spokesman on local government in Gauteng, said "The ANC must get a system of identifying the really poor so that those who can afford to pay do not hide behind the poor"

The IFP's Gerda Bekker said "The IFP supports the action if it has been communicated properly with the affected residents and if those who really cannot afford to pay are spared"

Sandton residents bid to step up rates boycott

Deborah Fine

SANDTON residents are calling for a militant intensification of their rates boycott after the failure of negotiations to end the seven-month-old rates dispute between residents and the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure.

Residents opted to withhold rates payments in July last year in protest against a decision by the substructure and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to increase rates in the area by up to 385%.

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed), an umbrella body representing various Sandton ratepayers' associations, has claimed that between 60% to 90% of Sandton residents and a number of businesses, were withholding payments which was costing local government more than R10m a month.

The Residential Sectional Title Owners' Association, which represents sectional title properties in Sandton, estimated that between 300 and 350 properties were withholding payments at a cost to the substructure and the council of R8m.

Individual residential properties were estimated to have withheld rates of between R1 500 and R15 000 each, while some sectional title properties had withheld funds totalling R60 000.

The substructure has disputed these figures, claiming to have received 85% of its expected income. A spokesman said residents were ending their boycott and rates payments were increasing to normal levels.

BD 27/11/97 (127)
But Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenburg said on Friday that residents had indicated that they were prepared to intensify the boycott. This indication came after a task team appointed by the Gauteng government four months ago had failed to resolve the issue through meetings with ratepayer representatives, the last of which was on Thursday night.

Some residents had indicated that they were considering also withholding service payments, while residents who had been paying the equivalent of the old rates plus 20% had threatened to completely cut off rates payments.

They were also examining suing substructure councillors in their individual capacities for approving what residents allege to have been an unlawful budget for this year and the next.

Sanfed has accused the task team of not committing itself to resolving the issue in the hope that the boycott would "simply blow over in time".

Substructure communications officer Keith Peacock said on Friday that he was "very surprised" at Sanfed's accusations as the task team believed progress had been made. The substructure was committed to a solution and it was up to the ratepayers' representatives to present realistic proposals.

The substructure was also expected to file answering papers in the Rand Supreme Court this week in response to legal action lodged last year by a group of Sandton businesses asking the court to declare the substructure's budget ultra vires.

Sandton rates talks hit brick wall yet again

Star 27/1/97 (127)

Government team says it can't talk with boycotts and legal threats over its head

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Negotiations over the Sandton rates boycott are in deadlock.

At a meeting to find solutions last week, the government delegation threatened to withdraw from talks until all ratepayer groups suspended the rates boycott, withdrew legal action and withheld media statements.

A group of Sandton commercial property owners, including Liberty Life, Sanlam and Commercial Union, have taken legal action to overturn the budgets of the Eastern and Greater Johannesburg metro councils on the grounds that the budgetary process was defective.

If their court action succeeds, the budgets of all five councils in Johannesburg will be overturned as they are all interlinked.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said residents would not be bullied. "If we stop the boycott and withdraw legal ac-

tion, we'll have no negotiating power. This is an attempt to steamroller the issues in their favour - a deliberate attempt to sabotage the discussion."

In light of the failure of the task team to make meaningful progress on any major issue over the past four months, Sanfed had proposed an independent chairman acceptable to all delegates be appointed to lead discussion.

Eastern Metro Council deputy chairman Sol Cowan claims, however, the government delegation could not continue talks while Sanfed was propagating a rates boycott, running to the media with "distorted" press statements and while legal action was under way.

"How can we negotiate in seriousness and in a congenial way while we have these threats hanging over our heads? We still believe Sanfed is pursuing its own narrow political agenda.

"We are however, still committed to resolving the crisis through negotiations," he said.

Banks unlikely to help cash-strapped councils

Not yet time to hit the panic buttons as lawyers move in to solve the crisis over unpaid rates

(127) STW 28/1/97

BY FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
AND KARIN SCHIMKE

Local banks are unlikely to lend money to Gauteng's cash-strapped councils, which may have to find international finance to see them through a crisis while people are not paying for their rates and services.

The Brakpan Town Council urgently needs R10-million and the Springs Town Council is investigating the possibility of borrowing R20-million to save itself from bankruptcy.

Gauteng Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry chairman Frank Cauldwell said banks approached by organisations with no security and no collateral were unlikely to grant such large loans.

"But they may see their way clear to act as intermediaries to seek international finance," he said.

The kind of people who would provide such finance would be development agencies, institutions which wanted to invest in South Africa, or people who were friends of the Government and were interested in transformation. He mentioned as an example the R400-million loan

that a major SA bank secured for the Johannesburg Metro Council from a Japanese bank last year.

However, Ian Gilbert, senior general manager at a top bank, said it was unlikely that international banks would grant short-term lines of credit to councils unless a local bank was prepared to guarantee the loans.

The Brakpan Town Council is optimistic that it will be granted a R10-million bank overdraft.

"We are expecting about R60-million from our attorneys, whom we have approached for the normal default procedures," town treasurer Lucas Pretorius said.

He said money had started trickling in since the lawyers became involved.

"We have taken stringent financial controls and will be cutting expenditure."

Spending cuts would not affect service provision, but may delay capital projects such as the building of roads for a month or two, Pretorius said.

Gilbert did not share the council's optimism.

"An overdraft is a bridging facility, and the bank would have to be satisfied that the client would be getting enough cash flow within a reasonable period to enable them

to pay off the overdraft," he said.

Meanwhile, the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council has strongly denied inferences that it may also be in financial difficulty.

Responding to a report showing that the council did not have enough cash reserves to meet payments for bulk electricity and manpower for one month, the chairman of the council's budget and finance committee, Eugene Robson, said people in Johannesburg had no reason to be alarmed.

"We have a challenging situation, but it is well managed and we have never been in a position where we can't pay our people. We are not at risk not to meet our obligations."

"Our own investigations show that most councils work on a pay-as-you-go basis. If properly managed, we can survive by relying on month-to-month inflow."

In line with a request by the central Department of Finance, the Johannesburg council will, however, be cutting back on proposed capital projects by 8%. Instead of the metro council and its four substructures spending R1,6-billion on maintaining, upgrading or extending infrastructure in the coming year, it will spend only R1,4-billion.

More houses promised for Gauteng poor

(127) Star 29/1/99

MEC says his department hopes to build 123 000 units by 1999

By Anso Thom
Political Reporter

More than 123 000 houses need to be built in Gauteng in the next two years if the backlog of at least 600 000 units is to be addressed.

Housing and Land Affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday the housing department was also planning to build 21 000 "top structures" for people living in shacks on serviced sites, transfer 215 000 properties to their occupants, subsidise the upgrading and conversion of 4 800 inner-city units, upgrade hostels accommodating 53 300 beds, and provide services to about 81 000 sites.

Specific challenges identified by Mofokeng included

- Gauteng was geographically the smallest province in the country and it had nearly a third of the national housing backlog.
- The department had to take account of new family formations as well as the influx of at least 20 000 people every month from other provinces as well as the rest of Africa and the world.
- The capacity of the building and construction industry had to be increased. For example, the approximately 18 000 serviced sites in the province

would require building materials costing about R900-million.

"The Gauteng housing and land affairs department views 1997 as the year in which we seek to escalate housing delivery for the homeless and release land for the landless," Mofokeng said.

He hastened to point out that housing delivery should not be judged on the basis of the number of formal houses in the province, but, on the numerous programmes of the department.

Programmes undertaken included the release of land to ease the shortage and to provide secure tenure, upgrading of informal settlements, upgrading of hostels, upgrading of the inner city, provision of water and sanitation, provision of tenure to more than 215 000 tenants through the transfer of houses, granting subsidies to low-income groups; and the renovation of houses damaged during the political violence of the early 1990s, in the Katlehong-Tokoza-Vosloorus area.

The department has also set a March deadline to establish the Gauteng housing development fund, which aims to provide provincial and private sector finance to local authorities for their housing projects.

Rates defaulters face power cuts

Star 29/1/97

(127)

Almost 370 000 households living in the Southern Metro Council area who are in arrears on their rates could face a legal battle to hold on to their properties

The council is planning to institute court action against residents who have not paid their rates, according to Shan Balton, chairman of the council's budget and finance committee

In addition, certain services, including electricity and refuse collection, would be stopped unless the residents started making

payments

The council would decide tomorrow on stringent credit-control measures, he said

These included the issuing of summonses to defaulters, and cutting off electricity to residents not owning the property they live on.

The council would also deduct service charges from the salaries of council employees who were in arrears with payments, and would refuse "to do business with any individual or company that is

not paid up", he said

"The reason for this dramatic crackdown is the poor payment level by all Southern Metro Council communities. Although we do now boast low payment, as opposed to non-payment, the council's arrears amount to about R623-million.

"Nearly 370 000 residents owe the council money for rates and services," he said. - City Desk.

► Businesses owe R100-m

Rand Water Board gets tough on service defaulters

Jacob Dlamini

THE Rand Water Board would support cutting off services to people who refused to pay for them in an attempt to make them understand that it was necessary they pay for services, the board's Chief Executive Bath said yesterday.

Bath was reacting to a statement by Gauteng local government MEC Sicele Shuceka yesterday that local authorities would embark on a survey to determine the economic profile of each community to determine the reasons why individual households were not paying for services. Shuceka said he had met Eskom and the board to decide on a set of tough mea-

ures to be taken against defaulters

He said cutting off services "was not a bad idea if people are not paying, but we need to be able to distinguish between those people who can't afford to pay and those who are just not paying."

Shuceka said the survey would be completed by June and its findings would be used to determine where to cut services

Bath said "We have in the past said that we would terminate services and I'm sure that we will have to do that sometime in the future to make people understand that they have to pay for services."

Bath said there was at present no debt owing to the board. "Many councils understand that they have to pay for the wa-

ter we provide them, otherwise we will just have to stop," he said

Shuceka also said Gauteng municipalities would support the creation of street committees in another attempt to encourage people to pay for services.

He said the committees would be used to monitor residents who refused to pay their rates and taxes despite having resources to do so

Denying there was a crisis in local government finances, Shuceka said local government was not about to collapse and said the province and local councils would use "persuasion and coercion" to get people to pay

Shuceka dismissed reports that local

government in the province was on the verge of collapse due to serious cashflow problems, saying only 30% of the councils were affected

However, NP spokesman Johan Kilian predicted that, by winter, 80% of local councils would not be able to pay salaries

Shuceka also said Gauteng's local government ministry had suspended the task team set up to resolve the Sandton rates boycott, and would hold bilateral meetings with separate ratepayers' bodies

Shuceka said he had decided to stop negotiations with the largest of the ratepayers' associations, the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed), accusing it of "pursuing a political agenda, us-

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defaulters

ing double talk and standards"

He said Sanfed had failed to show confidence in the task team, set up last October to find a solution to the boycott which began in July when Sandton residents protested against increases of up to 300%. The MEC said he would begin a series of meetings with organisations representing sectional title holders and other ratepayers' association

However, Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenberg denied his organisation had acted irresponsibly and said the MEC had been misled by his representatives in the task team. "He will not find a solution without Sanfed. We represent 95% of residents in Sandton," Stolzenberg said

Sandton rates (127) boycott takes new turn

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The Sandton rates boycott took a new turn on Tuesday when a row erupted over the appointment by the Eastern Metro Council of valuation board members who will consider rate-payers' objections that led to the boycott.

The Democratic Party claims the ANC has politicised the board by appointing Clive Gilbert, a former ANC councillor who became a failed ANC candidate for Orange Grove, as chairman of the board; as well as Koos Roets, a former National Party councillor, and Bernard Lapidus, who is opposed to boycotts.

DP leader Claire Quail said the ANC had also appointed two valuation boards, instead of one, without the prior permission of the premier.

The Eastern Council has received 10 000 objections to the valuations, most of which come from Sandton. The process of reviewing valuations could take more than a year.

Quail said "These political appointments will instil a lack of confidence among residents who will believe the members are acting on the instruction of the ANC. Most of the members appointed do not qualify in terms of the act.

"It is vital that nothing should get in the way of the valuation process. There must be no question about the judgment and impartiality of its members. It is unfortunate the ANC chose members with political backgrounds."

Quail said that if residents were unhappy with the way objections were dealt with, they could take the matter on appeal, and this could delay the process for months, if not years.

Eastern council deputy chairman Sol Cowan said the posts had been advertised and the appointments had been recommended by officials, not politicians.

■ On Tuesday the ANC in the Eastern Council refused to disclose information regarding its defence in the court case brought against it by Sandton commercial property owners. They have applied to the Supreme Court to set the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern metro councils aside on the grounds that they are illegal and *ultra vires*.

► No faith in negotiations

15 families find their home sweet home after battling to oust squatters

BY FIKILE-NTSIKHELELO MOYA
City Desk

When Elizabeth Petersen and her husband Chris found curtains on windows in their half-built house in Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, two years ago, they were convinced their neighbours had moved into their house by mistake.

But when "the neighbours" violently chased them away, they knew something was wrong and reported the problem to the local council. They were told there was a slight problem that would be resolved shortly.

It is only now, however, after

much confusion and legal hassles, that the "slight problem" has been resolved. The illegal occupants have finally been evicted and the Petersens and 14 other families have moved into their houses for the first time.

But rather than enjoying their stay in their new homes, they live in fear following threats by the previous, illegal occupants.

Mrs Petersen has reason to take their threats seriously. Two other houses in the area have been gutted by fire and the families cannot move in. Other homes were badly vandalised.

Southern Metro Council spokesman Muff Andersson said

the walls of the vandalised houses were in danger of collapsing and one of the roofs had been damaged, making it too dangerous to live under.

The council has circled the houses with a heavy ring of barbed wire to prevent them from being vandalised further.

The houses were built in 1993 as part of the former Johannesburg council's Delft scheme. The scheme provided for a council-led initiative where small businesses were allowed to tender and develop low-cost houses for the council. Prospective owners paid deposits of R500 and arranged bonds of between R33 000 and

R35 000. Ownership of the houses was to be transferred once the houses were paid up.

But, during the local government transition, the houses were invaded by illegal tenants who, in some cases, finished building the houses before moving in.

They could not be thrown out because of a moratorium on evictions instituted after the 1994 general election.

The Southern Metro Council was granted an interdict to evict them last month.

"We delayed evicting them, seeing that it was almost Christmas and did not want them spending it on the streets,"

said Prena Naidoo, chairman of the council's executive committee.

The move angered the rightful owners. "I was very upset. I had wanted my children to spend Christmas in their own home," said Mrs Petersen.

The evictions followed months of talks with community organisations. The evicted families would be accommodated at Wel-er's Farm, near Vereeniging, if they accept the offer, according to Naidoo.

Said Mrs Petersen: "This could have been solved peacefully if the council had dealt with this when it began."

Sanfed 'no faith in negotiations'

(127) show 30/1/97

By KARIN SCHIMKE
AND ANNA COX

Sandton rates boycotters affiliated to the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers are being given the cold shoulder by the provincial government because of what the province calls Sanfed's lack of faith in the negotiation process

"Sanfed continues to be irresponsible about the negotiation process (between itself and the government) by showing it has no confidence in talks," said local government and development planning MEC Siculo Shiceka yesterday.

Sanfed last year embarked on a rates protest when it appeared that the equalisation of the rates in the rand across Johannesburg had resulted in some municipal account increases of up to 300%

Sanfed has in the past complained about the workings of the task team set up by Shiceka to break the boycott.

The organisation has complained about the provincial government and the Eastern Metro Council's tardiness and unwillingness to listen to residents' grievances. The government part-

ners have also been accused of not turning up for task team meetings

Shiceka, however, said these "continuous" complaints showed a lack of confidence in the process

"You cannot have your cake and eat it. If you have no confidence in the negotiations, don't negotiate. If you have confidence, stop boycotting," he said.

Shiceka said he had called for all Sandton residents to come forward with proposals about how the rates deadlock could be solved. The only groups that had not done this were Sanfed and business.

"I have decided to conduct bilateral talks with those people interested in resolving the matter. The bilateral talks will continue until Sanfed comes with a sincere proposal responding to the fears of government that it cannot expand services in the area without rates payments"

He said the boycott appeared to be dwindling and that only between 10% and 15% of Sandton residents were still taking part. He said he thought this was probably because Sanfed could not sustain the boycott because of responsible

citizens in the area.

Sanfed has denied that it has failed to give the task group its proposals. Spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said his organisation was the first to submit proposals for a solution to the crisis and that the task group chairman, at last Thursday's meeting, admitted that he had received its proposals.

Sanfed had two basic proposals which had been suggested from the start: an increase in the rebate and a decrease in the valuation of properties. There were legal mechanisms to put both in place, said Stolzenberg

"I believe the MEC is being fed misinformation about the task group meetings. He should have attended personally to get the true message. We will not stop the boycott and we will not stop legal action."

Sanfed claims that between 60% and 90% of Sandton residents, sectional title owners and businesses were withholding rates payments costing the council more than R10-million a month. "We have asked for figures but they are not being given to us - what is the council hiding?" said Stolzenberg

FRIDAY

JANUARY 31, 1997 ★

IT'S UNCONSTITUTIONAL — JUDGES

Landmark judgment on rates discrimination

CT 31/1/97

(127)

PRETORIA: The Supreme Court here ruled yesterday that the city council could not expect the court to assist it in continuing a process of "unconstitutional" discrimination.

A FULL bench of the Pretoria Supreme Court found yesterday that the Pretoria City Council had unfairly discriminated against white ratepayers by charging black residents a flat rate that amounted to cross-subsidisation.

Mr Johan Walker, was ordered by a magistrate last year to pay more than R4 700 in outstanding rates after dismissing his defence that the city council was unfairly discriminating against him and that he was entitled to pay a flat rate similar to those paid by residents of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville.

Walker successfully appealed against the ruling before a full bench of the Supreme Court, consisting of Mr Justice K van Dijkhorst, Mr Justice D J H le Roux and Mr Justice I W B de Villiers.

The court found the council had contravened sections 8 (2) and 178 (2) of the Constitution by charging a flat rate that amounted to cross-subsidisation, by selectively summoning residents on the basis of racial areas, and by charging residents different tariffs for res-

idents in different areas, all of whom had meters.

The mere charging of a flat rate for all services, against metered tariffs, was in itself not unfair. However, where the flat rate, as in this case, did not reflect the fair value of the services but was substantially lower, the differentiation was unfair.

The judges said good government included the application of the equality principle laid down in section 8 of the Constitution.

"In this case, only electricity and water rates are at stake. The services rendered were the same. Not only were the rates different where there were no meters, but the rates also differed where there were meters.

"Also, summonses were only issued in the old Pretoria in an attempt to recover service debts. The black areas obtained an unofficial moratorium from officials. The residents of black areas who had paid a metered tariff received their money back.

"This is prima facie clearly a case of unfair discrimination which falls under the total ban of section 8 (2). Red tape had led to an unrea-

sonable delay in the installation of meters, and the council could not hide behind its own incompetence to justify its failure to carry out the stipulations of the Constitution.

The council could not satisfactorily explain the cross-subsidisation or the return of rates already paid. Indications were the moratorium was instituted under pressure and for political reasons.

The judges stressed that the court did not have the power to write off the amount owed.

"Against this, the city council expects the court to assist it in the continuation of a process of unfair discrimination.

"It is the task of the court to enforce the provisions of the Constitution. It can therefore not be expected .. to be part of, or to place a stamp of approval on an unfair practice.

"The debt created by the use of services under a legally promulgated tariff that was accepted by Mr Walker cannot be undone or written off by the court. But we can refuse to become part of an unfair collection process.

"This means that as long as the City Council persists with its unfair discrimination, it cannot enforce its legitimate claim through a court of law," the judge said — Sapa

White ratepayers win test case

A full bench of the Pretoria Supreme Court found yesterday that the Pretoria City Council had unfairly discriminated against white ratepayers by charging a flat rate to black residents.

A member of the Concerned Ratepayers Group, Johan Walker, was last year ordered by a magistrate to pay more than R4 700 in outstanding rates after dismissing his defence that the council was unfairly discriminating against him and that he was entitled to pay a flat rate similar to those paid by residents of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville.

He appealed against the ruling before a full bench of the Supreme

Court, consisting of Mr Justice K. van Dijkhorst, Mr Justice D. le Roux and Mr Justice I. W. B. de Villiers.

The court found that the council had acted in contravention of sections 8 (2) and 178 (2) of the constitution by charging a flat rate which amounted to cross-subsidisation, by selectively summoning residents on the basis of racial areas, and by charging different tariffs for residents in different areas, all of whom had meters.

The judges said, where the flat rate, as in this case, did not reflect the fair value of the services but was substantially lower, the differentiation was unfair - Sapa.

(127) Star 31/1/97

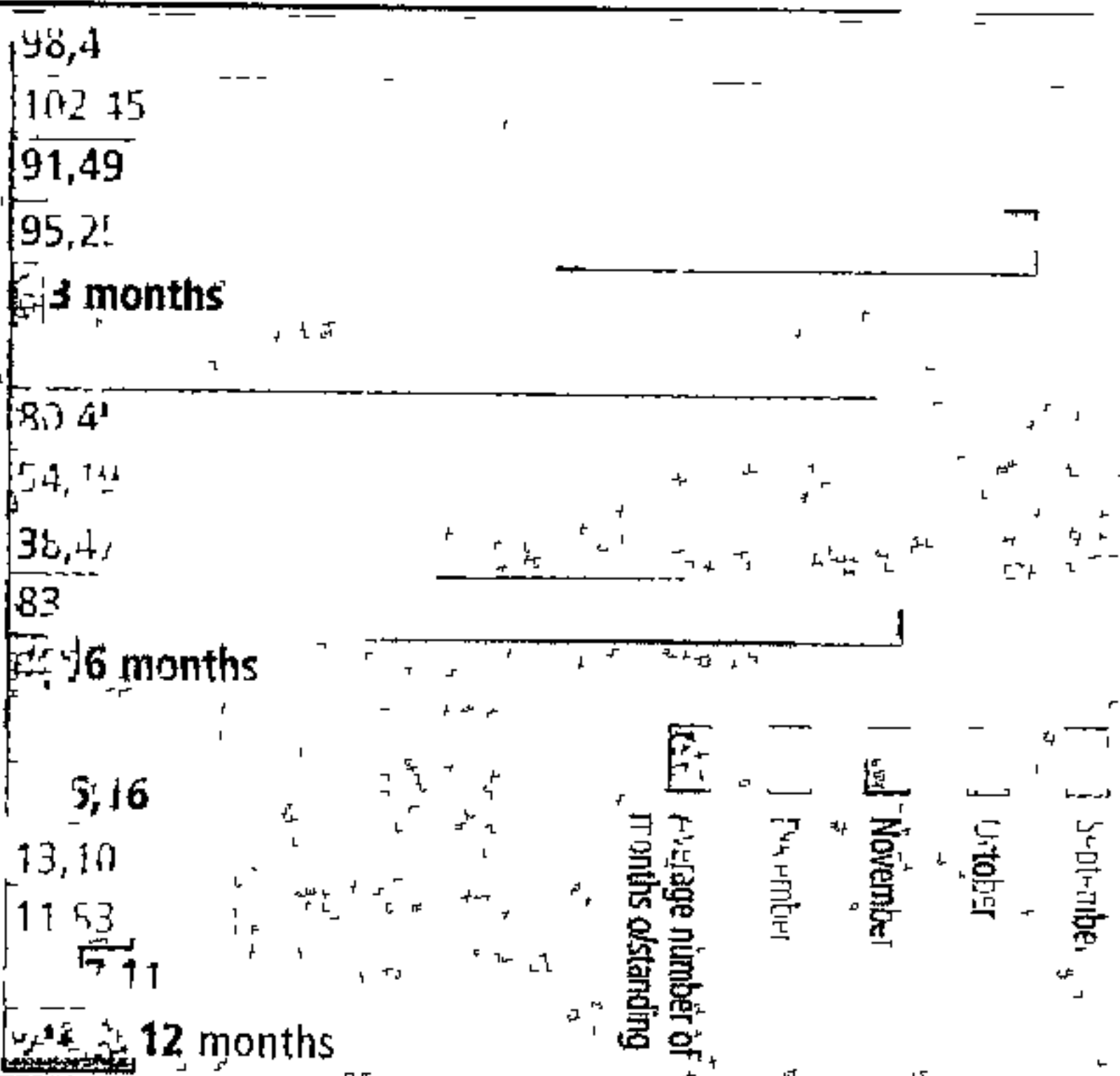
Broke Brakpan council out of touch, say residents

(127) Star 31/1197

PICTURES RAN HORN

Erosion of loyalty to ANC councillors and anger that there is no consultation or publicity about increases

PERCENTAGE PAYMENT LEVELS



- Brakpan municipal area = 725 75m population with 50 000
- Residents should be paying according to water consumption and sun at the of their stand
- On average = 137 per month per household
- Outstanding amount R60 million
- Estimated monthly ration = R20 million
- Budget allocated for 1996/97 financial year = R3 million
- The rest from USF's in residential consumers.
- One central administration in Brakpan and various departments in Gelokstad and Tsakane
- The township of Tsakane has two informal settlements adjacent to it

By HOPEWELL RADEBE
City Desk

The town council of Brakpan is in a financial crisis, but residents of Tsakane, which is part of Brakpan, blame the council for failing to seek their co-operation or to properly communicate its decisions and activities to the people.

Resident Sonny Mabuza, who has paid his rates and services punctually for the past four years, attributes the splitting of the township and the erosion of loyalty to the ANC-dominated council to a communication breakdown between councillors and residents.

Mabuza said this had led to the creation of various new residents' associations, which were hoping to challenge the often unannounced changes and monitor council activities.

Mabuza is one of several residents who told The Star he was prepared to pay for services. However, he accused the council of "taking things for granted" and not making an effort to publicise even the increase in rates and services charges.

Residents used to pay R30, which was first increased to R55 and later R130, but on both occasions the council failed to inform the majority of residents, Mabuza claimed.

Brakpan was trying to act against payment defaulters in the township, but ran into difficulties when residents alleged the sheriff had not delivered a summons to them before taking action, he said.

Another resident, Sonto Thanyekwayo, said "We were shocked to receive a summons from council attorneys threatening court action and ordering us to pay various amounts claimed to be in arrears."

Brakpan is now deeply in the red, with residents owing the council more than R60-million. The council needs to find R10-million urgently for its immediate obligations.

"The council is not treating its residents equally, especially in billing township folk properly and in time. Our meters are not even read, but we keep paying for water for which values are estimated willy-nilly," Mabuza said.

Executive committee chairman



Talk to us... Tsakane resident Tsukudu Letsholo blames a communication breakdown between Brakpan councillors and residents for plunging the council into financial crisis.

Paul Nkuna agreed with Mabuza, but defended the council. He said the billing system had problems because the treasury department was understaffed.

"Some inaccurate accounts were sent to people. Once mistakes on our side are eliminated, we believe levels of payment could probably reach 75% by the end of March," said Nkuna.

Resident Szwed Madhu pointed out his meter, which was completely covered by sand and grass. He wondered where council officials had been getting figures of his household water consumption, since the meter had not been opened for months. He accused the council of "cheating".

Tsukudu Letsholo of Thlokwe section, Tsakane, accused councillors of failing to report back regularly to their constituencies about important issues such as rates increases.

"They have stopped a wonderful ANC tradition of block meetings, which kept people on their toes about crucial things affecting their lives. That

is why we have new parties and residents' associations, like Simunye, trying to help us call the council to order," said Letsholo.

But Nkuna believes Simunye was formed mostly by "people who lost in the 1995 local elections".

Letsholo believes councillors are "losing grip of the grassroots" because the majority of them moved out of the townships and closer to town, and seldom found the time to socialise with the community.

Selma Nxumalo, on the other hand, is opposed to increases because, she says, the council is failing to improve roads, and residents continue to dump rubbish on street corners in her section - which was seldom cleaned.

But Elsie Sibanyoni of Extension 4 is satisfied with the council's performance even though she is not getting monthly bills. She understands the shortfalls and hopes that if residents exercise patience, there will be parity in the quality of services delivered in the whole of the council area.



To err is human... Brakpan chief executive officer Thys Human acknowledges that inaccurate accounts were sent out

Council discriminated against white ratepayers — Supreme Court

(127) BD 3/1/197

PRETORIA — A full bench of the Pretoria Supreme Court found yesterday that the Pretoria city council had discriminated unfairly against white ratepayers by charging a flat rate to black residents, which amounted to cross-subsidisation.

A member of the Concerned Ratepayers' Group, Johan Walker, was ordered by a Pretoria magistrate last year to pay more than R4 700 in outstanding rates after dismissing his defence that the council was discriminating against him unfairly and that he

was entitled to pay a flat rate similar to those paid by residents of Mamelodi and Aterri'sgeville.

Walker successfully appealed against the ruling before a full bench of the Supreme Court, consisting of judges K van Dijkhorst, DJH le Roux and IWB de Villiers.

About 50 members of the ratepayers' group stood to attention and sang Die Stem after Van Dijkhorst, who gave a short summary of the court's main findings, left the courtroom. The court found the council had act-

ed in contravention of sections 8 (2) and 178 (2) of the constitution by charging a flat-rate which amounted to cross-subsidisation by selectively summing residents on the basis of racial areas, and by charging different tariffs for residents in different areas, all of whom had meters.

The judges said the mere charging of a flat rate for all services, against metered tariffs, was in itself not unfair. However, where the flat rate, as in this case, did not reflect the fair value of the services but was substantially lower,

the differentiation was unfair.

The judges said good government meant, among other things, the application of the equality principle laid down in section 8 of the constitution.

"In this case, only electricity and water rates are at stake. The services rendered were the same. Not only were the rates different where there were no meters, but the rates also differed where there were meters.

"Also, summonses were only issued in the old Pretoria in an attempt to recover service debts. The black areas

of an unfair collection process. This means that as long as the city council persists with its unfair discrimination, it cannot enforce its legitimate claim through a court of law. If it stops

cannot be undone or written off by the court. But we can refuse to become part of the debt created by the use of services under a legally promulgated tariff that was accepted by Mr Walker

simply be turned down. The debt created by the use of services under a legally promulgated tariff that was accepted by Mr Walker cannot be undone or written off by the court. But we can refuse to become part of an unfair collection process.

Against this, the city council expects of the court to assist it in the continuation of a process of unfair discrimination. It is the task of the court to enforce the provisions of the constitution. It can therefore not be expected of the court to be part of or to place a stamp of approval on an unfair practice. A claim that entails this must simply be turned down.

Continued from Page 1

Ratepayers

(127)

BD 3/1/197

obtained an unofficial moratorium from officials. The residents of black areas who had paid a metered tariff received their money back.

"This is clearly a case of unfair discrimination which falls under the total ban of section 8 (2)."

Van Dijkhorst said red tape had led to an unreasonable delay in the installation of meters and the city council could not hide behind its incompetence to justify its failure to carry out ship-

Continued on Page 2

The ratepayers' group said the ruling meant Walker need not pay R6 000 — the difference over a period between his account and the flat rate he had been paying. — Sapa

have to pay for the fiction of racial equality. The ratepayers' group said the ruling meant Walker need not pay R6 000 — the difference over a period between his account and the flat rate he had been paying. — Sapa

Herzigte Nasionale Party leader Jaap Marais said the outcome would probably plunge the city council into a crisis. "But that is the price they will have to pay for the fiction of racial equality. The ratepayers' group said the ruling meant Walker need not pay R6 000 — the difference over a period between his account and the flat rate he had been paying. — Sapa

Right-wing parties lauded the ruling. Conservative Party leader Ferdin Hartzenberg said it implied all residents had to be charged the same rate. "It vindicates our own slogan of a flat rate for all or no flat rate at all."

Stephane Bothma reports that the council "would possibly" appeal against the ruling. A council spokesman said the judgment had been forwarded to the council's legal team to study and advise on future action.

Bank steps in to rescue troubled council

By RODNEY VICTOR

Star 3/2/97

(127)

The Brakpan council, facing a major cash crunch and unable to pay its creditors or its monthly salary bill to employees, has been saved by a temporary overdraft facility of R10-million from its bankers, Volkskas Bank.

The overdraft has to be repaid by March 7. Interest is pegged at 18% and interest repayments will amount to R150 000 a month.

At its monthly meeting last week, council adopted a series of crisis measures to save money and to increase the council's income. Capital projects are to be postponed and an "aggressive" Masakhane campaign is to be instituted to increase payment

levels on municipal accounts. Labuschagne described Brakpan as a "critically-ill patient". If it did not get the right medicine, the patient would die, he said.

He proposed that council act against defaulters in Tsakane township, just as it was acting against defaulters in Brakpan proper and in the predominately coloured area of Geluksdal. To fail to do so would be discriminatory, he said.

The council had been "soft-footing" around the issue for two years now, Labuschagne said, and could no longer afford to ignore the problem.

Freedom Front councillor Stefan Kruger also urged action against defaulters in Tsakane. The

"masses" had brought the old NP regime to its knees, he said, and now they had the ANC regime on its knees as well.

Executive committee chairman Paul Nkuna said it would not be helpful to adopt a confrontational approach to the problems in Tsakane. People should pay their current accounts, he said, and those in arrears should be encouraged to come forward and make arrangements to rectify the matter.

The council instructed the town treasurer to investigate problems they have experienced in acting against defaulters in Tsakane, and to report back to the council at its next meeting at the end of February.

Flat-rate dispute leaves East Rand residents confused about payments

By HOPEWELL RADEBE
City Desk

Residents in Brakpan's Tsakane township intend to continue paying a four-year-old flat rate of R30 for municipal services until local government and development planning MEC Siceko Shuceka advises them otherwise.

Tsakane resident Seth Letsholo said political bickering between local civic organisations, ratepayers' associations and Brakpan councillors had created confusion over how much residents should pay for rates and services. At a rally last year, Shuceka said residents should pay a R30 flat rate until the matter had been resolved, at which time he would inform residents how much they should be paying.

Residents complained to Shuceka at his December rally held at the local stadium that they were being accused of not paying for services, while local politicians and civic leaders were calling on them to pay different amounts. Authorities were not speaking with one voice, said Letsholo.

He said Shuceka had allowed them to continue paying the flat

(127) ATM 8/2/97
rate while "he investigated the truth behind the confusion" and the correct amount the residents should be paying.

Brakpan chief executive officer Thys Human said it would be unfortunate if the MEC had granted the residents "permission" to pay the flat rate while the local council had long done away with it.

Human said it was also disappointing to councillors who were trying their best to improve ser-

Task team appointed to seek a solution

vices standards and who were encouraging residents to pay according to what they use.

Stanley Khanyile, appointed by Shuceka as the man to head the task team investigating the dispute over the rates issue, said Shuceka had agreed to residents continuing to pay the flat rate of R30 on condition that it would be temporary while the team sought a solution. The task team is made

up of civic and ratepayers' associations like Simunye and local council and provincial government representatives.

Shuceka established the team to quickly negotiate and identify items which could qualify to be charged equally and items that would be charged for according to consumption.

Khanyile said Shuceka had clearly warned residents that there was no way the local and provincial government would allow them to pay a flat rate because consumption and operational costs far exceeded their payment collectively.

The task team is to reach an agreement this week and recommendations are to be forwarded to Shuceka for evaluation. He would then call another general public rally to address residents on the final decision, Khanyile said.

There was no objection from anyone on the team to the concept of individuals paying service accounts according to their monthly consumption. Standard service items, like refuse removal, would be a standard monthly payment across the board.

Squatters learn to pay up and play the game

Star 3/2/97 (127)

The stokvel scheme has helped the Midrand Town Council to overcome the culture of rate boycotts

By Rodney Victor

ALF KHUMALO

A few months ago, only about 3% of residents in the informal settlement of Ivory Park in Midrand were paying their municipal accounts

Today that same squatter community is the highest paying black area in Gauteng, with a return of 41% in December

The achievement is unparalleled in Gauteng, says Alan Dawson, chairman of the Midrand council's executive committee

It is all the more remarkable, he says, because the council has been delivering very little to the community for the money paid

"It's difficult to break a culture of non-payment when, at the same time, there's a culture of non-delivery of services. The one is there because of the other," Dawson said

The council realised that substantial services could not be installed overnight, so it encouraged people to pay on a "stokvel" basis. Paying would be an investment in the future of the community, rather than for services already provided

In July last year, the council organised a roadshow to sell the idea to the community. A truck was fitted with a public address system for music, and councillors and officials travelled through the settlement to the soccer field

There, some "industrial theatre" was provided, with displays by those services available to the community: firefighting, ambulance and traffic services and the council's helicopter

A shack specially built on the field was set alight, and members of the community trained in fire



Success story... the squatter community of Ivory Park in Midrand, where residents paid 41% of their municipal accounts in December - the highest payment rate in any black area in Gauteng.

fighting moved in to douse the flames

Someone then lay down, pretending to be injured, and community first-aiders arrived to "stabilise" the injured person

From 3% to 41% in a few months

until the helicopter arrived.

The council realised it had to reach every resident with the message that paying was for the good of the community, Dawson said. It divided the settlement into 12 zones and called on the local political leadership to act as "messengers", delivering accounts and reinforcing the message about paying

The messengers were paid on a sliding scale - 35c for each

account delivered if the return in their area was below 15%, increasing to R1 per account if the return was 100%.

The messengers delivered their first accounts in August. The return was 17,5% - substantially higher than before

The council also held mass meetings every quarter to salute "Heroes of Masakhane". The total money collected in each zone was announced, and the community decided how to spend it, or whether to bank it towards future projects. Requests so far have included street lighting, a park, and skills training for unemployed people

Councillors and officials went on regular walkabouts with the local leadership, going from one end of a zone to the other and examining all the problems

People saw their concerns being taken seriously

Only 30% of leases in the set-

tlement were valid, Dawson said. Council wanted to validate the others because people who were legally registered would be more likely to pay than those who were not

Dawson confessed that he was



Pleasantly surprised... Alan Dawson, chairman of the Midrand council's executive committee.

as surprised as anyone at the success of the campaign. "Where everyone else had failed, we assumed that we too could fail, but by using basic principles of handling people, we reaped success"

January's payments would be higher than those of December, he said. Projections indicated payments would reach 50% by March and 75% by July

In the past, boycotters had been regarded as heroes, he said. Now they were being seen as people who were retarding the development of the community

The problem with other Masakhane campaigns was they had been "overnight wonders", he said, producing a surge in payments which soon dropped back to their usual levels. Midrand's campaign had been sustained for more than six months, and it would go on as long as was necessary to achieve the breakthrough the council sought

METRO BEAT

Reiger Park residents stay put as sheriff tries to give them the boot

BY CECILIA RUSSELL
AND BEATRICE MOTSIKI

Angry residents of Popcorn Valley in Reiger Park, Boksburg, yesterday barricaded the streets to their suburb to prevent the Sheriff of the Court from carrying out eviction orders.

The evictions were to be part of the tough stance the Greater Boksburg Council has adopted against rental and service payment defaulters.

On January 23 an attempt to evict people from 18 houses in Popcorn Valley was called off after about 300 residents resisted.

Yesterday residents, who had received an early morning tipoff about the evictions, were standing in small groups near their barricades.

Residents said they believed the evictions were unconstitutional and that the coloured community was being unfairly victimised.

Popcorn Valley and Reiger Park residents allege their arrears were not written off "like those in the black townships" in 1994.

They said the houses for which

(127) Star 4/2/97
they were expected to pay rents in Popcorn Valley were of substandard quality.

Residents' spokesman Diana Bartman said the council disregarded the high rate of unemployment in the area and the number of pensioners living there.

She said the council had ignored proposals for having pre-paid electrical meters installed.

Vusi Sikhakhane, Boksburg council's executive committee chairman, said "The evictions are lawful. We have followed all the rules and the people were handed over to the sheriff."

"They were duly notified and we have given them more than adequate time to respond. This saga has been going on since 1995."

He said the council would proceed with the evictions.

Dismissing claims by residents that they were victimised, Sikhakhane said arrears for rates and taxes were written off across the board in all areas, however rentals were not. "In some cases they have not paid rent for five years," he said.

New investigation into Delft housing allegations

ERIC NTABAZALLA and HENRY LUDSKI

A COMMISSION of inquiry investigating allegations of corruption in Delft will begin hearing fresh evidence today from residents that officials received money in return for new homes

The low-cost housing development, near Cape Town International Airport, has been plagued by problems almost from the day the homes were first occupied several years ago

These include claims of maladministration, shoddy workmanship, the wholesale illegal occupation of houses and racial tension between coloured and black residents over who receives preference for homes

Now the township faces a new crisis with claims by scores of evicted residents that certain officials accepted

bribes in return for homes and at least one allegation that a Delft councillor offered a civic leader three homes in exchange for his political allegiance

The shock claims surfaced last week when illegal occupants of homes in the Bindhoven area of Delft were evicted by the local authority by order of the Supreme Court

The allegations led to the Housing Ministry extending the life of the Swart Commission, which recently wrapped up its inquiry into malpractice claims going back several years

Evicted residents have alleged that they paid several thousand rand to officials and that some were prompted by officials to occupy the houses

Ministry of Housing project director Mr James Slabbert yesterday confirmed that 88 of the families evicted last week

had complained about having paid officials to allow them to occupy the homes illegally.

Presiding commissioner Mr Johan Swart said last night that advocate Mrs Gesie Lategan would begin today to take statements and affidavits about the alleged irregularities

Swart said the findings of his initial investigation into allegations of malpractice and irregularities in the allocation of Delft homes would be presented to Western Cape Premier Mr Hennus Knel in the next few days

He would not disclose details of his findings, which are expected to show the extent of the corruption and the various ways in which residents were able to obtain illegal occupation of homes

Swart said residents had until February 14 to lodge their complaints at the

commission's office at the Bindhoven Information Centre in Delft

Local Housing MEC Mr Cecil Herandien said "I trust that the identities of those persons responsible for encouraging the illegal occupation of the dwellings and those who were involved in the acceptance of bribes will be revealed"

The crisis in Delft over the illegal occupation of homes took on political proportions in 1993, when blacks from nearby townships invaded unoccupied homes meant for coloured families

It became an election issue in the general elections the following year and remains an issue around which the National Party is trying to galvanise support

The township was originally conceived as a low-cost solution to the Western Cape's housing shortage. How-

ever, the dream of a model housing settlement has not materialised. The area is plagued by socio-economic problems, unemployment and crime

Mr George van Niekerk, chairman of the Delft Community Organisation, has claimed that he was offered three plots of land to vote for the National Party — a claim denied by the party

"I was rewarded with three plots, one in Belhar and two here, in Delft, Van Niekerk said

"I have cancelled all those plots though I'm still receiving accounts on the one in Belhar. This shows how corrupt these people are"

NP MP Mr Stan Simmons dismissed Van Niekerk's claims as "nonsense".

He said he was aware of the allegations, but had no knowledge of any members of his party having received money in return for homes

R13-m for low-cost housing

By Joshua Raboroko

FOREIGN aid is beginning to pour into South Africa with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) donating about R13 million aimed at speeding up the delivery of low-cost housing to poor communities.

An agreement was signed in Johannesburg yesterday by Sida and the Urban Sector Network (USN) to start a housing loan fund aimed at

building 10 000 low-cost houses a year

USN executive Mr Brian McKay said the project was initiated by nine major service organisations spearheading community driven urban development in South Africa

The first 1 000 homes will be delivered in April in Durban and Cape Town, and later in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and East London

The main aim of the USN is to

create sustainable financial mechanisms to unblock housing delivery to low-income earners

It aims to provide an alternative financing framework that encourages small scale contractors, self-builders and other community contracts

It provides affordable microloans that can be used in conjunction with the National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency, offering appropriate loan guarantees as a means of securing affordable bank finance

Sowetan 6/2/97

(127)

NP council's 'apartheid-style' housing scheme

(127) MtG 31/1-6/2/97
established three "transit camps", where the squatters are to live until the new housing is completed

Centurion's NP council believes it is creating affordable housing, but the ANC says it is separate development, writes **Stuart Hess**

TO the council of Centurion, the development they are planning on 30 hectares of vacant land outside city limits is a gesture to the new South Africa - affordable housing for the increasing numbers of squatters moving into the area. But to members of the Pretoria branch of the African National Congress, the Centurion council, which is controlled by the National Party, is creating what amounts to an "apartheid-style township", a separate development for its newest black residents.

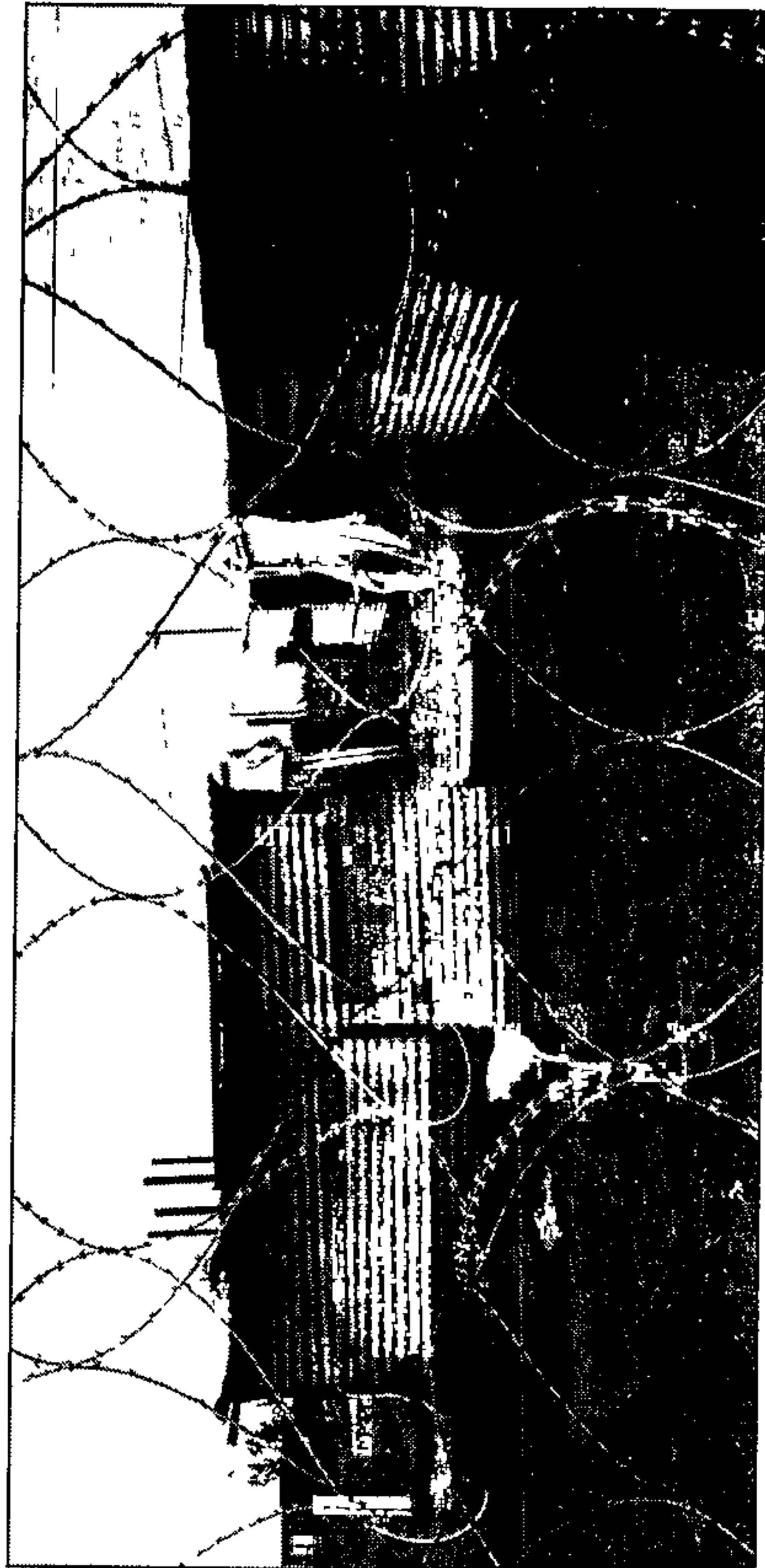
The development in dispute is 10km from Centurion, formerly known as Verwoerdburg. Its opponents insist that there is suitable land much closer to the city.

The planned development came to the ANC's attention when Centurion

The largest camp, known as Olivevouthbosch, has about 100 families living in it. They do so under the tight control of the city council, which has erected razor wire fences around the border and brought in security guards to stand watch at the entrance. So controlled is access to the camp that the guards, upon seeing a *Mail & Guardian* reporter and photographer interviewing residents, forced them to leave.

The ANC metropolitan branch in Pretoria this week strongly criticised the NP for its handling of the matter saying it was reminiscent of the "old apartheid system". The development was actually started by the state-run South African Housing Trust, but the Centurion council asked to take over the project, and paid the housing trust some R350 000 for the land, a price of R11 000 per hectare.

"There must be a move away from black townships which the NP is attempting to create in Olivevouthbosch," said Donisie Khumalo, a member of the Pretoria metropolitan coun-



Behind barbed wire: Squatters have been kept in 'transit camps' until housing is ready

PHOTOGRAPH: SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

cil's executive committee. He said the area proposed for development was isolated and lacked amenities, that it was too far from schools and shops. Bafana Sibisi, ANC secretary for the Pretoria metropolitan branch, accused the council of playing politics with the squatters by promising them housing that would be completed in 1997, just in time for local government elections. Sibisi also accused the NP of actually recruiting squatters from Alexandra township to increase their support for the proposed development. "They promised those people houses and by doing so they were guaranteed more support," he said.

Residents of the Olivevouthbosch squatter camp were divided about their situation. Many refused to be named because they feared reprisals from fellow residents. One resident, who had moved to the squatter camp from Alexandra, sup-

ported the council's decision to build a transit camp. "The council is trying to give us better facilities while they build our houses," said the resident who said he had lived in the camp for nearly two months. He said he felt safer near Centurion than he had in Alexandra and that he was grateful for the security the council provided.

But a single mother, tending a small vegetable patch outside her front door, said she was impatient for a solution to the housing problem. "I have stayed here for four years and worked hard to look after my three children when my boyfriend disappeared," she said. "I want my house now not in two years."

The woman said she was a member of the Thathzakho Community Trust, which represents long-time residents of the squatter settlement. The trust is seeking tenure rights to ensure that long-term residents have a place in any future development, and to ensure that residents have some say in the development.

The trust has asked for help from the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) because they are unhappy that the council failed to consult them before building the transit camp. A representative for the LRC, Durkge Gijfflian, said the council wanted to control all aspects of the development in Olivevouthbosch. "They do not want to build these houses near Centurion because they want to maintain their lily-white image," she said. "There should be a more concerted effort to push for integrated development."

Asmita Thakor, ANC councillor for Olivevouthbosch, agreed, saying there is vacant land ready for development near the city. "Centurion already has infrastructure, such as water pipes and electricity pylons, in place," she said. "It would be far more convenient to build houses nearer the town."

CHRIS ADLAM

'Stretching' R15 000 house subsidy

Community-based approach could provide new owners with bigger homes

By **RODNEY VICTOR**

The Midrand Council is launching a new community-based home-building programme which it believes will revolutionise housing delivery throughout South Africa

The programme aims to "stretch" the Government's R15 000 housing subsidy to new home-owners, says Alan Dawson, chairman of the Midrand Council's executive committee. It would allow new home-owners to get much more house for their money than usually the case.

A problem with the subsidy, he said, was that once services such as electricity, water and sewerage were installed, there was very little money left over to build the house itself.

Major players in the sub-economic housing market, Dawson said, could provide no more than a roof covering 15m² with the R15 000, with a tiny toilet tucked into one corner. Owners then filled

in the walls themselves with bricks if they could afford them, otherwise using shack materials.

Dawson said the council believed the community-based approach could provide new home-owners with fully completed 45m² houses. It based its optimism on work in neighbouring Phomolong in Edenvalle, where more than 500 houses covering 45m² each have

Company will buy materials in bulk to cut costs

been completed since May last year, and where a further 1 200 houses were currently under construction, he said.

In Phomolong, people have been buying building materials cheaply from local suppliers, and either building their houses themselves or paying local builders to

do it for them. Local builders with smaller overheads and needing a smaller profit structure, could deliver much larger houses.

The community-based approach also had the effect of "multiplying" the Government subsidy, Dawson said. The money not only provided houses for the homeless, but also provided skills training and a basic income of around R35 a day for people who were previously unemployed.

In nine months some 40 small home-builders had emerged in Phomolong, employing more than 400 people. Numerous associated industries had also sprung up, manufacturing items such as doors and window frames.

The Midrand Council has now established a Section 21 company not for gain called MidDev, which will facilitate a similar programme in the Midrand townships of Ivory Park and Rabie Ridge.

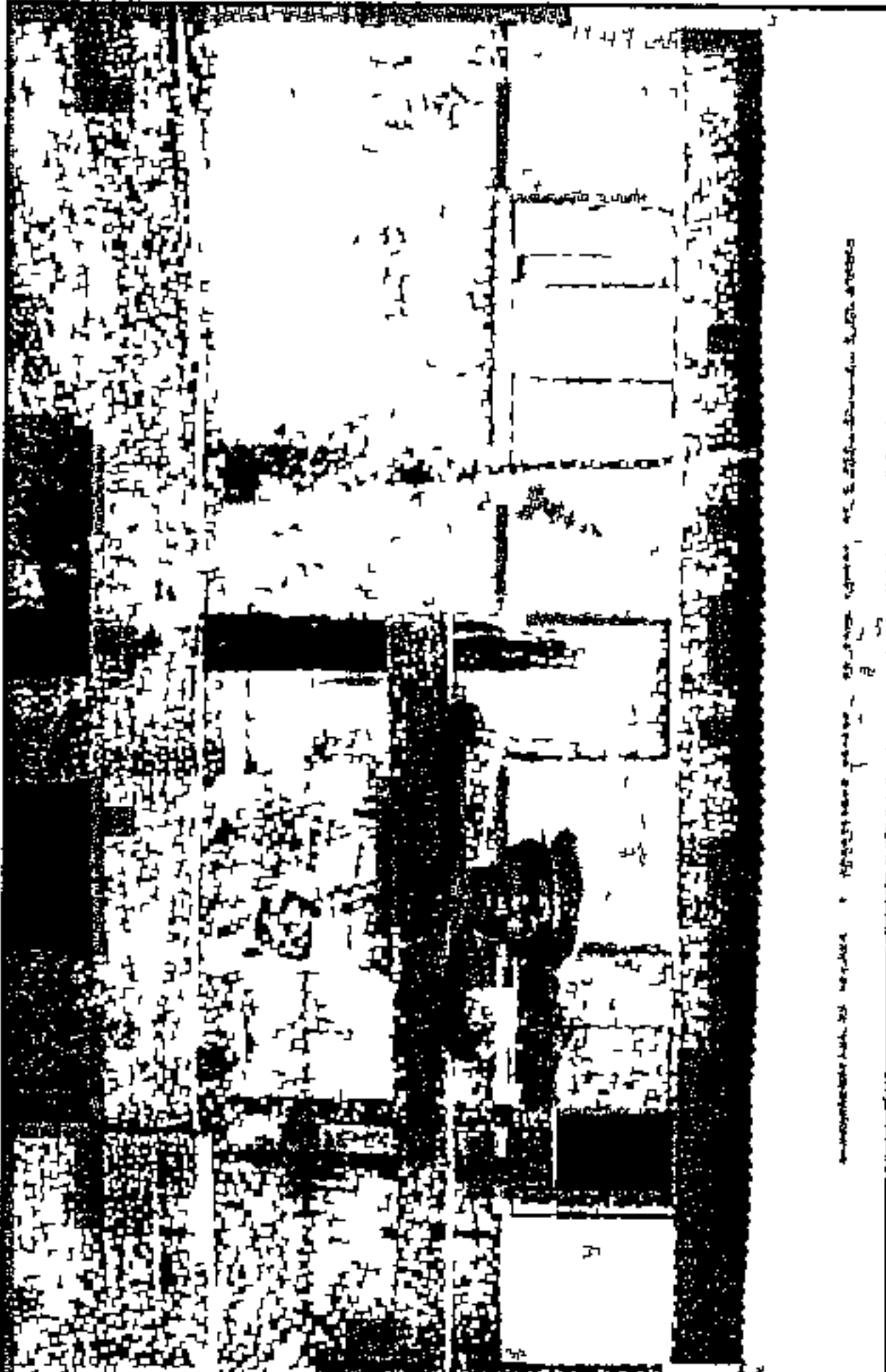
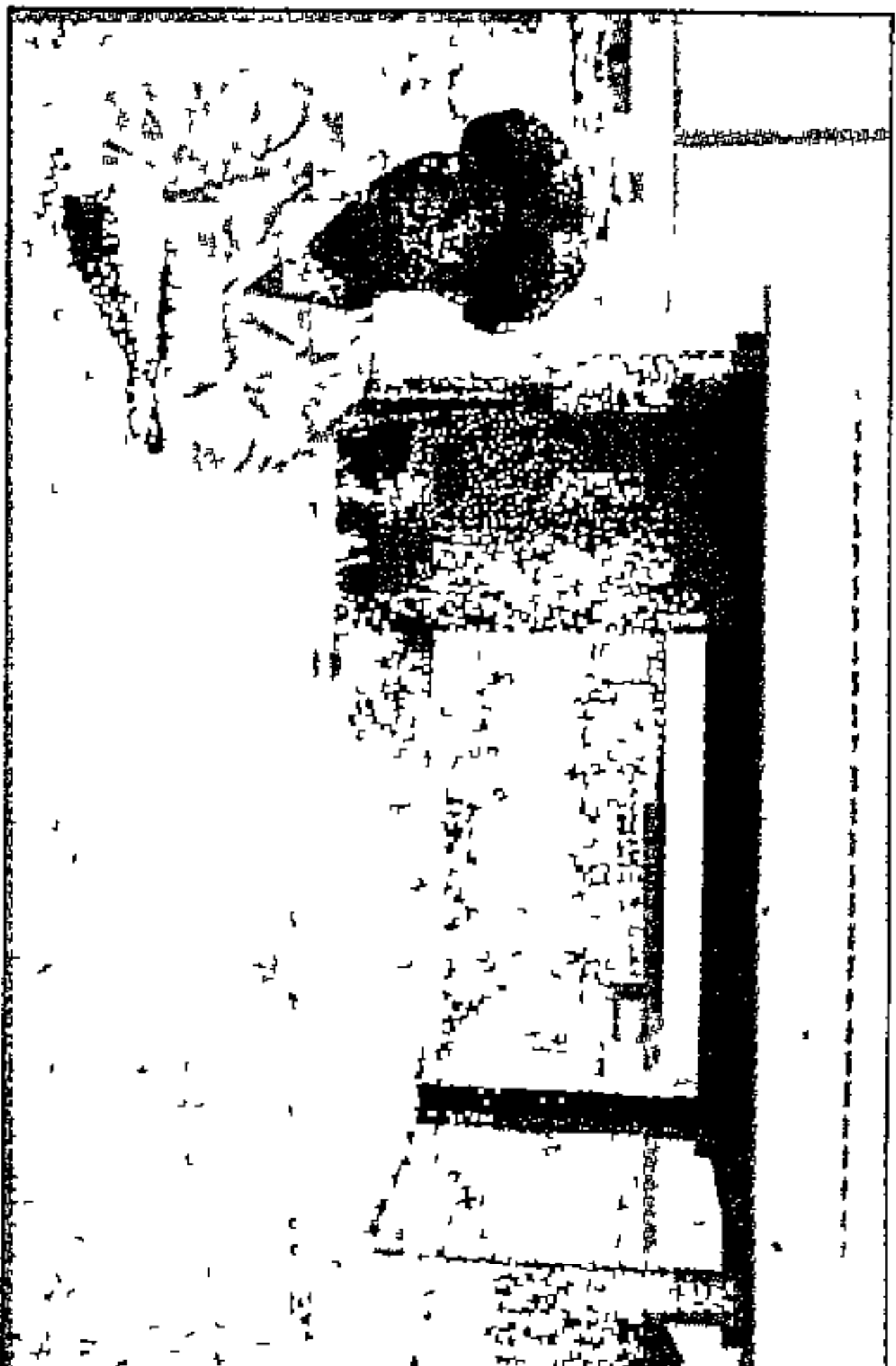
MidDev managing director Ahmed Moonda said the programme aimed to maximise the

size of the houses available to new home-owners by eliminating the "leakage of profit and expenses" experienced when work was undertaken by big corporations.

MidDev will buy building materials in bulk to cut costs, and resell these cheaply to the public. It is also establishing a "housing support centre" at Ivory Park, to give advice to prospective home-owners, to train unemployed people in building skills and to support newly established community builders.

The housing support centre and other sites will be bases for a range of new small industries manufacturing bricks, blocks, doors and window frames.

MidDev is currently releasing sites in Ivory Park Ext 13 to community builders to build a show village of 24 houses. The houses must be completed within three weeks, and MidDev will officially launch the programme in Ivory Park and Rabie Ridge at the end of February.



Spot the difference ... Anna Moruping (top) stands outside a 15m² 'shell' in Ivory Park, and Anna Mabelane shows off her completed 45m² dwelling in Phomolong. Both structures cost R15 000, with land and services included.

Women raises protests in coloured areas

(127) Star 6/2/92

Heavy police presence in nine townships as burning tyres and barricades go up, vehicles are stoned and those work-bound are forced from taxis



NATASHA PINCUS

STAFF REPORTERS

Protesters in coloured townships around Johannesburg took to the streets this morning blocking roads with burning tyres and barricades in protest against what they claim are excessive rents and service charges.

Police maintained a heavy presence and fired teargas at the protesters when, in an attempt to enforce a stayaway, they tried to stop all vehicles driving out of the townships.

The South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca), which is organising the protest, claimed that by 8am today it had spread across the Reef to virtually all the so-called coloured townships. Marches to local police stations were being planned for later in the day.

Sowejoca secretary-general Amy Williams said roads were barricaded in Riverlea, Coronahonville, Newclare, Westbury, Waterval, Emmendale, Klipspruit and Reiger Park.

At Westbury, the protesters spilled into the neighbouring suburb of Westdene, stoning vehicles and looting a passing truck until police ordered them to disperse. They then withdrew to behind police lines.

Williams said the coloured community had been forced to resort to protest action across the Reef because "stubborn" Northern and Southern MSS councillors had not only failed to keep earlier promises, but refused to come to reasonable agreements over the rents and services issue.

"The barricades are a message to these councillors that we want to settle the payment issues

"They must sit down and talk with the people so that we can reach an agreement with the rent, lights and water charges," she said.

"We have gone through the proper channels to settle the dispute, but it is clear they have not negotiated in good faith.

"Nothing has come of talks with mayors, chief executive officers and executive councils.

"Instead of settlement, they have simply scrapped the 1994 agreement on arrears and started serving summonses and eviction notices.

"We also have to ask why the coloured community is being singled out for this treatment. Why are they not acting against people who, like us, cannot afford to pay in places like Soweto?" Williams asked.

Streets were barricaded from 5am in Reiger Park near Benoni on the East Rand where residents dug ditches across roads and set tyres alight as workers started leaving home.

Community spokesman Vincent Erasmus said a large police contingent was monitoring the situation which was tense.

Police report widespread intimidation of residents to heed the stayaway. Terrified commuters from Noordgesig reported people on their way to work being ripped from minibuses by militant groups who boarded the vehicles on most of the major routes.

Residents in Bellavista told The Star that police had opened fire on protesters with what appeared to be live ammunition in Bellavista Avenue at about 6.45am. Police denied this, saying teargas was used.

To the barricades demonstrators block roads in Westbury, west Johannesburg, early today. There were scuffles between the protesters and police from various units and in some instances teargas was fired. Johannesburg traffic officers redirected traffic in the morning rush hour.

Services protest turns 'very tense'

(127) ARG 6/2/97

Johannesburg - Police said today the situation in Eldorado Park was "very tense" with barricades blocking roads to the area.

Residents are protesting against a cut-off in electricity and evictions due to non-payment of service fees and rent.

Earlier today, police were attacked by a crowd in Eldorado Park, south west of Johannesburg, who threw stones and bricks

Teargas was used to disperse the crowd.

Three people were arrested when residents threw stones at police trying to remove barricades in parts of the Golden Highway, radio news said

The area was inaccessible to traffic by mid-morning

According to radio news reports, police were negotiating with local leaders in Eldorado Park to try to prevent any further violence and damage to property

Protest action was also reported to be taking place at Alra Park near Nigel on the Gauteng East Rand.

More than 300 residents gathered at the entrance to the area to protest against evictions and against water and electricity cuts in the area.

Residents' spokesman Golden Miles Bhudu said that residents were awaiting permission from the magistrate for a march to the local government offices - Sapa

Evicted Delft families give evidence to bribery probe

NP gave us homes for votes, say squatters

AKG 6/12/97

(127)

STAFF REPORTER

Families evicted from the Eindhoven section of Delft are giving verbal evidence before the Swart Commission, which is investigating allegations of bribery and corruption in Delft.

The families claim they were moved into the homes by National Party councillors in exchange for votes in the local government elections.

About 45 people gave preliminary evidence to the commission on its first day yesterday. They were members of the 88 families evicted from Eindhoven last week after illegally occupying houses in the area, as well as the Delft Civic Centre.

Advocate Gesie Lategan, who is collecting information and affidavits for the commission, said most of these families would be testifying, as well as the NP councillors named in their affidavits.

The commission is collecting information and taking statements, with evidence scheduled to begin on February 17 at a venue yet to be announced.

Ms Lategan said that among those who would give evidence was Nico Rheeder, coordinator of the Integrated Serviced Land Project (ISLP), a presidential project aimed at addressing the housing needs of about 40 000 people living in informal settlements. Those recently evicted have also alleged that consultants for the ISLP gave them keys to dwellings in exchange for cash, sometimes up to R2 500.

This has been denied by the Western Cape Housing Department, which said duplicate keys had been illegally obtained through copying master keys or removing locks and replacing them with new locks.

The station commander of the Bellville South police station, Jan Solomons, will also give evidence. Some of those evicted

have claimed police escorted NP councillors when they moved people into homes illegally. Captain Solomons denies this.

About 25 homeless families are now staying in shacks on a vacant piece of land opposite the civic centre, from where they were evicted last week.

Meanwhile provincial Minister of Health Ebrahim Rasool has told 37 families living in an overcrowded hostel in Delft and facing eviction that he will help to address unhealthy conditions at the hostel.

After an extensive tour of Coin Hostel yesterday, Mr Rasool said he would send an independent health inspector to compile a detailed report on the health risks to tenants. About 200 people live in the hostel, which has fewer than 15 rooms.

The only drinking water comes from an outside toilet. Mr Rasool said that at the heart of the housing problem in Delft were the many broken promises by councillors



Homeless: Patricia Jansen, with 3-month-old baby Warren, and Hester Solomons now living opposite the Delft Civic Centre, from where they were evicted

The ethics initiative — which has
 Town, says she has been "fighting
 Nasima Isaacs of Ottery in Cape
 anyway Du Toit refused to pay her a
 bonus or severance package
 Isaacs approached the Depart-
 ment
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Burning issue: Residents of Eldorado Park, Westbury and Riverlea staged protests this week after councils cut off water and electricity for non-payment
 PHOTOGRAPH SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

Cut-offs unleash violent clashes ⁽¹²⁷⁾

MTG 7-13/2/97

Stuart Hess

HOW am I supposed to feed my children if the taps don't work?" asked a young mother of two in Eldorado Park. "If there's no water, how do I wash myself?" inquired a boy, adding that he had not bathed for two days.

These were reactions by residents of Westbury, Riverlea and Eldorado Park this week after councils cut off electricity and water for nonpayment. The townships were turned into virtual war zones as angry residents set up burning barricades blocking off parts of suburban streets.

The South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) called a stay-away on Thursday as part of their

protest. "The present situation has to change because residents cannot afford to pay for their services," said Basil Douglas, an association representative. He warned pensioners not to try and collect their pensions because of the volatile situation in the suburbs.

Residents expressed anger at their mistreatment by the apartheid government but said that "nothing had changed under the ANC".

"We had nothing under apartheid when they only looked after the whites. But now the blacks only look after themselves. What must we do?" said one woman at a barricade blocking the main road in Eldorado Park.

Police spokesperson Superinten-

dent Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said protestors set a school on fire and several policemen were injured. Cynthia Ndluli, a social worker from Eldorado Park, called for calm as tensions mounted in the suburb late this week.

In the western Johannesburg suburb of Westbury residents burned barricades and provoked police and intimidated other residents. "Why must we pay the full rate when the blacks only pay a flat rate for their services?" said a resident, Ronald Jacobs. He added that blacks in Soweto and surrounding townships only paid a flat rate of R35 per month for water and electricity while residents of Westbury had to pay according to how much they used.

"They [the government] think we coloureds benefited from apartheid but we suffered the same oppression as blacks," said Jacobs.

Jacobs added that he respected the police but the current protests did not involve them. If they wanted "to maintain stability", he said, "The police should rather leave."

Four die as police, residents clash over rates and service charges

Jacob Dlamini

JOHANNESBURG's southern suburb is to investigate councillor Basil Douglas after four people died and scores were injured in clashes between police and residents protesting against rates and service charges in coloured townships yesterday.

Executive committee chairman Prema Nardoo said whether Douglas had breached the council's code of conduct by calling on residents not to pay rates and taxes would be investigated

Douglas allegedly made the call during demonstrations intended to enforce a stayaway called by the South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) in coloured townships. Douglas is chairman of Sowejoca.

The stayaway was called off late yesterday after Gauteng local government MEC Sicele Shuceka set up a team to probe Sowejoca's grievances. Nardoo said "Councillors have a code of conduct they must abide by and they cannot call on people to pay flat rates or not to pay. That would be in

violation of the code of conduct." The probe would be conducted by council CEO Chris Ngcobo, who would report to the executive committee, which would then take the matter to the council for a decision on whether to suspend or expel Douglas.

A defiant Douglas said: "I don't care about that. I never fight for seats, I fight against injustice, and if they expel me I'll sell tomatoes on the street corner." Sowejoca had called the stayaway to protest against attempts to cut off services only in coloured areas. The

body said the council also reneged on an agreement to write off arrears incurred before February 1994.

The claims were dismissed by the council as "absurd and racist". The council said "Our credit control measures are aimed at all the communities within our sphere of authority."

The four people who were killed, including a young boy and girl, were said to have died when shooting erupted between police and protesters who were allegedly trying to petrol-bomb a service station in Eldorado Park.

Rates riots

(127)

Continued from Page 1

BD 7/12/97

bers who had attacked police and property would be disciplined. He could not say why the situation in Eldorado Park, where a mass meeting was to have been held, got out of hand. "When I got there (at noon) the police and people were exchanging fire." He tried to calm the situation by escorting

ratepayers to a nearby sports ground, but police had shot at him as well.

While the ANC labelled Douglas an "unsound anarchist" willing to do anything to further his own political aims, Inkatha Freedom Party spokesman Dlangezwa Mvelafe said the call to remove him amounted to intimidation and a loss of vision by the ANC.

The Westbury Residents' Action Committee slammed Sowejoca's actions and called on Shuceka to meet civic organisations

Sapa reports that 14 policemen were injured in running gun battles.

The demonstrations began early in the morning, with protesters burning tyres and setting up barricades to prevent people from leaving the townships. A police spokesman said violence erupted when policemen trying to remove the barricades were stoned.

Douglas said he could guarantee that no further action would be taken by ratepayers today. Sowejoca men-

Continued on Page 2

How a 'peaceful demo' turned into violent confrontation

By **DEREK RODNEY**
Crime Reporter

The centre of yesterday's violent protests in coloured townships was Eldorado Park, south of Soweto

There was a standoff at mid-morning between some 2 000 irate residents and jittery police

Violence exploded when a petrol station was stoned and police fired teargas and rubber bullets

Soweto Public Order Policing (POP) commander Senior-Superintendent Jan Paxton was on the scene, and so was Dale Paleman, an Eldorado Park disaster management paramedic

Paleman ran the gauntlet between police and the protesters to treat injured residents. He said about five people were hit when police first opened fire, which incensed the crowd

Police withdrew about 300m to the local police station at 11am at the request of Sowajoca leader Basil Douglas, who informed Paxton that he would calm the crowd

Paxton said, "It is my opinion that Douglas lost control of the situation at about 11.45am when a group of people proceeded to plunder a nearby petrol station, causing extensive damage, and the police were forced to intervene again."

It was while police were re-deploying around the extensively vandalised and looted petrol station that they came under fire from semi-automatic and small



NATASHA PINCUS

Keeping the peace ... a Sowajoca supporter argues with police during yesterday's violence in Eldorado Park. Protesters and police fought running battles before order was restored last night.

arms fire, he said
Sergeant Christo Carstens (24) of the POP unit was struck in the back and rushed to hospital

Sporadic shooting from the adjacent houses and return fire from the police lasted for several minutes before relative calm was temporarily restored

Paramedics came under fire under a salvo of stones as they moved in to remove the wounded

The crowd regrouped at the garage at about 1pm, and after

hurling abuse at the policemen for almost an hour, moved towards the Shoprite shopping centre about 500m away

Tensions started mounting as a lone police Nyala raced up and down Jan Beam Street. Minutes later, an argument broke out between policemen and a protester

The crowd surged forward and police opened fire with buckshot and teargas. Several people were struck

The situation remained tense until about 2.30pm, before the

majority of marchers returned to the looted garage on the corner of Jan Beam and Buckingham streets

Two plainclothes policemen who drove into the garage forecourt alone to remove burning items were forced to retreat under an avalanche of rocks

This prompted another battering run by an Nyala and the ensuing buckshot barrage resulted in the wounding of a woman and man as well as several youngsters aged between three and 10.

Peace returns to Reef's coloured townships

BY **DEREK RODNEY, KAREN SCHIMKE, GEOLIA RUSSELL AND SHIRLEY WOODGATE**

(127) Star 7/2/97

have been simmering in the community, said Sowjoca secretary-general Amy Williams

The first report was due on February 17, she said

Williams denied allegations that vast numbers of unemployed youths had been specifically involved in protest, stressing that taxis and buses manned by employed people had also stopped work.

She said the task team would have to consider calls for "affordable" rates for water and electricity, not a flat rate as had been suggested in some quarters Sowjoca also wants rent arrears dating back to before 1994 scrapped

Among those who were injured in the violence yesterday was The Star photographer Thys Dullaart, who was hit by birdshot in Eldorado Park. A number of petrol stations were looted and burnt, a schoolroom was razed and a council bus and several vehicles were stoned. A council office was also stoned.

Police came under automatic rifle fire from protesters looting a petrol station in Eldorado Park

Using armoured cars, teargas and buckshot, security forces took action at 7pm, shortly after crowds had stormed the suburb's police station.

More reports, picture



High five... a protester celebrates amid the chaos during the Sowjoca-organised stayaway in Westbury yesterday.

Coloureds have been targeted, says Douglas

Star 7/2/97
By CECILIA RUSSELL

(107)
Many consider the tall and imposing founder and leader of the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) to be a dedicated campaigner for the poor coloured community. Others consider him a political opportunist who has taken advantage of the efforts of Gauteng councils to collect service and rental arrears to gather support for his organisation.

Basil Douglas draws his support from the poor in all communities – although he is considered a coloured leader, he has a small white and black following

His white supporters are drawn from the council-flat dwellers of the southern and western suburbs and his black supporters from squatter camps bordering Eldorado Park.

Douglas believes coloureds are being targeted by councils. Arrears for the coloured community were not scrapped like those in the black areas. Blacks also benefited from "flat rate" service payments, a privilege not accorded to the coloured community, he said.

Yesterday, as the acrid smell of teargas and burning tyres hung over Gauteng's predominantly coloured townships, Douglas could not be contacted. As police and rioters were involved in running battles, his supporters told The Star "You won't find him here, he is where it is safe."

Douglas later told a media conference he was in Eldorado Park trying to calm the situation

Douglas is the only Sowejoca representative on the Southern Metro Council. As a result of an election collaboration between Sowejoca and the IFP, he was able to gain a proportional representation seat in the council

Although he has always spoken for imposition of a flat rate, last year he voted with the council for imposition of credit control measures. He denies this, saying "I went to the meeting late and did not participate in the debate"



THYS DULLAART

Man against machine ... a protester defies a police Nyala trying to push past a row of burning tyres in Noordgesig yesterday.

'No plan to evict whites from flats'

BY RODNEY VICTOR

There is no truth in rumours circulating Johannesburg that the council plans to evict poor white and coloured families from council-owned flats and replace them with black people, according to Prema Naidoo, chairman of the executive committee of Johannesburg's Southern local authority.

The waiting list for flats was previously available only to white and coloured families, he said. However, it was now open to all races.

He confirmed that the council intended acting against payment

defaulters of all races.

The campaign for a flat rate for services appears to have wide support from residents. "If other people can pay a flat rate, so can we," said a coloured woman, who did not wish to give her name.

Naidoo denied that flat rates were in force anywhere in the city, even though certain organisations were calling for them.

The situation was complicated, he said, because some properties in Soweto did not yet have water meters. In those areas, people were required to pay a standard rate for their water consumption.

'You're my broer ... what are you doing?'

BY SASHA JENSEN

Drunken protesters shouted at police to stop shooting at rioting residents and a mob outside Eldorado Park police station screamed for "justice" and called for "police brutality to stop". Chaos reigned all around the predominantly coloured township south of Soweto.

Tension erupted as black policemen fired at black residents, who in turn shouted "You're my broer (brother) What are doing?"

Residents, holding bottles of beer and spirits, swarmed on to the streets. There was little talk of the issues which were said to

have caused yesterday's protests.

Men, women and children wandered aimlessly through the streets talking of nothing but the police's behaviour and "brutality".

At the same time, looters positioned themselves on street corners waiting to attack empty petrol stations which were later burnt down.

Elsewhere in the suburb, soldiers clashed with rioting residents who had been hurling bottles, bricks and stones at police throughout the day, inciting more violence and bitter recrimination from the residents.

Then, later, during another outburst of violence, an unmarked police car sped into the crowds to try to stop renewed rioting. Three policemen jumped out, firing three rounds from an R-4 automatic rifle.

They had to rescue a colleague who was overpowered by the rioters. A chase then ensued, two suspects were arrested and many rioters were injured.

As the sun set, parts of Eldorado Park were covered in smoke, people were still fleeing from police, and the officers were still trying to gain ground and restore a semblance of order.

Sandton rates boycotters get 'final warnings' from council

BY ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Hundreds of Sandton residents have received final notices from the Eastern Metro Council to pay their rates - with a threat of legal action for failing to do so.

Many Sandton ratepayers have been boycotting payments since September last year in protest at the Eastern Metro Council's decision to increase their rates by almost 300%.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' help office chief executive officer John Lambson said the office had been inundated by concerned ratepayers who had received final notices.

"The help office is giving residents a standard letter of reply to send to the council in which they state that the budget was unlawful in that it was not drawn up in

terms of the Local Government Ordinance 1938," Lambson said.

"It also states that the rate of 6,45 cents in the rand imposed by the council was based on the unlawful budget and that claims for payment would be defended by residents," he added.

"Why are the idiots in the eastern council spending ratepayers money sending out ludicrous final notices for rates imposed by what could be an illegal budget when the supreme court (now high court) is already considering an application by Sandton businesses questioning the legality of the budget and the way it was introduced," he said.

Eastern council deputy chairman Sol Cowan said normal credit control measures were being implemented throughout the sub-structure and this was not just aimed at Sandton residents

stav 7/2/97 (127)



Under fire: Eldorado Park residents carry an injured protester to safety

THE STAR



Innocent victim: an injured child is carried to safety after being shot in crossfire

THE STAR



Barrier of fire: a protester at one of the burning barricades in Eldorado Park

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Four die, 400 hurt as Reef clashes erupt

(127) ARG 7/2/97
ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Peace returned to the Reef's coloured townships today after yesterday's bloody confrontations between South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) supporters and police in which four people were killed and about 400 injured.

Assault and incitement charges have been laid against Basil Douglas, a Southern Metro councillor who has been blamed for the clashes in Westbury and Eldorado Park.

At the same time, the council's executive committee chairman, Prema Naidoo, said Mr Douglas's behaviour and recent speeches would be investigated to establish whether he had transgressed any council code of conduct

Police in the eastern, western and southern suburbs said the strong force sent to control the situation was scaled down today as conditions returned to normal and people returned to work

Several petrol stations were looted and burnt yesterday, a schoolroom was razed and a council bus and vehicles were stoned

Police came under automatic rifle fire from protesters looting a petrol station in Eldorado Park Using armoured cars, tear-gas and buckshot, security forces took action shortly after crowds had stormed the suburb's police station

The debris of the day's violent confrontation littered the streets as police tried to beat back looters and arsonists in running battles Bleeding and limping protesters ran in all directions as police and army vehicles entered the streets

Agreement between Sowejoca and local government and Gauteng provincial authorities in the Southern Metropolitan Substructure was reached when a task team was set up to look at the grievances which had been simmering in the community, Sowejoca secretary-general Amy Williams said The first report was due on February 17, she said

Anger has been aroused by the differences in service rates charged in black and coloured areas In Soweto, residents are charged a flat rate of R45 for rent and electricity while in Eldorado Park electricity is metered

Ms Williams said the task team would have to consider calls for "affordable" rates Sowejoca also wants rent arrears dating back to before 1994 to be scrapped

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Thugs threaten women in cars

JOHANNESBURG: Women motorists on their way to work from the West Rand yesterday morning were subjected to obscene threats by thugs in Main Road, Newlands, about three kilometres from the city centre

Motorist Mr Riaan Scheepers said thugs singled out women drivers for obscene abuse while kicking and bashing their cars

"We were stuck in three-lane traffic and I saw a middle-aged lady in front of me being terrified by about 40 of these guys. She just pulled her hands over her head," Scheepers said

"There was nothing we could do," he added — Sapa

Douglas a campaigner for the poor or political opportunist?

(127) CT 7/2/97

OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG Many consider the tall and imposing founder and leader of the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) to be a dedicated campaigner for the poor coloured community

Others consider him a political opportunist who has taken advantage of the efforts of Gauteng councils to collect service and rental arrears to gather support for his organisation

Mr Basil Douglas draws his support from the poor in all communities — although he is considered a "coloured leader", he has a small white and black membership

His white supporters are drawn from the council flat dwellers of the southern and western suburbs of Johannesburg and his black supporters from squatter camps bordering Eldorado Park

People who are disgruntled with the authorities, who believe the old and new regimes have ignored their needs, who believe they are as powerless in this regime as in the previous, as well as the poor are attracted to Douglas' organisation. For these people "Die Stone Gaan Aan" (The story continues) — a phrase they coined during protests in the same area about two years ago

Douglas believes the coloured

community is being targeted by councils

This began years ago, he alleges, when the arrears for the coloured community were not scrapped like those in the black areas. The black communities also benefited from "flat rate" service payments, a privilege not accorded to the coloured community, he said

Yesterday, as the acrid smell of teargas and burning tyres hung over Gauteng's formally coloured townships, Douglas could not be contacted. As police and rioters were involved in running battles, his supporters said: "You won't find him here, he is where it is safe"

Douglas later told a media conference he was in Eldorado Park trying to calm the situation down

Douglas is the only Sowejoca representative on the Southern Metro Council

As a result of an election collabora-

tion between Sowejoca and the IFP, he was able to gain a proportional representation seat in the council.

Although he has always spoken for the imposition of a flat rate, last year he voted with the council for the imposition of credit control measures in the area

This he has denied, saying he had gone to the meeting late and did not participate in the debate

But even if his support is small, it is dedicated. Douglas is seen by one of his organisers, Mr Johann Penton, as the man who managed to unite old enemies. Through Douglas' efforts, Penton maintains, two disparate communities — the poor white community of the council flats in Bellavista and South Hills and

the newly settled coloured community — have been united

Douglas is also considered to have brought empowerment with him into this poor white community and the ability to fight against a common enemy — the authorities

People who believe the old and new regimes have ignored their needs, who believe they are as powerless in this regime as in the previous, and the poor are attracted to Douglas' organisation Sowejoca.

'WE MUST INVESTIGATE BEFORE WE POINT FINGERS'

Task team to probe Eldorado Park unrest

(127) CT 7/2/97

JOHANNESBURG: Chaos erupted in the suburb of Eldorado Park here yesterday in which a seven-year-old boy was killed. A task team will report back on events on Monday.

THE South Western Joint Civics Association's (Sowejo-ca) work stayaway, which erupted in violence yesterday, has been called off.

A task team has been appointed to investigate problems raised by Sowejo-ca, Gauteng local government and development planning MEC Mr Siceo Shceka announced yesterday.

The announcement followed an emergency meeting between Sowejo-ca chairman Mr Basil Douglas, Southern Metropolitan Sub-structure mayor Ms Sophie Masite and other council members.

The task team, led by Shceka's legal adviser, Mr Stanley Khanyile, will report back to the MEC by February 17. Its first meeting will be held on Monday.

The meeting will look into issues such as the scrapping of ser-

vice charge arrears accumulated before 1994 — which coloured ratepayers say have not yet been scrapped — arrears incurred thereafter, payment options for those in arrears since the beginning of last year and other related matters such as the invasion of houses and corruption.

At the meeting it was agreed the Sowejo-ca stayaway and all related demonstrations would cease with immediate effect to allow the "peaceful process to continue".

"In future, all channels of communication will be exhausted before resorting to peaceful and lawful mass action," Shceka said at a media briefing. "All forms of violence are condemned by all parties."

He added that all parties were optimistic the task team would

make sound and acceptable recommendations.

Shceka said he would comment on the casualties suffered during the day's actions once "an assessment" had been done.

Douglas said it was "futile for the spirit of negotiation" to point fingers at this stage as to what or who caused the violence.

"We first have to investigate before we start pointing fingers," he said, adding he could guarantee no further action would be taken by ratepayers today.

Asked if he would take action against Sowejo-ca members responsible for yesterday's violence, Douglas said he would act against those members "found responsible for attacks on the police and property".

However, an independent commission of inquiry into the matter might be needed. He said he did not know why the situation in Eldorado Park, where a mass meeting was to have been held, got out of hand — Sapa



GAUTENG FLARE-UP: Rioters throw stones at police from behind burning barricades during a protest against rates and service charges in Eldorado Park yesterday.

PICTURE: THE STAR

Boy, 7, killed in Gauteng rates riots

OWN CORRESPONDENT

ET 7/2/97
(127)

JOHANNESBURG: Police and soldiers were reclaiming the streets of Eldorado Park last night, dispersing riotous crowds down side streets and across fields, with teargas.

Their actions followed a day of violent clashes with residents from coloured communities in south and west of Johannesburg. Scores of people have been injured – including policemen – and an unconfirmed number of people have been killed. Some reports indicate that more than seven people were killed, but only one death had been confirmed by late last night. A seven-year-old boy was reported to be have been shot dead

In addition, a number of petrol stations were looted and burnt, a schoolroom razed, a council bus and several vehicles stoned. A council office was also stoned.

In one incident at 7pm yesterday, men in uniform using armoured cars, teargas and buckshot took action shortly after crowds stormed the suburb's police station.

Although live ammunition was being fired, it appeared to be coming from protesters. Police said they used buckshot throughout the day, but civil defence units said they treated between 175 and 200 civilians last night, of which 75 were said to have been shot by other ammunition.

Earlier in the day, South Western Joint Civics' Association (Sowejoca) leader Mr Basil Douglas agreed with Gauteng government and Southern Metro Council officials to set up a task team to look into the organisation's demands, and agreed, also, to call off the stayaway

However, news of the agreement did not filter down to protesters

Among the injured was The Star photographer Thys Dullaart, who was hit by birdshot.

Assault and incitement charges have been laid against Douglas, a Southern Metro councillor who has been blamed for yesterday's violent clashes in Westbury and Eldorado Park. Southern Metro Council spokesperson Ms Muff Anderson confirmed last night that charges had been laid against Douglas. The council's executive committee chairman, Mr Prema Nardoo, said Douglas' behaviour and recent speeches would be investigated to establish whether he had transgressed any council code of conduct.

Development, Planning and Local Government MEC Mr Sicelo Shiceka's task team has been given until February 17 to report back to him on the situation regarding rate payment arrears in the coloured townships before 1994, rates arrears after 1994 and payment options and alleged corruption among council officials.

● See Page 2



LEFT: Two men sift among the ruins of the demolished part of the Sotho hostel in Vosloorus. A squatter camp, which has emerged from these ruins, has created a major rift between hostel leaders and the town council.

RIGHT: Majoseph Khati with her child Joseph outside her home, one of the new structures that residents erected after their shacks had been demolished.



PHOTOGRAPHS TJ LEMON

Cough up or get out, says council

Clash looms as Boksburg gets ready to evict non-paying township residents and attach movable property

By NTHABISENG RAMPONENG

Another housing confrontation is imminent following the announcement by cash-strapped Boksburg — where service arrears shot up to R8-million between November and December last year — that the council is getting ready to evict non-paying residents in Vosloorus and Reiger Park after the end of a period of grace for the two townships.

Earlier, evictions in Reiger Park were suspended when residents resisted. In Vosloorus some

residents have reported being blacklisted by credit bureaux.

Greater Boksburg town treasurer Hank Kleinloog said he had submitted papers to court, listing those who owed the council, in order to prepare for summonses. He said further action would be taken after residents had been issued with notices.

"I'm going to cut off individual water supplies next Friday. We will also start evicting about 3 000 people from Vosloorus," said Kleinloog, adding that the council would attach movable property such as lounge suites

and TV sets against the debt.

Legal action has been taken against Reiger Park residents who reoccupied their houses after eviction two weeks ago. "The sheriff of the court is investigating charges of illegal occupation and contempt of court. That was the first lot — another 20 will be evicted next week."

"And it's not just happening in the townships or in Reiger Park — I have evicted two people in the old white town of Boksburg," he added.

Kleinloog urged people who had received a summons or notice with their accounts to make arrangements with his office to pay.

Payment for services at the two hostels in Vosloorus and rented flats in Reiger Park is another problem. Of the R86 000 owed each month for the 402 state-owned rented flats, only about R10 000 is paid. A squatter camp, which has emerged from the ruins of the demolished part of the Sotho hostel in Vosloorus, has created a rift between hostel leaders and the town council.

Hostel leaders said they regarded the squatters as hostel

residents. Some were former residents who were left without rooms after the upgrading of the hostels, and others were widows and families of hostel dwellers who had died in the violence that swept the township.

The council, however, believes the squatters are occupying the area illegally. Last week, new brick structures built in the area were demolished after a council order.

Kleinloog said the town council had given approval to a few of the squatters to stay there temporarily while upgrading was

under way. It was agreed that after the renovations, they would move into the hostel.

"I have started demolishing new erections in the squatter camp because the place is growing and, as council puts it, aliens have come and erected illegal shacks."

"They have plundered the new hostel structures, taking building material to build their shacks. Council will not allow those shacks to be permanent because that was never part of the initial agreement," said Kleinloog.

All Ntshangase, a hostel

leader and Inkatha Freedom Party regional deputy chairman, said the squatters never received any notice about the council's move.

"Five houses were being bulldozed when we arrived. The council is now threatening to take legal action and to deliver eviction notices any day," he said.

"The houses they destroyed were built by our people, who bought their own bricks and cement. Others used the foundation and material, from the old, demolished hostel structures."

The hostel leaders intend meeting the council to discuss the squatter issue. They feel that since the squatter camp is within the old borders of the hostel, no harm is being done.

They also feel that the squatters should not be moved, but that the area should instead be furnished with toilets, water and electricity and made livable.

"We are tired of fighting, we want peace. The council should build us houses, service the area and register us so that we can pay rent like everyone else," one of the leaders said.

Uneasy calm after fatal Jo'burg riots

ARTS 8/12/97 (127)

Johannesburg - Residents of former coloured townships west of Johannesburg are counting the cost of protest action that went horribly wrong and left four dead.

Scores more were injured in the violent clashes on Thursday between police and residents protesting against charges levied for electricity and water for their homes.

Among the dead was a seven-year-old boy, shot behind a police station at Eldorado Park - where some of the most violent clashes occurred.

Riots also took place at Westbury. Despite the return of an uneasy calm to the areas, coils of razor wire, damaged property and bloodstained streets were a

grim reminder of what has become known as the 'battle of Soweto'.

The South-Western Joint Civics' Association (Sowejoca) was the organisation that called for a work stayaway that sparked the protest action.

Alta Stapelberg, assistant director of Gauteng police, said yesterday police were still keeping a vigil in Westbury and Eldorado Park as they could not count on the streets remaining peaceful.

"There is a police presence in these areas and we have members of the national defence force standing by. But we have to consider the possibility of further trouble as we come to the weekend," she said. Late Thursday night Sapa had con-

firmed a death toll of four in the riots, but by yesterday morning police were still working on figure of two.

Ms Stapelberg said police reports had two people dead in Eldorado Park - including the seven-year-old child.

"We are still investigating the cause of these deaths so we cannot say at this stage if they were shot."

Soweto police spokesman Govindsamy Marimuthoo - under whose jurisdiction Eldorado Park falls - confirmed two deaths, but said they were both men, aged 18 and 25 years.

Ms Stapelberg said 12 civilians were injured at Eldorado Park, including two media photographers - Sapa

AUSTRALIA &

SEMINAR ON OVERSEAS MARKETS

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Independent probe of violent protests welcomed

(127) Star 10/2/97

Commission of inquiry will investigate mayhem in coloured areas, Tokyo Sexwale announces

By Cecilia Russell

South Western Joint Civic Association leader Basil Douglas, whose organisation called for last week's violence-plagued protest in the coloured townships, said yesterday he would welcome an independent investigation into the violence.

Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale announced at the weekend that a commission of inquiry would investigate the violent protest action which caused several deaths when police and protesters clashed.

The stayaway was called by Sowejoca in protest at charges levied for household services in Eldorado Park, Westbury, Noordgesig and other areas previously demarcated as coloured townships.

The commission, headed by a High Court judge, will probe the events which led to the protest action as well as the conduct of the protesters and police during the demonstrations, Sexwale said.

Douglas, who has been criticised for his role in the protests, condemned police action, especially the use of live ammunition. "Police have the means and the manpower to quell a riot. Why didn't they use them?"

He said police had fired at him and his supporters while he was

trying to maintain calm. He said he was forced to leave the scene to attend an urgent meeting.

Sexwale said the commission would specifically look at the resources deployed by police and "the circumstances in which live ammunition was used".

The commission is expected to report back within two weeks.

Sexwale said Thursday's violence had coincided with the opening of Parliament in Cape Town and had been televised

Report expected within two weeks

worldwide.

"This has given a very inaccurate picture of South Africa - an image of people who cannot manage their own affairs; people who are given rights by their constitution but cannot utilise these rights," he said.

"It is highly objectionable and unacceptable that certain leaders who organised this violent protest misled ordinary people into believing that their electricity and water was to be cut off immediately," Sexwale added.

While some Sowejoca leaders were reported to have played a constructive role when they saw their actions degenerate into uncontrollable violence, others continued to instigate violent action, he said. "These (leaders) stand condemned in the harshest possible terms for their irresponsible behaviour."

At the media conference, police said that some of their colleagues, in fear of their lives, may have fired live ammunition during the riots. They also said shots were fired at police and that the crowd's aggression had been fuelled by alcohol.

In the report, police said Douglas had told police members at the scene he would calm down the protesters and asked the police to withdraw. As police retreated they were attacked with stones, petrol bombs and gunfire.

According to Senior Superintendent John Paxton, commander of the Soweto public order police, Douglas left the scene and "made no attempt to calm or control his followers". Damage to private property in Eldorado Park alone was later estimated at R3-million while R25 000 damage was caused to SAPS vehicles.

Police are still not able to confirm the number of people killed in the protests, but four people are believed to have been killed in Eldorado Park.

Commission to probe violent protests

Jacob Dlamini

1 TWO separate inquiries related to
 2 the events that took place in Johan-
 3 nesburg's former coloured town-
 4 ships in which four people died last
 5 week have been set up
 6 . Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale
 7 announced the formation of a com-
 8 mission of inquiry at the weekend
 9 . And local government MEC Siculo
 10 Shiceka has set up a task team to
 11 look into the grievances that led to
 12 the violent protest against rates and
 13 services charges in the townships
 14 . The task team will hold its first

meeting today to pass information
 to the commission of inquiry. The
 meeting will be attended by officials
 from Gauteng's provincial govern-
 ment, Johannesburg's southern
 substructure and representatives
 from the South Western Joint Civics
 Association (Sowejoca).
 Sowejoca has claimed that the
 council had reneged on an agree-
 ment to scrap arrears incurred be-
 fore February 1994 and that de-
 faulters in coloured townships were
 being unfairly targeted.
 The commission of inquiry, to be
 headed by a Supreme Court judge,

would look into the events leading to
 the protest action and the conduct of
 the protesters and police.
 Sexwale said it would specifically
 look at the circumstances in which
 live ammunition was used.
 It would table its findings within
 two weeks to the premier and
 provincial government, and also
 make recommendations to the at-
 torney-general on possible prosecu-
 tions. Gauteng government legal of-
 ficer Stanley Khanyile will chair the
 task team.
 Sowejoca leader councillor Basil
 Douglas would be asked to provide

evidence to support his claims that
 the council had not written off
 arrears in coloured areas and that
 credit control measures were being
 selectively applied.
 Southern substructure executive
 committee chairman Prema Naidoo
 said on Friday: "We are quite con-
 fident that we have the evidence to
 show that arrears have been written
 off. We are implementing credit con-
 trol measures in all the areas of the
 southern substructure and we will
 take action, starting with the people
 owing the highest amount and
 working our way down."

(127) 80 10 12 1997
 The southern substructure is to
 investigate if Douglas violated the
 council's code of conduct by calling
 on residents not to pay.
 The Inkatha Freedom Party —
 on whose ticket Douglas was elected
 councillor — criticised Thursday's
 demonstrations.
 The African National Congress
 blamed Douglas for last week's
 violence and demanded his removal
 from the council. It accused him of
 instigating violence and misleading
 residents.

Sexwale promises probe into Gauteng rates riots

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – The violent protest action which caused several deaths as police and protesters clashed in coloured townships here last week will be investigated by a commission of inquiry, Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale has said.

The stayaway was called by the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejo-ca) in protest at charges levied for household services in Eldorado Park, Westbury, Noordgesig and other so-called coloured suburbs and led to riots in these areas on Thursday.

The commission, headed by a High Court judge, will probe the events which led to the protest action as well as the conduct of the protesters and police during the

demonstrations, Mr Sexwale said, adding that it would look specifically at the resources deployed by police and "the circumstances in which live ammunition was used" The commission is expected to report back within two weeks.

Mr Sexwale said that Thursday's violence had coincided with the opening of Parliament in Cape Town and had been televised worldwide

"This has given a very inaccurate picture of South Africa – an image of people who cannot manage their own affairs, people who are given rights by their constitution but cannot utilise these rights," he said

Police said damage to police vehicles during the riots was about R250 000 and damage to private property was estimated at R3-million

(127) ARG 10/2/97

Judge to probe violent protests

(127)
CT 10/2/97

OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG The violent protest action that caused several deaths as police and protesters clashed in coloured townships here last week will be investigated by a commission of inquiry, Gauteng premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale said.

A stayaway was called by the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) in protest at charges levied for household services in Eldorado Park, Westbury, Noordgesig and other coloured suburbs and led to riots in these areas.

The commission, headed by a judge, would probe the events that led to the protest action as well as the conduct of the protesters and police during the demonstrations, Sexwale said.

He said it would specifically look at the resources deployed by police and "the circumstances in which live ammunition was used".

"The commission is expected to report back within two weeks,"

Sexwale said Thursday's violence had coincided with the open-

ing of Parliament in Cape Town and had been televised worldwide.

"This has given a very inaccurate picture of South Africa — an image of people who cannot manage their own affairs; people who are given rights by their Constitution but cannot utilise these rights," he said.

"It is highly objectionable and unacceptable that certain leaders who organised this violent protest misled ordinary people into believing that their electricity and water were to be cut off immediately," Sexwale said.

He said that while some Sowejoca leaders were reported to have played a constructive role when they saw their actions degenerate into uncontrollable violence, others continued to instigate violent action. "These (leaders) stand condemned for their irresponsible behaviour."

At the media conference police admitted that some of their colleagues, for fear of their lives, might have fired sharp ammunition during the riots.

They also said shots were fired at police and the aggression of the crowd was fuelled by alcohol.

From gang leader to community politician

(127) Alan 11/2/97

CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE

The Masakhane campaign cannot be successful unless it is linked to job creation, says Basil Douglas

By Cecelia Russell

The stayaway organised by the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) on Thursday, which erupted in violence and street battles between supporters and the police, catapulted Sowejoca leader Basil Douglas into fame or, if you like, notoriety.

"I'm not growing angel wings," an exhausted Douglas told The Star in an interview two days after the riot which left four dead and scores injured. But even though he has had to deal with damning criticism, he is still motivated by the belief that he and his organisation can improve the lot of the poor and the coloured community.

Who is this man who assumes the role of protector of the poor and spokesman for the predominantly coloured townships in Gauteng?

The 36-year-old Douglas says he grew up in abject poverty in Noordgesig, near Soweto. His parents were divorced and he lived with his grandmother. He recalls being so hungry he would scrounge tomatoes that grew wild in the drains.

He left school in Std 7 and for about a year became a gang leader.

Through the influences of poet and politician Don Matheza and coloured leader Olli Beck, he rejoined the mainstream, returned to school and concentrated on politics.

Douglas does not see a contradiction in moving from crime to politics. "Leadership - whether you are a politician or the leader of a gang or a church - demands certain characteristics," he says.

He has used those leadership qualities in the struggle and later in the formation of his own civic organisation. I did my share for the struggle," says Douglas. He was involved with the

Soweto uprising and in 1989 became a fully fledged PAC member. He left the PAC after a personal difference with "Benny Alexander", (Douglas refuses to call him Khoisan X), and just before the 1994 local elections, was instrumental in the formation of Sowejoca because he saw the need for a "non-aligned" civic grouping.

But the group did not remain non-aligned for long. Sowejoca formed an election pact with the Inkatha Freedom Party, which gave him his seat as a proportional representative in the Southern Metro Council.

It is a seat he does not expect to keep for long.

Douglas is aware that his conduct as a councillor is being investigated. He is unrepentant. "I am fighting for the poor oppressed people."

"If the seat is to be sacrificed I am willing to do it. I would rather suffer than sell my people out."

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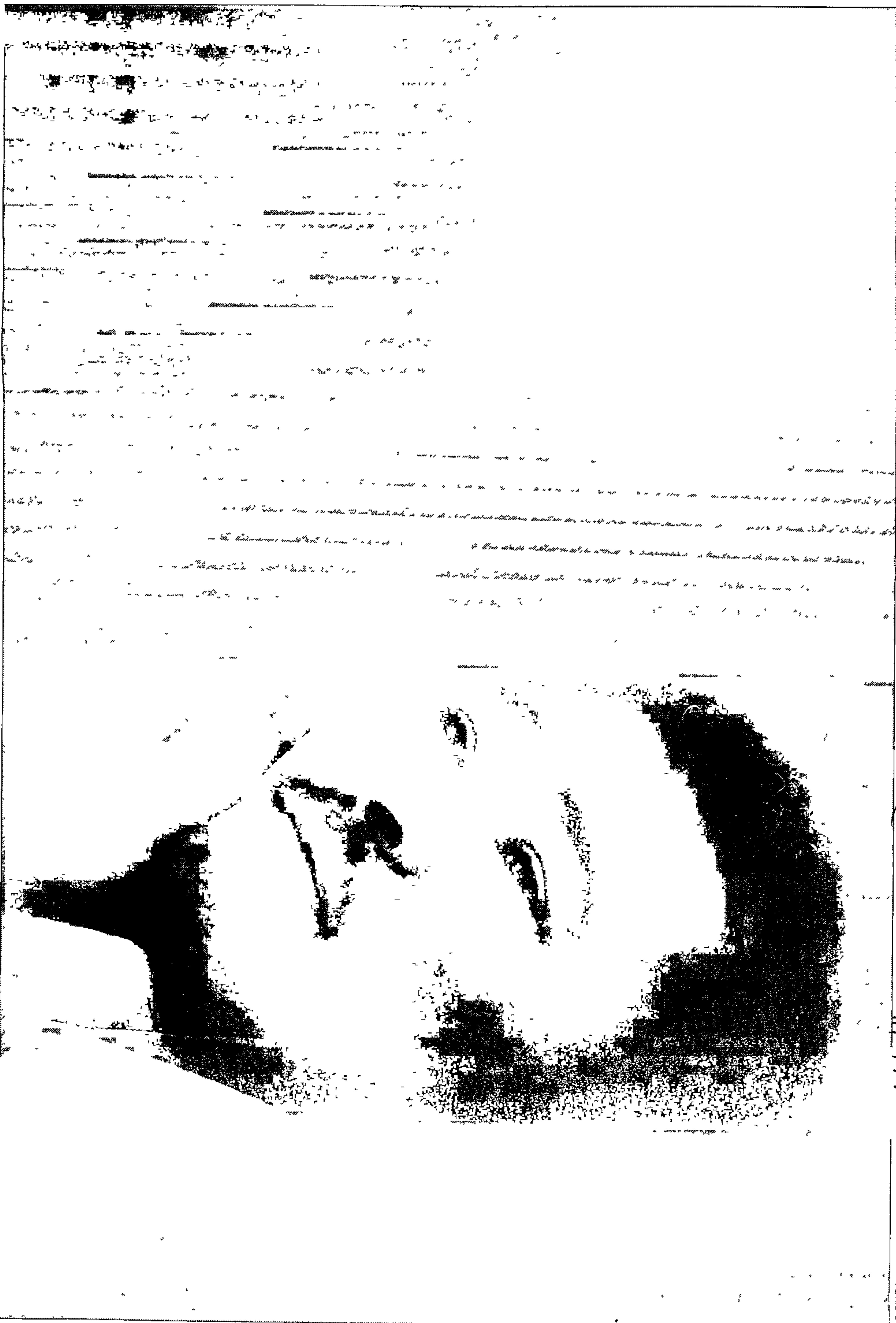
I would rather suffer than sell out my people

potential for violence? At the press conference the day before the stayaway he expressed his unease.

He referred to those "among us" who would unhand a peaceful protest, who would "pervert the dignity and nobleness of our cause".

The agents provocateurs "could be anybody" - intelligence services, gangs - he doesn't know. He does know that unemployment in Eldorado Park is about 70%, and a "hungry person will do anything".

"Also, growing up in a coloured community you are confronted with violence in the home and on the street on a daily basis. There are social reasons why they (the coloured people) reacted



Pledged support ... Basil Douglas sees himself as a peacemaker and says he worked tirelessly to calm people during the recent unrest.

with violence. This does not mean we should condone this violence, but we should understand it," says Douglas.

Many believe Douglas knew the potential for violence and used it to further his cause - to draw maximum attention to Sowejoca and to draw a chasm between the coloured and other communities. He has been accused of being provocative, and of inciting public violence.

Douglas, however, sees himself as a peacemaker. He worked tirelessly on Thursday morning, he says, trying to calm people in Eldorado and Noordgesig. But the police were shooting. They even shot at him as he tried to calm the crowd at Eldorado Park, "when my back was turned".

He is not prepared to shoulder responsibility for deaths and injuries.

"I never pulled the trigger,"

Those who shot and gave instructions to shoot should take responsibility," says Douglas, but adds "I am also a human being and filled with deep indignation. Any death is one death too many".

He condemns the use of live ammunition. "The police have the manpower, the teargas, the mearns at their disposal to quell a riot. Why didn't they use them?"

"There is nothing new about this new South Africa.

"They are using the same units and methods as they used in the past."

Douglas welcomes an independent investigation into the violence at the stayaway.

He has pledged his support to the task group looking into the grievances of the coloured community.

He says something has to be done to help those who are unable to pay, due to unemployment

or because they are pensioners. And he believes the Masakhane payment campaign cannot be successful without job creation.

He says that instead of spending millions on "unsuccessful" advertising campaigns for Masakhane, money should be spent on creating jobs.

In a colourful turn of phrase, punning in Afrikaans on the word Masakhane, one of his supporters gave his explanation of

Masakhane "Die mass'kan nie betaal nie, want hulle is werkloos." (The masses cannot pay as they are unemployed.)

If the task team formed by the Gauteng government, the Southern Metro Council and Sowejoca to investigate and make recommendations on Sowejoca's grievances is successful, Douglas says he "will personally lead the marches to the offices with pay-

ments"

Sandton local govt may face 'collapse'

BD 11/2/97

(127)

Deborah Fine

IF A group of Sandton businesses succeeded in immediately overturning substantial increases in their municipal rates, there would be "major disruption" to services in Johannesburg, the city's metropolitan council warned in court papers yesterday.

In papers before the Johannesburg High Court, the council submitted that immediate enforcement of the action, if successful, would also result in the collapse of local government in eastern Johannesburg, of which Sandton is part. It would also "seriously impair" the delivery of services in southern and western Johannesburg — which include Soweto — at "a very critical phase of local government in the history of SA".

Should the court find in the businesses' favour, however, the council said it would be in the "interests of good government" to allow it time to correct the defects rather than overturn the resolutions with immediate effect, given the "detrimental" effects

this would have on local government. It would be at the court's discretion to set the time period.

The businesses lodged their application last year on the basis that the resolutions whereby the council and its eastern substructure increased their assessment rates by up to 385% were not drawn up in accordance with the Local Government Transition Act and were thus ultra vires and invalid. They submitted that the R444,2m levy imposed on the eastern and northern substructures to make up for deficits in the council and the southern and western structures was unconstitutional, inequitable and invalid.

The businesses represent some of SA's largest property owners with an aggregate property investment of R4,2bn, and include Fedlife, Tiber Bonvec, Stanprop, Liberty Life, Momentum Life, Investec, Kirschmann-Hurry Properties, Sanlam, Commercial Union and the JCI and Amplats Pension Funds. They have asked the

Continued on Page 2

Sandton

(127)

Continued from Page 1

BD 11/2/97

court to set aside with immediate effect portions of the eastern substructure's 1996/97 budget which increased assessment rates, as well as the council's resolutions to impose the levy and subsidise the southern and western substructures.

The council warned in answering affidavits, however, that the immediate invalidation of its resolutions would deprive it of revenue of R162m, which it would not be able to recover from national or provincial government.

The council would be forced to drastically reduce its expenditure, which would result in "major cutbacks" in municipal services in Johannesburg.

The eastern substructure would immediately be deprived of assessment rates revenue of about R55m a month, and would also be obliged to refund assessment rates already paid in the 1996/97 tax year.

It was doubtful whether the structure would be able to raise sufficient funds through bridging finance or other means to recover the losses, and would thus be unable to prevent itself from collapsing.

The council has asked the court to dismiss the action on the basis that the resolutions and increases are completely lawful, equitable and in accordance with statutory stipulations.

The businesses have 10 court days to reply to the council's answering affidavits, after which the matter is expected to be set down on the High Court's motion roll for argument.

Occupations can scupper s

CT 12/21/97

(127)



A MIGRATION onto sites on a stretch of land at Weltevreden Valley North threatened to disrupt a major RDP housing project for squatters on the Cape Flats and put to the test the negotiating skills of police and programme facilitators. **YAZEED FAKIER** continues his series, *Grappling With Change*.

ON the night of Saturday, May 17, 1986, conservative and progressive squatter factions in Crossroads finally erupted into a full-scale battle

It raged for a week and left at least 20 people dead and thousands homeless as warriors loyal to the conservative faction — supported by state security forces — swept through the area, torching their opponents' shacks as they went

Reports were numerous of "white men wearing balaclavas" helping in the attack, and journalists saw plainly how police in Casspirs and soldiers in Buffels sided with the conservative squatter leaders and their supporters

People who found themselves suddenly caught up in the fighting fled the area and set up satellite camps elsewhere

Some managed to salvage meagre possessions, but most thought themselves lucky to escape with their lives

The event exposed to the public a sinister element in the teeming settlements — the wily warlord — who would in succeeding years continue to be exploited by government agents keen to sow disension among a once unified people

It was this same element that recently surfaced and came within a hair's breadth of derailing an important component of the government's RDP squatter housing programme

Only tactful negotiation by intermediaries and restraint — this time by the police — saved the day, averting an imminent battle with resulting bloodshed

And the land-grabbing warlords, who assumed they could resort to the underhand tactics employed during the apartheid years, found they were sorely mistaken this time round

They could no longer rely on the tacit support of police for their unscrupulous scrambles for turf. Instead they were met with a firm message from the provincial government — land invasions would not be tolerated, whatever quarter they came from, and would be dealt with severely, according to the law

The drama that threatened a repeat of the 1980s faction fighting that continued sporadically till just a few years ago, unfolded recently at Samora Machel/Weltevreden Valley North, the squatter upgrading settlement on the R300 road to Mitchells Plain

The area is one of seven that forms part of the RDP's Integrated Serviced Land Project (ISLP), which includes the African communities of Nyanga, Langa, Guguletu, Crossroads, Philippi and southern Delft

Under the scheme a total of 42 000 houses are to be built for shack-dwellers, most of whom are now living in squalid conditions without services

It is already well under way and involves the provincial government, local authorities and communities themselves

But a nightmarish day at the office awaited Mr Mbuyiselo Nombembe, a key facilitator for the project, on his return from the December holidays

Nombembe is project facilitator for Holistic Settlements, which is co-ordinating the ISLP on behalf of the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape

Nombembe says the legal residents moved into Weltevreden Valley North from August through to December last year

There were persistent rumblings of discontent from various quarters earlier and "we were worried that those sites would be invaded during the December holidays"

"We tried to put in place mechanisms to deal with that crisis as and when it arose"

But nothing happened. On January 20, his first day back at work, he was faced by a toyl toying crowd who had pegged their own sites

The action was in defiance of agreements settled and accepted by the majority of representatives of squatters due to be housed

With the project having proceeded relatively smoothly until then, "I was suddenly faced by this crisis," says Nombembe

"The situation was very volatile — you could have gotten into trouble just by standing up and trying to reason with the people"

A flurry of consultations followed with those concerned with the programme (a presidential lead project)

Those involved included the provincial housing and safety and security ministries, the Cape Metropolitan Council and the city council housing committee, under the chairmanship of Mr Sydney Ncate

"We made our position clear from the start of this land invasion," says Ncate "We are not going to tolerate people going onto

land in this manner without permission. We will call in the police and they will be removed"

He notes that when land invasions took place in the past "we were then fighting the government of the day, we were fighting for the government to change and listen to our voice"

Today, though, "we have a government who speaks with our voice, we now have the third tier of government — local government — which is made up of the local councillors representing the people on the ground"

For their part, the police ensured an atmosphere conducive to negotiations by not adopting an aggressive approach (see story below)

While tempers were frayed and some already flaring, there was, mercifully, no violence that day

The next day, however, the invaders had still not moved and police were back at the scene

"Luckily, they didn't shoot any teargas," says Nombembe

"Just as they were reading the riot act and people were asking how long they were expected to wait, I decided that was the perfect opportunity to at least talk to them. I asked them why they were doing it and it turned out that the majority were acting out of ignorance"

Most had come from the nearby Philippi/Brown's Farm settlements — areas which themselves have a history of internecline wrangles with roots stretching back to the Crossroads leadership struggles

"They had heard through their next door neighbours or some other source that land was up for grabs somewhere in Weltevreden Valley North and then rushed to invade sites. They were already frustrated at the lack of progress in the building of sites in their own area

"But we spelt out that this is a government project and there was no way they could be allowed to do what they were doing"

The invaders were advised to return to their councillors and ascertain the extent of progress of upgrading plans already in place for Brown's Farm

Residents point to a lack of agreement and uniformity among the leadership in Philippi/Brown's Farm as being the cause for the delay in development there. Other resident sources say there was an additional element — behind-the-scenes role-players who were exploiting frustrations and manipulating residents to invade sites so that a more sinister plot could be hatched

Ncate says that illegal occupations of sites only delays the entire housing process and unfairly disadvantages those living in more desperately squalid conditions for whom the sites have already been earmarked

He says the Philippi RDP Forum was party to initial discussions and agreements on these issues, but was the only dissenting voice during those talks

"There were 11 RDP forums present when the allocation of plots was discussed and agreed on, but if 10 RDP forums agree and only Philippi disagrees, we cannot hold up the entire process because of a disagreement from one area

"The decision of the majority is the decision that has to govern at the end of the day"

(The Philippi RDP Forum and the area's local councillors are due to meet to discuss the issue and present their response to housing authorities soon)

On the question of empire-building by individuals, Ncate says he "impressed on those responsible that 'even if I am so powerful — let me not be the instigator of the wrong things'

"At the end of the day, you will invite more trouble to yourself

"They are obstructing housing developments for people who need accommodation desperately"

Asked what threat the warlords held for the future of the delivery of housing and upgrading of existing areas, Ncate said "We are taking those warlords out and replacing them with community policing in each and every area. We are pushing for those warlords to be taken out

"That is why we said even to the courts of the Western Cape, we need assessors to be drawn from the civics on the ground — because the civics are the watchdogs of the government"

Asked how he personally would approach the vexing warlord question, he cited his intervention in Crossroads, when, he says, he was warned not to do so because he would be killed

"But I decided that whether I'm killed or not, I have to talk to them — that's the only way — and now the development in Crossroads is going well"

He says he has appealed to squatter leaders and councillors, "telling them we depend on the leadership not to allow people to invade areas we want to develop"

Ncate notes that "we may have been fighting with the NP before, but we are sitting round a table now to try to solve things together with the NP

"We are not focusing on the fact that these people have been chasing us around all these years — so that is what I'm putting it to the people so that they must understand that when they take action, they do so in the proper manner

"It's the message I gave to the leaders of Brown's Farm and Philippi — if we have 100 people present and 99 agree on something, it must



GRAPPLING WITH CHANGE

FLASHBACK Much of Crossro

be understood that the outstanding one must abide by the declaration of the 99"

Recalling President Nelson Mandela's statement during speech at the opening of Parliament, Ncate said "This has to be the year of delivery — the fruit what we're doing on the ground

Philippi RDP Forum chair Mr Madoda Gijose confirmed body's discontent with agreement on the housing project "forum is very autonomous nobody can decide for us

"Whatever decisions we in forum make will stand," he said

Upper squatter housing

(127)

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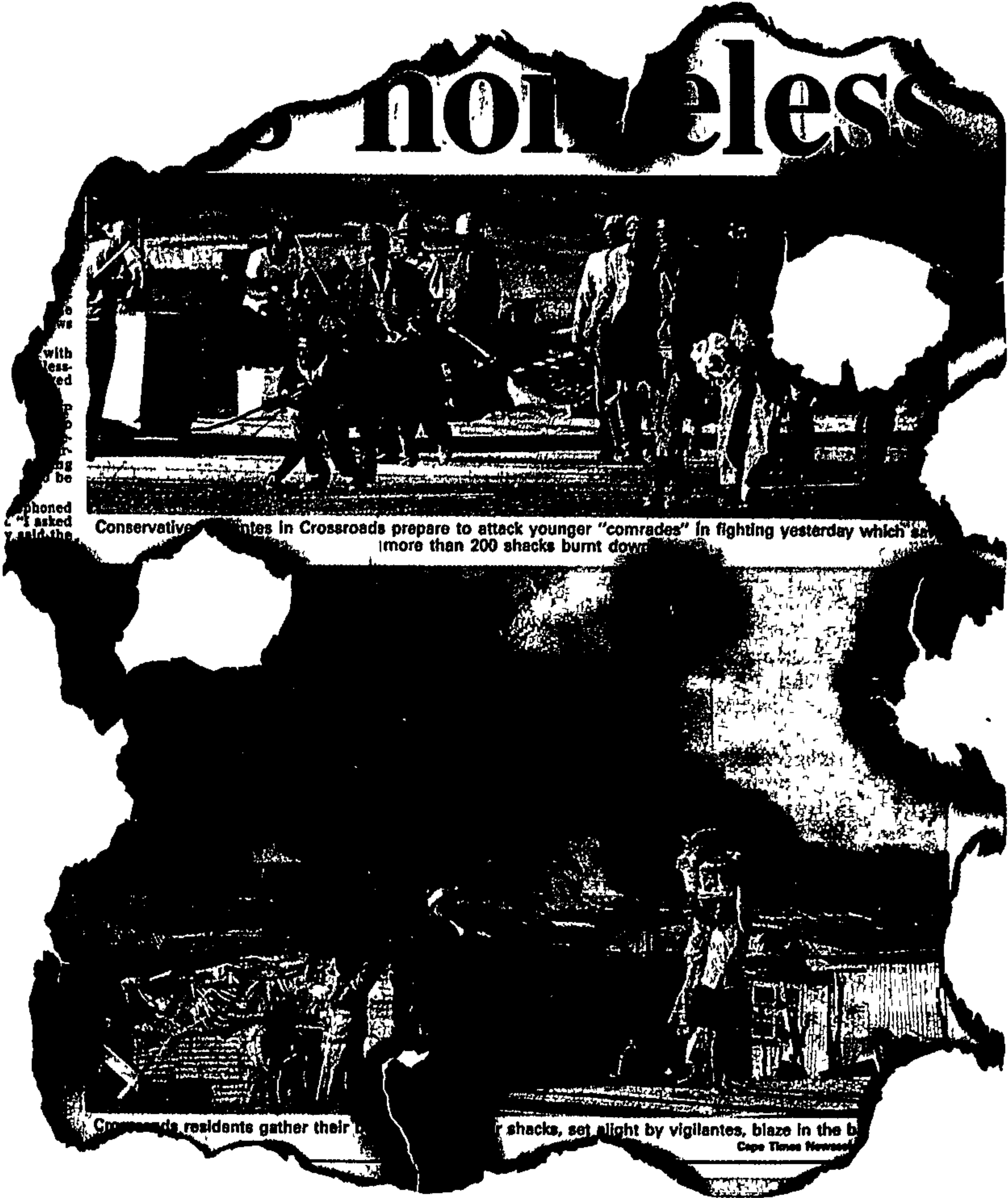
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Conservative... in Crossroads prepare to attack younger "comrades" in fighting yesterday which saw more than 200 shacks burnt down

Crossroads residents gather their... shacks, set alight by vigilantes, blaze in the b
Cape Times News

FLASHBACK Much of Crossroads squatter camp was destroyed in May 1986, when fighting broke out between rival factions

be understood that the outstanding one must abide by the decision of the 99 "

Recalling President Nelson Mandela's statement during his speech at the opening of Parliament, Ncate said "This has to be the year of delivery — the fruits of what we're doing on the ground "

Philippi RDP Forum chairman Mr Madoda Guyose confirmed the body's discontent with agreements on the housing project "The forum is very autonomous, nobody can decide for us

"Whatever decisions we in the forum make will stand," he said

But the forum was still to hold discussions with the ISLP, councillors and other players in the wrangle and these factors had nothing to do with the invasion of sites

"If we are called to a meeting to discuss this matter, we will go "

One of the four councillors for Philippi area, Mr Mteto Ntlangiso, said they were having "ongoing negotiations" on the dispute

"We were told to go back to the (Philippi) forum and come up with a position that is agreed upon by all the interested parties

"We still have to sit down with the ISLP and push the ISI P to also

start working on levelling the ground of the Brown's Farm and Philippi areas because people have become impatient "

Nombembe says the experience at Weltevreden Valley was a triumph for negotiation over the Delft and Mbekweni clashes witnessed by millions on television

"Even in the face of people invading with tanks, there's no substitute for sitting down with them — you must find out what their problems are before resorting to force

"If they are being unreasonable then it's a different question, but

we managed to get the police on our side and they were very helpful — they didn't just move in there and start spraying teargas all over the show

"They gave us a chance to talk and agreed to patrol the area till things had settled down "

He appealed for patience among squatter residents and assured them that no one had been overlooked in the housing process

"This is a project that will run until 1999 and beyond, and the government is going to buy more land as and when the need arises But nobody will be left out "

Pretoria to cut electricity to thousands of nonpayers in white areas

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — Outside contractors would be appointed to assist the Pretoria city council to disconnect electricity supplies to defaulters, a special council meeting decided yesterday.

Arrears in electricity payments in the Pretoria city substructure reached R298m last week, treasurer Mare-Lise Fourie said. About 70% of defaulters were from traditional white areas.

The township of Mamelodi accounted for 20% of arrears while Atteridgeville accounted for 10%.

"Pretoria could handle the arrears up to now, but it has now reached critical conditions," she said.

An auditor-general's report indicated that the financial position of the council had weakened from an accumulated surplus of about R14m to an accumulated deficit of R67m for the financial year ending June 1996.

"Our bank overdraft is in such a state that we make special trips to the bank — sometimes six times a day — to deposit cheques of R1 000 and over in an attempt to service the overdraft," Fourie told a media briefing after the special council meeting.

She said the council had no indication that a large group of ratepayers had embarked on an active boycott.

"Many of the defaulters are merely chancers who saw a gap, provided by the transition period, not to pay."

The undesirable state of affairs could be attributed to the problems encountered with the collection of rates and service charges, the expansion of the area of jurisdiction of the municipality to cover previously disadvantaged areas, the reluctance by some ratepayers to pay according to metered consumption and many more, she said.

The council decided to give defaulters up to February 28 to contact it to arrange to settle arrears interest free.

Office hours would be extended from next week to give the public the opportunity to contact the council.

"If no special arrangements are made, their electricity will be cut and they will receive another letter explaining why it was done," Fourie said.

She warned that those who had agreed to make special arrear payments would have their electricity disconnected at once if they defaulted.

The council lodged an application to the High Court on Monday for leave to appeal against a recent judgment that it had unfairly discriminated against whites by charging a flat rate to residents in former black areas.

The council had spent R33m on the installation of electricity meters in the former black areas to afford equal treatment to all ratepayers in Pretoria.

(147) BD 1312197

Claims that rates row is Mandela's 'revenge'

(127) mtg 14-20/2/97

Stuart Hess

MORE than a week after rioting to protest high taxes, residents of Johannesburg's coloured areas remain defiant of the government, saying that an old oppressor has merely been replaced with a new one.

The rates row which sparked the rioting — in which police have confirmed two people died — is only one of many reasons for their anger, residents said, adding that police

response to the protest only aggravated the situation

"Police fired wildly and just shot anyone they saw," said Celia Dan, whose 11-year-old son David was shot in the leg during the fighting.

"What did an 11-year-old boy do?"

"[Civics leader] Basil Douglas is the only person that is willing to fight for the coloured community. He should be awarded a medal," said Eldorado Park resident Sonja Olfant. "Douglas," said a pensioner, "is the only one standing up for coloureds."

Douglas tapped into a popular vein when he called last week's stayaway to protest rising electricity and water tariffs.

"This is an act of revenge by Mandela because the coloured community did not support the ANC during the elections," said Olfant. She faces electricity and water arrears of more than R9 000, but said she cannot afford to pay because she is unemployed. "We suffered under the old regime and we are still suffering today."

Mary residents blamed the Gaut-

eng government for neglecting the coloured community. "This is ridiculous. Does the council think we are rich? We won't pay these high rates," said one woman, who refused to be identified.

Eldorado Park resident Colette du Pont said Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale had failed to respond to calls from residents to deal with the issue.

"If this had happened in a black township he would be visiting the people. But he doesn't care about us," she said.

Residents have accused municipal

councils of failing to keep their promises to scrap arrears accumulated prior to the April 1994 election. "No arrears were scrapped in Eldorado Park, only in Soweto," said Du Pont.

Prerna Naidoo, chair of the Southern Metropolitan Substructure, dismissed the claims. He said some residents had not paid their accounts for two years and thus explained why they owed as much as R15 000. Naidoo said the residents' calls to scrap arrears that accumulated after the 1994 election were unrealistic.

Sowejoca, IFP combine voices.

(127) Star 14/2/97

By MORGAN NAIDU

One week after deadly riots erupted in the streets of Eldorado Park, residents of the township south of Johannesburg gathered to mourn their dead and to seek comfort in the welcoming arms of Inkatha leaders Themba Khoza and Humphrey Ndlovu.

More than 2 000 residents, including many who were injured in last week's riots over rates arrears, packed a local community hall last night to join leaders of Sowejoca (South Western Joint Civic Association) in singing and chanting, "Die storie gaan aan (the story is continuing)".

With the two Inkatha leaders sharing the podium, Sowejoca slammed the Government, pledging allegiance to its "brothers in the struggle" - the IFP.

"I want to make it clear," said Khoza, "that as long as the Gov-

ernment doesn't deliver (services) people are not going to pay."

He accused the Government and police of "using coloureds as human targets" in the riots.

Victims paraded their wounds on stage, some of them describing how they were shot and injured.

Sowejoca leader and Southern Metro councillor Basil Douglas said he had received letters of support from the Democratic Party and Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

The IFP had also helped cover some of the legal costs after Sowejoca members were arrested.

Douglas said the victims who had died in the rioting had paid the ultimate price and that their "murders exposed this fraud called a new South Africa".

Sowejoca leaders are to present a report on their version of what occurred in the rioting to Gauteng MEC for safety and security Jessie Duarte on Monday.

Proper houses to replace shacks for thousands after Midrand ratepayers make peace with council

By **HOPWELL RADEBE**
City Desk

Homeless people in Tembisa and Ivory Park are finally to move out following an agreement on Wednesday between Midrand ratepayers and the Khayalami Metropolitan Council to build homes for them.

The Mayibuye housing project, which is aimed at settling about 1 800 families in Comberca, Midrand, initially called for site and service, with families building houses for themselves.

However, efforts came to a halt last year when ratepayers objected to the creation of "another shantytown like Ivory Park" in their backyards.

The provincial government had approved R15-million for the project.

Ratepayers who feared their properties would depreciate demanded to have an input on the planning and the nature of houses to be built.

Council officials, ratepayers and various squatter camp communities then agreed at a meeting

held in Rabie Ridge, Midrand, to do away with shacks and build proper houses for more than 10 000 homeless people.

Erecting shacks next to formally built houses in the new township would not be allowed, and the council would demand that people add formal rooms to their houses.

Speaking on behalf of rate-

payers, Luigi Bortolotti, said Midrand residents were pleased by their successful intervention.

By insisting on having proper housing development prior to settlement, their efforts had prevented the development of another squatter camp.

Council spokesman Alida Kotzee said development could start in four months.

Star 14/2/97 (127)

AVOIDING APOCALYPSE

FM 14/2/97 (127)

Provincial & Constitutional Affairs Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa minces no words on the importance of local government success or failure there will determine whether SA can be governed effectively or whether it will become ungovernable

If Moosa is right — and there are cogent reasons to believe that he is — local governance in Gauteng provides a gloomy glimpse of the future

Sandton's rates boycott is into its sixth month and no compromise is in sight, coloured townships around Johannesburg are still simmering after an attempt to persuade residents to pay their accumulated municipal debts ended in bloodshed, neighbouring black townships are still characterised by abysmally low levels of payment

The Sandton rates boycott, triggered by a rates increase of up to 300% and by sharp rises in property valuation after ANC local election victories throughout the Johannesburg metropolis, is approaching a critical point

Final notices of demand for arrears are being sent to boycotting residents by the ANC-controlled Eastern Metropolitan Substructure. Several Sandton-based firms, including Liberty Life and Sanlam, are challenging the legality of the substructure's budget and rates increase in court

A task team, mandated by the Gauteng provincial government to help resolve the dispute, has failed to negotiate a compromise. It may even have presided over a hardening of attitudes

Brian Stolzenberg, spokesman for the Sandton Ratepayers' Federation (Sanfed), which is spearheading the rates boycott, says bluntly "The authorities have no intention of negotiating"

He believes they are interested only in devising stratagems to disarm the boycotters and impose the new tariffs. He sees the failure to appoint an independent chairman — the chairman, Stanley Khanyile, is a legal adviser to the provincial government — as proof of that

Sol Cowan, an ANC member of the

eastern substructure, responds by accusing Sanfed of constantly "moving the goal posts" and reneging on agreements

The task team's apparent inability to end the Sandton boycott does not augur well for a negotiated end to the dispute which resulted in last week's protest action in the coloured townships. A second task team has been established by Gauteng MEC for Local Government Sicelo Shiceka. It will be chaired by Khanyile, who has thus far failed to resolve the Sandton dispute



The situation in coloured townships around Johannesburg, including Westbury and Eldorado, is complicated by a racial factor. Coloured residents there believe they are being unfairly targeted in a bid by the Southern Metropolitan Substructure to collect arrears in service charges. They note that arrears have either been scrapped or ignored in black townships

Basil Douglas, leader of the largely coloured South Western Joint Civics As-

sociation (Sowejoca) which called for last week's stayaway, says "Our own brothers and sisters are kicking us in the teeth." There is no doubt he is referring to the ANC-controlled local authority

Douglas, a former teacher who was brought up in Noordgesig, a coloured township on the edge of Soweto, encapsulates his feelings in the slogan "Under the whites we weren't white enough. Under the blacks we aren't black enough." The same attitude is reflected in the pithy description of post-apartheid SA by a coloured woman at the height of last week's turmoil: "The blacks are the whites and the whites are the blacks. But the coloureds are still the coloureds."

These views have been criticised by Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale. He has accused those propagating them of attempting to "instigate racial conflict" and of indulging in "completely immoral" politicking

Sexwale, who castigates the protest leaders for trying to impose the stayaway by erecting roadblocks, closing off pension paypoints, disrupting schooling and impeding commercial activity, offers an assurance "All our people are equal citizens in one country"

Douglas, speaking after Sexwale's admonitions, ripostes "They suffer from amnesia. They have forgotten what happened. They started the culture of nonpayment. They made the country ungovernable. I am not going to apologise"

The realpolitik of the broader situation on the rates issue is that there is — for historical reasons — a racial dimension

Payment in traditionally white suburbs in and around Johannesburg is high, even in Sandton (where some residents are paying the old rate or the old rate plus 20%), payment in surrounding black townships is low even as the third anniversary of the ANC's 1994 election victory approaches

Payment levels in Johannesburg and Sandton are 87% and 85% respectively (though many, perhaps most, Sandton residents are not paying the new rate). In

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40 CURRENT AFFAIRS

Soweto payment varies from 20% to 24%, in Alexandra it is below 10%

Many residents in the historically white suburbs resent the higher tariffs for two reasons there is no improvement in services they receive and there appears to be little or no effort by township people to meet their obligations Many white residents feel they are being made to bear "the white man's burden" in post-liberation SA

The culture of nonpayment persists in many townships in Gauteng, despite the ANC's Masakhane campaign Vast and growing sums of money are owed to the local authorities Outstanding service payments for the four substructures of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council total R1,48bn The equivalent figure for Gauteng is R3,16bn

Chrispian Olver, a senior official in the Department of Provincial & Constitu-

tional Affairs, has a less gloomy interpretation A portion of the debt is short-term The moment services are used a debt is registered against the user Payment comes later Thus the actual long-term

debt is, he reckons, smaller than the astronomical figures spewed out by computers

Olver puts the "aggregate figure" for the long-term debt owed to local authorities countrywide at "between R2,5bn and R3,5bn"

He divides the more than 800 local authorities across SA into three categories which account for roughly a third each

The top third are perfectly sound administratively and financially

The bottom third are "basket cases" without tax

bases and without long-term financial viability Radical intervention is needed to save them

Plans are afoot to do just that

The middle third, though hampered by

the culture of nonpayment, "can be made viable" Olver says there are a number of small towns in the middle category which are on the way to "full repayment" Their success results from several factors, including politicians who have resisted the temptation to climb aboard the "populist bandwagon," individual metering of households, improved services to residents, "hard credit control" and compassionate consideration for genuinely indigent families

The success of these small towns, which range from New Doringstad in North-West Province to Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape, offers hope that SA can avoid the apocalypse of ungovernability *Patrick Laurence*



Basil Douglas

Sowejoca's Basil Douglas is back in the

Johannesburg southern substructure councillor Basil Douglas, Malcolm X and Sobukwe, writes Jacob Dlamini

THESE are two sides to every story, says Johannesburg southern substructure councillor Basil Douglas, echoing the refrain he uses each time querees of his chequered political past are raised.

This week he was offering his side of events surrounding the deaths of four people last Thursday during clashes between police and residents protesting against rates and services bills in Johannesburg's coloured townships.

Police said they fired in self-defence after coming under attack while trying to remove barricades set up by protesters enforcing the stayaway called by Douglas's South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca). But Douglas blames the police for the shooting, saying "None of the people killed had guns in their hands."

A commission of inquiry has been set up by Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale to establish which side of this story is true.

While Douglas's championing of service charge protests may have endeared him to many in the impoverished suburbs of southwestern Johannesburg, it has also brought upon him the wrath of the southern substructure which is investigating whether he violated the council's code of conduct by calling on residents to pay a flat rate. If found guilty, he could face expulsion, something the African National Congress (ANC) has suggested.

DD 17/2/97

be antblack because if that happens it will be ant-granny, ant-auntes and I do not want that I have relatives in Soweto."

He says: "Coloured people feel they have been left out and they experience this when they look for employment. In the past we were seen as not being black enough on the one hand and not being white enough on the other. Now it seems that we were not disadvantaged enough and therefore do not qualify for affirmative action."

He points out that Sowejoca's struggles are not about race "Coloured people are not a race, we are an ethnic group and we do not define our struggle in race terms because the minute you do that it becomes Hitlerian and racist. We just want the restoration of our dignity, our land and our culture."

A good start would be to move the Taal Monument from Paarl to Sea Point because that is where Afrikaans was born, he says. "We also want to be more visible on television. We are tired of being shown as criminals, alcohol abusers and knife-wielding thugs." He was elected to be a councillor on an Inkatha

The 36-year-old devout Catholic shot into the limelight in 1994 when he led Sowejoca, which he founded after being expelled from the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) for allegedly assaulting a colleague in rates protests. That action left one person dead and 28 injured. Douglas describes this and last week's incidents as "massacres".

He disputes that he was kicked out of the PAC, and claims he resigned after disagreements with the PAC leadership. There are always two sides to any story involving Douglas. Take his official dismissal from Kluptown High School in 1994 for allegedly assaulting headmaster Gideon van Branden. The former geography teacher insists he quit teaching because he disagreed with "chalkdowns".

Earlier this month, he was in the news again, for allegedly striking ANC Noordings branch chairman Irvin Langeveldt after a row over politics. "I did not assault him," says Douglas, "I just klapped (hit) him for calling me a political infant."

That epithet is just one of many labels that have been attached to Douglas. He has been called a racist, a troublemaker, an opportunist, an egomaniac and worse.

Many have accused him of playing the race card and exploiting the anxieties of coloured people. But Douglas denies he is a racist, saying that his paternal great-grandmother was Zulu. "Our struggle cannot

Freedom Party ticket and Sowejoca operates out of the party's Johannesburg offices.

But Douglas is quick to say that no alliance exists and that it is just a friendship. He describes himself as "the last honest politician. There are so few of us around they should put us in a museum."

Douglas says that he is not sure whether his wife, who works in a bank, headed his stayaway call last week. And opponents says he omitted to tell residents that his own arrears of about R9 000, incurred before February 1994, have been written off. At the same time, he is claiming that the council has reneged on an agreement to do this in coloured areas.

Douglas's political models are Gandhi, Malcolm X and PAC founder Robert Sobukwe, and he claims to have read all three volumes of Karl Marx's Das Kapital. He quotes Voltaire as readily as he quotes from Isaiah 21 and Job 23 — his favourite passages in the Bible. "I read those passages to be strong, patient and resilient."

When will his campaign end? Douglas answers "When my people have jobs, when their dignity is restored and when they are accepted as part of the new SA." As Sowejoca's slogan reads: Die storie gaan aan (the story continues). **END.**

Timeight after clashes

Robert (127)

DOUGLAS

Inner-city clash looms as tenants face the boot

(127)
BY SHIRLEY WOODGATE

SAW 18/12/97
A showdown is looming between the managing agents of two large inner-city apartment blocks and tenants who are due to be served with eviction orders for non-payment of rents today.

Squaring up to each other are lawyers Mervyn J Smith and tenants of Queensbury Court and Hoffman New Yorker, who are backed by the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco)

Rental arrears at the two blocks totalled almost R400 000, and a High Court application has been launched to evict 37 Queensbury Court tenants, Smith said.

Problems surfaced when tenants unilaterally decided to reduce rentals which would be paid into a Sanco trust account and not to the owners, said attorney Deborah Mann.

She claimed tenants who continued paying rent were intimidated by Sanco, and messengers of the court feared for their lives when serving orders on rent dodgers.

Sanco had in the past thumbed its nose at the law and promptly placed evicted tenants back into their vacated flats.

The owners, who continued to foot the rates and maintenance bills, could face having proceedings instituted against them by the Southern Metro Council, a desperate situation they share with many other landlords.

Smith said the anarchy which existed in certain "no-go" blocks of flats in Yeoville, Berea, Hillbrow and Joubert Park threatened the entire inner-city rehabilitation project, as frustrated landlords battled against a succession of tenant protest associations and boycotts.

comment.

R40-m for serviced land and housing (127)

By Joshua Raboroko

GREATER Johannesburg metropolitan substructures are to spend more than R40-million to buy land and to improve infrastructure aimed to provide housing, transport, public safety and emergency services in their areas

But, the facilities to be kick-started on short- and long-terms, possibly in March, will not be introduced unless the residents resume payment of rates and services, a Press conference was told in Johannesburg yesterday

Executives of Greater Johannesburg council Mr Collins Matjila, southern metropolitan executive Mr Parks Tau, western metropolitan chairman Mr Strike Ralegoma, and northern metropolitan Mr Pule Buthelezi promised to deliver land developments promised residents before the 1995 elections

Matjila said the councils' land development objectives included building

houses, creating jobs and economic development

The SMSS and WMSS will spent R40-million to purchase and negotiate land deals for developments.

However, he added that there was opposition from some residents that informal settlements near their homes would devalue the prices of their properties.

The councils would negotiate deals with the owners

They (councils) will also provide sports, recreation, open space, cultural facilities, social and community developments

Adequate transport and public safety will have to be provided to ensure that people travelled easily and safely to and from work

Taxi problems will also have to be addressed

Matjila said all these facilities would not get off the ground if the people did not pay their rates and services

Sawetam 18/12/98

Council to take drastic action

(127) 00 20/2/97

THE Johannesburg southern metropolitan substructure last night announced drastic measures to recover R650m it was owed by defaulting ratepayers by February

At a budget discussion meeting with about 50 businessmen, councillor Shan Balton said credit control measures, which would see all defaulters being taken to court for outstanding rates and taxes, and measures to cut the electricity and water supplies of defaulters would be implemented on March 1

The measures did not only apply to residents, but also to councillors who could face losing their jobs if their accounts were not brought up to date. The substructure was negotiating with employee organisations on the matter.

Other drastic measures to be implemented included that: no contracts would be entered into with businesses (on tenders) which owed the council money, the property of defaulters would be attached to recover outstanding debts, and people wanting to hire

sports or other council facilities would first have to prove that their accounts had been paid

Several defaulters had been issued with their 14-day warnings, while the remainder would be sent out within weeks. Those not settling their outstanding debt as of January 1 1994 would have to make arrangements to pay in instalments.

Balton said the substructure had been under pressure from certain groups and communities to write off the outstanding debts, but he said it did not have the legal competency to write off arrears. "We have undertaken to collect that R650 million," he said.

Substructure financial head Bethwell Jwili said "On March 3 the cut-off of services is to be intensified throughout the southern substructure. There will be no discrimination".

The businessmen were told that on the budgeted income of R544 148m for the 1996/97 financial year ending June, the expected shortfall would be R193 656m — Sapa.

Rates rebels back down on flat-rate demand

Star 21/2/97 (127)

BY CECILIA RUSSELL

The South Western Joint Civic Association has backed down on demands for a flat rate for services and the scrapping of all arrears.

Sowejoca leader Basil Douglas instead committed the organisation to leading marches for payment of rates and services once the mechanisms agreed to by a task team, set up to look into the causes of the rates riots two weeks ago, were in place.

The team, comprising members of the Gauteng government,

the Johannesburg Metro Council and Sowejoca, was hastily set up to look into the grievances of Sowejoca supporters when the February 6 stayaway called by the organisation erupted into violence. Four people died.

The protesters were demanding a flat rate for services in mainly coloured areas and the scrapping of all arrears. The organisation's leadership called for the stayaway after accusing local government of not consulting them over the suspension of services.

At the time, Douglas accused the council of discrimination by allowing flat rates in black areas but not in coloured areas.

■ If Douglas does not pay his rates arrears within 30 days, his seat on the Southern Metro Local Council will become vacant.

He said yesterday the onus would be on the council to enforce the Local Government Elections Ordinance of 1970.

Douglas warned "I would be very worried if I were them. Who would then be here negotiating and helping to keep the peace?"

Council gets tough on (127) Tembisa defaulters

APR 21/2/97

By HOPEWELL RADEBE

City Desk

More than 14 000 Tembisa households have had their electricity cut as the Kempton Park/Tembisa Metro Local Council spares no one in its campaign to end the culture of non-payment.

Council spokesman Henriette Weeseman said about 5 000 more households which had still not paid for services would be cut off by next week.

Some had dishonoured their contract agreements with the council and others were simply not paying.

The council's firm actions against creditors is slowly eroding the resistance to payment in the township, according to Weeseman, because an average of R2,35-million had been collected in the township since November.

This is a significant improvement compared to the less than R600 000 collected during the same period last year.

Council officials have been engaged in the process of inspecting households' electricity connections. Those found to be illegally connected were either disconnected or arrangements made for legal connections and registration.

Weeseman said although the process had not yet been completed, it had helped the council to save about R200 000 on the area's electricity bill for December.

On the other hand, while workers were installing and inspecting water meters, many leakages had been identified and repaired.

This had also contributed to reducing the water bill by about R700 000 a month. This amount was being lost from wasted water leaking from old pipes which were often not reported.

Final notices sent out for rates non-payment

(127)

Authorities attempt to exclude Sanfed from talks and hold bilateral meetings with independent bodies

SAFETY 24/12/97

By ANNA COX

A total of 8 200 final notices for non-payment of rates and services have been sent out to residents of the Eastern Metro Local Council

Residents claim, however, that the council is refusing to give them a breakdown of amounts they owe

The final notices contain a single figure and residents have been told verbally by officials that this figure was reached by adding outstanding September, October and November amounts with service payments deducted

John Lambson, the chief executive officer of the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers Help Office, said if this was the case, the notices were probably illegal as amounts paid for services should not be deducted from the rates' bill. Most boycotting residents had stipulated in writing that they were continuing to pay for services

"The amounts of the final notices should be much more. We have sent letters to the chief executive officer requesting breakdowns but have not received replies. Residents have the right to know these figures," he said

Council communications officer Keith Peacock said the notices

were sent out as normal credit control measures, but in the case of genuine financial hardship a mutually acceptable agreement on arrears could be made

He said ratepayers received detailed monthly statements of their charges and any amounts that were outstanding from previous months would be clearly shown.

Sandton residents have been boycotting rates in protest of increases of up to 300%

Meanwhile, talks between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) to resolve the rates' boycott remain in stalemate

Provincial authorities are now excluding Sanfed from talks and are holding bilateral talks with individuals or independent ratepayer bodies not affiliated to Sanfed

Stanley Khanyile, the leader of a task team convened by the Gauteng province to end the boycott, said the team had temporarily ceased its work and would only continue once Sanfed came back with a sincere and positive attitude and a genuine desire to resolve the matter

Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said talks with individual organisations not affiliated to Sanfed would lead nowhere

His organisation represented 24 ratepayer bodies - by far the vast majority - and without its co-operation no progress would be made, he said

There were only two organisations independent of Sanfed - the Residential Sectional Title Owners' Association (Restoa) and the Triangle Community which only represented Kelvin and Buccleuch residents

"We believe province is now trying the divide-and-rule trick, but without us there will be no solution. We believe that in the interests of making real progress, an independent chairperson should be appointed," he said

Restoa said it had held a successful meeting with MEC for local government Sicelo Shiceka regarding the rates' boycott

Chairman Reg Cartwright said his organisation's proposals had been well-received and a technical committee had been set up by the minister to investigate them

Restoa is calling for equal rates for sectional title owners and remissions for pensioners in sectional title units. At present sectional title owners receive only a 35% rebate while other residential owners receive a 55% rebate, a difference which was unfair, said Cartwright

'90% of residents support the Sandton rates boycott'

Mar 25/2/97

(127)

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The Sandton rates boycott is in full swing with between 80% and 90% of residents supporting the call not to pay rates.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said the support was borne out by the fact that the Eastern Metro Local Council had refused to give residents a breakdown of numbers of final notices sent out to Sandton, Alexandra and Johannesburg.

Local politicians were afraid that the figures would reveal that only Sandton residents boycotting rates payments in protest of hikes of up to 300% were being targeted with the notices, he said.

It would also prove that the rates boycott, which municipal officials have been claiming has failed, was in fact in full swing and is becoming more widespread.

"We have feedback that thousands of people are not paying," said Stolzenberg.

There were only about 36 000 account holders in Sandton including businesses, which constituted a large proportion, he

said. If those were deducted, it would mean that the boycott by Sandton residents had reached between 80% and 90%, said Stolzenberg.

He said a massive poster campaign would soon be launched by Sanfed to encourage residents to continue with the boycott.

"It is vital, to keep pressure on officials, to keep up with the boycott," he said.

Council communications officer Keith Peacock said the Eastern council did not differentiate between different areas.

"We wish to place on record that we object to the continued separation of our local council into its old apartheid component parts. The notices were sent out as normal credit control measures.

"In the case of genuine financial hardship, a mutually acceptable agreement on arrears could be made," he said.

He said ratepayers received detailed monthly statements of their charges and any amounts that were outstanding from previous months would be clearly shown.

Bid to penalise Sandton businesses

127
By Anna Cox

26/2/97
The ANC attempted to push a motion through the Eastern Metro Council last night to penalise Sandton businesses that are boycotting rates payments in protest against increases of up to 385%.

The motion called for the council not to do business with any company, or its subsidiaries or individuals, that owed the council money for rates and/or services.

The motion was however, not allowed by the mayor, Justice Ngidi, who ruled it sub judice.

The deputy chairman of the executive committee, Sol Cowan, however, has lodged an objection against the ruling by the mayor and said he would be obtaining legal advice on it.

"The mayor was advised by an official who does not have legal knowledge. The motion was simply aimed at good financial management in the future. It does not make sense for us to do business with people who owe us money," he said.

Opposing political parties said last night the motion could have had far-reaching effects and they feared the ANC would try to bring it up again at the next council meeting.

Northern suburb residents fight for new kind of

By JAMES CLARKE

Town planning seems to be practically dead in Greater Johannesburg

Anything seems to go as petrol companies bulldoze houses for filling stations, shopping malls mushroom overnight, more and more roads become noisy traffic sewers, out-of-scale office blocks appear among houses

Disheathered residents no longer bother about aesthetics and so commercial enterprises are able to vandalise suburban avenues with their posters

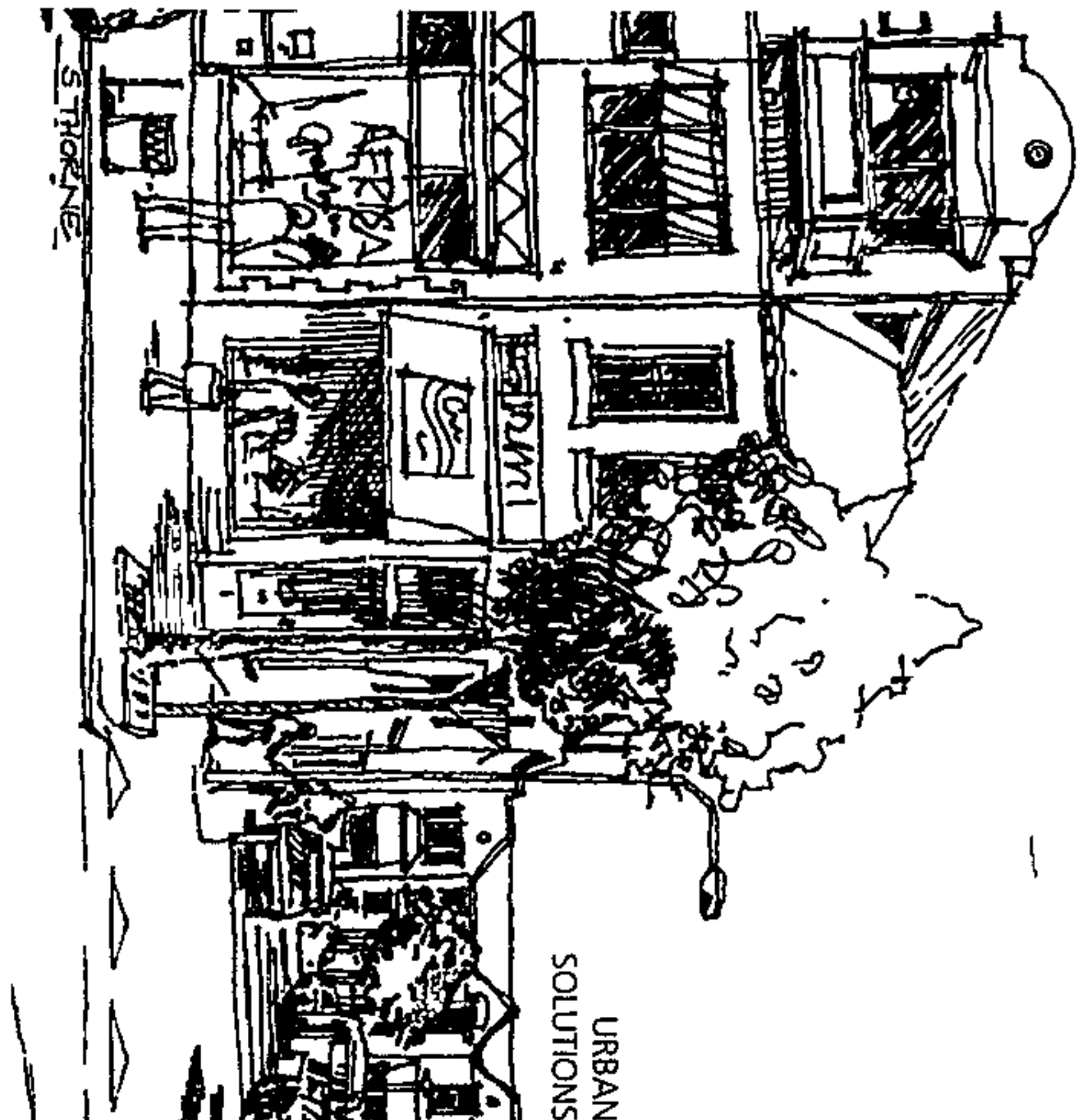
But small pockets of resistance are beginning to rise

Typical of them is an *ad hoc* residents' committee set up in Bryanston to contest a plan to create a 6 000 sq m regional shopping centre only a few minutes walk from another 6 000 sq m centre (Epsom Downs)

The new one is planned right in the middle of a suburb which neither wants it nor needs it. The development, around the periphery of the Bryanston Country Club, includes cluster housing and office parks. Residents say they are not against development there - they just don't like the way it is being done. The outcome affects all suburban dwellers in Gauteng because it will determine whether the present regional government is any more receptive than the last one, which blatantly "planned upon" people instead of with people.

The developers, surprised by the strength of the opposition, have already agreed to reduce the size of the shopping centre from 6 000 to 2 000 sq m. But residents, who have hired their own team of town planners and lawyers, say the developers are still musing the

point. Residents' committee chairman John Stewart said "We are not against higher densities and cluster development and a poll we conducted showed most people are easy about offices too - provided they are integrated with the suburb and provided they share their open space so people can, for instance, use the open space for cycling or jogging". The development was forced on the Bryanston Country Club when its rates shot through the roof in 1995. The whole point of stripping private clubs such as Wanderers and the country clubs of their low rates privileges was to force them to develop unused land in line with the needs of surrounding communities. Suburbs, says Stewart, must have higher densities and must accept mixed land-use if Gauteng is to avoid further urban sprawl and



public open space is developing. Many Bryanston residents would like to see the country club development become a model for the future development. One suggestion was that residential accommodation be allowed above the shops just as in the old days when shopping nodes were alive at night with local pedestrian traffic and bistros. This way there is natural surveillance and, therefore, better security. They would like to see the office parks become part of an integrated open space plan. From March 4, when there is a public site inspection, the council has set aside two days for a town planning tribunal to hear objections. Late news developers have apparently agreed to a "compromise solution" and residents are invited to ratify the new plan tomorrow at 7pm at Bryanvale School. Phone Sandy at 886-7317.

There's nothing in between. Schools occupy enormous tracts of open land, used for 40 out of every 168 hours in a week. They are sealed off from public use. Office park grounds are also out of bounds. There are no intermediate zones and, therefore, as densities increase, a serious shortage of

South African urban areas have a characteristic which sets them off from the old towns of Europe and Asia and some parts of Africa - here we have a pitbull mentality with strictly zoned private land (such as walled-off homes, fenced-off offices parks) and public land (streets and parks). There's nothing in between. Schools occupy enormous tracts of open land, used for 40 out of every 168 hours in a week. They are sealed off from public use. Office park grounds are also out of bounds. There are no intermediate zones and, therefore, as densities increase, a serious shortage of

down as has the number of shops. But what remains, say residents, is still not good town planning. The developers are proposing a new form of old-fashioned selfish zoning and not the integration of land uses. South African urban areas have a characteristic which sets them off from the old towns of Europe and Asia and some parts of Africa - here we have a pitbull mentality with strictly zoned private land (such as walled-off homes, fenced-off offices parks) and public land (streets and parks). There's nothing in between. Schools occupy enormous tracts of open land, used for 40 out of every 168 hours in a week. They are sealed off from public use. Office park grounds are also out of bounds. There are no intermediate zones and, therefore, as densities increase, a serious shortage of

Integration (and WIM) Show 26 Feb 1997

Inquiry into violent rates and taxes protests gets under way

Star 26/2/97

BY JAMEEL CHAND

The Froneman commission of inquiry into the violence which left three people dead during rates and services protests in Eldorado Park, Westbury, Noordgesig and Reiger Park on February 6 held its first sitting at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature yesterday afternoon.

Mr Justice Johan Froneman, who was appointed by Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale to head the inquiry, told members of the communities that the commission would report on the cause of the violence and make specific recommendations as to what steps were

needed to avoid the outbreak of violence in the future

Judge Froneman said the commission was unable to focus in detail on individual cases of death or injury but would concentrate on the broader issues relating to the underlining causes of the violence

He said the commission would concentrate its investigations on the conduct of the police, the organisers of the stayaway, the local authority and members of the public.

"It will also attempt to establish the identity of persons whose conduct amounted to criminal offences and whether or not the

local authority and the organisers had taken sufficient precautions in advance to avoid the possible outbreak of violence," he said.

Judge Froneman has requested all interested parties to prepare a written statement to be handed to the commission by Wednesday March 5, when it will sit again.

"Each party's written statement should contain a statement of facts, the party's theory as to causes of the violence, steps taken so far to reduce or avoid violence in the immediate future and proposals to avoid future violence," he said.

Commission member Advocate Janet Neethling said the find-

(127)
ings of the commission would be presented to Sexwale by March 28

Eldorado Park Concerned Residents Association chairman Ayob Mungalee said his organisation welcomed the inquiry but stressed that the commission must have the power to prosecute individuals and organisations found responsible for the violence

Mungalee said he was concerned about statements made by South Western Joint Civics Association chairman Basil Douglas in the Rapport newspaper last week, in which he was reported to have said that there would be more violence if he was arrested

Jo'burg's population to double in 20 years

(127)

Mar 26/2/97

Higher density in residential areas is one way of providing affordable housing, says council's town-planning chief

By ANNA COX

The face of the leafy Greater Johannesburg suburbs is set to change as the Gauteng population increases by at least 850 000 people during the next five years, said Ivor Isaacs, the chairman of the Eastern Metro Council townplanning tribunal

An additional 178 000 housing units would have to be found by then and one of the ways of meeting that need would be to increase densities, Isaacs said

Speaking at a Lower Houghton Residents' Association meeting last week to discuss higher densities in the area, Isaacs said the population of Johannesburg would double within the next 20 years

He said the northern section of Johannesburg in general and the Eastern Metro Local Council area in particular were characterised by a sustained growth in employment opportunities which, in turn, created a demand for residential development

Isaacs said the utilisation of existing residential areas by subdividing existing sites and building second dwellings, in addition to other forms of higher density development, were necessary

He said urban sprawl had resulted in hundreds, if not thousands of kilometres of roads,

water and sanitation networks that were built at incredible costs

"Today the cost of maintaining and upgrading the network is enormous and this is without considering the national prerogative to extend these networks to our formerly neglected and deprived areas

"There is therefore no resource available to further extend infrastructure spending merely to allow people to live further away from the city and its infra-

A number of positive spinoffs will result from smaller erven

structure network," he said

During 1995 the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metro Council adopted an overall densification strategy based on the fact that the functioning of the metropolitan area was uneconomical

"An oversupply of bulk infrastructure is prevalent throughout Johannesburg North, Sandton, Randburg and Roodepoort

"The result is that the provision of services in the metro area

is largely subsidised and the recent hikes in municipal taxation and municipal services were a direct result thereof," he said

By allowing the densification of the Johannesburg northern and southern suburbs, a number of positive spinoffs could be generated, said Isaacs

Those were the improved utilisation of bulk infrastructure, roads and public transportation, the optimisation of municipal and other services such as waste collection and postal services, the establishment of greater residential choice within the urban area; the discouragement of urban sprawl, and the correction of historically distorted spatial patterns of settlement

With increasing employment opportunities in the northern and eastern suburbs, there was a growing demand for residential development, he said

"Erven in traditionally low-density areas are being marketed at prices well beyond the financial means of a large number of people employed in the growing areas of employment

"To reduce the need to travel and concomitant expense, it is necessary to provide housing for these people and the only way to achieve this is to reduce the amount of land per residential unit to make it more affordable," he said

Sandton feels the pinch as rates revolt begins to bite

(127) Star 28/2/97

BY RODNEY VICTOR
AND ANNA COX

Sandton's rates payments plunged in December when residents and businesses were billed for R50,1-million but paid only R27,4-million, according to figures released by the Gauteng provincial government this week.

In years gone by, Sandton's payment levels hovered around the 100% mark, but they took a sharp dip in July last year, to 60,2%, and in December, to 54,6%, when residents decided to boycott payments in protest against increases of up to 300% in rates and services.

The Eastern Metro Local Council claimed earlier this week that payment levels for the area had reached 94%. Sandton communications officer Keith Peacock said payment of accounts had hit 110%. He said a total of R55-million was received by the council for the R50-million invoiced.

The discrepancy between Peacock's figures and those of the Gauteng authorities is explained by the fact that most Sandtonians did not pay in December because they were on holiday. But last month they paid extra, bringing the average payment from July to January this year to 78,6%.

Sandton's new payment rate, as revealed by the province, is now well below that of the traditionally

white areas of Johannesburg (including the CBD), where residents and businesses were billed R242,3-million in December and paid R211,8-million, or 87,4%.

There were minor improvements in some parts of Soweto, but the overall situation in Greater Soweto was a decrease in payment to 27,6% for December.

In Alexandra the December payments were 13,9%, up from November's 9,4%.

In Tembisa, Kempton Park, payments jumped from 28,6% in November to 38% in December after the local authority announced a get-tough policy on boycotters.

In bankrupt Brakpan, residents of the township of Tsakane paid a mere 7,1% of the total amount billed for December.

The Midrand squatter camp of Ivory Park remained a payment success story, with residents setting a new record for the area by paying 38,8%, but at the Orange Farm informal settlement, south of Johannesburg, which has a similar socio-economic profile, residents paid only 4,6% of the total amount billed.

Lenasia took a "surprising" dip to 53,3%, down from 84,5% in October and 67,5% in November.

The December figures are the latest available from the province, which usually publishes them about two months late.

Southern council to stop services to rates defaulters

(127)

Nov 28/2/97

More than R650-million is owed by various residents

By JAMEEL CHAND

Rates and service defaulters in the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) have until tomorrow to settle arrears or make provision with local authorities to do so, said Nishan Bolton, the head of finance and budget at the substructure.

Failure to meet those conditions would result in termination of services, he said.

"The council has no alternative but to adopt a firmer approach to the issue of service and rate payment evasion. To date, more than R650-million is owed to the council by residents and property owners in the substructure for services rendered."

Bolton said the only way the South could break away from its reputation as the poorest and least developed of the four substructures

in the Greater Johannesburg area was to pay services and rates.

"The council has plans to upgrade and introduce a whole range of facilities in the South but we cannot do this if this culture of non-payment is not broken."

Bolton said the SMSS had plans to sell a number of business properties. "In these cases the owners of the properties owe the council over R500 000 in arrears."

Residential properties where substantial arrears were due would also be a priority.

He said the council had devised a scheme to assist residents at the bottom end of the earning spectrum.

"The SMSS acknowledges that some of the poorest people in the country live within its metropolitan boundaries and we need to ensure that basic amenities are afforded to them," said Bolton. He

said he expected at least 50 000 residents to apply for assistance under the scheme.

As from March 15, residents needing council assistance can fill in registration forms available at all community halls and council paypoints.

"A screening process will follow and each applicant will be investigated with the help of local ward councillors and community based organisations.

"The SMSS will then approve applications which it feels have met all the criteria set out by the council."

Bolton said two forms of assistance had been mooted, where unemployment was the cause of non-payment the applicant could do voluntary work for the council in lieu of services, or the council could provide the applicant with a limited supply of services.

Council warns of new cuts to riot suburbs

(127) MTC 28/2-6/3/97

Stuart Hess

THE crackdown on rate defaulters which triggered riots earlier this month in Johannesburg's coloured suburbs is to restart next week.

The decision — announced by the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) — coincided with the launch of a commission of inquiry into the riots in Eldorado Park, Westbury and Reiger Park, which left four dead.

The council, whose vast area of responsibility includes Soweto and part of Johannesburg's central business district, is owed R343-million by residents and R305-million by businesses.

SMSS chairman Prema Naidoo says services will be cut from March 1, following the council's failure to persuade non-payers to pay up.

"There is a feeling that if you're not paying why should I pay?" Naidoo adds.

More than 370 000 residents are in arrears, he says. In Soweto, for example, just 18% of residents are paying their rates.

Among the options the council is considering is reducing water flow to non-payers — Naidoo says it is unconstitutional to totally cut off water supplies. Soweto residents pay their electricity bills directly to Eskom. A representative from Eskom says payment levels range from 65% to 80%, depending on the area — a vast improvement on levels just three years ago.

The council's renewed tough stance comes in the same week Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale opened a commission of inquiry into the rioting. The troubles were partly sparked by coloured residents' refusal to pay higher levels of rates than residents in Soweto.

The South West Joint Civics Association, which spearheaded residents' opposition, refused to comment on the council's cut-off warning.

Naidoo says the council is likely to try to assist pensioners and unemployed people who were unable to pay.

The council is also expected to focus much of its attention on business non-payers, given the reception expected from Soweto residents to mass cut-offs. The council has already issued 2677 summonses to businesses which are in arrears, and nearly a hundred properties in the CBD have been attached.

Earlier this month the SMSS cut off electricity to the offices of the Gauteng's local government department. The R600 000 it owed was paid the following days.

Council uses the 'big stick' against business defaulters

(127)
BY CECILIA RUSSELL,
RODNEY VICTOR
AND JAMEEL CHAND

Threats of tough action by the Southern Metropolitan Substructure against rent and service-payment defaulters prompted a scramble at paypoints over the weekend ahead of electricity and water cut-offs due to start today.

Nishan Balton, head of the council's finance committee, said paypoints were extremely busy at the weekend as consumers made arrangements for the repayment of arrears.

"Although the council was targeting, in the first month, those property owners and businesses which owe the council the largest amounts of money, the threat of tough action seemed to have filtered down to the smaller consumer, too," said Balton.

He said the cut-offs of electricity and water to service defaulters would proceed as planned today.

But some property owners in the CBD, threatened with cut-offs, dispute the council's actions.

"The council can expect a big backlash from the business community on their unilateral cutting off of services," said Ian Levitt, a lawyer acting for eight property owners and tenants threatened with cut-offs.

"On Friday the High Court issued an urgent interdict on the council preventing the immediate

cut-off of electricity to Levitt's clients.

"As my clients' arrears had accumulated prior to 1994, these should have been scrapped," said Levitt. "We also believe the council has acted unconstitutionally as it was proceeding without giving a fair hearing to the tenants."

Between Monday and Thursday last week, it had already cut off electricity to 22 businesses. Eighteen of those have since been reinstated following payments to the council by the account holders.

More than 2 200 businesses and residents in the southern metropolitan area have signed special credit agreements to pay more than R5,8-million in 60 months. Almost R650-million worth of rates and service arrears is owed to the substructure.

Initially, the council will be targeting businesses which owe it R500 000 or more in unpaid rates and service charges, said Balton.

There were more than 300 businesses which owed R500 000 or more, he said. Most were in the CBD.

The council intended targeting those which owed the largest sums first and would then work down to businesses and individuals owing smaller sums.

Balton said the stick-wielding approach adopted by the council has begun to show signs of success.

Star 3/3/97

20 000 homeless wait for the promised land

Star 4/3/97 (127)

Families languish in limbo, between officialdom's rapid development plan and a series of court cases and objections

BY ANNA COX AND
CECELIA RUSSELL

The 20 000 destitute people in Greater Johannesburg who were to have received land from local councils to build houses last year are in for a long wait

The families were expecting to start building homes with the Provincial Housing Board subsidies of R15 000 each

But the Rapid Land Development Programme, designed by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, appears to be having difficulty getting off the ground

Some 5 000 families were to have been moved on to five sites (Lombardy East in the east, Liefde-en-Vrede and Misgund North in the south and Bloubostrand and Maroeadal in the north) early last year but a series of court cases and objections by residents have delayed the process

There have been 20 000 objections, including from black communities, who claim property values will drop if they have shack dwellers nearby

The application to rezone two sites that would have accommodated 970 families in Maroeadal and 1 130 in Bloubostrand was withdrawn last year because of defective applications by the Northern council. They have not yet been resubmitted. Those two sites were allocated to squatters on privately owned land in Zevenfontein

Almost 10 000 objections were received from residents of Blou-

bostrand, Craigavon, Fourways, Chartwell, Kya Sands, Broadacres and River Bend. Besides a drop in property values, residents fear water and air pollution from fires and are concerned about traffic volumes, especially from taxis

The Northern Metro Local Council said consultations had started afresh by re-looking at new housing schemes acceptable to residents. A spokesman said once the consultants had completed their work residents would be invited to public meetings. If the plans were accepted the relocation would go ahead. If not, the

Objectors claim their land values will drop

entire plan would go back to the drawing board or other sites would be considered

The Lombardy East site appears to be the only one where some progress is being made. Initially residents threatened to institute an interdict against the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure but successful negotiations have been held with residents, the displaced and the council. Workshops are under way, but the scheme is at least 18 months behind schedule

The beneficiaries of the 770 stands in Lombardy East are former residents of Alexandra who lost homes to political violence in 1992 and who have been living in

church halls and municipal buildings since. Chairman of the Lombardy East Residents' Association Jules Sher said Lombardy would become a model for the rest of Johannesburg

In the Southern Metro Council the elation of the Themb'lithle and Dhlamini communities has been tempered by the long wait

Last year the council approved the township applications for Misgund North and Liefde-en-Vrede Ext 2, provided a steering committee be formed

About 800 families living on land in Themb'lithle squatter camp in Lenasia and 1 200 living on a refuse dump site at Dhlamini, Soweto, are the beneficiaries

The Themb'lithle community formed a trust fund to help them finance houses for the community. They approached agencies overseas for aid, but six months later the council is no closer to developing the area

Three objectors, the Naturena Task Team, the New South Community Forum and Alberton's United Ratepayers Action Group declared a dispute and have lodged a High Court appeal. Although the steering committees have been disbanded, an interim task team has been set up by the council to negotiate with the objectors. Chairman of the Southern council town planning tribunal Norman Prince is hopeful the matter will be resolved without going to court. However, attorney acting for the ratepayers Hugo Venter said the organisation still regarded the proposal as unacceptable

Top-up loans for better structures should pacify neighbours

BY ANNA COX

The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has agreed to assist beneficiaries of the Rapid Land Release Programme with top-up loans of R12 250 per site, over and above the Provincial Housing Board subsidy of R15 000 to ensure the structures are acceptable

to neighbouring residential areas

It has made available R65-million in a housing fund for the project because of 20 000 objections from residents claiming their property values would drop

The Greater Johannesburg Council has now agreed to set up the R65-million fund to help beneficiaries build better structures

It will also stipulate the minimum size of the houses and the minimum levels of finish, so that neighbouring property values will not deteriorate

The council will also investigate how to use the fund to secure credit and bond finance, and if it can repeat the subsidy every year over a five-year period

Malawi and SA sign pact on transport

Nomavanda Maghiane
004/3/97

ALTHOUGH the road transport industry in Malawi was composed mainly of small operators, it was very important to the survival of the nation, Malawian Transport Minister Harry Ian Thomson said in Cape Town yesterday.

At the signing of a road transport agreement between Malawi and SA, Thomson said Malawi was a landlocked country which relied on its neighbours for access to overseas markets.

He said that Malawi currently used the ports of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Nacala and Beira in Mozambique and Durban in SA.

He said his government would be introducing a road fund and a roads board to enable it to run Malawi's roads as a business entity.

SA Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said the agreement between Malawi and SA would facilitate the issuing of permits for transportation between the two countries in a way which ensured that operators could respond quickly to market demands, while at the same time the reduced administrative requirements would bring about a cost saving for operators.

The agreement also provided for private sector involvement in joint route management committees.

These committees would serve as consultative forums between the SA authorities and road transport industries, Maharaj said.

Council to screen rates defaulters

Jacob Dlamini
(127) 004/3/97

JOHANNESBURG's southern metropolitan council announced yesterday that it would begin screening unemployed and indigent people to protect them from the crackdown targeting service and rates defaulters.

The council said it would begin by registering all those who claimed to be unemployed. They would be screened by a committee made up of a ward councillor, a social worker and community representatives.

Budget and finance committee chairman Shan Balton said the committee would then recommend to the council what action to take. Balton said the council would investigate options such as the issuing of coupons, the establishment of a contingency fund, the provision of contract council employment and possible training for job creation projects.

The council began a massive crackdown yesterday aimed at recovering more than R623m owed to it by residents and businesses in large parts of Soweto and Johannesburg's central business district.

Balton said residents who were in arrears and had not made arrangements to clear their debts would find themselves without lights and water while others would be evicted from their properties.

Balton said a number of businesses

in the CBD owing more than R500 000 had already had their services cut off. He said the council would be issuing 1 000 summonses a day.

Balton said service levels in the council had gone up since the announcement of the crackdown last month. Many had entered special arrangements with the council to pay their arrears off over a 60-month period. These arrangements accounted for an estimated R5,8m.

"We expect more than 50 000 people to come through the screening process and if we catch any of the applicants lying we will immediately institute strict credit control measures without the option of 60 months to pay."

Balton also announced that eight CBD property owners had brought an interdict against the council challenging its rights to cut off services to payment defaulters.

"The eight property owners seem to hold the perception that their arrears should have been written off by the council and they are fighting our legal status to cut off services without a court order," Balton said.

According to Balton, the council had entered into a temporary agreement with the eight not to cut off their services for the time being while both parties sought legal clarification on the matter. Balton said the property owners would continue to pay the council for current consumption.

Students to march in spite of aid promises

Pearl Sebalo
004/3/97

TERTIARY students plan to go ahead with their mass action campaign despite Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu's announcement at the weekend that planned subsidy cuts would not be as severe as expected and that R300m would be made available for student aid this year.

SA Students' Congress national deputy president Kgomoiso Disako said the protests at march to Parliament in Cape Town and the Laager by students planned for budget day next Wednesday was still on.

In KwaZulu-Natal the spotlight would fall on the University of Natal where the university management had made it clear it was not prepared to negotiate any further with students, Disako said.

Disako said the congress was taking Bengu's announcement "with a pinch of salt" because subsidy cuts were the finance ministry's domain and not his and therefore his comments could not be official. "We are still waiting for a formal response from the finance ministry," he said.

The announcement was a political attempt to confuse congress members and dissuade them from planned mass action on March 12, he said.

Funds allocated for financial aid were the same as last year and did not meet students' needs, Disako said. The allocation did not take into account increased inflation, increased student numbers and the increasing student population.

University of Natal student president Sam Thobakgale said the financial aid crisis would be partly resolved but there would still be a shortfall. He said institutions were responsible for ensuring that returning students got funding. The council was proposing that tertiary institutions use money from their reserves and borrowed from private financial institutions if necessary to create financial assistance.

Megacor Holdings Limited

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M E G A C O R

HOLDINGS LIMITED

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Pretoria denied leave to appeal

(127) CT4/3/99

PRETORIA. An application for leave to appeal to the Constitutional Court against a High Court ruling that the city council unfairly discriminated against white ratepayers by charging a flat rate to black residents, was dismissed, with costs yesterday.

Mr Justice D J H le Roux, Mr Justice I W B de Vilhiers and Mr Justice K van Dijkhorst said there was no reasonable prospect that the Constitutional Court would set aside or alter the High Court's ruling.

The High Court found earlier that the city council had acted in contravention of Sections 8(2) and 178(2) of the Constitution by charging a flat rate that amounted to cross subsidisation, selectively summoning residents on the basis of racial areas and charging different tariffs to residents in different areas who all had meters — Sapa.

It's only a temporary step, says local government

Ruling adds to growing calls for flat rates to be scrapped

By JACQUI REEVES

The pressure is mounting for local councils to remove flat-rate charges following a landmark ruling in the Pretoria High Court this week.

A full bench of the High Court refused the Pretoria City Council leave to appeal against an earlier ruling which stated that municipal flat rates are unconstitutional.

The court action came about when a Pretoria resident, Johan Walker, insisted on paying a flat rate for certain services he receives.

The council attempted to sue Walker for the outstanding payments, but was halted by the High Court decision.

As the only ruling of its type in the country, local councils across South Africa can expect to see more ratepayers jumping on the bandwagon, and using the Pretoria case as a precedent.

The court found rates and taxes levied along racial lines, differentiating between previously black and white areas, to be in contravention of sections 8(2) and 178(2) of the constitution.

The court withdrew the council's right to sue for outstanding debts until the "discrim-

inatory" practices are removed.

Although councillors throughout South Africa generally agree that flat rates are discriminatory, experts say citizens need to understand their purpose.

Shoots Nadoo, the acting chief executive officer for the South African Local Government Association, says flat rates should be seen only as a temporary measure.

"One of the most important issues at a local government level is establishing a uniform rating system. But before this can be done, assessment mechanisms need to be put into place," he said.

Equitable

Until an accurate billing system is in place, there is no way to bill individual households for their consumption of council services.

Eugene Robson, the chairman of the budget and finance committee of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, told the *Saturday Star* that flat rates were just one step in the process of setting up an equitable rating system.

"The flat rate is an interim measure to at least establish a basic charge. Once the assessment mechanisms are operating, we

will consult with people on their individual bills and the importance of payment," he said.

The South African National Civic Organisation also spoke out on the ruling, saying flat rates were not here to stay.

"It has never been the policy of Sanco to encourage the flat-rate system. This ruling is not a victory for the people, it simply reinforces something local councils are already working on," said Mbongeni Ngobeni, the organisation's national director of governance and democratisation.

Ngobeni said Sanco believed flat rates were a handicap in townships because people who could afford full payments for their services were not encouraged to do so.

"For this reason, accurate and individual billing is essential," he said.

One councillor, who did not wish to be named, said he was concerned that court time and money may be wasted in the future with citizens challenging the flat-rate system.

"Every Tom, Dick and Harry is going to try this route to stop summonses for arrears. All it will achieve is to tie up more money, which the councils desperately need, and prolong the development of townships."

Mar 8/3/97 (127)

CBD businesses and council face standoff

(127) Star 8/3/97

By JACQUI REEVES

A showdown is looming between the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) and inner city businesses over pre-1994 election outstanding arrears

The city property owners believe they are not accountable for arrears incurred before 1994

Last week, the Johannesburg High Court refused a group of eight businesses an interdict to restrain the council from cutting services without a court order

Although the SMSS is legally bound to dismiss pre-1994 residential arrears, it cannot do the same for commercial owners, says Shan Balton, chairman of

the budget and finance committee of the SMSS

The eight businesses at the centre of the wrangle are aligned to the Johannesburg Property Owners' Association

Within that group are landlords who own blocks of residential flats in the city's central business district

Balton says residential block owners claim they were unable to collect rent during the general rates boycott of the early 1990s and were therefore unable to pay their council debts. The council says agreements are drawn up with landlords, not tenants

Some CBD property owners claim they will not pay their

rates and taxes while crime levels remain high. Not so, says Balton. "Although these property owners have valid concerns on the levels of crime in the area, it is not a justification in terms of withholding payment."

The writing-off of debts in the old Johannesburg area, which included Lenasia, Ennerdale, the south-western areas and Soweto, cost the council over R400-million. Arrears owed to the SMSS stand at R650-million

The council will not cut services to businesses, provided they undertake to pay current accounts until March 25, when the court decides if the SMSS has the right to cut services

ANC reshuffles councillors to boost delivery

By Ann Cox

The face of Greater Johannesburg's local councils could change as a result of the ANC's decision to reshuffle councillors who hold top political positions

Local ANC councillors who are chairmen of policy-making committees within Greater Johannesburg and its four councils could be dropped or moved from their positions at the end of this month.

The ANC regional executive committee has undertaken a major review of the chairmen of the executive committees and policy-making committees
ANC Johannesburg deputy chairman Vincent Smith said

councillors had been holding their positions for one year. These positions would be reviewed in terms of their performance in the delivery of services within their departments

"When we deployed the councillors to different portfolios, we had no idea of their capacities. Now we have a year behind us which puts us in a better position to judge skills and capacities. No one will be fired as a councillor. They will simply be moved into positions which better suit them and their skills.

"We are not looking at individuals but at the committees as a whole. In the process, people could be redeployed.
"The review process is being

undertaken for more effective local government as a whole," said Smith

The move has been welcomed by the Democratic Party which recently made claims of mismanagement, deterioration of services and non-delivery in local councils because of political appointments

"We welcome this reshuffling and see it as a step towards making this the year of delivery," said DP spokesman Claire Quaal.
"There is no denying that services have taken a nose dive
"One only has to look around at littered streets and parks, overgrown verges, broken street and traffic lights and blocked stormwater drains
"This bears visible testimony

to the deterioration of infrastructure and services.

"The less visible signs of mismanagement are, among others, illegal uses and disrespect of building regulations and enormous overspending on the legal budget.

"The blame cannot be laid at the door of middle management or employees in general

"The buck stops at the top. And at the top is the political authority - the ANC," she said.
The decisions will be taken before the end of March so the changes can be formally approved at council meetings which are held at the end of the month.
The ANC aims to implement the changes by April 1

Squatter-camp residents demolish shacks and build houses

By **TOMMY MAKOE**

A growing number of Gauteng squatter-camp residents are breaking down their shacks to build formal houses, in anticipation of the Gauteng government's plan to develop these areas into fully fledged townships.

The plan, which is awaiting the go-ahead from Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng, will far get two of the biggest informal

settlements - Orange Farm and Ivory Park.

Although the plan has yet to be formally approved, shack dwellers in some areas have gone ahead and "implemented" it themselves, by breaking down their homes and building houses.

According to Gauteng Housing Department spokesman On-dela Mahlangu, the implementation of the project is being delayed by legal technicalities.

Orange Farm and Ivory Park in particular have seen many squatters building formal houses in what used to be shackland with no electricity, poor infrastructure and virtually no services.

The improved houses have gardens, lawns, running water and electricity. There is transport and a growing number of schools, shops and clinics. Improvements are mostly carried out with private money. Roads, however, re-

main untarred and in bad condition.

"All we wanted was to be given land to build our own houses out of our own money. But for some squatter camps it is difficult for people to build their own houses because they illegally occupied land, and as a result they cannot build houses on land that does not belong to them. Most of us here could only build houses after this land was allocated to

us," said Tebogo Toka, who has now built a four-roomed house in Ivory Park.

Toka, who pays R33 in service rates, said she was proud, after four years of squatting in various areas, to own a house on land that belongs to her.

Alice Moholo, who also lives in Ivory Park, said she stayed in a three-roomed shack before she received a R15 000 government subsidy to build her own house

(127) (21) / Star 11/3/97

Sectional title owners up in arms over 'unfair' rating system (127)

Outraged owners' association members approach the Public Protector to investigate council's actions under the provisions of the new constitution

May 11/3/97

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

There is growing anger among sectional title owners in both the Northern and Eastern metro council areas about the "unfair" rating system among property owners and this has resulted in 97% of sectional title owners in these two areas boycotting rates payments

Chairman of the Residential Sectional Title Owners' Association (Restoa), Reg Cartwright, said owners had approached the Public Protector to investigate the legality of councils' actions under the new constitution

Sectional title owners receive only a 35% rebate while residential owners receive a 60% rebate. This is the lowest rebate second only to government and post offices properties which receive a 20% rebate. Owners claim they

pay more in rates than residential properties because of their higher land valuations

Land value per square metre in Sandton is R81,35 for residential properties and R122,78 for sectional title with sectional title paying a premium of 51%. In Randburg it is R56,46 for residential

Councils' new rating policy denies rebates in some cases

properties and R100,17 for sectional title - a premium of 77%

Sectional title property owners who are pensioners do not receive an additional 40% rebate as do residential property owners

Cartwright said his organisa-

tion had actively contested the unfair and discriminatory rebating policy to resolve the inequities imposed on sectional title owners

"The councils' inability to amend their policies is indicative of their intention to impose a political will on a section of the community above the desires and interests of those people," he said.

He said he was amazed at the rate at which sectional title complexes were joining Restoa, particularly in the northern council area where valuation increases were being contested. The exponential growth in membership had placed Restoa in a strong position to challenge the pensioner remission and rebate inequities, he said.

Restoa had recently conducted a survey among 1 676 owners and found that 52% of owners had chosen to limit their payments to old rates plus 20%, 25% were paying no rates at all, 20% were pay-

ing old rates and services only

All returns had been kept on file as evidence should the council wish to dispute the intensity of the boycott and continue to assert its "pathetically inaccurate view that the boycott had collapsed", said Cartwright.

"The fact that only two complexes are paying the full amount levied by the council is indicative of the anger and resentment of the community towards the council's new rating policies," he said.

Restoa had submitted proposals to the Sandton task team convened by MEC for Local Government Sicele Shuceka on how to end the rates' boycott.

Cartwright said the proposals had been very well accepted and the task team had agreed to consider them.

Repeated attempts to contact council officials proved unsuccessful.

Showdown looms over power cuts

Soweto 12/3/97 (127)

By Joshua Raboroko

A MAJOR showdown is looming between black business and four Greater Johannesburg metropolitan local councils after the decision to cut off electricity supply and services to hundreds of enterprises, particularly black residential areas

The decision was taken by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, which is owed more than R1,4 billion for rates and services

The cut-off, which has already started in some parts of the Johannesburg central business district, will continue unless consumers, and businesses pay their arrears

GJMC says legal action is also being taken against business owners. Several businesses have found themselves without electricity, while others are fighting legal battles to protect their properties

Soweto businessman Thabang Makhetha says they are negotiating with the council to include businesses in the 1994 agreement to scrap arrears in the townships

According to the agreement reached between President Nelson

Mandela and former president FW de Klerk, all arrears were scrapped

But the agreement, says Southern Metropolitan Local Council's (SMLC) budget and finance committee chairman Shan Balton, did not include arrears affecting the businesses in these areas

"We will fight for our rights until a compromise is reached. We are part of the community in Soweto and should not be discriminated against," argues Makhetha

Court order

Balton has warned "debtors who cannot pay off arrears immediately to make arrangements to pay or face prosecution"

Meanwhile nine property owners who had electricity at their premises cut off won a temporary reprieve after obtaining a court order restraining the SMLC from discontinuing services in Johannesburg

The property owners claim the council did not inform them in good time

A Johannesburg High Court judgment on the issue is expected on March 25

Southern council offers rates amnesty to destitute

Star 13/3/97 (127)

Municipality decides to get tough with the 'haves' and show leniency to the 'have-nots'

By **FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA**
City Desk

The Southern Council has announced venues where desperately poor people who cannot afford to pay their rates and services can register for a rates amnesty

The announcement comes after the council decided to get tough against people who could afford to pay for services rendered by the council, but did not

Last month, it adopted a resolution to deal with people who were genuinely destitute and could not afford to pay their rates

Several businesses in the Johannesburg inner city area have already had their electricity cut off and property attached for failing to pay for municipal services

Households owing council monies were expected to be treated in the same way after the council had put measures in place to identify those who could not afford to pay.

Head of finances at the council, Shan Balton, said people who lived solely on government grants, pensioners who lived alone and "those who

lived through their own ingenuity" would be screened

Balton said it was difficult to put a monetary figure on what the council termed "really needy" because financial obligations of people differed despite having similar incomes

"Although the council has not yet decided how it will help the really poor, it would consider asking those who are healthy and able-bodied to volunteer to perform community services like sweeping streets," said Balton

The "really poor" would have to bring along their unemployment insurance cards or a medical certificate or a letter from a church or welfare organisation testifying to their plight

Balton said the council would penalise people who pretended they were destitute by withdrawing the option to pay their arrears over 60 months and having their services suspended immediately

People who need to register for the amnesty can call at the nearest council office

Registration begins on Saturday and will go on for another two Saturdays until March 29

Robyn Chalmers

LOCAL councils in the Katorus area have banded together to launch a comprehensive Masakhane programme in a bid to push service payments to 90% by the end of this year from the current 25%.

The programme supports the Katorus special presidential project under way in Katorus, Vosloorus and Thokoza on the east Rand, for which R645m was allocated over five years ending in 1999. Katorus special presidential project management team

Councils unite on Katorus payments

member Marion Stewart said yesterday a range of areas was being addressed as part of the programme — notably the provision of effective services.

The programme aimed at ensuring that consumers received service accounts which could be clearly understood while easy methods of payment would be arranged by accessible pay points manned by "well trained and polite staff". Stewart said action would

be taken against those consumers who did not pay.

"Most importantly, the attitude of residents to local government and the payment of services must change."

"This is being addressed through an incentive competition, the training of local government and staff members, the training of promoters to meet with small groups of consumers, and a poster and pamphlet campaign," he said.

(127) 6/14/97

The Katorus area received an allocation of R645m over five years as part of the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) in 1994.

Of this, R218m had been spent by the end of February, this year, while the remainder of the funding had been allocated to projects and would be spent in the next two years.

About R45m of both RDP and local government funds were spent in the area each

month on a range of projects — including engineering services, health, welfare, education, sport and recreation, business development as well as housing and security.

Stewart said that in February last year local governments of Germiston, Alberton and Boksburg agreed to develop and implement a co-ordinated strategy to facilitate payment for local government services by Katorus residents.

An overall strategy was finalised last May, to try to get 90% payment levels from residents by the end of the year.

Lies, poor policing blamed for Eldorado chaos

By CECILIA RUSSELL

The South Western Joint Civic Association's manipulation of misinformed communities and an ill-prepared and trigger-happy police force were the major contributors to the Eldorado Park conflict on February 6

So said submissions this week to the Froneman Commission of Inquiry into last month's violence in Johannesburg's predominantly coloured areas. The clashes, which left three people dead and scores injured, occurred during a stayaway

organised by Sowejoca

Theo Burgers, on behalf of the Gauteng Secretariat for Safety and Security, said police preparation and their reaction on the day had been inadequate. Although they had been warned at least a week before of the possibility of violence, they were under-equipped and lacked the manpower to deal with the situation, he said.

The problem was exacerbated by hostility and the lack of communication between Eldorado Park police and the Soweto Public Order Policing Unit

There had been a public confrontation between two officers when the Soweto police responded to stone-throwing with tear-gas and rubber bullets

Mogammad Fish, for the Eldorado Park Muslim Council, said the police had "acted provocatively towards the crowds and discharged teargas and birdshot at will"

At the Green Mosque in Eldorado Park's Extension 2, police had discharged teargas canisters into the building while the congregation was at prayer at 8pm. They had then fired on the

(127) Mar 15/3/97
congregation, killing Faud Nicholson.

"The mosque is situated in a quiet street where no occurrences of violence or rioting took place," Fish said

Lack of leadership from Sowejoca had also contributed to the violence, and hardly any marshal were on hand

"The organisers of the protest action displayed a shocking lack of will in controlling the violence of the crowds," he said. Alcohol and hooliganism had fuelled an already volatile situation, he added

123 000 houses 'are in production'

Lukanyo Mnyanda

THE housing ministry should have issued about 500 000 low-cost housing subsidies by June this year when delivery should have accelerated enough to push the number of units to 200 000, according to the BMI Building Research Strategic Unit.

The unit's quarterly review of the industry notes that, with 123 000 houses in production, visible delivery was taking place at a faster pace and should boost business and consumer confidence levels.

However, it warned that concerns about crime would continue to put a damper on spirits.

"The building industry will only be able to exploit its undoubted potential to be an engine for growth if government can fulfil its role to create a secure and investor friendly environment," it said.

Respondents were also concerned

about the availability of key resources, especially finance, capital subsidies and land for low cost developments. But other resources were fairly easy to access, with the high unemployment rate making labour "extremely easily available".

BMI director Llewellyn Lewis said the survey — made up of 121 telephone interviews with both established and emerging contractors — showed that confidence levels had been consolidated in the fourth quarter with 40,8% of respondents expecting improved conditions over the next six months.

Contribution

Lewis said both the emerging and established sector viewed houses costing less than R65 000 as an important source of growth this year, although this view was more prevalent among emerging contractors.

The established sector expected

that houses in the R65 000 to R150 000 bracket would be their main source of growth, while townhouses and cluster homes were also set to make a healthy contribution.

Lewis said both the established and emerging sectors generally expected conditions to improve by up to 5% this year, with the emerging sector slightly more confident.

Building costs, which were seen to be very high, were still a source of concern for both sectors of the market and most respondents believed that building materials price increases had exceeded the inflation rate.

Confidence was also suffering from perceptions that corruption, an ineffective public service and government were still the norm.

Continuing perceptions that SA was still a divided society added to the negative views and did "not contribute to the nurturing of a positive self image and an investor environment".

Josey Ballenger

MIDRAND had achieved one of the best records in SA during the seven-month-old Masakhane campaign, having stepped up its collection of service payments from 3% at the programme's launch to 30% in the December-to-February quarter, officials said at the weekend.

In the greater Midrand area, Masakhane — a national campaign to implement services in disadvantaged areas, and combat rates boycotts — was applied to Ivory Park township, which has a population of 180 000.

December was the highest-yielding month, as 41% of Ivory Park's 15 000 formal sites paid for their ser-

Ivory Park leads the way in Masakhane campaign

The residents were charged R31 a month.

To date the Midrand local council had collected about R982 000, said council executive committee chairman Alan Dawson. This would be used to install street lights, parks and undertake job skills training.

However, at an awards ceremony in Ivory Park on Saturday, Dawson said 60% or R2,5m still needed to be collected to realise the council's goals.

"We have collected nearly R1m, but R2,5m is not with us," he said, noting that sum

could be used for 600 flush toilets, mass lighting to reduce crime or the launch of a training centre for jobs.

"We not only have a culture of nonpayment, which is being swept away in Ivory Park, but also a culture of nonservice delivery," he said, emphasising that the council had to improve its delivery of services.

The council ranked 4,5 out of 10 in its administration and delivery of services in an in-house survey.

He said Midrand's goal was to reach a 50% payment level by June.

"Ivory Park has very little by way of infrastructure," Dawson said. Only 20% of residents had flush toilets and individual water points, while 80% used a septic tank system — which Dawson described as "totally unacceptable given the geological strata of Ivory Park" — and shared water taps. Emergency and waste removal services were, however, available throughout the area.

Dawson credited the improvement in payments to council interaction with the community. "Because of the lack of services, we have turned payment for services into developmental rands, which allows the community to reinvest its money directly into the community."

SA cities to vie for investment

Nicola Jenvey

MARITZBURG — The constitution, which transfers the responsibility of regional development to local government, would force cities to look at their competitive advantages when competing for fixed direct foreign investment, said KwaZulu-Natal Finance and Investment Corporation economist Dana Moore.

Addressing the annual KwaZulu-Natal marketing initiative strategic planning session last week, Moore said there was a concentration of fixed direct investment in the trading blocks of Europe, southeast Asia and the US.

In 1994, Japan, US and western Europe attracted 60% of the world's fixed direct investment followed by developing countries (37%) and eastern Europe (3%) Sub-Saharan Africa and New Zealand each attracted \$1,8bn, translating into 1,7% of the investment pie.

Moore said one advantage of encouraging local governments to assess their competitive advantages was that the affected citizens would become more familiar with their own environments.

Investment SA CEO Rafiq Bagus said SA did not have the time or manpower to use "the shotgun approach" to attract investment Malaysia and Scotland annually spent more than \$500m each on attracting investment, but SA's constraints forced a more targeted approach.

Reviewing the KwaZulu-Natal initiative's targets for the year, initiative chairman Peet Marais said there would be more emphasis on attracting investment in the food and beverage sector.

During 1995/96, the initiative attracted 33 new projects worth R176m to the province and 15 projects valued at R147m last year.

Incentives (127) for rates and services payments

BY BONGIWE MLANGENI

In an effort to encourage East Rand township residents to pay for council services, prizes worth more than R100 000 have been made available for the best paying households.

The introduction of incentives for services payments was part of a new Masakhane programme launched in Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus (Katorus) at the weekend.

Alberton mayor Nomsa Maseko said the aim was to increase levels of payment to more than 90% by December.

Service payments are currently below 25%. The area is run by three councils.

She said the innovative Masakhane programme would complement the Katorus special presidential project, responsible for upgrading the area's infrastructure and housing.

Special project manager Themba Maluleke said residents' levels of payment would be evaluated every month and the five best-paying residents would each win a cash prize of R10 000 when the competition ends in three months.

Every month, residents also stand to win small prizes for paying their current bills.

In addition, 20 Katorus schools will compete in a debate on how local government should function.

The best school will win R10 000 and all entrants will be awarded two trees. The incentive competition is sponsored by Absa Bank.

Star 17/3/97

1101
2248

GJMC gets tough on defaulters

127
Some Jan 19/3/97

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council is to take drastic action, including dismissing some councillors who do not pay their rates and services, a council briefing was told yesterday.

The council will announce the names and the action to be taken against defaulting councillors during its monthly meeting next week.

Chairman of Johannesburg Southern Metropolitan Local Council's (SMLC) finance committee Mr Shan Balton said there were councillors who did not pay their tariffs. Most have paid but some have not, despite warnings.

Defaulting councillors have been summoned to appear before the council executive to make payment arrangements or face drastic action, including being sacked from their positions.

Masakhane campaign

Balton said it was not proper for councillors to join the hundreds of residents who were still not paying for services. Their actions were not in line with the spirit of the Masakhane campaign. Sources have disclosed that the GJMC was about R1,5 billion in arrears and was losing approximately R50 million a month as a result of non-payment of services over the past months.

GJMC's finance executive Mr Eugene Robson said the arrears were huge but the council was doing all it could, including introducing stringent credit controls such as cutting off services, to save the situation.

Balton said the council would take various measures, including sending summonses and warnings to consumers, before cutting off services or attaching defaulters' properties.

Land plan to unite communities

Four distinct development zones in the greater Johannesburg area have been identified

Star 21/3/97

(127)

By Anna Cox

A massive land planning campaign aimed at uniting the previously segregated communities in the Northern council area has been finalised.

Since the new Greater Johannesburg boundary demarcations were made recently, the Northern council includes parts of Soweto in the south, former Randburg established areas such as Melville and Northcliff, new informal settlements and affluent landowners in the far north - communities which not only live far from one another demographically but socially as well.

The council now plans, through its Land Development Objectives (LDOs), to change this and create not only physical links through new road systems but also social links.

The council has become one of the first in Greater Johannesburg to complete its LDOs which are five-year land use plans. The main functions of the LDO plans in the Northern council area, however, are to incorporate the needs of communities within the local budget, said strategic officer for transformation Siumko Sowazi.

"More importantly it is the unification of diverse people living in the area. The council area is characterised by vastly diverse urban structures with great imbalances.

"There are disadvantaged communities in Soweto, informal settlements in the north, as well as affluent homes in the former white areas and farmlands in the far north. There is poverty and overcrowding in some areas and small scale farming activities in the north. There is little or no social interaction between these communities.

The national campaign to encourage payment of services. We undertook a five-week intensive study period to workshop the needs with communities. The response by the public was overwhelming with some 3 000 people having participated," said Sowazi.

One of the main findings was that the entire area is insufficiently served with community and social services such as clinics, sports and recreational facilities.

In general, the area was fairly well-provided with engineering infrastructure such as roads, water sanitation, electricity. The southern portion has been called the zone of intervention and upliftment.

Shortage of community services

This is the north-eastern portion of Soweto including Orlando East, Pinville and Diepkloof. This area is isolated from the rest of the area by a strip of mining land and large mine dumps that exist on it. It requires institutional, social and economic upliftment and upgrading of the total environment as well as improvement of access at all levels and development opportunities on the periphery.

Zone 2, the transition zone, comprises the belt of mining land in the south, Indus, the West, Rivonia, Bryanston, Westbury, Wyncliffe and Auckland Park. This area is largely in a state of neglect as a former mine site and largely of economic activity. It has good infrastructure. The New Forest had age-towards a young population. It is well-served as the development of a wide range of land use opportunities.

Zone 3, known as the stability zone, is the former Randburg municipal area and Northcliff where there are established houses, shopping centres and the central business district of Randburg. Here the man requirement is the maintenance of existing services levels and environmental quality. The promotion and improvement of the CBD as a major business and shopping node and the improvement of the east-west linkages throughout the area, were of concern.

Zone 4 in the north, the opportunity zone, includes rural areas, agricultural and industrial area as well as Lanseria Airport.

This area is under extreme pressure from land invasions, squatting and low cost housing because of the vast expanses of land. Residents stated they needed assurance on future land uses and asked for improved access, sanitation and water reticulation, and the upgrading of roads to overcome prevalent problems.

In general, said Sowazi, north-south linkages are very poor and functionally, people living in zone 1 had very little to do with people living in zone 4.

"The Johannesburg CBD is a primary metropolitan activity node outside the Northern council area and it is envisaged it will retain its status in future. Apart from the Johannesburg CBD, the Randburg CBD is considered a very important activity node which should be conserved," he said.

To the south there were no similar activity nodes for the Soweto community. It is proposed that the council support the Baralink project - a proposed corridor linking Soweto with Greater Johannesburg which will also be a strategic link towards the integration of Soweto and Johannesburg.

The development of land north of Nodgesig, north of Soweto, where there are three mine dumps, is of strategic importance as it represents the linking of Soweto with the West Rand as a first step towards the integration of these historically segregated communities, he said.

As far as mining land is concerned, it is proposed that this be developed for mixed uses to provide for both residential and economic needs. Extensive geotechnical studies would have to be undertaken, said Sowazi.

"The role of the proposed N17 freeway could play a part in unlocking the development potential of this area. The existing rail

Support for Baralink corridor plan

infrastructure in this area is also very strong and could play an important role in future development," he said.

In the north it is proposed that existing business/retail areas be conserved and strengthened with special emphasis on the Randburg CBD. Hans Strijdom Drive has the most development potential over the short/medium term.

"Another important requirement for future development is the provision of east-west access. The Northern council area is off-centre to the most prominent spine of activity in the Gauteng Province - that between the Johannesburg CBD and Midrand, along Ben Schoeman highway (M1/N3), including Rosebank and the Sandton CBD. The area lacks east-west access and as a result cannot derive any benefit from it," he said.

Police did not act like cowboys during rates riots, inquiry told

By CECILIA RUSSELL

Aggressive crowds fuelled by alcohol influenced police reaction during the rates riot in Eldorado Park last month, according to evidence presented to the the Froneman Commission of Inquiry.

Soweto public order unit chief, Superintendent John Facer, said information based on intelligence received before the stayaway, previous experience police had in dealing with crowd control in Eldorado Park, and talks with the local police station's staff had led them to prepare for the possibility of violence and intimidation during the stayaway.

Contrary to testimony given earlier by the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowe-

joca), intelligence reports received by the unit had indicated a well-formulated strategy by the civics to set up barricades in the area because they wanted to prevent residents from going to work, Facer said.

Attempts by police to remove the barricades had led to violent behaviour and stone-throwing, which the unit had quelled with the use of teargas and rubber bullets

At 7 30am, police could already smell alcohol on the breath of many of the participants, he said

Far from using cowboy tactics, inciting violence and shooting unnecessarily at innocent supporters, as was earlier alleged by Sowejoca leader Basil Douglas, the police operation had been a finely tuned

and well-planned exercise that had adapted its methods as the initially "excited" crowd turned into aggressive, violent rioters without any clear leadership, said Facer.

This had led the police unit to change tactics and call for backup from other units.

At mid-morning, as the crowd moved towards the Cal-tex service station in Eldorado Park - scene of the worst conflict between police and Sowejoca supporters - incidents of looting, stone-throwing and shooting were reported. Police retaliated by firing teargas, birdshot and rubber bullets

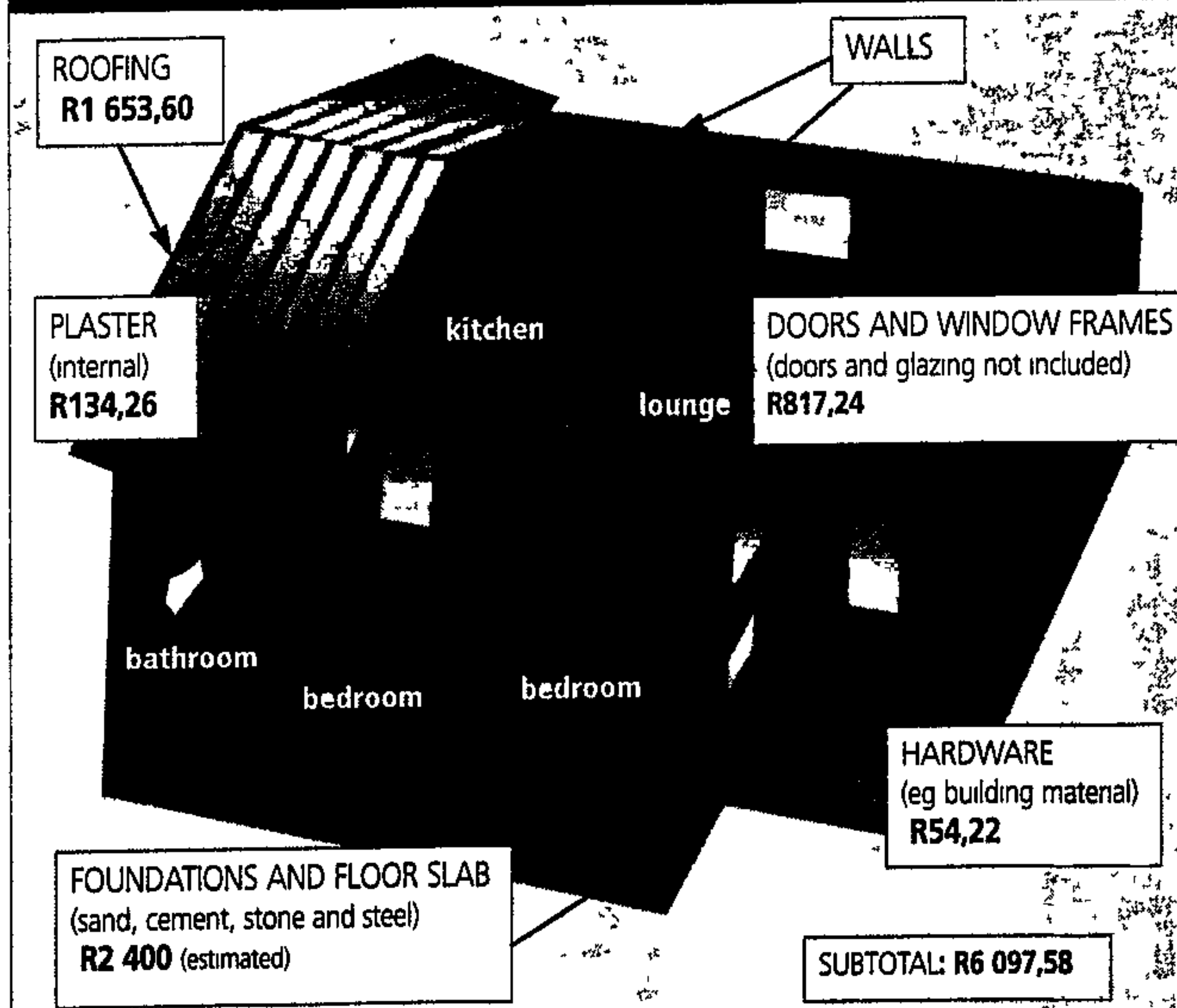
Later, when police were shot at by an unknown gunman with an AK-47, fire was returned at the perpetrators, said Facer

The inquest continues today.

Star 24/3/97

(127)

SA's homeless design low-cost houses



Required to complete the house:

Doors	R700,00
Glazing	R250,00
Ceiling	R324,65
Electrical	R200,00
Plumbing and Fittings	R950,00
Plastering	R150,00
Painting	R250,00
Miscellaneous	R125,45
TOTAL	R2 950,10

PROJECTED TOTAL: R9 047,68

- This price does not include labour costs or any possible future discounts
- The cost is cut by using second hand material, eg door frames etc
- Average size of house 62sq m.
- Labour comes from the community

Building bigger for less without the government subsidy

Nov 24/3/97

(123)

NATASHA PINCUS

BY BONGIWE MLANGENI

A group of East Rand residents is building comfortable homes without using the government housing subsidy, and proving that more can be achieved with less than R15 000.

The residents of Vosloorus Extension 20 are replacing their corrugated-iron shacks with brick and mortar houses costing not more than R10 500.

The houses vary from two-roomed to four-roomed structures and are far bigger than the "one-room and a toilet" plan built with the R15 000 government housing subsidy.

Calling themselves Luthando Housing Saving Scheme, the community has completed 36 houses, and 25 more are under construction.

"The solution is to let the community build the houses themselves, the way they want," said residents' spokesman Makgetha Mokoena, who helped to start the Luthando scheme.

"The idea is that people should save every day. Then my neighbours help me lay bricks for my house and, when it is complete, I help them build theirs."

The Vosloorus group is one of several communities country-wide which has joined the Homeless People's Federation and has opened a joint savings scheme.

The federation was initiated by People's Dialogue, a non-



Joint responsibility ... women on the East Rand are building their own houses in a community self-help scheme.

governmental organisation which promotes self-reliance in poor communities and helps people build houses using their own money and labour.

The organisation also has a loan fund called *Utshani*, meaning grass, to make it easier for the poor to access extra finance.

Over 600 savings schemes are held and managed by communities, which have built about 900 houses over the past two years in

seven provinces.

People's Dialogue administration director Limakatso Namo said the ability to save money and share existing skills in the community had brought a sense of pride to many poor people.

Only members who prove to be thrifty are recommended for small loans with a maximum interest of 2%, Namo said.

"We are having difficulty accessing the (government) subsidy

scheme because it favours private builders (rather than people who are building for themselves.)"

Miriam Mbatshana, a grandmother of two, remembers when she had only 20c to save.

"It grew to R1 until I had R250 with the savings scheme," Mbatshana said.

Today Mbatshana owns a four-roomed house on 72sq m, with a kitchen, two bedrooms, a lounge and a bathroom.

Act flouted during violent stayaway

BY CECILIA RUSSELL

Mar 27 13/98
The South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) admitted on the final day of hearings of the Froneman Commission of Inquiry yesterday that it failed to comply with the Regulations of Gatherings Act (127)

The act lays down certain minimum requirements for the organisers of a large gathering or march.

Sowejoca lawyer Magesh Moodliyar said he was not sure if the act applied to a stayaway, but if it did then "appropriate steps should be taken" against Sowejoca leader Basil Douglas and his

organisation. He said the act had not been followed because Douglas was not aware of its contents.

Moodliyar was presenting the final arguments of Sowejoca at the commission into the causes of violence in Eldorado Park, Reiger Park, Noordgesig and Westbury during a stayaway on February 6.

Douglas had tried to avert the stayaway. Because no witness had testified otherwise, the commission had not heard any hard evidence to prove he had misled the community, Moodliyar said.

Mr Justice Johan Froneman will make his final report to Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale on April 5.

Council's authority questioned in court

BY CECILIA RUSSELL

Sandton businessmen have told the Johannesburg High Court that the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure had no legal right to force its ratepayers to pay the same rates as the three other councils in the Greater Johannesburg area

On the first day of the hearings into the Sandton rates dispute, D.J.B. Osborn, acting on behalf of Fedsure Life Assurance, Liberty Life Association, Momentum Property Investments and others, said the constitution made provision for uniform rates to be levied only within a local authority or substructure, and each metropolitan substructure "was empowered to define its own rates"

"This is not the same as saying the same rate in the rand should be imposed by all substructures," said Osborn

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (GJTMC) had acted outside its authority when it imposed a levy on the Eastern Metropolitan Council of R438-million to help fund the Southern and the Western substructures, which were in deficit. The R438-million levy amounted to about a quarter of the Eastern substructure's income of R1,16-billion

The Local Government Transition Act had allocated new and wider-ranging functions to the substructures while limiting the functions of the GJTMC. In terms of this legislation, which came

into effect after the local election in November 1995, the TMC had the legal right to impose a levy on substructures only to exercise its powers and its functions. It did not have the power to subsidise other metropolitan substructures, or to make grants to other substructures, Osborn told Mr Justice E Goldstein

The act further states that all contributions to the TMC should be equitable, each substructure providing the same percentage of its income to the TMC, to be levied on the basis of a formula

"The GJTMC was not created to fund other local authorities. If there are poor local authorities, these may have to look at other sources of income" said Osborn

The case continues today

Three Gauteng local councils now bankrupt

Soweto 4/4/97

(121) (255)

Government has to rescue many others
broke because of billions in unpaid rates

By Joshua Raboroko

THREE OUT OF THE 51 Gauteng local authorities which are owed R3,6 billion in unpaid rates and services have collapsed, provincial MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka said yesterday.

He declined to disclose the names of the three local councils for fear that they might not get loans from banks to pay their debts. They are believed to owe millions of rands.

Shiceka said 51 local councils were owed R3,6 billion by communities in Gauteng by September last year, but the debt was reduced to R3,3 billion by March this year as a result of improved payment in various areas.

The provincial government supported credit control measures that have been undertaken by a number of local authorities. It also applauded residents who have come forward to pay their services and called upon all communities to do the same.

Some of the hard-hit areas, including Soweto, Sebokeng, Tembisa, Tokoza, Vosloorus, KwaThema, Katlehong, Kagiso and Khutsong, showed a marked improvement in their payment levels.

Shiceka said the government would support local authorities that cut off essential services to defaulters, adding that properties would be attached and sold on auction if residents did not pay from a date still to be decided, possibly before June.

He would introduce legislation making it compulsory for defaulters to pay for services, saying "we are in business and cannot afford to lose money because people do not want to pay".

The authorities are to assist Government to identify those who cannot afford to pay and help collapsing and destitute local authorities to survive through an intergovernmental grant of R295 million.

Discussions were under way for this process to be introduced nationally by April 22.

The Department of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs in conjunction with provinces has embarked on "project liquidity" to investigate the financial and administrative viability of local governments.

Civil servants and politicians, including Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, have signed a Masakhane pledge to pay for services.

'Robin Hood' policy slammed by advocate

Star 4/4/97 (127)

By MICHAEL SPARKS

South Africa did not have a "Robin Hood constitution" that allowed the robbing of the rich to pay the poor, Peter van Blerk SC told the Johannesburg High Court yesterday.

Van Blerk was arguing that the Greater Johannesburg council had overstepped its mark by increasing rates in the Eastern Metro Council to subsidise other areas.

He was arguing for the group of 10 Sandton commercial property owners who are seeking to overturn the budget of the Eastern and Greater Johannesburg councils, which increased the rates of many Sandton businesses by nearly 400%.

While conceding that one of the ideals of the country's new constitution was to redress past wrongs implemented during the apartheid years, Van Blerk maintained that it was not the function of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to dictate to the municipalities what rates they should be charging residents.

By increasing the rates, the Johannesburg council was trying to raise a levy of R438-million from the Eastern council to help subsidise the Western and Southern councils.

Van Blerk also called on Mr Justice E Goldstein to consider not just the implications and possible problems overturning the budget would have for the council, but also the implications of not overturning the budget for pensioners and those who were only just making ends meet.

He said that in an affidavit, DP councillor Mike Moriarty had indicated that no money had been paid by the Eastern council to the Johannesburg council.

But recent information indicated that although no formal levy payments had been made, money had been transferred, Van Blerk told the courts.

"Surplus funds" from the Eastern council had been used by Johannesburg because there had been an "integration" of funds from the two councils, although it was unclear why or how much money was involved, he said.

The case continues.

A 1991

Gauteng to get tough on defaulters

Star 4/4/97

(127)

By TROYE LUND

Extreme measures to make Gauteng ratepayers fork out the R3,3-billion outstanding on services, as well as steps to turn local authorities into more cost-effective bodies, were announced yesterday

The province's 51 local authorities are also being audited to establish their financial viability and how wisely they are spending money

Where and how society can be trained to partner councillors in management and development, instead of using expensive consultants, is another key element of the 1997 Masakhane strategy announced yesterday by Sicelo Shiceka, MEC for Development Planning and Local Government

While Gauteng has undertaken to subsidise those who genuinely can't pay, harsh credit con-

trol measures will mean ratepayers who can afford to do so will risk losing jobs, property and even homes for not paying

These steps come amid reports that payments, although up in some areas, are still too low

Soweto has improved from a

Property and jobs on the line

14% rate of payment last September to 25% in February this year. Payments in Kagiso, Krugersdorp, improved over the same period from 7,4% to 25% and in Vosloorus, Boksburg, from 22,4% to 31,6%.

By enforcing credit control measures and "convincing" business, trade unions, non-govern-

mental organisations and parastatals to sign legally binding pledges, Shiceka hopes payment across the province will rise by 10% every month from May

Non-payment will result in services being cut, Shiceka said

Local authorities have started attaching belongings and confiscating property to recover money from those who have refused to start paying or complying with a five or 10-year plan to pay arrears

Besides having their names published in a monthly report, defaulters may find their employers agreeing to dismiss them after a certain amount of time

"We are not playing dice. We are going to do it. We must recover costs," Shiceka said after launching the campaign, and plans to boost financial and administrative capacities of local authorities

W. April 4 1997

Ratepayers' lawyer rejects 'robbing rich to pay poor,'

Deborah Fine

SA WAS not governed by a "Robin Hood constitution" that allowed "for the robbing of the rich to help the poor," a senior advocate told the Johannesburg High Court yesterday.

Adv Peter van Blerk was representing a group of Sandton commercial property owners who have attacked the legality of a decision by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to impose a R438m levy on its eastern metropolitan substructure, which governs Sandton.

The levy was to fund deficits in the budgets of the western and southern substructures, both of which govern Soweto.

The imposition of the levy allegedly resulted in the eastern substructure increasing Sandton assessment rates by up to 385% to raise money to finance the levy.

Van Blerk said that while a founding principle of the new constitution had been the redressing of past wrongs, the principle could not be given effect through actions which broke the law or violated fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution.

He told presiding Judge Ezra Goldstein that the rule of law was also a well-enshrined constitutional corner-

stone, while the bill of rights guaranteed Sandton ratepayers the right to lawful administrative action.

The metropolitan council and the eastern substructure had violated that right by embarking on illegal administrative action. This included introducing the levy and increasing property rates, Van Blerk said.

In terms of section 178 (2) of the constitution, the metropolitan council was only allowed to extract levies for its own functions and duties. Instead, it had introduced a levy to pay the functions and duties of two substructures. Moreover, Proclamation 35 of 1995 limited the council to recovering levies

(127) 00414197

based on a substructure's gross or rates income. The levy imposed on the eastern substructure was based on neither, Van Blerk submitted.

Clearly the council had acted outside the laws governing its powers, and there was "no magic constitutional wand . . . to make gross and rates incomes mean anything other than what it does," he said.

He also attacked the council's submission that should the court find in favour of the businesses, any rulings overturning the levy should be suspended to allow the council time to correct its mistakes. Van Blerk said the council had not

presented the court with sufficient financial facts to warrant such a request. There was no mention of how much of the levy, if any, had already been paid over to the council, and how long it would take to repay.

Instead, the council had provided a "very curious smokescreen" about its financial affairs.

An affidavit by metropolitan council finance head Lucas Opperman said "while no formal levy payments had taken place, (eastern substructure) funds have been transferred in terms of the levy."

Opperman also said the metropolitan council and its four local substructures operated "an integrated case management system" whereby portions of the income generated by the eastern substructure was retained in the metropolitan council bank account. The metropolitan council drew on surplus eastern substructure funds to finance its activities and the other substructures, Opperman said.

"What does this mean? What is an integrated cash management system? Have levy payments been made or not? It appears as if there is no distinction between the funds of the metropolitan council and the eastern substructure."

Van Blerk will continue his argument today.

Rates rejig 'theft by consent'

By MICHAEL SPARKS

(127) Star 7/4/97
The redistribution of rates from wealthy to poor municipalities was not stealing, but "theft by consent", the Johannesburg High Court heard on Friday.

Clive Cohen SC, appearing for the four Johannesburg metropolitan substructures, told Mr Justice E Goldstein that the decision to move money from the wealthy councils to subsidise the poorer ones had been taken "transparently" and through a number of committees.

In taking the decisions, the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council had not itself decided to impose the levy to subsidise the poorer southern and western substructures with money from the richer northern and eastern substructures. The decision had been taken jointly, with the agreement of all the substructures, Cohen said.

The legality of the council's decision to impose a R438-million levy on its eastern metropolitan substructure is being challenged by a group of Sandton commercial property owners who object

to paying towards the levy.

Cohen argued that the areas within Greater Johannesburg were economically interdependent and that an aim of the proposal was to provide money to allow the areas to become more equal than they had been in the past, as demanded by the constitution.

It was not important for the final result to be equal, but for the structure and foundation of the system to be equal. Drawing an analogy with the tax system, Cohen said the structure and foundation of the tax structure was the same, even though wealthy people paid more taxes than poorer people.

Cohen said that should the 10 Sandton businesses succeed in their application to have the metropolitan budget overturned, it would have "devastating consequences" for all four substructures and for the metropolitan authority.

Consequences could include the possible closure of certain facilities as well as a massive increase in rates levied by the southern and western councils, possibly as much as double.

The case continues today.

Inner-city boycotts not the norm, survey finds

127

By **KARIN SCHIMKE**

City Editor

Star 7/4/97

Contrary to an image of wholesale problems between landlords and tenants in Johannesburg's CBD, only 800 of the estimated 112 000 people living in the city are involved in rent boycotts, a new study has found.

According to a survey by the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust, a company which provides bridging finance for housing projects in the inner city, the reality of a city in turmoil does not square neatly with the popular perception.

"There is this popular perception that tenants and landlords in the inner city are always at each others' throats and that tenants are highly politicised and involved in boycotting their rental and service charge payments. The reality is quite different," said Michael Oelofse, a housing expert who wrote a report on the study.

The survey was conducted to gauge the extent of city housing problems. It showed that most city-centre tenants are not members of a tenants' organisation, such as Actstop, the Johannesburg Tenants' Association or the SA

National Civic Organisation

Oelofse said "These results are of extreme importance in countering the view that inner-city residents do not pay their rent."

In spite of the small number of boycotting inner-city residents, there were some conflicts, he added. These needed to be resolved, especially because they fed misperceptions.

Brian Leveson, managing trustee of the National Housing Forum, said "Some landlords and tenants don't accept their obligations and you often hear them baying for each others' blood. Where this happens, some kind of intervention is needed."

This intervention materialised towards the end of last month when the Gauteng legislature passed the Residential and Landlord Bill. It provides for the establishment of a dispute resolution board which will have the power to investigate complaints, subpoena landlords and tenants, and solve disputes through mediation or arbitration.

The board will also be able to impose penalties on landlords or tenants who are deemed to have behaved unfairly.

Rates hike in accord with constitution, council says

(127)
By TARYN LAMBERT

Star 8/4/97

Massive rates increases imposed by the Greater Johannesburg council on Sandton residents and businesses were in accordance with the country's new constitution, the Johannesburg High Court heard yesterday.

A rates increase of up to 385% imposed by the council in June last year is being contested in court by 10 large Sandton property owners

They say the council adopted a "Robin Hood" approach when it increased the rates in the "richer" Eastern and Northern councils to subsidise development in the "poorer" Western and Southern areas

Bob Wise SC, representing the four councils, told Mr Justice E Goldstein yesterday that the council could not provide all the services laid out in the constitution if it did not have the autonomy to establish its own priorities and allocate the necessary resources to them.

"By agreement there was to be a common tax base, and the revenue would be divided and deployed to meet the needs of the metro as a whole," Wise told the court

Clive Cohen, SC, also appearing for Greater Johannesburg's councils, earlier argued that Judge Goldstein should interpret the legislation governing the running of the metropolitan chamber in conjunction with the new constitution, which emphasises the need for equality and the need to redistribute wealth from richer to poorer areas

Cohen said the first right in the Bill of Rights dealt with equality, and that it was also the focus of the constitution's preamble and afterword

The 10 firms want the budget to be set aside and the new rates charges to be overturned

Jo'burg councils to conduct audits on lost water

(127)

SMW 8/4/97

Wastage has been reduced significantly since municipalities had to pay higher tariffs

By BUNTY WEST

Johannesburg's councils will soon conduct comprehensive annual water audits to establish where "unaccounted for" water is being lost

Officials are reluctant to commit themselves to exact figures, but confirmed that 3 500 pools could be filled, or more than 22 million toilets flushed, with the amount of water that is "unaccounted for" in Johannesburg every day

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry announced drastic measures to tighten up controls of water consumption last week

Local authorities will be required to undertake comprehensive annual water audits and some have already started in the Johannesburg metro area

National water regulations are also currently being drafted to provide a common approach to water conservation throughout the country

Final figures for water lost in Johannesburg would be released when the audits had been completed, spokesmen for the councils said.

The lost water has huge financial and economic implications, George Constantides, head of water demand management at Rand Water, said.

"If local authorities cannot account for the water they bought, they have to retrieve the money in some way and may increase the tariffs residents pay. The issue is transparency. We have to know that councils are doing enough to combat unaccounted for water," he said.

Water that is lost is not necessarily the same as wasted water. Water cannot be accounted for when meters are inaccurate, when people illegally tap into reticulation mains or use fire hydrants for personal use, when local authorities use water for watering parks, or test fire hydrants without keeping tabs on their consumption

Outdated plumbing, faulty valves and hydrants, and leaking reservoirs also result in unaccounted for water.

Rand Water chief executive Vincent Bath said "This time last year, Gauteng's unaccounted for water figure was estimated at 50% in some areas, but this has been reduced since we imposed higher tariffs on municipalities which could not account for their water losses"

Part of the reason for the reduced water wastage is that the R50-million levy collected from municipalities by Rand Water has been ploughed into poor communities to update old meters and pipes, and to train plumbers to look for leaks.

Nearly 30%, or 30 million litres a day, of all water supplied to the Western council by Rand Water is unaccounted for, and the situation of the other councils is not much better

Enough for 22-m flushes daily goes missing

In the Northern council, the older areas of Randburg and the north-west have very little unaccounted for water. Kurt Rohner, in charge of water at the Northern council, said between 6 and 9% was

lost - a figure similar to that of London. But in the Diepmeadow area of Soweto, losses were estimated to be as high as 30%

"We have embarked on an expensive campaign to install and replace meters as many homes are charged a flat rate for services," Rohner said.

Eastern council spokesman Keith Peacock said all the water in his area was accounted for: "We know what we buy and we know what we charge to consumers. There are losses, but the council has embarked on a major capital programme to ensure that water losses are minimised."

Southern council water spokesman Connie Ras said: "On average about 14% of our water is unaccounted for. We are busy upgrading and renewing water mains at an annual cost of R10-million and this will take at least six years"

Council's tariffs 'constitutional'

Jacob Dlamini (23) (127)
BDS 14/97
THE tariff structure used by the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council to decide rates and taxes was in line with the constitutional principle of equality, senior counsel Chve Cohen told the High Court yesterday.

Cohen, who is representing the council in its court battle against a group of Sandton com-

mercial property owners seeking to have its budget set aside, said the new tariff treated individuals the same way.

Cohen said while the new scheme did not treat the four substructures making up the Johannesburg metro identically, it did treat them equally in that all were required to pay a rate of 6,45 cents in the rand.

The property owners are challenging the

R438m levy imposed on the eastern metropolitan substructure (which includes Sandton) and an increase of up to 385% in area assessment rates.

The levy is used to subsidise the southern and the western metropolitan councils, both of which include sections of Soweto. Cohen said the property owners' application would place the revenue base of local councils in jeopardy.



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'Crisis for local govt if court rules for Sandton businesses'

Star 9/4/97 (127)

STAFF REPORTER

Greater Johannesburg local government would face a financial crisis if the High Court found in favour of 10 Sandton businesses seeking to set aside the recent rates hike, the High Court heard yesterday.

Legal counsel for the Greater Johannesburg Metro council told Mr Justice E Goldstein that, if the rates levy was set aside, the Eastern Metro Council would be deprived of all assessment rate income pending the approval of a revised rate. It would also be required to refund the rates already paid.

"Neither national nor provincial government is likely to tide the EMSS over its budgetary crisis," said senior counsel Clive Cohen.

Failing such interven-

tion, it was unlikely that the EMSS would be able to raise sufficient funds to compensate for lost rates revenue and so prevent local government collapse

Earlier, the court heard that the call for "one city, one tax base" did not apply to Greater Johannesburg as a whole, but to the four councils within it.

The legal team representing 10 major Sandton property owners who have taken the councils to court over rates increases told the judge yesterday that the area, including Alexandra and Sandton, should be seen as "one city" and the individual cities which make up the Johannesburg metropolitan area should each have its own "tax base"

The team was arguing for the rates increase of up to 385% to be set aside be-

cause the council had adopted a "Robin Hood" approach, taking funds from the wealthier councils to help the poorer councils.

Peter van Blerk SC, acting for the Sandton ratepayers, was reacting to an argument put by Rob Wise SC, for the city council, who said the original structuring of local government was based on the premise of "one city, one tax base" - implying that money would be taken from the wealthier areas to subsidise poorer ones.

The 10 Sandton companies are also seeking to have a R438-million levy imposed by Greater Johannesburg on the Eastern council set aside. The levy was the Eastern council's budget surplus.

The case enters its seventh day today

Man injured by explosion on farm loses arm

By JAMEEL CHAND

The Zimbabwean farm labourer who triggered an explosive device with his pick on Monday while working at the Waterplaas farm near Messina

in Northern Province has lost an arm.

Pietersburg Hospital said last night that Eaghriot Chari had lost his right arm. He also suffered head and chest injuries.

Chari and six other

Zimbabweans were clearing bushes when the explosion took place. His colleagues sustained only slight wounds.

Police could not yet confirm whether the device was a landmine.

Banks accused of 'redlining' in Johannesburg

Estate agents charge that the practice of making loans difficult leads to the development of slums

By **RODNEY VICTOR**

Some home buyers in Johannesburg are being asked to pay deposits as high as two-fifths of the full purchase price as banks hedge their bets against deteriorating conditions in suburbs on the city fringes.

Estate agents have accused banks of 'redlining', a practice which entails cutting off finance to buyers in high-risk areas. The agents alleged the practice contributes to slum conditions.

Glyn Evans, a Kensington estate agent said it was becoming difficult to sell property in such suburbs. Deposit requirements were prohibitive and property values were dropping. This was contributing to the degradation of the areas.

Evans recently had a buyer, Jotham Mbuyisa, who had saved R20 000 and who wanted to buy a well-kept house in Jeppeshtown on the eastern fringes of the city. The price was R30 000, almost a give-away. It should have been higher, but it had been reduced because of problems getting bonds in the area. Evans said a deposit of R20 000 would

satisfy the bank. He was wrong. The bank wanted R26 000, almost a third of the price.

The banks discriminate against people with lower incomes, Evans said, while readily granting bonds to people with high incomes.

A man earning R10 000 a month could get a 100% bond on a R210 000 house, at a favourable 19,25% interest rate. After paying 45% tax and a R3 444 bond instalment, he would be left with only R2 056 in his pocket.

If Evans' buyer had been granted a R60 000 bond, it would have been at a higher 20,25% interest rate, Evans said. After paying tax and his R1 030 bond instalment, he would have had R2 075 left over - or more than the big earner.

"If people cannot borrow in Jeppeshtown, the area will continue going down. The blight will creep over the hill, affecting the banks' investments in neighbouring suburbs," he said. Southern suburbs estate agent Clarence Miller agreed it was becoming difficult to buy houses in "redlined" suburbs. "We have some homes that have been beautifully renovated by the

Portuguese, but we can't get anything for them. No one can afford to put down a deposit of 15% or 20%."

Soweto was even worse, said Moses Majola, chairman of the 97 Residents' Committee in Meadowlands Zone 9. The whole of Meadowlands Zone 9 had been redlined. Buyers could not get bonds, and residents could not get

We owe it to our depositors, says banks' spokesman

second bonds to extend their houses.

Councillor Robert Rousseau, whose ward covers parts of Kensington and Malvern, said banks were largely responsible for creating many slums. "Once they condemn an area by redlining it, it quickly deteriorates."

Lance Edmunds, general manager for housing with the Council of South African Banks, said banks had a re-

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(127)

sponsibility to depositors, and could lend only if they could recover it through the sale of the property.

Factors in deciding whether or not to grant a bond and the percentage risk to take included the character of the area. "If an area is deteriorating, it's a bad risk and the bank will be reluctant to lend. It's almost like a spiral."

Edmunds said, when asked if the policy was not contributing to the development of slums, that an easing of credit control requirements would not help areas which were deteriorating. Such areas would not attract people willing to improve their properties.

Edmunds denied this was a form of redlining. "Redlining is very emotive. People feel the banks must lend, but if the risk is not acceptable, they can't."

The Star's investigations reveal banks have given each suburb and township a rating. Edmunds confirmed this, but said not every bank had such a system, which served merely as a "guide" to loan managers. One bank's rating system is called "Gapu", which stands for Good, Average, Poor, Unsuitable.

Suburbs in Johannesburg's affluent north generally have Good ratings, and qualifying buyers can obtain 90% or 100% bonds there.

In the east, west and south the ratings fall to Average, Poor or Unsuitable. In A areas the bank will grant bonds of between 70% and 90%. In P areas it is reluctant to lend unless purchasers have substantial deposits, and in U areas it is unwilling to lend at all.

Some of this bank's Capu ratings: G1. Bryanston, Hurlingham, Rosebank, Helderkrum, Auckland Park, Melville, Crown North and Mulbarton G2. Morningside and Rivonia A1. Blangowrie, Kensington, Westdene, Naturena and better parts of Diepkloof Ext, Soweto A2. Bordeaux, Malanshof, Highlands North, Orange Grove, Horizon View, Whipoorie, Albertsville, Mayfar and Malvern, and parts of Diepkloof Ext and Protea North in Soweto A3. Fordsburg, Clairmont, Sofiatown, Booyers, South Hills and parts of Protea North, Soweto P3. Jeppeshtown, Fairview, Troyeville and Vrededorp P4. Wolluter



THYS DILLAART

Broken dreams ... Jotham Mbuyisa, who has been turned down by banks after numerous applications to buy the Jeppeshtown house in the background.

'Comic budget' goes to court

MtG (Bsm) 11-17/4/97 (127)

The Sandton ratepayers' revolt is gaining momentum as 10 businesses take the local council to court, reports **Ferial Haffajee**

THE country's most costly rates revolt in one of its richest municipalities — the Johannesburg suburb of Sandton — is now in its ninth month

And the protest has found a new battleground in the past two weeks as captains of Sandton industry hauled the area's local council, responsible for Sandton and surrounding suburbs, into Johannesburg's High Court, charging that it had illegally levied millions of rands or redistribution to Johannesburg's poorer areas such as Soweto and the sprawling townships of the West Rand.

Not so, says the council, pointing out that the revolt was premised on a fiction; rates were increased so that Sandton now pays exactly the same as others who live in Johannesburg.

And that's 6,45c in a rand; up from 5,5c, which Sandtonites paid before the increase and before changes to local government. Court papers show these were the lowest rates among Johannesburg's four councils.

Sandton enjoyed an indirect subsidy to the rich. We're not even talking about a progressive tax here," says a council source.

Lawyers for the 10 businesses objecting to their rates increase also say the council did not have the power to levy from ratepayers (both residential and business) and then to pass it on to Johannesburg's poorer areas.

Legal mud-slugging aside though, the boycott is biting — the Sandton ratepayers' federation, Sanfed, says the protest is costing the council about R25-million every month.

Sandton is responsible for half the rates raised in Greater Johannesburg.

The protesters' planning station is a small but well-equipped office in one of Sandton's many shopping centres. The tools of struggle copied from the boycotters of old are everywhere: the hard-talking posters lining the walls, the constantly ringing phones, the well-used copying machine (to keep up the media propaganda war) and the stalwart who keeps it all together.

John Lambson has been involved in municipal affairs for longer than he can remember. Like others, he got a shock last year when the rates bill for the townhouse he lives in increased from R137 to R331 a month.

Negotiations with the hapless new councillors came to nought in a suburb where residents were accustomed to being listened to by the old council. "There was little or no consultation. Instead all we got was this comic budgeting," says Lambson.

'Sandton enjoyed an indirect subsidy to the rich. We're not even talking about a progressive tax here'

"Comic budgeting" in this case was a little new South Africa book-keeping. Johannesburg's umbrella council, the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, transferred the surpluses raised in its more flush eastern council, including Sandton, which raised R438-million, and northern council (including Randburg) to others. There's nothing unusual in that.

Gavin Lewis, the editor of *The RDP Monitor* says. "There is definitely a redistributive element in all metropolitan areas."

What troubles local government consultant David Solomon more is the manner in which the increase

was imposed. "Simply doing it that way is not accountable. It's not acting in the public interest."

The Sandton public reacted by either withholding their rates payments completely or paying the old amount with a reasonable increase added (in most cases, protesters paid 20% more).

Sanfed says that in the past two months, more people have started a full boycott, paying nothing at all. But most protesters still tear off the perforated ends of their green accounts, pay their old bill plus a bit and scrawl a note on their accounts to the council: "Payment for portion of rates bill only. I consider the full increase unreasonable."

In August last year, 10 leading Sandton companies, including Liberty Life and Fedsure, stopped paying the increase and decided to take the council to court.

Now they've asked the court to throw out the local council's budget. Critics say that business stands to save millions from its protest. They point out that Sandton's lower rates was a factor in attracting the many businesses away from Johannesburg central.

The case also mirrors the urgent need for new ways of funding local government.

Lewis says councils' ability to raise revenue is limited in the main to dog taxes, car licences and rates. He says this should be expanded to include a percentage of revenues raised per province. "The fund-raising powers of the provinces need to be redefined."

The council's coffers meanwhile get leaner and leaner. And while the huge plastic bowl marked "Fighting Fund" in Lambson's office is empty for now, the boycott shows no sign of letting up.

This week the Sandton residents will chalk up another first as they become South Africa's only protesting community to hit cyberspace with their own Web site.



John Lambson: 'There was little or no consultation' PHOTOGRAPH RUTH MOTAU

Sovejoca found most to blame for violence

BY CECILIA RUSSELL,
MIKE MASIPA AND SAPA

The South Western Joint Civic Association (Sovejoca) is considering legal action against the Froneman Commission, which yesterday found the organisation primarily to blame for the violence which racked Johannesburg's formerly coloured areas earlier this year.

Sovejoca leader Basis Douglas labelled the finding "biased" and an "insult" as it effectively exonerated the police.

"This report smacks of Sovejoca bashing. The wrong actions of the police, who were the main culprits, are nowhere to be seen. They shot our people to pieces," he said.

The Froneman Commission, charged with determining the causes of the violence in which three people were killed and more than 65 injured on February 6, found that although a combination of factors had resulted in the violence, the association had to take most responsibility.

Mr Justice Johan Froneman said in his report that a combination of perceptions about rates and services, and Sovejoca's lack of leadership, had led to the violence. He also said a lack of preparation by the police had contributed to violence escalating out of control.

After hearing testimony from several witnesses, Froneman said he had come to the conclusion that while the police had been shot at in Eldorado Park, he could not say if they had been fired at by Sove-

joca supporters, or a criminal element who had taken advantage of the volatile situation.

Reacting to the findings, Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale said yesterday the riots had demonstrated that "where perceptions (of discrimination) exist, these are more dangerous than the facts".

Even though Douglas knew there were no discriminatory practices against the coloured community, he had "failed to inform or convince his followers that the reasons for the stayaway were not based on fact", Froneman said.

He found that Sovejoca's preparations for the stayaway were "woefully" inadequate.

The police, however, should urgently address the management of situations like that which occurred in Eldorado Park, where there was a complete degeneration into lawlessness, he said.

The IFP, which is closely allied to Sovejoca, condemned the findings of the commission and said it "shied away" from the real cause of the problem.

"I don't believe Sovejoca were to blame for the violence," said IFP Gauteng deputy chairman Themba Khoza.

In its reaction, the ANC endorsed the report and called on the Attorney-General's office to take action against Douglas.

"Sovejoca, and in particular Douglas as leader, should be held accountable for the unnecessary loss of life, injury to innocent people and senseless damage to property," said the ANC statement.

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(127)

Discrimination not

govt policy, says report

Jacob Dlamini

(127)

IT WAS not government policy to discriminate against coloured people, but the perception that such discrimination existed needed to be addressed, a commission of inquiry report on the February rates protest violence said.

The report — released by Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale yesterday — said there had been no evidence to support claims that only blacks had benefited from the writing off of council arrears incurred before February 1994.

The commission, chaired by Judge Johan Froneman, said the council had treated all arrears incurred after February 1994 sympathetically by allowing defaulters to settle their debt over 60 months.

The commission said it could not determine the cause of the violence which erupted when supporters of the South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) clashed with police in Johannesburg's coloured townships, while trying to set up barricades to enforce a stayaway on February 6.

A factor had been the perception among coloured people that they had been discriminated

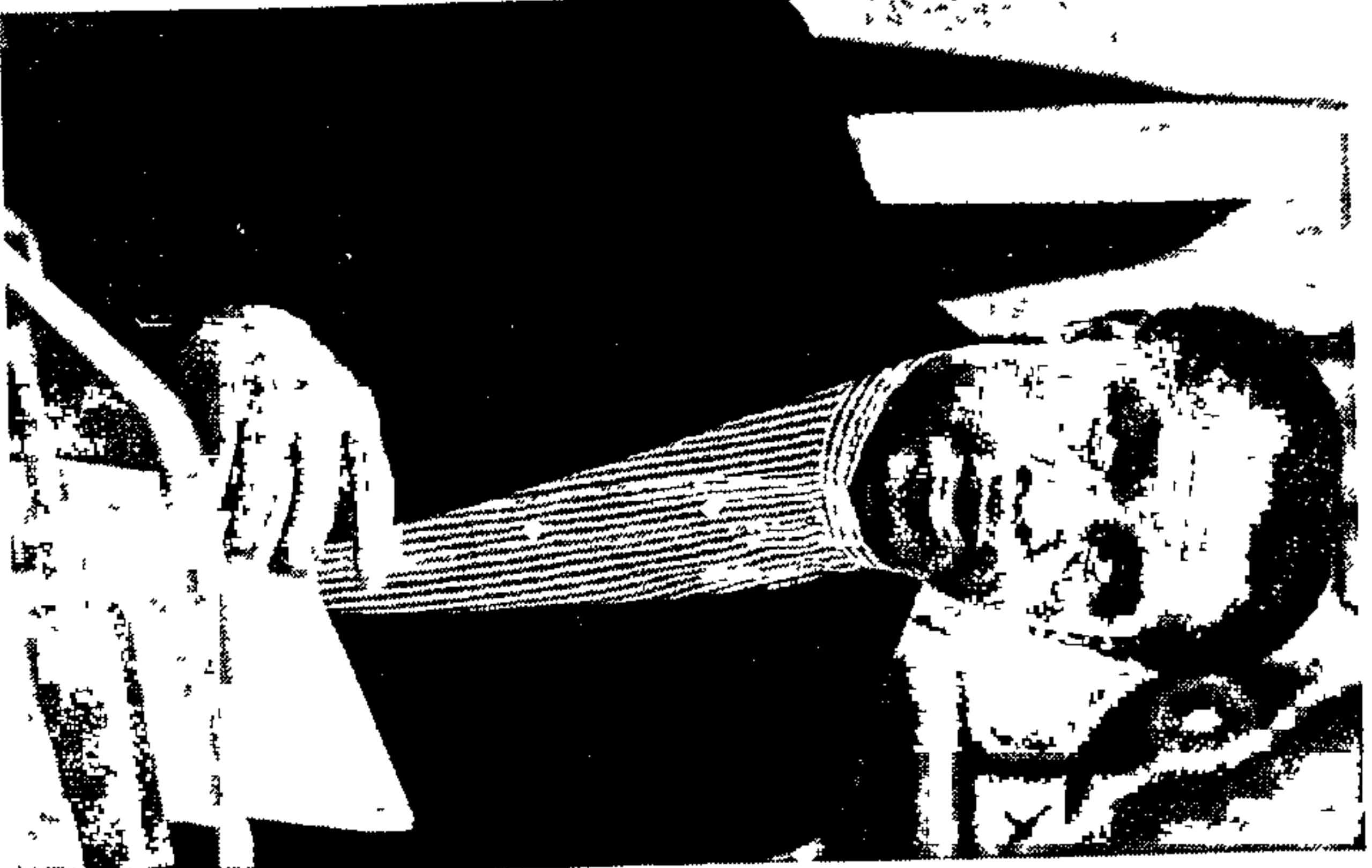
against, but that Sowejoca's claim that pre-1994 arrears in coloured townships had not been written off was false.

The commission found that Sowejoca's planning and control of the stayaway had been "woefully inadequate" and that some of its leaders had been drunk on the day. Criminal elements had taken advantage of the chaos to intimidate people, loot and destroy property. Police had also failed to anticipate the extent of the violence.

The commission said criminal action could be taken against some demonstrators for violating the Gatherings Act.

The commission said there could be no compromise on the council's insistence that residents pay for services nor could groups be treated differently, but flexibility was needed in the application of credit control measures.

The commission said the Gauteng government should address perceptions of discrimination against coloured people, but Sowejoca should also reassess whether its campaign had been justified. Sexwale said his government would ensure all the recommendations were implemented.



Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale releases the report yesterday of the commission of inquiry into the violence surrounding February's rates protest in Johannesburg's coloured townships

Picture TYRONE ARTHUR

... of the Commission of Inquiry into the Violence Surrounding the February Rates Protest in Johannesburg's Coloured Townships

Low-cost housing development a shot in the arm for inner city

Star 12/4/97
BY JACQUI REEVES

Johannesburg's much beleaguered inner city is to receive a major boost with a housing development in and around Albert Street

The Albert Street site will offer low-cost housing to people earning less than R3 500 a month, with units costing an estimated R65 000

The flats will be for rental only and will be administered by a trustee

The site, which previously housed the West Rand administration board, is being donated by the council.

Taffy Adler, chief executive of the Johannesburg Housing Company (JHC), a social housing organisation, said the Albert Street project would get off the ground as soon as the council formally approved the use of the land

"As soon as we have the ratification from the council we can start the development, and about 18 months after that we expect to be housing our first tenants," he said.

Preliminary planning indicates that the site can hold between 150 and 176 two-bedroom flats

The complex will be a four-storey walk-up structure, with the flats averaging 50sq m

Adler said a saving scheme, rather than a waiting list, would be used to select tenants

"We will have to look at a variety of factors such as the person's ability to afford the rent, family circumstances and current accommodation. Rather than use a waiting list, we will be encouraging people to invest in a saving scheme for their housing deposit which will, over a time, help them to

secure their flat," Adler said

The South East Sector project, which covers the area between Commissioner Street, the M2 highway, Smal Street and Harrow Road, was proposed by a private group representing Ampros, Absa, Investec, Kagiso Trust and Liberty Life

The Johannesburg Inner City Development Forum then set up the South East Sector working group to develop the proposals

The JHC, which is also responsible for the Jeppe Oval development, will act as the developer and will take on the development risks

Catalytic project

In a draft report on the project, Graeme Reid, the JHC's executive officer for implementation and facilitation services, said there was a clear need for the provision of affordable housing in the inner city and that the use of the council land held a number of benefits for the community

"The development, which is close to the new Absa development, while being a function on its own will also have an important effect in stimulating other developments and is seen to be an important catalytic project," he said

Adler said the JHC would be converting other buildings to provide more low-cost housing in the inner city

Some of the project's finance will be gained through the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust, but the major portion of the capital will be raised by the JHC.

The project will also seek subsidies from the provincial housing board and the Gauteng government, which has committed R50-million for the subsidisation of inner-city housing

Rates row threatens Thokoza

By ANDILE NOGANTA

(127)
A FRESH row is looming in Thokoza as families displaced by the violence that swept the East Rand township in the early 1990s face service charges accumulated years after they fled their homes.

CP 13/4/97
Hundreds of families are estimated to have each been billed for more than R5 000

It is believed that the families may not know that court judgements were obtained against them after the council issued summonses against them for service arrears.

It has also emerged that the names of defaulters have since been listed in the credit bureau.

The Council last year issued about 1 500 summonses on Thokoza residents who had defaulted on their rate payments.

However, when the papers were served the legal owners of the houses had not occupied their homes for more than over three years.

The summonses were served on IFP families who had illegally occupied houses in the hotly disputed Phenduka section of Thokoza since 1993

Early this year the IFP resisted a court order to evict their members from the houses

The action by the Alberton City Council is likely to stir new controversy over the houses as affected resi-

dents battle to clear their names from the credit bureau list

The council has indicated that affected residents would have to make their own applications for a decision to reverse the judgement.

A source in the council said "the matter is out of our hands now".

Monica Nhlapo, who owns a house in the same area, was angry that she was billed and her name listed in the credit bureau more than three years after her family was forced out of their home.

"Most of the affected area was mostly occupied by elderly people. Now they have been blacklisted for expenses they did not incur. These are old people. They can never afford to pay to get their names written off the credit bureau," said Nhlapo.

She said she only realised that she had been blacklisted when her bond application on a new house in Spruitview was turned down early this year

In a statement the council said it had no way of knowing that the houses were illegally occupied when it issued the summonses.

"It is practically impossible for council to investigate each individual case prior to issuing of a summons to determine the reasons for default. Should there be circumstances as there allegedly are, in the present instance the onus rests upon the owner or legal occupant of the house to bring it to the council's attention timeously or take such action which is available in terms of legislation to protect his or her interest."

Southern ratepayers ready to defy council

(127)

But taking irresponsible advice from new residents' body to pay a flat rate could backfire, council officials warn

BY KARIN SCHIMKE
City Editor

A ratepayers' group representing fairly affluent "white suburbs" in the south of Johannesburg is encouraging its members to pay a flat rate for municipal services, claiming township residents do not pay according to their consumption.

A letter circulated to members of the New South Community Forum (NSCF), which represents suburbs like Glenvista, Mulbarton and Glenanda, states that at a meeting held last month "it was unanimously decided that the community would embark on a flat rate scheme".

"This was in response to the Pretoria High Court's decision that to enforce payment on consumption was unfair discrimination at this time," the letter stated.

The Pretoria High Court ruled early last month that the city council had acted unconstitutionally by charging black residents a flat rate for municipal services while not according white Pretorians the same option.

The Star reported that Johannesburg residents would not be

able to fight the same battle because rates in the rand had been equalised all over Johannesburg.

Hugo Venter, the NSCF's lawyer, said yesterday "The council discriminates against people in traditionally white suburbs. So we want residents to pay what people in townships pay".

Members are advised to pay

'We want to pay what township residents pay ...'

for their refuse, sewerage and water, plus VAT according to the size of their stands. For stands less than 300sq m they would pay R77,52, for stands between 300 and 1 000sq m, R112,86, for stands between 1 000 and 2 000sq m, R145,92, and for stands larger than 2 000 sq m a total of R189,24.

Water is charged at a flat rate of R35. According to the letter, electricity should be paid to Eskom, but property assessment

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rates are included in the NSCF's payment formula. This, said Venter, was because "people in Soweto pay no assessment rates".

Councillors and council officials are adamant this is not the case and have provided documentation as support.

Accounts obtained from Mofolo in Soweto and the suburb of Glenvista indicate that the only difference in charges is water.

In Soweto, residents pay for an "assumed average consumption" because meters are still being installed to measure individual household consumption.

Shan Balton, head of finance in the Southern Council, said: "It is very irresponsible to piggy-back on the Pretoria court ruling when the issues are very different".

Johannesburg property owners had now had their properties evaluated and paid 6,45c in the rand for their rates. Balton was concerned about the wrong information being passed on to ratepayers.

"If consumers follow the advice of irresponsible leaders and then land in trouble," he said, "they should hold those leaders responsible".

Illegal occupants given ultimatum

(127) (Sowetan) Sowetan 15/4/97

By Mokgadi Pela



sterday
interdict

IZENI ZULU

THE Gauteng department of land and housing has issued a week's ultimatum to illegal occupants of houses in Thokoza.

The move follows incessant pressure from the Thokoza Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC) and the local branch of the South African National Civics Organisation.

Spokesman for the department Mr Jubie Matlou said yesterday that if the ultimatum was not honoured "we will use force to remove the illegals".

He confirmed that the department would hold a meeting with the Alberton sheriff to issue eviction orders against those not complying with the directive.

If the move goes ahead, it will bring to an end the plight of more than 600 families who were evicted from their homes seven years ago at the height of the warfare between hostel inmates and residents

The department's ultimatum com-

cides with the apparent willingness of the Thokoza branch of the IFP to speed up the process

Speaking to *Sowetan* at the weekend, branch secretary Mr Petrus Sithole said the IFP wanted a list of those whose houses had been illegally occupied "so that we can assist in returning them to their homes"

The law

Coordinator of the TPDC Mr John Khumalo has reacted favourably to the department's ultimatum, adding "It's time the law protected those whose rights have been violated. We will watch with keen interest to see if the department acts on its threat."

Leaders of the TPDC have in the past called on the Gauteng department of safety and security to provide the necessary protection to "those who have moved into their houses so that we do not experience acts of intimidation from faceless people" Matlou said security was being considered to prevent acts of vandalism and intimidation

Sandton residents lose fight

By Joshua Raboroko

(127)

THE rates battle between Sandton's affluent residents and the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council came to a halt yesterday when a Johannesburg High Court judge ruled against the residents

For nine months Sandton residents have refused to pay rates

Their right to do so was rejected by Judge EL Goldstein in a 24-page judgment

Goldstein found no irregularities in the manner in which the metropolitan council and four of its local councils drew up their budgets

Sandton ratepayers had argued that the council and its four local councils acted illegally and unconstitutionally in drawing up their budgets which meant they (Sandton residents) paid more rates

Their arguments were that the council took money from "the rich to enrich the poor" in its substructures in Alexandra Township other and poor areas They contended that the action was unconstitutional

About 15 percent of Sandton residents and business decided not to pay rates last July

Cost council R60 million

Sandton 15/4/97
The protest action cost the council an estimated R60 million

However, metropolitan representatives said that they introduced the same rates in the local councils, thereby imposing equitable contributions on substructures Sandton fell under the Eastern Council

At a Press briefing in Johannesburg yesterday, provincial and local government executives, including Gauteng MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka, hailed the judgment as "a major victory for local government in South Africa"

Shiceka said the council would introduce various credit control measures, including attaching property and cutting services such as water and electricity, to recover the arrears

GJMC chairman of the executive committee Mr Colin Matjila said the case highlighted the

Peace offerings made to Sandton ratepayers

Council spokesman says authorities are prepared to assist Eastern Council residents who cannot afford to pay rates arrears or the increased taxes they now face

By ANNA COX, CELULA RUSSELL AND FRANS-KRISTENBERG MOVA

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council has made a peace offering to Sandton ratepayers who lost their high court case yesterday when the judge upheld the massive rates hike imposed on them by the Eastern Council.

Chairman of the finance committee Eugene Robson said today the council may find ways to help those who cannot afford to pay arrears arising from the boycott or the new rates.

"We are prepared to meet with Sandton to discuss a safety net," he said, referring to the Sandton Ratepayers' Federation. Sandton meets tonight and the 10 businesses which brought the court action meet earlier today to plan their strategies.

After the judgment, local government threatened to crack down on defaulters, who could lose their properties.

In his judgment, the judge saw, the 10-judge court

stern reproof in bid by the Sandton but set aside a R438-million levy, which represented a 300% increase in rates imposed by the umbrella Greater Johan-

nesburg Metro Council on Sandton's Eastern Council.

He ruled that not only was the levy not unlawful, but that its distribution to poorer municipal suburbs fulfilled the constitution's bias in favour of redistribution from richer to poorer areas.

"The approach I have adopted in deciding that Greater Johannesburg and the various suburbs were empowered to act as they did is consistent with the spirit of the constitution," the judge said.

The ANC-led local authorities welcomed the landmark court ruling with a party last night, and Gauteng Premier Tobyr Seaxvale said it supported the policy of "one city, one tax base".

He added: "The judgment confirms the duty of Government at all levels to accelerate development of all communities and to ensure that the city's resources are equitably distributed".

But Brian Stolzenberg of Sandton said the boycott would continue. Meanwhile, issues such as "unfair valuation of property" still remained unresolved.

Gauteng MEC Sico Sibeke said "the Government expects its income and will pursue credit measures vigorously".

Staff Reporter

Not all rich

Not all the residents of Sandton are affluent and drive luxury cars, says John Lambson, a retired teacher who is dependent on his pension.

An almost 300% increase in rates means he and his wife will have to R331 on their sectional title unit as opposed to R137 a month.

Because he felt so strongly about the "unfair" increases he volunteered to file the Sandton Ratepayers' Federation's application with the High Court.

He said - Staff Reporter



THYS DILLIART
Overcome Marcel van der Merwe, wife of slain Cleveland policeman Thinus van der Merwe, breaks down at her husband's burial in Germiston yesterday

Nov 15/4/97
Police mourn colleague gunned down in street

By ROONEY VICTOR

Police officers and women batted to hold back tears at yesterday's funeral of Inspector Marthinus van der Merwe, who was shot in Kensington, Johannesburg, last week.

Van der Merwe (31) was on patrol with Cleveland station commissioner Senior Superintendent Nick Jones (44) when they stopped to talk to two men. One of them produced a firearm and started shooting, hitting Jones in the chest and shoulder and Van der Merwe in the neck.

Van der Merwe was the sixth policeman from Cleveland to be killed on duty in three years.

East Rand police chaplain Frans Koekemoer, who conducted the service, said many policemen were deeply demoralised at the rate at which criminals were killing their colleagues.

Many police marriages were falling apart under the pressures, and many policemen were drinking themselves to death, he said.

He extended condolences to the family and friends on behalf of President Nelson Mandela and national Police Commissioner George Fivaz.

Sapa reports that Sergeant Dean Gebhardt (24) was shot dead while trying to apprehend two men who had allegedly robbed a woman in a shopping complex at De Dour in the Vaal Triangle yesterday.

403-m litres down the drain daily in Gauteng

Star 15/4/97 (127)

Trickles and dribbles are costing the equivalent of four dams

By BUNTY WEST

Wasted water pours down Gauteng's drains at a rate of 403 million litres a day, according to Rand Water figures

Imminent national water-supply legislation means Gauteng's local authorities, which have been slow to stem the tide of unaccounted-for water because of the costs involved, will now have to get their act together

Rand Water estimates that R390-million is wasted each year just in unaccounted-for water throughout Gauteng

Spokesman George Constantides explained "If the present trend continues, four new dams and their infrastructure will be needed over the next 20 years to service Gauteng. If we can delay building those dams by just one year, we can save R800-million

annually. By reducing wastage and the growth in demand for water, the price of water to the consumer will not rise at such a high rate"

After the recent announcement by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry of tighter controls on water consumption, municipalities will be expected to complete an annual audit on unaccounted-for water

The audit will make it harder for municipalities to pass on debts for wastage to the consumer

According to Basil Bold, a member of the South African Bureau of Standards-appointed technical committee that drew up the new audit regulations, "Gauteng's massive unaccounted-for water bill, which is especially acute in black townships, bears strikingly close parallels with the problems faced in East Berlin after reunification.

"The similarity between the affluent West and impoverished East Berlin and Gauteng's white and black suburbs is uncanny

"In some East Berlin districts it was found that more than 50% of water supplied was unaccounted for. Practically no maintenance work had been done to the city's water system since World War 2

"Meters were not working, if they existed at all, and pipes were badly corroded and leaking. No one seemed to care. After all, water was free, so what did it matter if it went to waste?" Bold said

Berlin solved its problems by first installing accurate meters, especially the main bulk supply meters, at the critical points where water entered districts within the municipal network. The engineers believed that unless metering was correct to start with, there was no way to identify areas of greatest wastage

Sandton rates

war not over

ET 15/4/97 (127)

JOHANNESBURG: Sandton rates defaulters have been threatened with service cuts and other legal measures, including attachment of their houses and properties, as part of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's "get tough" action to enforce the payment of rates.

This follows the Johannesburg High Court's dismissal yesterday of a challenge brought by 10 Sandton businesses against a R438 million levy imposed by the council on its Eastern substructure.

While ANC-led local authorities welcomed yesterday's landmark court ruling against the Sandton rates boycott, ratepayers' groups and the opposition Democratic Party warned that the battle was not over.

The Greater Johannesburg region of the ANC said the ruling was consistent with the Constitution and Gauteng Premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale said it was in support of the policy of "one city, one tax base".

However, Mr Brian Stolzenberg, a spokesman for the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed), said the rates boycott would continue and that other issues like the "unfair valuation of property" remained unresolved.

The 10 Sandton businesses would meet today to chart a way forward.

The metropolitan council's executive committee chairperson Mr Collin Matjila told a media briefing the court's ruling had vindicated the council's policy of redistribution to redress the imbalances of the past. "In a sense the court case was between the old and the new."

Spokesman for Sandton commercial property owners including Fed-sure, Liberty Life and Momentum, Dr Chris Westinghouse, said no decision had been taken on what to do about the court ruling.

Their counsel, Mr Clive Osborn, SC, said his instructing attorneys would read the written judgment before deciding whether or not to appeal.

Gauteng local government MEC Mr Dicelo Shiceka said the credit control measures being considered for Sandton had been used elsewhere in the city and province to end the culture of non-payment.

He described the redistribution policy as a "no principle" and said "Sandton ratepayers must abide by the law and pay what's due".

The court decision was welcomed by the ANC, which also said it was a vindication of the party's policy of "redressing unevenness of wealth distribution".

The DP's Ms Claire Quail called the court decision a "dangerous precedent" which raised serious concerns about administrative justice being ignored. — Sapa

Rates boycotters vow to fight on after landmark court ruling

ARG 15/4/97

(127)

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - As Johannesburg's African National Congress-dominated local authorities welcome a court ruling against the Sandton rates boycott, ratepayers' groups and the Democratic Party are warning that the battle is not over yet.

The Greater Johannesburg region of the ANC said the ruling was consistent with the constitution, and Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale said it was in support of the policy of "one city, one tax base".

It has consequences for local government across the country.

But Brian Stolzenberg, a spokesman for the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed), said the boycott would continue.

The 10 Sandton businesses affected would meet today to chart a way forward.

In his judgment in the Johannesburg High Court, Mr Justice Ezra Goldstein rejected the attempt by the 10 businesses to have set aside a R438-million levy imposed by the umbrella Greater Johannesburg Council on Sandton's eastern council.

He ruled that not only was the levy not unlawful, its redistribution to poorer municipal substructures fulfilled the constitution's bias in favour of redistribution from richer to poorer areas.

Sandton property owners lose rates case

(127)

Bonile Ngqiyaza

IT WAS equitable for the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council's substructures which had surpluses to meet deficits in other substructures, a High Court judge said yesterday.

Judge Ezra Goldstein dismissed an application by 10 Sandton commercial property owners with costs.

The legal challenge by the Sandton property owners was to overturn the budgets of the council and its eastern substructure, and opposed a R438m rates levy imposed by the council on the eastern substructure. The application was brought by 10 Sandton firms, including Fedsure, Metropolitan and Liberty Life, against greater Johannesburg and all four substructures.

Last night Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' Associations (Sanfed) chairman Brian Stolzenberg said the association was disappointed by the judgment, but emphasised it was "only a stumbling block. In the meantime the boycott will continue until every avenue has been exhausted and an acceptable increase put in place".

Eastern substructure CEO Canzi Lisa said the council had an obligation

to implement vigorously the credit control measures it already had in place, which included issuing a warning to residents who had not paid their rates and tariffs after 60 days.

Goldstein said court costs, estimated at R750 000, included the employment of two counsel by the eastern and southern metropolitan local councils. He said the Premier's Proclamation 35 of 1995, which detailed council powers, gave it "the power to levy and claim an equitable contribution from any substructure, based on the gross or rates income of such substructure".

He said the R438m levy fell within this definition. It was equitable, he said, because ratepayers in all four substructures were levied the same rate, 6,45 cents in the rand based on a fair valuation of their properties.

Addressing the power of the council to pay the money, once levied, to the other substructures, the judge said it was a grant to the council, and Proclamation 35 gave the council the power to receive, allocate and distribute inter-governmental grants.

The judge said he was prepared to accept the ratepayers' argument that the council and eastern substructure's

finance committees did not "apply their minds" to the detail of their budgets, nor did they draft and present them as required by section 58 of the Local Government Ordinance. However, the applicants did not contest the respondents' reply that the committees could cause officials to do this for them.

The southern substructure said it was delighted by the court finding. The African National Congress (ANC) greater Johannesburg region said the judgment reinforced the correctness of the ANC's stated policy of a "one city one tax base". The Democratic Party expressed disappointment with the verdict and said it believed there were real grounds for appeal. By making the eastern substructure commercially unattractive, investment would flee from the council and possibly out of the province and the country, it said.

The council, he said, was willing to phase in payments of individuals who could not pay for various reasons, provided they arranged with the substructure's finance department first.

Sapa reports that the ratepayers' counsel Clive Osborne SC, said a decision to appeal would be made after the written judgment had been read.

Pretoria residents rush to pay electricity bills

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — Pretoria residents are rushing to the city council in their thousands to make payment arrangements to avoid having their electricity supply cut

Within seven workdays the council had received about R600 000 in cash, and arrangements to pay R2m had been concluded with the council, treasurer Mare-Lise Fourie said yesterday

The council's plan of action — which began in February and involved ap-

pointing outside contractors to assist it with disconnecting the electricity supply to defaulters who owed a total of more than R300m — was disrupted by a fire last month which destroyed an entire section of Pretoria's municipal headquarters

However, the action had resumed at full speed on April 3, and was progressing well, Fourie said

She said 268 accounts had been investigated since April 3, resulting in

Continued on Page 2

Pretoria

Continued from Page 1

the termination of electricity supply to 251 clients. In addition to the R600 000 cash payments received in the first week of resuming the action, clients indicated that another R900 000 would be paid this week

The council said that in the week preceding the fire, about 3 000 clients approached it to settle their arrears or to make special arrangements. Howev-

er, the amounts involved in that period were not available.

"We want to recover all our debt and therefore flexible arrangements, suited to the financial position of clients, are being made," Fourie said.

The council said in February that arrears in the substructure had reached R298m, of which about 70% was outstanding from defaulters in the traditionally white areas.

About R500m will be paid to the city by insurance companies to cover the losses sustained in the blaze, which was started by a faulty light fitting

Sandton businesses still to decide on whether to appeal

(127) Star 16/4/97

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) will continue its rates boycott until residents decide otherwise because Monday's Johannesburg High Court judgment addressed only one aspect of the dispute when it dismissed the case of 10 businesses against much higher local taxes.

The chairman, Peter Harmsen, says it was agreed last night at an executive committee meeting that the court decision did not address the community's objections to the non-uniform basis on which valuations are done, nor the unfairly discriminatory differences in charges being levied by the local authorities for water and electricity services.

Sanfed represents 24 associations and started the boycott in protest at increases of about 300% imposed by the Eastern council in June last year and a hike in commercial rates by up to 385%.

Harmsen said the meeting recommended that representatives "confirm with their associations that the rates boycott would continue until a settlement was reached or until the outstanding issues as listed above are satisfactorily settled, which discussion Sanfed will endeavour to initiate". Sandton businesses say they have not reached a decision on whether

to appeal against the high court judgment earlier this week which dismissed their application to have the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern councils overturned.

Business spokesman Chris Westinghouse said the group of commercial property owners, which includes Liberty Life, Commercial Union and Sanlam, met yesterday, but would only reach a decision early next week.

He said the commercial property owners were not associated in any way with Sanfed.

The Greater Johannesburg council yesterday made a peace offering to Sandton rates boycotters and offered to find ways to help those who could not afford to pay arrears arising from the boycott or new rates.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said that this was all Sandton residents ever wanted.

The DP has lashed out at ANC councillors for holding a party earlier this week to celebrate the court victory.

DP leader Claire Quail said: "This is appallingly arrogant. How insensitive to spend ratepayers' money on celebrating their defeat."

Eastern council communications officer Keith Peacock confirmed that the party had been held.

Replacement for 'go to Lucifer' councillor to be named next week

By FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
City Desk

The IFP and the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) will decide next week who will replace Basil Douglas as a councillor in the Southern council, according to IFP leader Themba Khoza.

Douglas, who is an IFP councillor and Sowejoca leader, lost his seat in the council after he refused to pay the R1 900 debt he owes the council.

Instead, he told the council to "go to Lucifer" and that he was not going to go "down on my knees" and ask for an extension to pay off

Star 16/4/97
the account

He is the first councillor in the Southern council to lose his seat since the council decided on tough action against rate defaulters.

Southern council executive committee chairman Prema Naidoo said that legally councillors who were more than 90 days in arrears automatically disqualified themselves as councillors.

Douglas accused the council of "selective morality" by naming him and not divulging the names of four other councillors in arrears.

"We support the stance taken by Douglas and believe he is being sin-

(127)
gled out because he is from Sowejoca and IFP," said Khoza.

Naidoo said Douglas was not at the council meeting where the council made public the names of councillors in arrears.

The council's head of finances, Shan Balton, said the four had made arrangements to pay their debts.

Douglas said the council was using "divide and rule" tactics by making him pay for his services while he encouraged Sowejoca members in mainly coloured areas not to pay until the council had scrapped rate arrears accrued before the 1994 general elections.

The spark that ignited Eldorado Park

Sowejoca, local government and police provided the components of the 'rates riots' and this was fuelled by a misconception by the poor section of the community

By Cecilia Russell

There was little to remind the small group of spectators, who gathered each day to listen to the Fromeman commission of inquiry into the violence which characterised the "rates riots" in former coloured townships in February this year, of the mayhem which wracked their communities

The finely crafted oak tables and the quietly-spoken witnesses at the commission presided over by Mr Justice Johan Fromeman were far removed from the black smoke of burning tyres, teargas and the sound of gunfire which typified the South Western Joint Civic Association-called stay-away

The spectators heard how three elements - Sowejoca, local government and the police - came into a crucible

Together they provided the chemistry which led in February to the wildly-emotional chaos in Eldorado Park and other predominantly coloured areas in which three people died and countless others were injured

This "depressingly familiar" images of chaotic civil unrest must be seen in a new context of a transforming South Africa, said Fromeman in his report

"This transformation (from apartheid to democracy) is a complex and difficult one and is not necessarily assured of success by virtue of good intentions alone. The events of, and leading up to, February 6 illustrate this point," said Fromeman

Much of the commission's testimony centred on perceptions and misconceptions held by Sowejoca supporters. These included perceptions about how the poorest sector of the coloured community viewed itself and its role in the local political arena in the post-apartheid era

In the 18 months since the local elections, the poor of the coloured community perceived that they had fallen between the

cracks of the formal political groupings. While they had played a part in the struggle which led to the demise of the apartheid regime, they believed they were not "black" enough to benefit from post-apartheid affirmative action and not "white" enough to already occupy powerful social and economic positions

The commission heard how this sector of the community was poised to be manipulated by a small but vociferous civic association whose leader, Basil Douglas, as a councillor for the Southern council, had the knowledge and background to allay fears - but who chose to heighten them

Three separate incidents - the removal of illegal occupants at the Delft Housing project in Eldorado Park, electricity cut-offs to defaulting consumers in Nigel and Popcorn Valley, Reiger Park - involving three different local authorities gave Sowejoca the evidence it needed to confirm its belief that coloured people were being targeted

A demand for a flat rate for all, the immediate scrapping of all arrears, and free services for the poor, became Sowejoca's rallying cry in the days preceding the stay-away

The facts were different from these perceptions and Fromeman could find no evidence to suggest "coloureds" were being unfairly discriminated against

The event itself was marred by a lack of organisation both by Sowejoca and the police and the violence intensified when the criminal element took advantage of this situation

Although there was not enough evidence to prove that Sowejoca "planned the event in such a way that invited violence", the events of the day could not have, with the "woefully inadequate preparations" be orderly and peaceful. Frome-

man found

The police had underestimated the possibility of violence even though both Eldorado Park and Westbury had a history of violence, said Fromeman

"Although the kind of random chaotic violence and looting is not easily contained at the best of times, it is conceivable that had stronger measures been taken earlier in the day the uncontrolled chaos could have been contained," he said

Douglas was particularly criticised for being conspicuous by his absence in Eldorado Park as the violence intensified

Police witnesses implied he was a coward. He left Eldorado Park when it got too hot to handle, on a pretext he was desperately needed to prevent further disaster in Noordgesig

At the time the situation in Eldorado Park was so out of control the police had called for reinforcements from all other areas, including Noordgesig

Fromeman was kinder in his assessment, but did say unequivocally that Douglas and Sowejoca should accept responsibility for its actions

While the Government had an obligation to address the perception of discrimination against minorities such as the coloured people, Sowejoca is obliged, by the commission's findings, to fully and publicly participate in the "culture of payment"

The success of the commission's findings relies heavily on the goodwill and participation of Douglas and Sowejoca. Fromeman asks them to "prove their critics wrong"

But even before the commission's findings were announced Sowejoca's leader had disqualified himself as a councillor by not paying his rates and service arrears

Does Sowejoca want to prove its critics wrong?



NATASHA PINCUS

(1a7) Star 16/4/97

Confrontation ... a Sowejoca supporter arguing with policemen during the violence in Eldorado Park in February when protesters and police were involved in running battles before order was restored.

Weiler's Farm to get R10-m

(127) (270) Sowetan 17/4/97

By Joshua Raboroko

WEILER'S Farm, an informal settlement situated about 45 kilometres south of Johannesburg, is to be turned into a "modern township" with basic services and communal amenities

Gauteng housing and land affairs department has allocated R10 million to upgrade various projects, including land acquisition, community participa-

tion, pre-planning investigation and establishment of 4 800 residential sites

Presenting his budget in the legislature this week, Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said the upgrading would be introduced by the government together with the Weiler's Farm Thuthuka Foundation and the Greater Johannesburg Southern Metropolitan

Local Council.

The project would be started this year and completed in 1999, Mofokeng said, adding that similar projects would be undertaken in other informal settlements

The more than 2 500 families of Weiler's Farm have been without basic amenities since the settlement was established in 1986 when the community was permitted to settle there

Soshanguve residents end five-year bond boycott

BD 17/4/97 (127)

PRETORIA — A five-year bond boycott by Soshanguve residents near Pretoria was resolved yesterday with the signing of an agreement between the residents and Khayaletu Home Loans (KHL)

Mediated by the Mortgage Indemnity Fund, the accord provides for an assessment of the bondholders' houses to identify building errors. Owners will be able to have such defects rectified and their loans adjusted.

They can also opt to have their bonds credited with the

amount such repairs will cost.

"All loans will be renegotiated on an individual basis, taking into account the financial circumstances of each household and a new house price will be determined," MIF managing director Nkululeko said at the signing ceremony, which was held in Soshanguve.

The Soshanguve residents' boycott was started in 1992 because residents had complaints about the workmanship of the houses they had bought. They contended that the houses were

not worth their purchase prices.

KHL managing director Siza Khampepe said his organisation had provided bond finance totalling R6m to 141 clients in the area. Between 60% and 80% of them had been withholding their bond repayments over the past five years.

"KHL did not build these houses, but inherited the problems created by the developers," Khampepe said.

Soshanguve mayor Oliver Lukheleni expressed confidence that the agreement would re-

store a culture of payment in the area.

"This settlement will do much to increase investor confidence, and thereby facilitate new development in our township," he said.

Khampepe said that KHL had financed bonds totalling an amount of R1,5bn for about 30 000 houses throughout the country since 1988.

"We have lost between R250m and R300m through bond boycotts over the past five years," he said — Sapa

SANDTON RATES CASE

KILLING THE GOLDEN GOOSE

(127) FM 18/4/97

Business could start fleeing Sandton. That's the warning from National Business Initiative director André Fourie, following this week's judgment by the Johannesburg High Court in the Sandton rates case and a threat from Gauteng's MEC for local government, Sicelo Shiceka, to "get tough" on Sandton's rates payers who don't promptly cough up the arrears they owe the Johannesburg metropolitan council.

"Most of the businesses which challenged the Budget were previously in the Johannesburg central business district. If they now feel isolated, there is nothing to stop them from moving further north, say to Midrand," says Fourie.

It is therefore imperative, he believes, that both the council and business realise they have the same vision for the city and that talks can produce an amicable solution.

An Institute for Democracy in SA (Idasa) spokesman confirms the legality of Shiceka's threat — that if the property owners' appeal is not successful, the metro

can expropriate property. He recommends that rates payers offer "a sort of phased-in programme of rate hikes."

Shiceka dismisses suggestions of a business flight from Sandton. "There has been no rate increase in Sandton for the past six years," he says. "All we are doing is levelling the playing field. What is happening in Johannesburg will happen in Midrand and any other area."

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' Associations (Sanfed) treasurer Brian Stolzenberg points out, though, that the attachment of houses can occur only through a protracted legal process for which, he believes, the council is not prepared. Sanfed has vowed to continue not

paying the full rates amount. The judgment, Stolzenberg says, is a mere setback.

The Democratic Party's Claire Quail and KwaZulu-Natal local government MEC Peter Miller say the court's decision sets "a potentially dangerous precedent" and raises serious concerns about administrative justice being ignored. "It needs to be tested against the administrative justice clause in the Constitution," Quail believes.



Sicelo Shiceka pay up or face tough consequences

According to Professor Shadrack Gutto of the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Applied Legal Studies, the judgment affects several areas of constitutionality.

The first is that Judge Goldstein clarified that any form of measure taken to rectify historical imbalances is not necessarily unfair. Gutto says the correctness of Monday's judgment was boosted by the fact that two similar cases of differential rates, in Krugersdorp and Port Elizabeth, produced similar judgments.

He says the property owners' court challenge had been important in that it shows officials cannot take decisions without thorough consultation and neither can they ride roughshod over ratepayers.

Still, the judgment means businesses and individual ratepayers will have to pay the increased rates. "If they don't, there are measures which can be taken against them. The big corporations will pay and the individuals will have to follow."

Idasa's spokesman says there's no dichotomy in the fact that areas like Soweto have payment levels of about 25%, while Sandton, where payments are reported to be near 90%, would be partic-

ularly targeted to pay.

"One has to look at the capacity to pay. In black areas, payment levels are increasing, and should rise still further under the encouragement of the Masakhane campaign," Justice Malala.

POLICY DIRECTION

DIVERGING LINES

There's no power struggle between himself and Public Enterprises Minister Stella Sigcau for control over Transnet, insists Transport Minister Mac Maharaj.

"Any differences which may have arisen at different times at the most reflect on what happens in any debate," he says.

Public Enterprises spokesman Wandile Zote finds it inconceivable that Maharaj could wage a power struggle as he is part of the Cabinet which adopted the restructuring process. "If there were tensions or any misunderstandings, the inter-ministerial Cabinet committee on restructuring is the platform where they would be ironed out so that the public hears one voice," he says.

Maharaj says the two ministries have recently reached common ground on restructuring the relations between the SA Rail Commuter Corporation (SARCC), of which he is the shareholding Minister, and Metrorail, which falls under Sigcau. Metrorail has been moved out of Spoornet and is being established as a separate business unit within Transnet.

But co-operation is not always evident, say the National Party and Freedom Front. Both have long argued that for the sake of planning and efficiency and to remove the unnecessary duplication of skills, all modes of transport should fall under the Transport Minister.

An example of the poor planning that results because they don't is that SA's R7bn road maintenance backlog is compounded by considerable traffic in heavy freight, while railway lines are closing because of the lack of freight.

The NP's Danie Streicher says he

limit is exceeded. We are also precluded from designing multistorey buildings, and from tendering for State work from the Public Works Department."

A practising architect, Igor Kabalin, thinks technologists are whingeing unnecessarily. Most of the work available nowadays falls below the 500 m² category, he says. "Moreover, government is changing densification policy. The 500 m² cut-off point should not be regarded as a major obstacle."

Greater sympathy comes from Herbert Prins, a member of Saca and past president of Saia. He agrees with Scott-Hayward that there is a need for change.

"Technikon courses were intended to train technicians, not architects. But over the years the tech courses have become more comprehensive and Saca recognises this. Saca needs to inspect the content of the technikon courses and, if they are found to be of acceptable standard, to accredit technikons." He suggests Saca should allow formal and informal methods of entry, through universities, technikons and private colleges.

"What is important in the public interest is competence and mobility. Various levels of competence should be defined and opportunities created for individuals to acquire enhanced skills and move from the lowest levels of professional recognition to the highest."

Saca has formed a subcommittee of the built environment council, with Saia on it, to consider the registration of technologists.

"There is no time frame on it," says Scott-Hayward, "because we will do what it takes to ensure the changes are fair and comprehensive."

Currently, to be registered as architects with Saca, members must be university graduates. That entails six years of full-time study and an additional two years of practical training in an architect's office.

Technikon graduates study for a four-year Bachelor's degree in technology. However, technikons will soon introduce a six-year MTech. *Margot Cohen*

INNER CITY HOUSING (127)

CHEAP AT THE PRICE?

FM 18/4/97

The main target market for new inner city housing development is lower-middle and middle income singles and couples wanting to rent small units. This is the finding of preliminary research by the Johannesburg Inner City Housing Up-

grade Trust, funded by local government and Anglo American Property Services.

But the research has discovered that occupants of such units (two bedrooms and less) are paying lower rentals than conventional calculations suggest they can afford. Is it because they refuse to pay more in a deteriorating physical environment? Or could it be because of other pressing spending needs? Operations manager Mike Oelofse says further research will depend on the provision of more funding.

The study has established, from a sample of 1 250 households in an area stretching from Fordsburg in the west to Jeppes town in the east and taking in Hillbrow and Joubert Park, that the average inner city household income is R2 851. "Current rentals average R691/month



Inner city accommodation would residents pay more if they received more?

for a one-bedroom unit," says Oelofse. "This excludes rates and water charges. But based on an average household income of R2 685 in one-bedroom units, and based on the World Bank's 30% affordability rule of thumb on housing, these occupants could afford R800/month for such a unit, plus R200/month for electricity and other services."

About 82% of the 111 000 people living in the inner city are renting. Vacated flats are quickly filled by new tenants.

Amid the debate about how best to tackle urban renewal, the trust is seeking to find out whether newly built rental accommodation would be economically viable. At less than R700/month for a one-bedroom flat, it would not be.

The trust believes, however, that other factors are distorting the market. More attractive surroundings to blocks of flats, for example, might boost rents.

And the survey shows crime, hawkers, squatters and taxi violence are more often cited as threats to property values, and the desirability of living in the inner city, than landlord-tenant relations or problems pertaining to flats or flat buildings themselves.

Half the households surveyed complain rentals are too high. Oelofse suspects "the reason for this perception of

high rentals is that the vast majority of the respondents are former (black) township residents who are comparing city rentals with the substantially lower, heavily subsidised rentals on houses they were used to in the townships. Markets, however, have changed."

Contrary to perceptions of overcrowded flats, Oelofse says about 70% of flats surveyed are occupied by three or fewer people, 31% of the total by two or fewer. Only 11% of all units are shared by more than one household, and only 8% of the sectional units surveyed are sublet.

Oelofse admits, however, that overcrowding is difficult to measure. "If two adults occupy a single room, that is considered overcrowding. But not if they are married. What the research did establish is a correlation between the occupation by four adults of one bedroom and shoddy conditions in the building. But this occurred in only 7% of households."

He says the value of the research is that it challenges the view that the inner city is the place to accommodate the very poor. By contrast, it is the lower-middle and middle income markets that need to be catered for.

"We have also established," he adds, "that poor jobseekers, often from the rural areas, do not want to live in the inner city. They prefer to live outside the city provided they can have their families with them and can own a piece of land on which to build their own houses at a pace dictated by their budgets."

Alison Goldberg



Living in hope .. Banginkomo Nene hopes that the R10-million to develop Weilers Farm will improve his life. The Gauteng government has provided the money to build basic infrastructure in the area.

Happiness as R10-million turns settlement into proper home

(127)

Star 18/4/97

By FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
City Desk

For Banginkomo Nene (78), this week's allocation of R10-million by the Gauteng Housing and Land Department to turn Weilers Farm - an informal settlement south of Johannesburg - into a township has been worth the wait.

He cannot remember the year he arrived, only that it was during the days of a white man called "Majazana".

The fact that a new clinic will be opened in the area tomorrow

has given locals hope that their stay here will be permanent.

The clinic will complement a mobile clinic that makes rounds twice a week and will render services free of charge.

The R10-million will help about 2 500 families acquire the land they have been living on. Some have been there for up to 17 years without owning the land.

Majazana was the late owner of a farm named "Weilers" that has been expropriated by the Gauteng government.

The provincial government and the Southern council have

joined hands to upgrade the area, with the Gauteng government providing the land, and the council providing services.

Southern council town planning head Norman Prince emphasised that the money was not meant to build a new township, but to upgrade existing facilities.

He said the council would be employing consultants to see whether it was feasible to have a township in the area.

Housing and land affairs spokesman Jubie Matlou said the money would be used to provide sewerage, stormwater drainage

facilities and running water to the 4 800 sites in the area.

He said the number of sites to be serviced was deliberately more than the number of existing sites so that families using Weilers Farm as a temporary site would also have services.

Residents will be happy to know that the plan will result in much-needed jobs. This means Nene may not have to eke out a living by selling traditional beer.

Local people will, through the community-based Thuthukani Foundation, be involved in planning how the money will be used.

Homeless immigrants say Sanco is exploiting them

(127) (227)

Tenants in abandoned factories object to being charged up to R200 a month for accommodation with no toilet facilities

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

A row has erupted between people living in unoccupied factories in Marlboro and the Alexandra branch of the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco)

The tenants, mainly immigrants, claim that Sanco is exploiting them by charging them up to R200 a month for small, partitioned sections of the factories. Sanco in turn claims that it is protecting the tenants against unscrupulous people who collect money for landlords.

Twenty one factory owners in Marlboro are renting their premises out to homeless people. There are hundreds of vacant factories. Owners abandoned them because of the high crime rate in the area.

Most of the factories being let out have no water or electricity,

and few have toilet and bathroom facilities.

Tenants would not talk to The Star yesterday because they are mostly immigrants and fear reprisals. They claim they are threatened if they are late with their rents.

Sanco, however, says it stepped in because factory owners had appointed people to collect money and these people were exploiting tenants by charging up to R400 a month.

Said Alex Sanco secretary Philemon Machutela: "We stepped in because we got complaints about the high rentals. There was no relationship between tenants and owners."

"We managed to get nine lease agreements signed. Each of those buildings now has a management committee which decides on rentals, water and electricity payments. No one pays more than a

maximum of R200," he said.

Sanco had also recently formed a housing association and was looking at converting some empty factories into proper flats, said Machutela.

He said four factory owners had indicated they were willing to sell. Sanco was negotiating with local and provincial authorities to get money to buy the buildings, but if this fell through, they would apply to banks to finance the purchase, he added.

"We have proved that people are willing to pay. If they get better accommodation and services they will pay. We don't want to see the industrial face of Marlboro destroyed. We want to see it as a mixed use area. If there is a residential component, crime will drop. We want to encourage investment in the area so we can provide jobs for the people of Alexandra," he said.

Star 18/4/97

Invasion threat spurs action

TOM HOOD

(127) (204)

ST(CM) 20/4/97

THREATS of land invasion by homeless people has spurred Cape Peninsula councils to step up the hunt for housing land

The number of homeless in the Peninsula is estimated at 106 000 families — more than the combined populations of Bellville, Goodwood and Grassy Park

Funds of R1,2-billion are available from an integrated serviced land project planned to meet the needs of 40 000 households. But only R209-million has been spent in the last two years, it was revealed this week.

The 106 000 families are living in squatter settlements, backyard shacks and overcrowded conditions, according to James Slabbert, director, project execution, in the Western Cape Department of Housing.

The Cape Metropolitan Planning Committee this week discussed the shortage of housing land and a government request to help find land that could be acquired.

Slabbert said about 15 000 housing sites would be provided this financial year from total spending of R330-million from RDP funds.

There was a dire need for industrial land with nearby housing for Marcom Beam-style projects, said Slabbert.

Committee member Daphne King warned that squatters could move into Bishopscourt and Rondebosch Common unless the provision of housing land was speeded up.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Rates battle won, the war is far from over

Local government should be getting in touch with the needs of ratepayers rather than delivering bulk services and infrastructure, writes Steven Friedman

(127) BD 21/4/97

HAVING won a battle against Sandton busi-
nesses in the courts, lo-
cal government in Jo-
hannesburg is still a long way
from winning the war.
Indeed, its battlefield problems
remain so great that it is time to
question whether the war is worth
fighting at all.

The war in question is city gov-
ernment's attempt to run Johan-
nesburg in the same way as it has
been run for decades — but this
time for all its residents.

This means raising revenue
from rates and service charges
and using it to provide bulk ser-
vices to residents — and develop-
ing the infrastructure which
makes it possible to provide ser-
vices to the majority.

The court judgment might have
saved Johannesburg's govern-
ment from a setback which might
have made it impossible to raise
money from richer parts of the city
to pay for services in poorer ones,
but it has done little else.

The boycotters are still paying
what they like and council war
talk notwithstanding, will proba-
bly continue to do so.

Nor is the council any nearer to
extending and improving services
to Johannesburg's majority than
before the ruling.

One among many reasons is
that servicing the city's existing
infrastructure — most of which is
in the suburbs — is costly, eating
away much of the council budget.
Salaries and perks do their bit too,
but their effect, while negative, is
largely symbolic. As central gov-
ernment places pressure on local
government to live within its
means and councils battle with
the same capacity problems as
other levels of government, it is in-
creasingly difficult to keep subur-
ban services ticking over, let alone
to extend them.

Even if it were clever to allow
the suburbs to run down so that
the former townships could be ser-
viced — and it is not — the council
would still not be able to service
the underserved. Many are not
paying in the townships either
and councils may lack capacity to
provide them with adequate ser-

vices, even if they have the money.

The dominant approach to this
problem is to find ways of making
new councils do what old councils
did better. This means the stan-
dard "capacity building" formula
— better financial management sys-
tems, more technical skills and
training in conventional ways of
running local government.

There is nothing wrong with
improving the skills of new coun-
cillors and officials — although
governing is about experience and
there is a limit to the extent to
which that can be passed on in a
training course.

It is unlikely that beefing up
administrative skills will produce
a magical way of getting users to
pay or conpire up ways of paying
for extended services. Johannes-
burg is by no means the only city
facing a financial crisis.

Besides which, the old methods
worked well for councils dealing
with affluent voters who lived in
neat suburban streets and did not
need local government to do more
than keep things ticking over.
Councils now have to do far more
than that among other things,
they have to build a new relation-
ship with voters either cynical
about local government after
apartheid-inspired experiences or
hostile to it because they believe it
no longer represents their inter-
ests. And they have to serve areas
lacking most of the basics which
old councils were maintaining.

Simply helping councils to do
things in the traditional way will
not equip them to deal with their
new circumstances.

There is another response — to
question whether the council
should even be trying to mimic its
predecessors by delivering bulk
services and infrastructure.

For decades in this country we
have assumed that the purpose of
local government is to deliver ser-

vices — under apartheid, councils
were prevented from doing just
about anything else. While the
new constitution grants local gov-
ernment far more leeway, govern-
ment policy documents still tend
to assume that this is what coun-
cils are there for.

The real reason for electing lo-
cal government is surely to make
sure that our interests are repre-
sented locally. Representing local
voters does not necessarily mean
running water and electricity sup-
ply or building infrastructure —
particularly when doing so places
such burdens on councils that
they cannot do much else.

Looking after local interests
does mean ensuring that everyone
gets affordable services of accept-
able quality, but that does not nec-
essarily mean operating the sup-
ply systems. Councils could hand
over that function to others, but
retain the power to regulate stan-
dards, prices and the like.

Mere mention of this idea is
enough to enrage the SA Munici-
pal Workers' Union, which is mo-
bilising to block arrangements of
this sort. Nor is it alone in seeing
them as an attempt to privatise
services so that the affluent con-
tinue to receive them and the poor
continue to do without.

This misses several points. The
first is that the service does not
have to be transferred to a private
provider. Eskom remains a public
utility and whatever its flaws,
knows far more about the electric-
ity business than most councils.

The second is that there are
services which, if farmed out to
private providers, need not go to
large businesses in Carro,
garbage removal is handled by
grassroots family concerns.

The third and most important
is that this approach does not ask
local government to abdicate re-
sponsibility for the service. Coun-

cils which took this route would
not be getting out of the way of
the contrary, they would have
become good at doing some things
which they do not do now.
Most of these are essential to man-
age the city's development.

No longer administering ser-
vices might also force the council
to address its most important
task: building a relationship with
local residents and interests in
which they co-operate to encour-
age the city's development.

Ideas about government in oth-
er parts of the world suggest that
it is far more likely to be effective
if it regulates rather than pro-
vides. This frees it to concentrate
on its core function — seeing to it
that voters get the services they
need — rather than on the details
of running a large water or elec-
tricity business.

This approach could also build
on the apparently successful ef-
forts of some local governments in
countries such as Brazil to take
their cities forward by building al-
liances with trade unions, busi-
nesses and local citizens' groups.

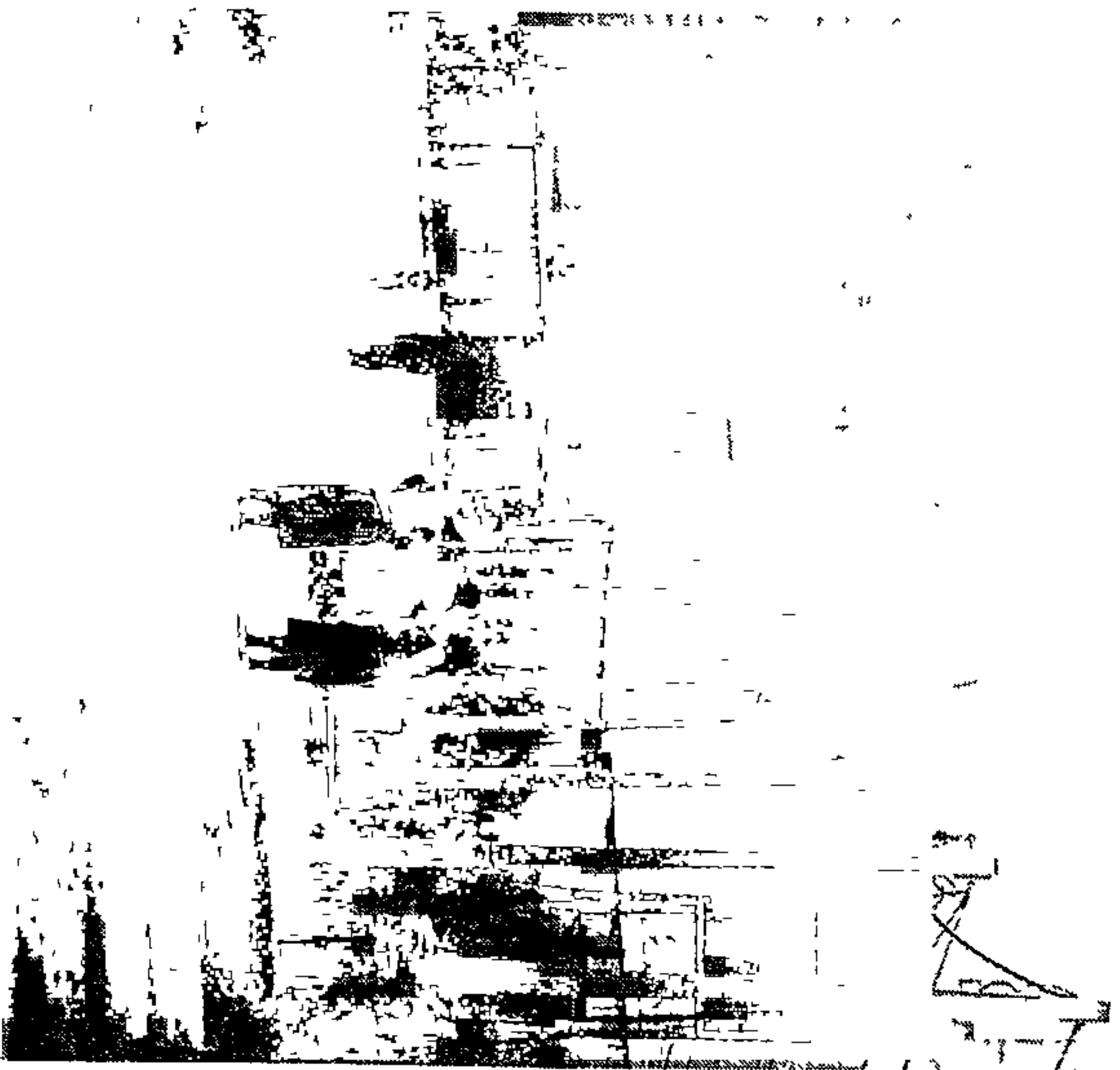
Most important of all, it allows
local government to do what it is
there for — represent the e who
elected it — rather than to serve
as a mega-project manager.

Johannesburg and other big
city councils may not be up to this
job. It requires the ability to rep-
resent people effectively, the ma-
jor parties distil out many of
their council seats to people re-
warded for party service, not those
with close links to the grassroots.

It also requires political skills
which have not been in evidence
during the northern suburbs boy-
cotts: the council's chief response
has been to do nothing, presum-
ably because it does not know
what to do.

One advantage is that services
continue to be provided, even if
the council does not play its role.
And, if local voters do not get the
quality and price they need, they
will know who to blame and what
to do about it.

We need local governments
which are in touch with their vot-
ers and the needs of their cities.
Absorbing much of their time and
effort in watching over large,
cash-strapped, delivery business-
es is likely to ensure that we do not
get them.



Regulating rather than providing would free government to concentrate on its core function — seeing that voters get the services they need.

Plight of 600 to end with a homecoming

Sowetan 22/4/97

By Mokgadi Pela

THE planned eviction of illegal occupants of houses in Thokoza this week will bring to an end what has been a bitter but worthwhile cause for over 600 families in the East Rand township.

The decision to evict the illegal occupants is the direct result of persistent pressure by the Thokoza-Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC) and the South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco).

The plight of the displaced people started seven years ago when over 600 families fled their homes at the height of internecine warfare between hostel inmates and residents.

The displaced people said the Alberton Magistrate's Court decision to evict illegal occupants from their homes was "God's will and a clear indication that He has heard our prayers".

They said they wanted to return to their homes to reconnect with their ancestors. "We want to go back to our homes so that we can have inner peace," said an outspoken Paulina Zwane (67)

They waged a long struggle to return to their homes and even petitioned President Nelson Mandela in an attempt to highlight their plight. They did not stop at that - they also stopped all development in Thokoza.

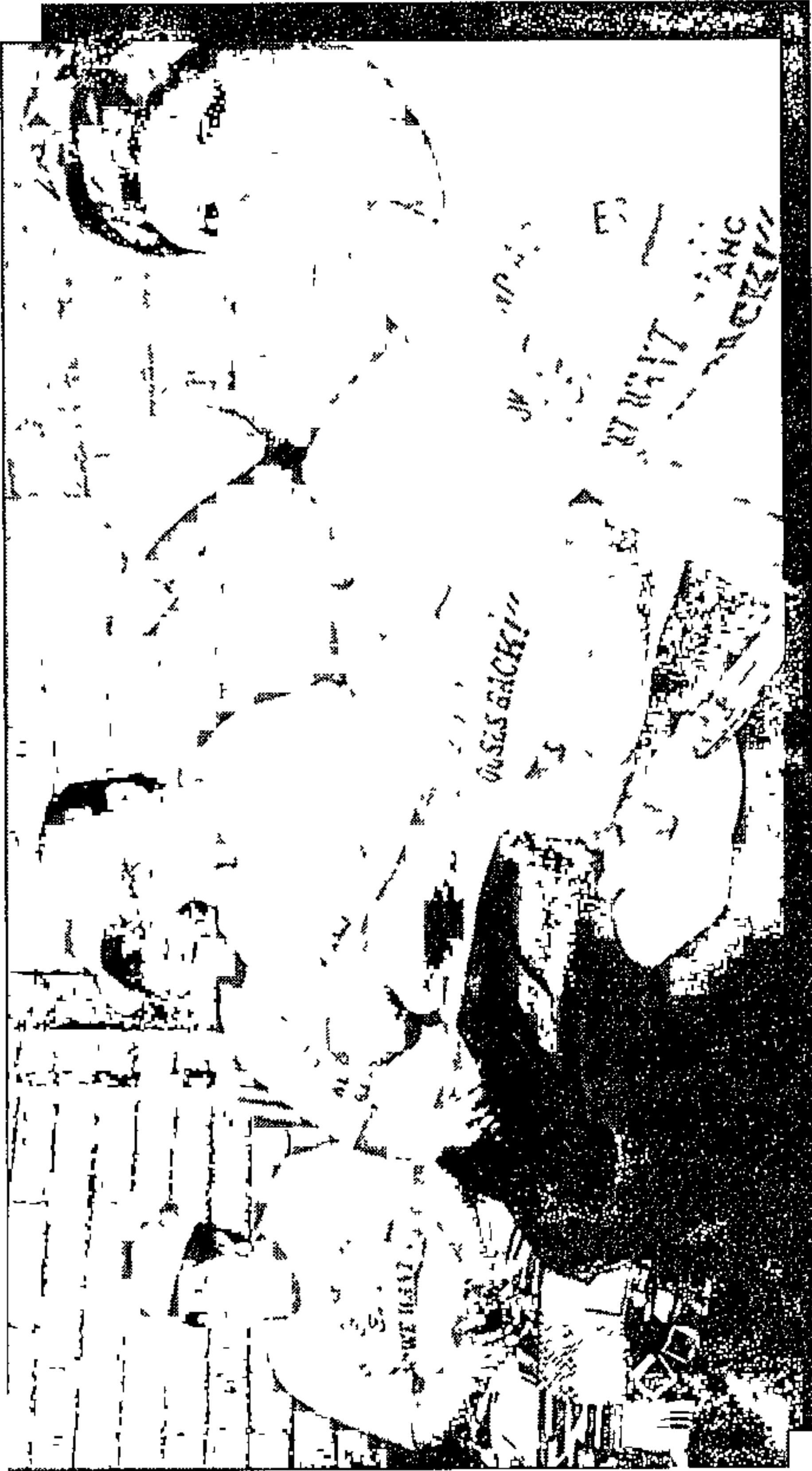
In addition they recently disrupted an African National Congress branch annual general meeting due to have been addressed by Gauteng MEC for land and housing Dan Mofokeng.

Mass action

They sought - and received - the support of Sanco. The civic organisation threatened "mass action until the displacees are returned to their homes", including consumer boycotts and stay-aways.

Since they fled from their homes, many displaced people have been staying with relatives and friends, or in church yards, halls and even literally in the veld.

Members of the TPDC, led by Sam Theron and John Khumalo, have paid tribute to these peoples for persevering with their efforts to convince the authorities to evict illegal occupants



Flashback ... Members of the Thokoza-Phenduka Displacees Committee at a meeting in Thokoza earlier this year to discuss their plight.

"All credit should go to the tireless spirit you showed over the years, hence the Government realises it has no option but to deliver on its election promises," Khumalo told them.

"We have always known that good will finally triumph over evil."

People spoken to in the area on Sunday said "We had lost all hope of returning to our homes. But now we see that there's movement. The illegals have realised that they can't stop the tide of justice."

Their comments followed a recent

flurry of meetings between members of the TPDC and representatives of the illegal occupants.

"We are committed to speeding up this process for the sake of peace and stability in Thokoza," said their representative, Sipho Mbatha, at a meeting of the two parties at PR Maphanzela Higher Primary School on Sunday.

"We think we can do this ourselves without involving the forces of law and order."

However, the displaced people - through the TPDC - insist that the

forces of law and order "are a necessary component for restoring stability in Thokoza".

They also called on police and the security forces to act harshly against anyone who frustrated the return of people to their homes. They urged the Gauteng Ministry of Safety and Security to provide security.

If no security is provided for people returning to their homes, they said, "Thokoza could go back to square one where criminals call the shots and intimidate law-abiding citizens."

Wrangle over rates increases jeopardises Greater Jo'burg's finances

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Greater Johannesburg's public finances are on the brink of collapse after the decision by the National Party and the Democratic Party yesterday to withdraw their support from the ruling ANC which needs their votes to pass the 1997-98 budget in June.

Their decision follows last week's ruling against Sandton businesses in which the High Court dismissed an application to overturn the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern councils because of business rates increases of up to 385%

The businesses are due to meet today to discuss whether to appeal against the judgment.

The ANC needs a two-thirds majority - 40 votes - to pass the

NP and DP withdraw support

budget in the east. It has only 31 councillors at present. If the DP, which has 19 councillors, and the NP, which has six, vote against it, it will not be passed. Even if the remaining three IFP and two

independent councillors vote for it, the ANC will not be able to muster 40 votes.

Both the NP and DP have said they will not support any rates increases because of residential rates increases of up to 285% in Sandton last year, which resulted in a rates boycott by residents that is still continuing.

The NP said yesterday it would vote on and approve the budget only if there were no rates increases and if tariff increases were limited to market-related adjustments, with additional funding coming through savings and management efficiency.

NP regional chairman Darryl

Swanepoel said the party had decided it would not approve the 1997-98 budget unless its conditions were met.

He said the NP was calling for social upliftment, especially in the Alexandra area, and was insisting on an equalisation of, or at least material progress towards, equalisation of services across the whole of the Eastern council area.

Capital spending should also be in the direction of social upliftment and 60% of the capital budget should be allocated to Alexandra. At the same time, the budget should ensure the maintenance at least of existing service levels across the area, Swanepoel said.

The NP is also calling for funds to be allocated for the provision of infrastructure that will promote public safety and security, such as by-law enforcement, street lighting, traffic-calming measures, security speed-checks, secured parks, extended traffic policing and community-based security measures.

DP budget spokesman Mike Moriarty said: "We will oppose any budget which has not been drawn up by its own council and where tariffs have not set by the councils themselves. We also want the redistribution of the levies to be done proportionately between all the councils."

Zimbabweans must still

carry IDs

Harare - The police could still demand identity cards from Zimbabweans, despite a recent landmark Supreme Court ruling declaring it unconstitutional, police commissioner Augustine Chihuri said in Harare yesterday.

Ziana news agency quoted Chihuri telling diplomats in Harare that police could still use a section of the National Registration Act, which he cited, to demand identity cards.

He said it was still illegal not to carry an identity card. The Supreme Court ruled recently that a different section of the act was unconstitutional.

Chihuri said he appreciated the reasoning behind the Supreme Court judgment and would ensure that the existing and remaining laws in respect of identity cards would not be implemented arbitrarily but "judicially and reasonably" - Sapa.

Ratepayers want R25-m back

(127)

Housing-land deal that won't work is costing R375 000 a month in interest

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Kelvin and Buccleuch residents north of Johannesburg want the Office for Serious Economic Offences to investigate the Eastern and Greater Johannesburg councils' payment of R25-million to Wits University for a property called Frankenwald, next to Alexandra.

In March last year, the auditor-general found that the sale of the land was invalid because the Department of Finance had not granted the then regional services council permission for its purchase. There was also uncertainty over a clause in the Alfred Beit Trust, which originally owned the land, which stated that the property had been donated to Wits University for

educational purposes.

The councils tried to take transfer of the property last year despite the auditor-general's findings, but Kelvin and Buccleuch residents applied for an interdict to the then Rand Supreme Court to stop the transfer just before the court hearing, the council gave residents an undertaking that the transfer would not proceed.

Resident Jim Powell from the Triangle Communities Association (Kelvin/Buccleuch) said that if the money had already been paid, the councils should have demanded the money back from Wits right after the auditor-general made his findings known. Powell claims the council is losing R375 000 a month in interest on the money.

"We believe the handing

over of the money is illegal and contrary to the undertaking given at the Supreme Court by local government," he said.

The land is destined for low-cost housing and commercial development. But although the money has already been paid, the council does not yet own the property and cannot begin development.

Kelvin and Buccleuch residents claim the purchase will result in the Greater Johannesburg council paying seven times more for Frankenwald than for other land for low-cost housing. The services will cost about R100-million and the maximum subsidy for 4 000 people will be R60-million.

"Depending on densities, this will deny about 24 000 families land to build homes on because the money will have

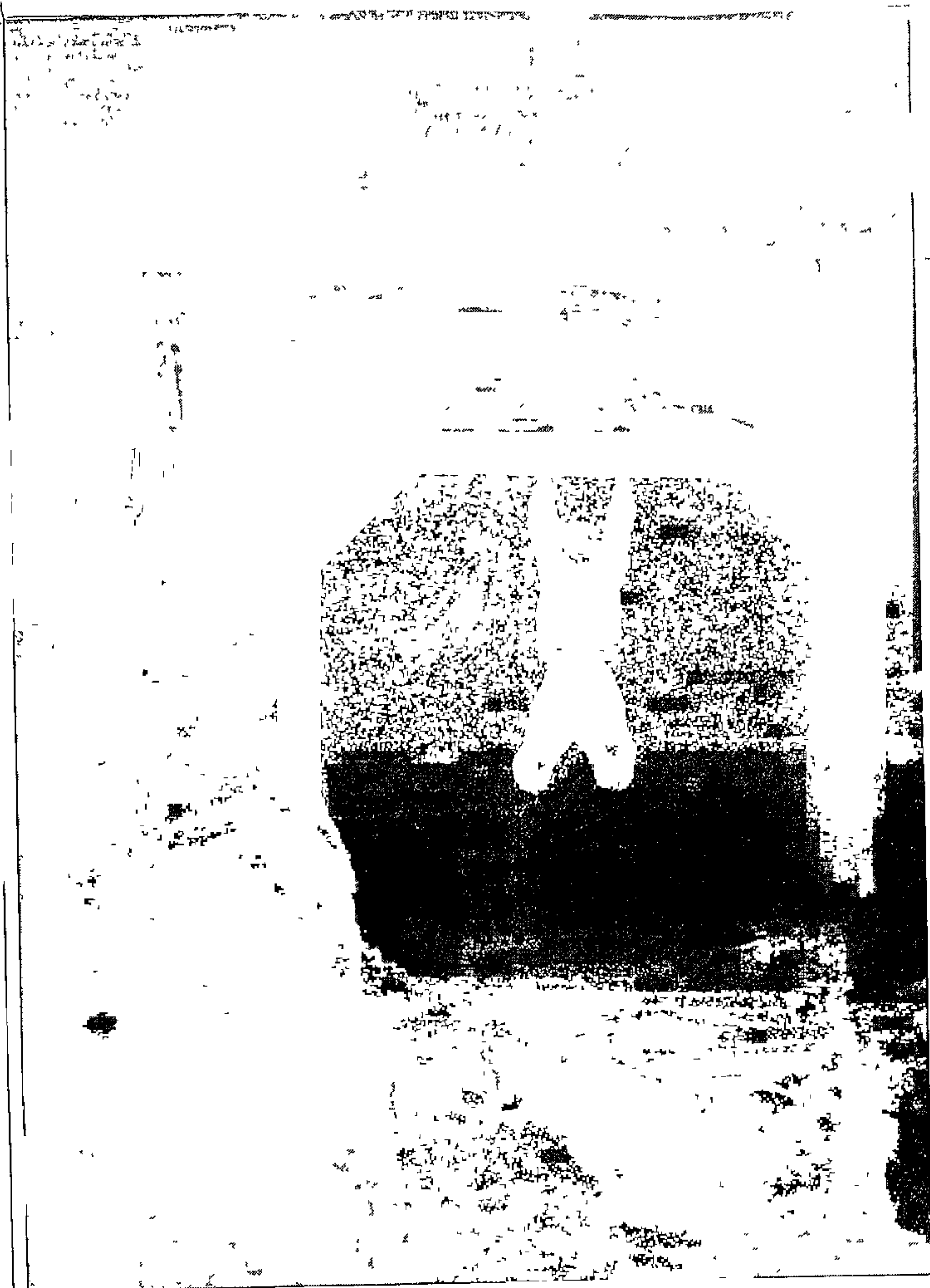
been wasted on Frankenwald," said Powell.

Residents also claim the proposed low-cost housing will devalue properties in neighbouring areas by about R300-million. They want a science technopark to be built to provide employment, and education and training facilities for Alexandra's underprivileged.

Eastern council executive committee deputy chairman Sol Cowan said the money had been paid to Wits University early last year in terms of the agreement to purchase before the interdict application.

He said he could not comment on why the money was not returned to the councils. Attempts by The Star to get comment from the Greater Johannesburg council failed.

Star 23/4/97



Dirty games . . . Dobsonville children play in a stormwater drain dug last year to build a road, but construction has just resumed, five months after the road was supposed to have been completed

New contractors to complete Dobsonville road

By **FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA**
City Desk

Johannesburg's Western council has appointed new contractors to complete the reconstruction of a busy Dobsonville, Soweto, road which was supposed to have been completed in November

Council deputy chairman Simphiwe Nanise said the previous contractor hired to build a new stormwater drainage system along Main Road produced work of a low standard, prompting the council to cancel the contract

Nanise, who is also a local ward councillor, said council technical staff had warned that the concrete used could collapse under heavy traffic

Construction work started in May and was initially supposed to be completed in six months

In October, the owner of the construction company responsible for the incorrectly fitted pipes admitted they were behind schedule and blamed a sub-

contractor for delivering inferior-quality concrete

In spite of this, the council paid the previous contractor R2,3-million for the delivery of pipes and for laying the foundation for the pipes

The complete job will cost the

66
It would not
happen if
this was a
white suburb

council R5,9-million, including the money already spent

The area now resembles a war zone with about a kilometre-long trench-turned-rubbish dump running in front of houses

Pipes are lying about carelessly and dangerously along the

pavement, preventing easy access for cars and pedestrians

Since the Main Road was a busy taxi route, taxis have had to resort to using a bumpy road behind the chaotic street

Rusty road railings are falling apart and some are used as bridges to walk across the trench.

The latest construction is expected to be completed by September

Residents living along the street complained about injuries to their children who have turned the trenches into playing fields

They are also upset at the inconvenience the delayed construction work had caused

"People have opted to throw their litter into the trenches because refuse trucks don't come here anymore," said Robert Baobuditse

"These people had pipes right in front of my gate which we had to walk over to get into the yard," he said, adding that this would not happen "if this was a white suburb"

Sandtonians angry over 'discrimination'

(127) # CT 24/4/97

JOHANNESBURG Sandton residents are furious at what they claim are discriminatory credit control measures being pursued by the Eastern Council

The council has sent out 8 269 final notices to boycotting Sandton residents, but only 199 to Johannesburg residents and not one to defaulting Alexandra residents

Although Sandton only owed

18,3% of the total debt of R278,5 million, 97,6% of final notices were sent to its residents. Johannesburg residents, who owe 75% of the council's debt, received only 2,3% of the final notices and Alex residents who owe 5,5% of the debt, got no notices

While it was common knowledge that residents of Alex were the longest outstanding debtors

and Johannesburg had the largest amount of outstanding debt, the administration had attacked Sandton residents to make the point that those who opposed the ANC would be crushed, Democratic Party Eastern councillor Mr Frans Bicker-Caarten charged

But Eastern Council communications officer, Mr Keith Peacock, said it was never the council's

intention to use discriminatory measures

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' spokesman, Mr Brian Stolzenberg, said: "These figures show that the boycott was in full swing and we are still encouraging people not to pay their rates until a settlement had been reached with the authorities" — Own Correspondent

● See Page 14

Thousands to get homes in handover scheme

(127)

Sowetan 25/4/97

By Josias Charle

ATTERIDGEVILLE and Mamelodi residents who qualify for ownership of their rented houses, have been urged to register and complete the necessary forms for full ownership

This follows a cooperative undertaking between the City Council of Pretoria and the Gauteng provincial government to facilitate the transfer of rented council houses to tenants

In Atteridgeville there are 2 700 and in Mamelodi 3 800 such houses

Residents have been urged to lodge their claims as soon as possible because the closing date has been set at August 31 this year

Rightful owners will qualify for

a "discount benefit" of up to R7 500 a property, which the state has made available as part of its policy to pursue home ownership for all

This discount will in most cases cover the price completely, so that there will be no need to pay anything more, according to council spokesman Mr Tommy Thompson

Existing purchase

"The discount is also available to settle a balance owing to the council on an existing purchase," Thompson said. Residents who have already paid off their houses are not affected

The Pretoria Housing Transfer Bureau opened its doors this week in two townships where tenants and

purchasers of state-funded houses may complete the claim forms

Tenants of rented houses may buy the house with the land on which it stands at a price based on the historic cost

"A detailed procedure has been negotiated to handle all claims in a fair, transparent and efficient manner in cases where records may be inaccurate, out of date, suspect or in the event of tenants having died, leaving a widow or other heirs," Thompson said

In cases where there is a dispute, the matter will be settled via legal adjudication

Residents in the Witwatersrand and Vaal areas have already benefited from the handover scheme

The pride of home ownership seen as only solution to decay

spreading through Berea flatland

By JACQUI REEVES

(127)

Standing in Rodger Chadwick's garden in Berea, Johannesburg, takes a fair amount of courage and a strong stomach

A quick look through the garden reveals empty bottles, scraps of paper, shards of broken glass and the odd used condom littering the area

Chadwick has also, in the past, come across used hypodermic needles which have been thrown on to his roof and lawn

The 16-storey building that looms over Chadwick's home appears to be the main source of the mess

"People just throw their rubbish over the balconies and into my garden. They also seem to enjoy ripping tiles from the floor and 'flying' them on to my roof," he says

The struggle to keep his home tidy has finally become too much for Chadwick and he's moving to Orange Grove at the end of this month

Chadwick says his experience in Berea has been the slow decline and degradation of the area, but he refuses to blame just sloppy tenants and unscrupulous landlords

"The problem goes further than just the landlord and tenant. The problem is getting the constituencies to meet and get to know their ward councillors, who can then take on issues and take them to the politicians, and then secure some action."

Chadwick has on numerous occasions approached ward councillor Norman Reed about the decline of the once sought-after stretch of upmarket apartments with sweeping vistas of the city. But little has been done

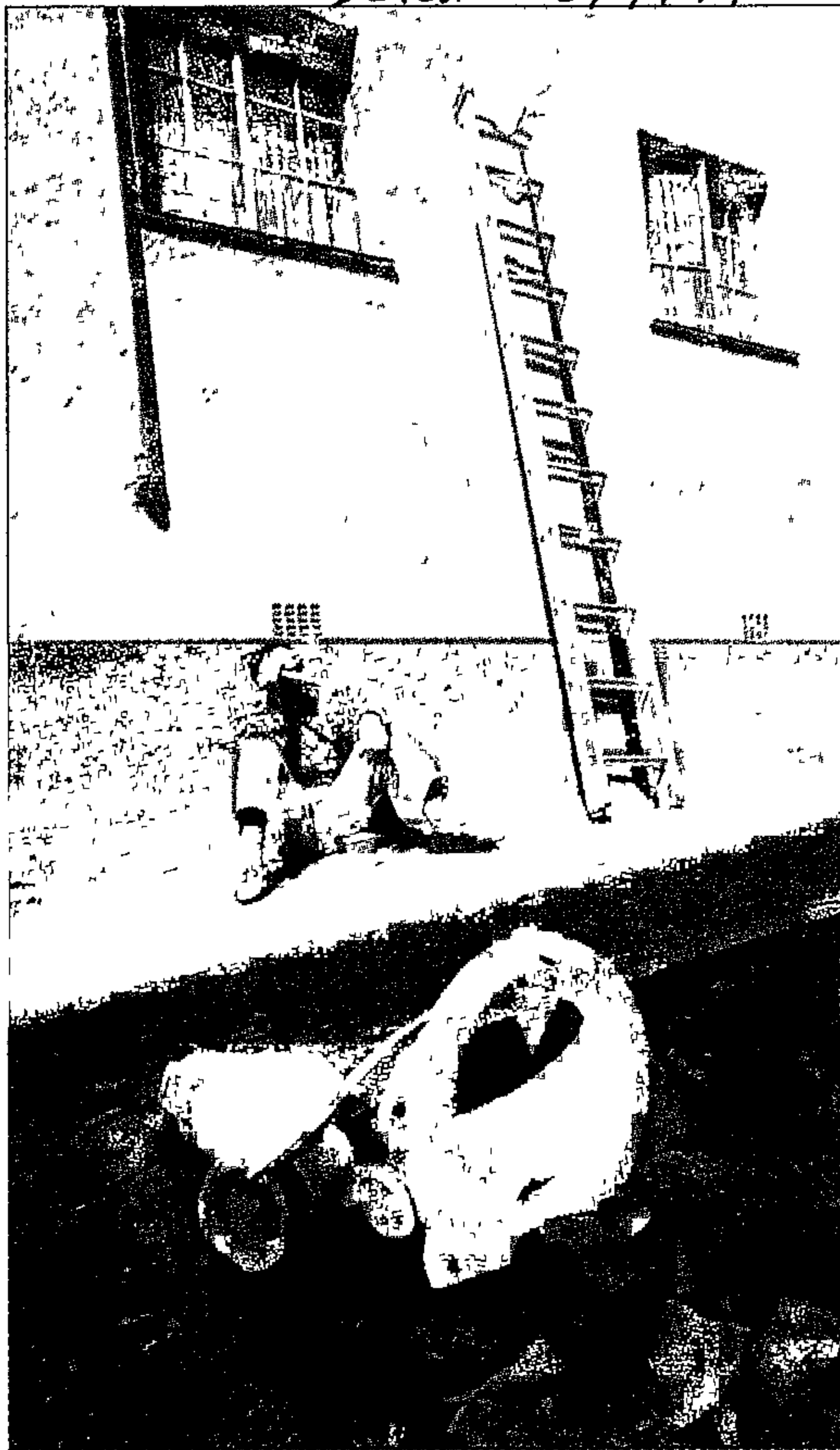
"I am leaving Berea, not because I want to, but because I am not seeing any improvement in the area. I have tried the route of the ward councillor and have written to higher authorities, but nothing seems to change."

After repeated attempts by the *Saturday Star* to contact Reed, the councillor finally agreed to meet on Wednesday. He didn't keep the appointment

Chadwick's attempts to set up projects to improve Berea have been spearheaded by one philosophy - he believes that the way to improve inner-city suburbs is to encourage ownership rather than a culture of leasing

"Ownership is a way to improve the responsibility each individual feels for his or her home and is also an easy way to improve security and health conditions in the area," he says.

Until recently, however, buying a home in Berea has proved a difficult task. In the past, the area was unofficially "red-lined" by banks



MESSY ISSUE: The rubbish-strewn streets of Berea have become too much for some residents who say they have had enough

PHOTOGRAPH CATHY PINNOCK

and lending institutions. The area was considered too risky to invest in - the institutions' chances of ever getting their investment back seemed minuscule.

This all changed last week with the extension of the Mortgage Indemnity Fund (MIF) to Berea

The fund, which was set up in 1995, is a government-owned entity that offers to take the risk if a bank is unable to get adequate returns on its investment

The fund should, however, not be seen as a saving grace. It can be used only once the banks have exhausted all legal avenues to reclaim the amount owing or the land itself

MIF managing director Nkululeko Swazi says the fund aims to keep finance flowing. "The fund needs to maximise the flow of finance for housing in previously

disadvantaged areas and to help restore normality"

Swazi says that the more the fund pays out, the clearer the signs are that the due processes of law are breaking down. He believes projects such as the MIF can restore the banks' faith in Berea and other areas in the grip of urban decay

Another development introduced by the MIF is that banks can no longer simply refuse a bond without citing adequate reasons.

Commercial risks, such as poor credit ratings of buyers, are still beyond the MIF's control, but banks will no longer be able to hide behind the "bad area" excuse

In the almost two years since its establishment, the MIF has not had to pay out any claims and has provided cover for 91 000 bonds across the country.

Tenants' and workers lock horns in squatter's den

STAFF REPORTER

Lake ants attracted to a sugar cube, Hillbrow and its environs have attracted thousands of people who dreamt that some sweetness could be found in Johannesburg a job, a place to stay, a future.

Sadly, many who were told of the Golden City arrive to find their hopes dashed, the rumours of wealth and jobs an urban legend.

But even before the quest for work begins, all hopefuls have first to find a place to live. Consequently, thousands have no option but to accept the exploitation of landlords. For many, the journey to Johannesburg exhausts both spirit and resources, but there is no turning back.

Many of Hillbrow's residential buildings are in an appalling state, yet hundreds of people live there in shocking conditions. There is no alternative for them.

Tenants live under unhealthy conditions either because they are being exploited by their landlords, or they are locked in disagreements with their landlords over unpaid services, resulting in partial or no delivery.

The *Saturday Star* visited several Hillbrow flats to gauge the response to the recent announcement that a Residential Landlord and Tenant Bill had been tabled by the Gauteng legislature.

The bill clarifies landlords' and tenants' rights and provides guidelines on their mutual conduct.

Did tenants know about the new bill, and were they aware of their rights?

Caroline Court, a residential block of flats at the corner of Caroline and Clain streets in Hillbrow, is in chaos as far as tenant conditions are concerned. If residents' claims are anything to go by, then almost every aspect relating to unfair practices, as outlined in the bill, have been flouted by their landlord.

the changing of locks, the paying of deposits, evictions, the issuing of receipts, forced entry and obstruction of entry, reconstruction or refurbishment work, overcrowding and general health matters, intimidation, lease contracts and general nuisances.

Anyone can enter Caroline Court at will. There is no security system at the entrance, the lock was removed a long time ago. This is also the case inside the building.

"Several women have been raped. Rapists take advantage of the lack of locks on the bathrooms and strike while females are bathing," claimed Antonia Ngeqa, spokesman for the building's residents.

Tenants also said there were identical locks to rooms and there had been instances in which people had opened others' rooms, using keys to their own rooms. Besides those who live in proper flats, there are others living in rooms that are subdivisions of flats.

Kicked in doors

The shared facilities, which include toilets and bathrooms, are overcrowded. Residents queue to have a bath. There are no sinks, and residents get drinking water from the bathtub taps, using buckets.

The cost to live here?

Livingstone Duma, who lives in one of the rooms, paid R375 for rent and services for February. His room is small for the R300 rent he pays for it. There is no wardrobe or sink.

Residents complained that their landlord, who lives in Pretoria, had on occasions invaded their privacy, kicking in doors to check on the number of inhabitants occupying certain flats. Residents also complained about a central water-reading meter, which meant water charges had to be divided equally between tenants. They protested that individual tenants consumed different amounts of water. And after claiming there



TIGHT SQUEEZE: Tiny rooms are the order of the day in Hillbrow's flatland

PHOTOGRAPHS CATHY PINNOCK

their monthly rental and services slips, tenants of the building said this week they would ignore the increase.

In his response, Eckart Sunkell told the *Saturday Star* he manages the building on behalf of someone else. Responding to some of the allegations, he said he did not avoid confrontation with tenants, as they alleged, because he could only visit the building fortnightly because of other commitments.

He also said he had already bought paint to renovate part of the building. Sunkell said water charges at Caroline Court were between R10 000 and R13 000 a month, including VAT. In cases

R13 000, he had to fork out R3 000 from his own pocket.

"In a way to be fair, I now divide this R3 000 by the number of tenants so that they pay for their own extra expenditure."

Sunkell said rents at Caroline Court had not been increased since 1994. Although he had sent out letters to residents warning them about the impending increases, the tenants said these had not been sent in time.

As for surprising residents in the early hours of the morning, he said "If I give notice that I will be coming, the tenants will send away their illegal counterparts, who are contributing to the extra water charges. There have

alleged there are only two in a flat, when they are many more."

Another block in poor condition is Wynfontoy Court in Nugget Street.

It can best be described as a hostel, since there are common facilities that residents share. The building needs to be fully renovated. Windows are broken, there are no lights in passages, and many toilets have been closed, meaning the functional ones are overused.

A Hillbrow ANC official who contacted the landlord (the *Saturday Star* has his name) said he had been told "You might be the ANC but the building's mine." It can't be doubted that the

habitation

The last building visited was Hospital Hill, just opposite Hillbrow Hospital. It has a leaking roof, too few lights, broken windows, and, in the event of fire, there is no way tenants can escape to safety, since the fire-escape stairway is damaged, with several stairs missing.

A tenant from the block of flats said, "I pay R650 for my room, while those with smaller rooms pay R450. This is too much since we do all the cleaning and oversee all there is to maintain ourselves."

The landlord also avoided discussing issues concerning his building's horrible state, the tenants added.

Contacted for comment, the owner of the block, Basil Vassile Alevras, said he no longer wanted to meet the tenants because they had let him down for a long time.

He added there was no money for renovations because the tenants were not paying.

"They owe me money and they owe the council money in unpaid services." These includ-

ed electricity, water and refuse rates. The total amount owed to the council was about R270 000, he said.

Alevras added "They told me I could not get my rental money because they had put it into a trust and would only release it after I talked to them. I found out there was not even a third of the total amount I was owed."

At the end of the telephone interview, Alevras asked to be quoted and said "The tenants can go to hell."

Dismay

The local-government ANC office in Hillbrow expressed dismay at the state of affairs at Caroline Court. "Some people do not have access to cold water and are living under horrible conditions," said Christine Walters, ANC councillor for Hillbrow.

The new tenant-landlord bill, however, also proposes the establishment of special landlord/tenant bodies to resolve disputes involving rental dwelling units. This will be overseen by the Department of Housing and Land Affairs.



THROWN OUT: Tharide Khele stands on a mound of rotting carpets that were thrown away behind

(127) Star 26/4/97

Once sought-after suburb

succumbs to inner-city blight

ART 26/4/99

(127)

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – Standing in Rodger Chadwick's garden in Berea takes a fair amount of courage and a strong stomach.

A quick look through the garden reveals empty bottles, scraps of paper, shards of broken glass and the odd used condom

Mr Chadwick has also, in the past, come across used hypodermic needles thrown on to his roof and lawn

The 16-storey building that looms over Mr Chadwick's home appears to be the main source of the mess

"People just throw their rubbish over the balconies and into my garden. They also seem to enjoy ripping tiles from the floor and 'flying' them on to my roof," he says

The struggle to keep his home tidy has finally become too much and Mr Chadwick's moving to Orange Grove at the end of this month

He says his experience in Berea has been the slow decline and degradation of the area, but he refuses to blame just sloppily tenants and unscrupulous landlords

"The problem goes further than just the landlord and tenant. The problem is getting the constituencies to meet and get to

know their ward councillors, who can then take on issues and take them to the politicians, and then secure some action."

Mr Chadwick has on numerous occasions approached ward councillor Norman Reed about the decline of the once sought-after stretch of upmarket apartments with sweeping vistas of the city. But little has been done

"I am leaving Berea, not because I want to, but because I am not seeing any improvement in the area

"I have tried the route of the ward councillor and have written to higher authorities, but nothing seems to change."

After repeated attempts to contact Mr Reed, the councillor finally agreed to meet on Wednesday. He didn't keep the appointment

Mr Chadwick's attempts to set up projects to improve Berea have been spearheaded by one philosophy – he believes that the way to improve inner-city suburbs is to encourage ownership rather than a culture of leasing

"Ownership is a way to improve the responsibility each individual feels for his or her home and is also an easy way to improve security and health conditions in the area," he says

Until recently, however, buying a home

in Berea has proved a difficult task. In the past, the area was unofficially "red-lined" by banks and lending institutions. It was considered too risky to invest in the institutions' chances of ever getting their investment back seemed minuscule

This all changed last week with the extension of the Mortgage Indemnity Fund (MIF) to Berea

The fund, which was set up in 1995, is a government-owned entity that offers to take the risk if a bank is unable to get adequate returns on its investment

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He believes projects such as the MIF can restore the banks' faith in Berea and other areas in the grip of urban decay

In the almost two years since its establishment, the MIF has not had to pay out any claims and has provided cover for 91 000 bonds across the country

Fear and loathing in the flats of

Hopeful jobseekers forced to live in shockings

OWN CORRESPONDENT

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Sadly, many who were told of the Golden City arrive to find their hopes dashed, the rumours of wealth and jobs an urban legend.

But even before the quest for work begins, they have to find a place to live.

Consequently, thousands have no option but to accept the exploitation of landlords. For many, the journey to Johannesburg exhausts both spirit and resources, but there is no turning back.

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The Weekend Argus's sister newspaper, the Saturday Star, visited several Hillbrow flats to gauge the response to the recent announcement that a Residential Landlord and Tenant Bill had been tabled by the Gauteng legislature.

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If residents' claims are anything to go by, then almost every aspect relating to unfair practices, as outlined in the bill, have been flouted by their landlord.

Bones of contention include the changing of locks, the paying of deposits, evictions, the issuing of receipts, forced entry and obstruction of entry, reconstruction or refurbishment work, overcrowding and general health matters, intimidation, lease contracts and general nuisances.

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He also said he had already bought paint to renovate part of the building.

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Another block in poor condition is Wynntonjoy Court in Nugget Street. It can best be described as a hostel, since there are common facilities that residents share.

The building needs to be fully renovated. Windows are broken, there are no lights in passageways and the only working toilets are overused.

Hospital Hill, just opposite Hillbrow Hospital is also in poor condition with a leaking roof, too few lights, broken windows. Contacted for comment, the owner of the block, Basil Vassile Alevras, said he no longer wanted to meet the tenants because they had let him down for a long time. He added there was no money for renovations because the tenants refused to pay rent.

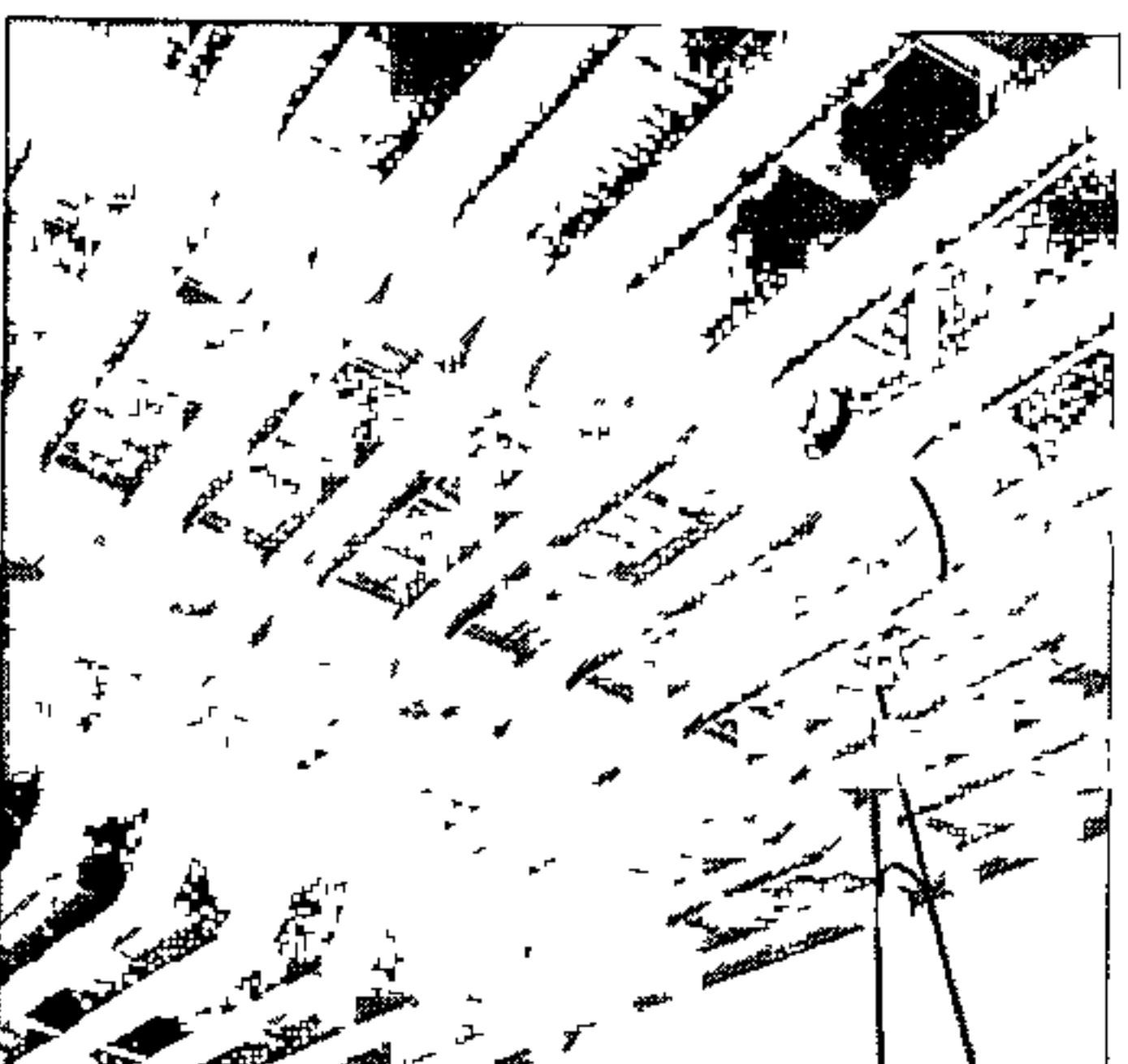
on the bathrooms and strike while females are bathing," claimed Antonia Ngega, spokeswoman for the building's residents.

Besides those who live in proper flats, there are others living in rooms that are sub-divisions of flats. Shared facilities, which include toilets and bathrooms, are overcrowded. Residents queue to bath.

"The cost to live here? Livingstone Duma, who lives in one of the rooms, paid R875 for rent and services for February. There is no wardrobe or sink.

And, after claiming there was an extra R60 of late on their monthly rental and services slips, tenants of the building said this week they would disregard the increase.

Eckart Sunkell said that he manages the building on behalf of someone else. He denied avoiding the tenants' problems saying he could only visit the building fortnightly due to other commitments.



Flatland: a Hillbrow block of flats

conditions

PRK 26/4/97

HILLBROW

(124)

Soweto chamber at odds over Eskom (127)

By Shadrack Mashalaba and Isaac Moledi

MEMBERS of the Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries launched a scathing attack at their leadership at the weekend for failing to convince Eskom to have the arrears of black businesses written off

At a report-back meeting called by the chamber in the township it was clear that simmering tensions had been developing as members lashed at their leadership, accusing it of having sold out to Eskom

Topping the agenda of the meeting, attended by more than 50 members at Jabulani, members accused the SCCI of failing to have members' arrears written off by Eskom

During a heated debate, which resulted in some members leaving the meeting, members became furious when SCCI executive member Lucky Nkosi said they had negotiated a compromise scheme with Eskom that would enable members to start paying

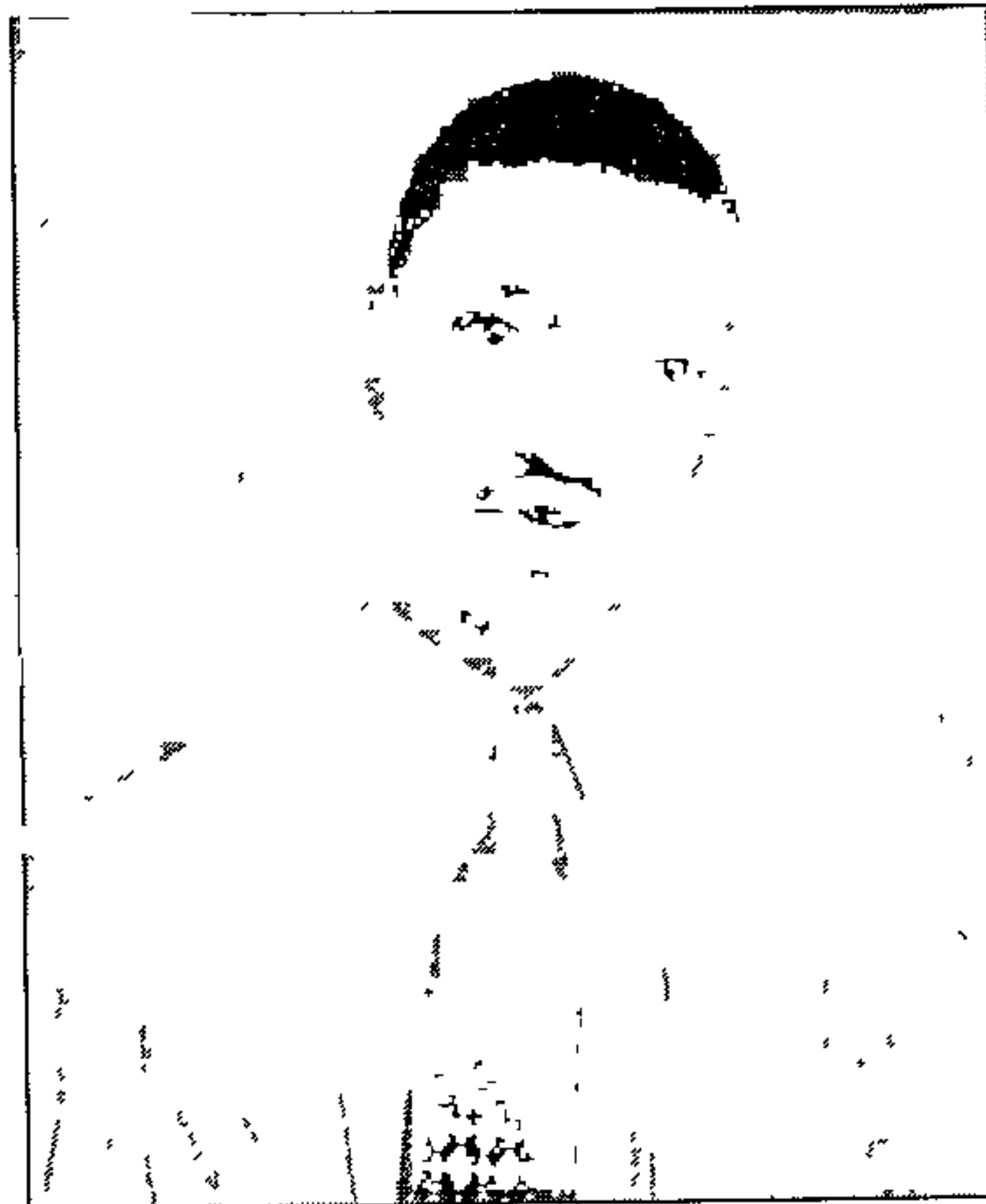
Nkosi told the meeting that the agreement reached with Eskom was such that all arrears owed before 1994 would be put on a suspense account and all those that were post-1995 would have to be paid including current accounts

This arrangement, he said, had to be done over a five-year period

If a member paid his dues without defaulting said Nkosi, the debts incurred before 1995 would be written off. But if the member failed to pay, the debts would have to be paid

This arrangement is understood to be at the core of members' frustrations and anger. They said they felt betrayed because their arrears were supposed to have been wiped off as had happened to residents in Soweto as part of an agreement signed by President Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk

Sowetan 29/4/97
Tension is running high as members want electricity arrears written off



Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries chief executive Bongani Mphuthi. His future as the chamber's chief executive is understood to be uncertain.

Nkosi, who was constantly howled at, cautioned that despite the arrangement with Eskom 'the culture of non-payment still continues'

It is estimated that Soweto businesses owe about R73 million in arrears to Eskom

From pillar to post

Nkosi said attempts by the chamber to elicit help from the Gauteng government proved fruitless as they were taken from 'pillar to post' by both the offices of the premier and planning and local government

The premier's office, members were told, insulated itself from the matter, saying it has to be addressed by the department of planning and local government

On the other hand the planning

and local government department is understood to have also excused itself, saying it was a matter for the local council to address

The local council, in turn, refused to be involved saying the matter belonged with the central Government

Also evident at the meeting was tension among SCCI executive members themselves, who are said to be fighting for positions

The chamber's chief executive Bongani Mphuthi, is understood to have been sidelined by other executive members who felt Mphuthi was 'getting too much publicity'

This problem is understood to have been the reason why former chief executive Max Legodi resigned from his post

Jo'burg's Southern council owed R699-m

Star 29/4/97 (127)

Some areas have improved payment levels and the executive is looking at ways of helping people too poor to meet their debts

By **FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA**
City Desk

Greater Johannesburg's Southern council ratepayers owe R699-million, says finances director Shan Balton

Balton, addressing a media briefing, said some areas in Soweto had seen a major rise in payment levels, an achievement he attributed to the council's recently announced tough action against rate dodgers

While most areas in the south had shown improved payment levels, with Mofolo South in Soweto moving from 34% to 86%,

some areas like Ennerdale and Lenasia South saw a 0,5% slide, dropping from 36,8% to 34,91%

Orange Farm, which has the lowest payment levels in the area, rose from 2% to 16% in the past month, Balton added

Orange Farm councillor Chris Rabajı said his community would stage a march on Saturday to encourage payments and "to show their appreciation for what the council had done for them"

Balton said the council executive committee had approved a draft policy based on the University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research that would help

the council identify and help people who were too poor to pay for their rates and services

He said the council was looking at subsidising up to 10 kilolitres of water, refuse removal and 25% of assessment rates per household that qualified for council help

He warned, however, that the council would, at the end of next month, be obliged to cut off electricity to households still owing it money

He said the council's assistance scheme would not include electricity because Eskom supplied power directly to households

businesses

Star 30/4/97 (127)

Council threatens Sandton

Companies in arrears will not get contracts for boycotting rates hike

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The Sandton rates dispute took a new turn last night when the ANC-controlled Eastern Council decided, after a heated debate, that it would stop all business with any company or its subsidiaries which, in support of the boycott, fall into arrears with rates and services payments.

Some businesses in Sandton are now deliberately in arrears by refusing to pay the increased taxes and are still paying the lower 1996 rates plus a percentage of the increase. They have lost a legal battle with the council, and intend to appeal against the higher taxes being imposed to subsidise poorer councils.

Last night's decision was opposed by both the National and Democratic parties. They argued that it could have serious financial implications not only for all Johannesburg councils, as they are all interlinked, but also for emerging small businesses.

A spokesman for the business sector, Dr Chris Westinghouse, says they represent an aggregate property investment in Sandton alone of R4,2-billion. The 10 companies, which brought the court action, include Liberty Life, Sanlam, Commercial Union, Indsure, Momentum and JDB Beleggings.

If the decision by the council last night meant that it would not be doing business with anyone who was not 100% up to date on rates' payments, it would not be doing a lot of business in the future, said Westinghouse.

"The decision is not clear. Businesses are not boycotting rates completely - they are still paying rates. If the council will refuse to do business with anyone

in arrears, no matter how little, it will not be doing much business in the future," he said.

Sandton businesses, which earlier this month lost an application in the Johannesburg High Court to overturn the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern councils, announced yesterday that they intend applying for leave to appeal against the judgment, stating it had far-reaching and constitutional consequences which could set precedents that had serious, negative economic effects.

Westinghouse said commercial property rates were between two and four times higher in Sandton than in comparable and alternative areas.

"We decided to appeal because we are also highly concerned at the implications for local government, and indeed all government, if politicians are licensed to endorse controversial budgets that are demonstrably unacceptable to a substantial percentage of the contributors to the rates account.

"Commercial property owners contribute over 50% of the total assessment rates in the Eastern council. The sooner the politicians realise that ratepayers are their customers the sooner constructive solutions can be found. We remain willing to negotiate towards finding a truly equitable and workable solution," he said.

In motivating the decision, ANC councillor Zwelibanzi Ndlovu said the decision was an extension of the Masakhane campaign to promote payment. It was morally unacceptable for the council to deal with businesses which were consciously sabotaging the efforts of the Government to rebuild the country, he said.

Council acts on ⁽¹²⁷⁾ rates defaulters

Sandton 1/5/97

THE Eastern Metropolitan Substructure has resolved not to buy services or goods from Sandton businesses, their subsidiaries or individuals who were not 100 percent up to date with their rates arrears.

The council, dominated by the African National Congress, approved the resolution following the announcement on Tuesday by 10 Sandton commercial property owners that they would apply for leave to appeal a judgment against them.

The ratepayers took the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) and its four substructures to court to overturn the councils' budget. They wanted to overturn a levy of R438 million on the EMSS to fund the GJMC and two of its substructures which resulted in rates increases of over 300 percent last year in greater Sandton.

The court ruled in favour of the GJMC and its substructures.

The motion to boycott the Sandton businesses was opposed by the Democratic Party and the National Party.

Dr Chris Westinghouse, spokesman for the businesses which include Liberty Life, Momentum Life and Fedsure, said he was puzzled by the council's resolution.

"If by that they mean businesses that are not entirely 100 percent paid up in their arrears, they are not likely to do a helluva lot of business," he said.

Sandton residential and business ratepayers have been paying for services and rates plus 20 percent after the council increased rates by over 300 percent in July last year. Sapa

Pretoria north cuts electricity

1/5/97 Soweran (127)

By McKeed Kotlolo

THE Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure, which is owed more than R110 million for municipal services by thousands of Soshanguve residents, has started cutting electricity supplies to defaulters

The local council could not provide statistics on the total number of defaulters in Soshanguve, but it said in a statement yesterday the majority of property owners were not paying for services

It was left with no option but to cut power to defaulting households since owners had failed to respond to appeals to pay or make arrangements to pay their arrears

Power cuts started in sections M and DD at the beginning of last month. Only 165 out of a total 1 349 properties in Section DD had paid for their ser-

vices on a regular basis

Until April 15 only 235 Section DD residents had made arrangements to pay for services

Section M residents owed the council more than R5 million and as a result the power supply was cut to 1 149 houses. Since then only 267 had had electricity re-connected after either having paid or having made arrangements to pay

Recently some council workers were held hostage and their lives threatened by criminal elements in Section M. The council decided to withdraw all its workers from Section M "until the situation has returned to normal and the safety of all our workers is guaranteed"

It appealed to defaulters to come and make arrangements for payment of arrears so that power could re-connected

It would continue with the power cuts until the culture of payment was restored

Service payments rise in Alex

(127) Stan 1/15/97

Levels of payments for services have risen in Alexandra from 13% in January to 25% in March

The reason for the improvement in payment levels is the Eastern council's commitment to the Masakhane campaign, according to communications officer Keith Peacock

"We are seeing positive results in Alex. One of our priorities is to link service delivery with payment

levels, and in June we will be running a major Masakhane summit in Alexandra, including all organisations in the area

"We believe it is the work that councillors and officials have done which has contributed to these encouraging results

"We have improved our credit control methods, and recognise we still have a long way to go," he said - Sandton Bureau

Sandton boycotters summonsed

Star 1/5/97

(127)

8 260 final notices sent out, but Alexandra does not get a single one as Eastern council gets tough with those resisting massive increases

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council has begun issuing summonses to Sandton residents who are boycotting rates payments in protest against increases of up to 285%

A Morningside resident was served with a summons for R5 000 yesterday

He said he had no intention of paying and would defend the matter in court

The summonses have raised the ire of the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers and the Democratic Party

They claim Sandton residents are being discriminated against and that the move will destroy

any hope of negotiations.

Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said that only last week the task team set up by Local Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka to resolve the crisis had met after previously reaching a stalemate, and authorities were committed to finding solutions

"The summons at this stage shows their bad faith"

He said affected residents should call the Sanfed help office for legal advice

Eastern council DP spokesman Judy Stockill said the council was using the summonses as a punitive measure

"The council has a credit control policy which states that the oldest and largest debts get sorted out first Johannesburg has the

largest debt and Alexandra the oldest," she said

The DP also slammed the fact that 8 269 final notices had been sent to Sandton residents in January, only 199 to Johannesburg residents and not one to Alex residents

Council communications officer Keith Peacock said that in March, 13 summonses had been sent to Sandton residents and 42 to Johannesburg residents in terms of normal credit control measures There had been 17 disconnections in Sandton and 249 in Johannesburg, as well as eight attachments of property in Johannesburg

A total of 102 final notices were sent out to Sandton, 362 to Johannesburg and 765 to Alex-

andra residents in March

Peacock denied that Sandton residents were being discriminated against He said the reason so many final notices were sent to Sandton in January was because there was a backlog from last year

■ The DP has slammed the Eastern council's decision not to do business with anyone who is in arrears with rates and services payments, and says the decision is unenforceable

The decision binds the council to ensure that any business from which it purchases goods or services is up to date

The DP said that if the council enforced the decision, it would have to even investigate suppliers of goods such as stationery, banking and telephone services

Deborah Fine

JOHANNESBURG East Democratic Party (DP) councillor Mike Moriarty is considering legal action after the Johannesburg council and its eastern substructure adopted motions to investigate his conduct because he provided information to 10 Sandton firms who initiated court action over a rates dispute.

Moriarty said the council and the substructure, which governs Sandton, had accused him of "betrayal" and contravening the councillors' code of conduct set out in the Local Government Transition Act. He had also been accused of perjury for providing firms with "misleading" information.

Conceding that the information had contained "one inconse-

Sandton 'turncoat' ponders legal action

(127) BD 2/5/97

quential mistake", he said his "first loyalty" had been to ratepayers and that he was confident he would be exonerated of misconduct.

He did, however, view the perjury allegations very seriously and would be taking legal advice.

Meanwhile, both the DP and the National Party have slammed as "ham-handed" and counter-productive a decision by the ANC-dominated substructure not to use the services of companies which have not fully paid for rates and municipal services.

The DP warned that the motion would be impossible to enforce and

could incur costly legal complications in terms of existing long-term leases and contracts.

□ Business Day incorrectly reported on Wednesday that Fedure and Momentum Properties were two of several firms embarking on a partial rates boycott to protest against a 300% assessment rates increase in Sandton.

The information was provided by the firms' media spokesman, but it was later established that both were up to date with their payments. Business Day apologises for any inconvenience or embarrassment caused by the incorrect report.

" said one source.

Council drive to put roofs over heads

Taking families off the streets and housing them near work is the priority

(127)

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council has introduced a new policy to address increasing homelessness in its area

The policy, which was adopted this week, provides for the creation of "transitional housing" in old buildings and ware-

houses for destitute people

The buildings, six initially, will be converted into sleeping quarters with communal ablution, cooking and eating facilities.

The occupants will be trained in skills and be moved into permanent accommodation. They will stay at the shelters for between six months and two years.

"Over the past few years

there has been a rapid increase in the number of homeless people living in the Eastern council area, with vagrancy in parks, land invasions and illegal occupancy of open public spaces increasing," said head of urban planning Pekane Ramarumo

The Greater Johannesburg council had adopted the position that illegal land invasions and occupations were not

acceptable and certain housing initiatives were created for the housing of homeless people in the metro area, she said.

However, a further strategy was needed to address the problem of homeless people who lived on the city streets, on pavements, in parking lots and in empty buildings, she added. Ramarumo said any initiative for the homeless had to take

into account the fact that many people needed to live close to shopping centres and central business districts where they could make a living

The council expects the Provincial Housing Board to fund the refurbishing of the buildings, with the council itself equipping the buildings. Where appropriate, the council plans to use RDIP funds

Star 21/5/97



ONE IN A MILLION Tryphinah Mbele is beneficiary of a R3,5-million water supply scheme. PHOTOS JOHANNESBURG

Asmal taps into safe water

CT (BC) 5/5/97 (127)

FRANK NXUMALO

For over 100 years, the government has been providing water to excluded people. But under the RDP, Asmal, the minister of water and forestry, said that...

Asmal said the launch of the R3,5-million Modderspruit water supply scheme ceremony to celebrate the fact that Tryphinah Mbele was South Africa's millionth person to have access to water under the RDP programme.

The octogenarian Mbele had not had access to running water since she was a domestic servant in Alberton, Johannesburg.

Asmal hailed the occasion as a historic achievement even by British standards and mentioned Lancashire, England,

where people were still carrying water on their backs. He also mentioned Botswana, where after more than 10 years of independence, the country had failed to meet the needs of a population of only more than 1 million.

Asmal said to speed up the delivery of safe, fresh water, or to accomplish the completion of projects at all, "a blue revolution", the department's word for collaborating with the private sector, had to be created.

"We shall do business with the private sector, which will build, operate, train our people and hand over the project to local governments," said Asmal.

The Modderspruit scheme would supply 11 000 people with potable water. It was implemented by Rand Water Odi Retail and consisted of an exist-

ing pipeline from the nearby Eastern Platinum Mines with a booster station to pump water to a 440-litre elevated tank in Modderspruit, 25km southwest of Brits.

The tank would feed 46 pre-cast concrete communal standpipes, modified to allow for the installation of coupon-operated meters.

Each coupon costs R10 and is the equivalent of 5 000 litres or 25 litres a day a person for 33 days for a household of about six people, according to Jammie Shutter of Consultbuo, the engineering company commissioned by the department to design the system.

Shutter said though there is no evidence of nitrate or faecal contamination of water because of the high density of pit-latrines in the area, the boreholes for drawing underground water would be phased out for safety.

Gauteng health, housing in a sick state – report

Star 6/5/97

(127) (85)

The money pours out, but there's no way of checking how it's being spent

By JANINE SIMON

Management shortcomings in Gauteng's health and housing departments have hobbled service delivery and cost millions in lost revenue, according to an auditor-general's report tabled in the provincial legislature yesterday.

The performance audit, the first of its kind presented to the province's public accounts committee, covered the 1994/5 and 1995/6 financial years and was completed in the last six months of 1996.

Performance audits do not only outline the amount of money used by departments, but provide details on management efficiency and administration of the funds.

The report tabled yesterday identified weak staff management, inadequate information systems and lack of budget controls as some of the deficiencies underlying the poor utilisation of resources.

This saw departments unable to plan, finance, monitor or retain control of key projects.

The report also contained a point-by-point breakdown of corrective steps taken by the relevant heads of department.

Although it highlighted management shortcomings, it "did not mean that poor or no value for money was received throughout the departments", said the auditor-general's corporate executive manager Lous van Rooyen.

According to the report, the department of housing and land affairs paid out 1 283 subsidies to the value of R385 788 under a

project-linked housing subsidy scheme in Phola Park, but by October 1995 no houses had been built because the department had no control to ensure a return on its investment once the subsidy had been paid out.

The housing department lost R1,5-million because there was no administration process to recover rent for provincially owned hostel rooms, and R212 581 a month for failing to charge interest on R16,5-million of arrears rental, the report said.

Also, the contract amounts of five provincial hostels overran by R4,6-million when the recommended completion time stretched to two years because the department failed to keep close contact with role-players.

Another R8,1-million was lost when the contractor due to renovate the Wattville hostel cancelled after hostel residents refused to vacate their rooms.

Controls on funds allocated for hostel upgrades were inadequate, with the approved allocation exceeded by almost 300% in one case, the report said.

The department also delayed completion of planned projects by failing to make available R24,3-million of the R170-million RDP funds allocated for the provision of infrastructure during the first three years of the administration; the funds had to be rolled over to the 1996/7 financial year.

There was no means to correctly calculate the cost of free health care because the estimated budget deficit of R383 309 621 for free care for the 1995/96 financial year was based on inaccurate information, the report said.

Council to act (127) over arrears

Sowetan 7/5/97

LEKOA-VAAL residents in arrears for services will be summoned this month after final notices were issued in April, the Vaal Metropolitan Council announced yesterday

Head of the Vaal Metropolitan Council debt collection task team Mr Shembiso Radebe says the decision was taken after several meetings in the townships on Masakhane, the campaign to promote payment for services and rates

Everyone who received final notices should settle their accounts or make arrangements at the nearest paypoint to pay the arrears and current rates

Radebe urged the unemployed, pensioners and those who cannot afford to pay for services to register at the council within two weeks. They could receive

subsidies or be placed on Reconstruction and Development Programme projects where they will receive an income

Those who fail to pay or register will be issued with summonses, he said

The cases of residents who make arrangements to pay or are unable to pay will be investigated and legal steps taken if incorrect information are been submitted to the council

Defaulters will be faced with legal procedures like court action, attachment of properties, disconnected water and electricity and being listed with the Credit Bureau

Consideration will be given to those who come forward after the summonses are issued. The first summonses will be issued today - *Sapa*

Outrage as Alex pays flat water rate

Star 7/5/97

(127)

Some residents on metered properties still being charged standard R14,50 month

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Sandton residents and the Democratic Party have expressed outrage at the fact that Alexandra residents who have water meters on their properties are still being charged a standard rate of R14,50 a month for water regardless of their consumption.

They claim that this is not only discriminatory, but could lead to the council facing legal action, particularly after the Pretoria High Court recently ruled that it was discriminatory to charge higher consumption-based rates in different areas.

DP councillor Alan Fuchs said residents of East Bank, a new and more upmarket area of Alex, paid a flat rate for water even though

their properties were metered. He said this was unfair to other residents in the Eastern council area, who were charged according to their consumption.

But Eastern council communications officer Keith Peacock said there had been no billing system in Alex until recently and this was creating difficulties in sending out accounts. He said some success had been attained and 90% of bills were now being sent out to Alexandra. If there were meters on the East Bank, an attempt would be made to try to identify where they were, to see if they were working and to start metering, he added.

Fuchs said: "As in the Pretoria case, charges of political expediency can be made against the ANC-led Eastern council. Properties on the East Bank have meters.

They should be read and the residents charged the same for their water as the rest of the residents in the area."

Last week Fuchs proposed a motion calling for a full report on the legal risks faced by the council in this regard, but it was opposed by the ANC-led council.

"I am confounded by the ANC's logic. Punitive measures are being taken against residents of Sandton in the form of summonses for rates arrears, but on the other hand the ANC voted against my motion to charge East Bank residents for their water at the ruling consumption-based rate for the Eastern council," he said.

Greater Johannesburg head of finance, Lucas Opperman, said no flat rates were payable within the area of Greater Johannesburg.

They were abolished in July 1995, he said. In Greater Soweto and Alex, where water was currently not being measured, the amount payable was levied at an estimated 20kl and 10kl per erf per month respectively at the appropriate uniform tariff.

This amounted to R35 and R14,50 per month which were not subsidised quantities, but in fact, the average consumption for average households in these areas, said Opperman.

"Metering of all consumers is, however, the ultimate objective," he said. "The reason Greater Johannesburg is the only metro council with a uniform rate, and for that matter uniform tariffs, is that this council is ahead with regard to the entire process of restructuring local government in South Africa."

Water cannon fired to force evictions

(127)

STAFF REPORTER AND SAPA

Star 8/5/97

Police fired a water cannon early today to disperse people protesting against the eviction of illegal residents in Tokoza's Phenduka section on the East Rand.

Evictions started at 6 30am, according to Department of Housing and Land Affairs spokesman Hubert Matlou. There was a heavy police and defence force presence in the section by 8 am.

About 120 houses were scheduled to be cleared. The evictions were halted last year because illegal tenants claimed they had no alternative accommodation.

The evictions today were being carried out by a sheriff of the court, assisted by a private security company and watched over by police and the army.

Matlou said about 100 eviction orders had been obtained from the Alberton Magistrate's Court. The Alberton Town Council had promised to provide alternative accommodation for the needy.

The houses were illegally occupied by about 600 Inkatha Freedom Party-supporting families after violence in the township caused legal owners to flee.

The Gauteng government said the legal residents had been squatting in the East Rand for the past seven years.

SANDTON RATES DISPUTE

The struggle continues (127)

FM 9/5/97
Appeal against High Court ruling by business set in motion

The struggle over increased rates in Sandton has entered a new phase, with the decision by 10 Sandton-based businesses to appeal against a High Court decision upholding the right of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to impose a R438m levy on the Eastern Council.

There have also been charges that the ANC-controlled Eastern Metropolitan Sub-structure or Council — under whose aegis Sandton falls — has begun a punitive campaign against Sandton residents.

It is accused of issuing a disproportionately high share of summonses against Sandton residents who are in arrears, though their debt is neither as large as Johannesburg's nor as long-standing as Alexandra's.

The charges have been denied by council communications officer Keith Peacock, who cites figures to substantiate his repudiation.

Spokesman for the 10 businesses Chris Westinghouse believes that the issues at

stake in the pending appeal are of cardinal importance to local governance.

One is whether politicians should "be licensed to endorse controversial budgets that are demonstrably unacceptable to a substantial percentage of the contributors to the rates account." Commercial property owners, he says, contribute more than 50% of the total assessment rates in the Eastern Council.

Rates in Sandton have risen by 300% since the ANC took control of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and subsidiary councils in the eastern, western, southern and northern regions of the metropolis.

A specific issue in the pending legal contest is whether the Metropolitan Council is empowered to appropriate the Eastern Council's entire surplus of more than R438m and use it to fund deficits in the budgets of the less wealthy Southern and Western Councils.

Judge Ezra Goldstein has found that it is — a view shared Shadrack Gutto, of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies. Gutto argues that the notion of substantive equality — provided for in the interim and newly adopted constitutions — may require differential treatment to "level the ground" among communities.

Westinghouse disputes Gutto's view. He reckons the notion of substantive equality can neither be stretched to give politicians the power to do "what they like in the name of redistribution" nor be used to sanction selective prosecution of rich defaulters while ignoring the arrears of the poor.

Councillor Alan Fuchs, of the Democratic Party, quotes figures given to him by Eastern Council strategic officer Irvine Florence. They show the following outstanding amounts at the end of January: Sandton R52,5m, Johannesburg R210,7m and Alexandra R15,5m.

Sandton has been hardest hit by final notices demanding payment: nearly 8 270 at end-January against just under 200 for Johannesburg and none for Alexandra.

Peacock cites figures for March which contradict those given to Fuchs. They show that 102 final notices were issued in Sandton against 362 in Johannesburg and 765 in Alexandra. His figures show that fewer disconnections were made and summonses issued in Sandton than Johannesburg.

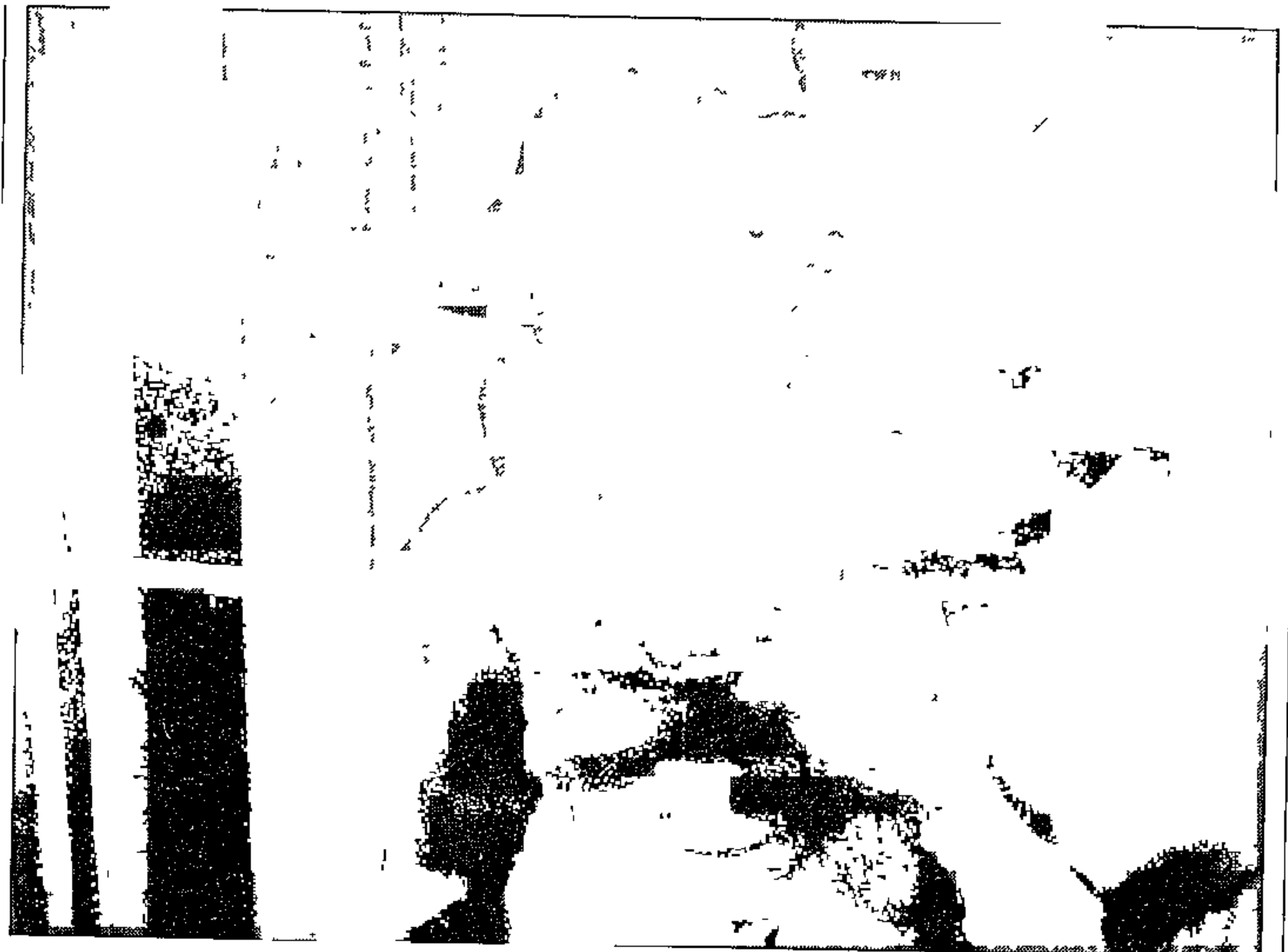
Fuchs is sceptical about Peacock's figures, describing him as a failed ANC candidate for a seat on the Eastern Council and a public relations man for the ANC rather than the council. He says of Peacock's figures: "If they are true, it is too little, too late."

He refers to "another discriminatory practice" sanctioned by the ANC-controlled Eastern Council: its failure to charge a consumption rate for Alexandra residents on the East Bank even though there are between 700-1 200 water meters there. Instead, he says, the council charges a flat rate while billing Sandton residents on consumption.

Fuchs implicitly accuses ANC councillors of favouring their constituents in Alexandra while penalising Sandton residents.

Noting that the ANC-controlled Eastern Council may be acting illegally — a reference

to a recent Pretoria High Court ruling in which the judge found it was discriminatory and unconstitutional to charge a flat rate in one area and a metered rate in another — he says "Charges of expediency can be made against the ANC-led (Eastern) Council." Patrick Laurence



BREAK-IN: People try to force their way into houses in Tokoza yesterday after police and council authorities evicted hundreds of illegal occupants

PHOTOGRAPH T J LEMON

Tokoza on a knife-edge as homes reclaimed

Tokoza on the East Rand was on a knife-edge last night as hundreds of people who had abandoned their houses during the height of the bloody political violence in the early 1990s began to reclaim their homes

However, apart from a few minor incidents, police say the delicate change of ownership is going smoothly and they will retain a strong presence in the area until the situation has stabilised

Yesterday, police kept a

close watch on hundreds of evicted homeowners in Penduka section after more than 100 houses were cleared of illegal occupants on Thursday

About 600 IFP-supporting families occupied houses along the notorious Khumalo Street and other parts of the township after the owners fled during strife in the area in the early 1990s

There was a tense standoff as the evicted residents jeered council workers and security

officers from an independent security firm

Police warned the occupants that they would be arrested if they returned to the houses, but it appears that this was not a deterrent

When the *Saturday Star* visited the area yesterday, it was evident that some of the evicted residents had returned with a vengeance. Doors had been ripped off their hinges and windows smashed in a last act of defiance

(127)

Star 10/5/97

Sandton rates boycotters reject six-month interest-free offer

Star 16/5/97

(127)

By ANNA COX

Sandton rates boycotters appear to have spurned a six-month no-interest offer from Johannesburg's Eastern council to repay arrears accrued during the nine month-old protest action.

A meeting last night between the Eastern council and the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) ended inconclusively.

Although neither officials from the Eastern council nor Sanfed was prepared to comment on the meeting, sources revealed that ratepayers were not satisfied with the compromise offered by the council.

The council was offering residents who have been refusing to pay rates increases since August last year six months to pay off their arrears

No interest would be charged. It is understood that the two parties have agreed to issue a joint statement once the council has put its offer in writing and it has been approved by the Eastern council executive committee.

Only one ratepayers' association - the Triangle Community, representing Kelvin and Buccleuch residents - was prepared to comment.

Spokesman Bruce McGregor said the council's offer was not acceptable.

"It only deals with arrears - it does not deal with the main issue, which is increased rates of almost 300% and we are not prepared to accept this offer," he said.

Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said he was encouraged by progress in talks but that it was premature for him to comment.

Cash-rich foreigners buy up flats Johannesburg's inner suburbs 'no good' for locals

NEWTON KANHEMA
OWN CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Entrepreneurs from Zaire, Nigeria and other African countries, with "suitcases full of money", are buying up entire blocks of flats in Johannesburg's deteriorating inner suburbs where banks are reluctant to grant bonds.

Estate agents say foreigners are rescuing the property market in Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and other areas where South African families still battle to get bonds.

In spite of government-backed measures to underwrite home loans, several realtors said many banks were still quietly "red-lining" these suburbs - the policy of denying bonds in high risk areas regardless of the buyer's own credit rating.

Two reporters, posing as home-buyers, were turned away by bank managers when they applied for loans to buy in Hillbrow. Cash sales, however, are still very welcome.

"We have people from Zaire, Nigeria, Angola and Namibia who bring in cash," said Walter Rosin of Sheraton Estate Agents, who has been selling property in these areas for the past six years.

Another estate agent, who declined to be named, said 90 percent of her clients were foreigners who had no dealings with the banks.

"When these guys say they like the property they don't even barter, but bring in a suitcase full of notes," she said.

"I was selling a block of flats in Hillbrow and these two guys from Nigeria came in, quiring about the number of flats in the block and the price per unit. Two days later they came with two suitcases with R4-million and told me that they wanted to buy."

Foreign names dominate the sales board that stretches across an entire wall of her Yeoville office.

"I have found foreigners much easier to deal with. There are no delays of waiting for a bond to be approved and they don't waste time in making a decision," she said.

Many foreign buyers buy purely for investment purposes and then go "straight back to Kinshasa" leaving their associates to administer the properties, an agent said.

Another estate agent, Nicholas Ncube, discouraged local people from buying property in Hillbrow, saying the area was for foreigners. "I would not encourage you to buy in Hillbrow. It is not a good area for a person like you to live in," he said.

AKG 17/5/97 (22)

"This is a place where foreigners live. They do terrible things like robbery and there are plenty of prostitutes. Now we can get you good property in Bez Valley," he said.

Most of the estate agents operating in this area say they survive through cash sales and government employees with subsidies.

Asked where the foreigners got their money and whether they checked if the buyers were legal or not, estate agents said they had only one function - to sell property.

"We are not immigration officers and I don't think it is our business where the money is coming from," said Rosin. "We check whether the money they have given us is fake or not. I personally examine each note I receive."

The Mortgage Indemnity Fund was established in 1995 to carry the risk for banks should they not get adequate returns. In terms of the fund's rules, banks can no longer refuse a bond purely on the basis of whether the property is in a "good" or "bad" area.

But, say estate agents, many banks are finding loopholes in this rule.

A visit to a branch of First National Bank revealed that Hillbrow had been classified as a slum. "Yes, we don't finance that area because it is a slum. If we put our money there

we might as well kiss it goodbye," an official said.

An enthusiastic official at Nedbank was surprised and immediately withdrew her enthusiasm when she learnt that our application was for a flat in Hillbrow. "I would not encourage you to apply for a loan in that area. Why don't you try another area?"

A Standard Bank official said she did not know all details of the bank's policy, but said her branch did not finance bonds in that area. Estate agents are normally told that an application has been turned down because the bank has already financed 40 percent of the units in a building.

"They say one bank cannot finance more than 40 percent but if you take the same application to the other bank they tell you the same thing," said Rosin. "Also, they are not at liberty to tell you which ones they have financed. They don't say it but it is red-lining."

Callie Nieman of Bellair Real Estate said the "red-lining" policy was hurting elderly people who were desperate to move to greener suburbs.

"The majority of people who are selling are the aged people and they are giving away their property for nothing," he said. "Property in Hillbrow is going for a song."

Rundown blocks in Jo'burg flatland being bought for cash by Nigerians and Zaireans

By NEWTON KANHEMA

Entrepreneurs from Zaure, Nigeria and other African countries, with "suitcases full of money", are buying up entire blocks of flats in Johannesburg's deteriorating inner suburbs where the banks are reluctant to grant bonds

Estate agents told the *Saturday Star* that foreigners are rescuing the property market in Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and other areas where ordinary South African families still battle to get bonds

Turned away

Despite government-backed measures to underwrite home loans, several realtors said many banks were still quietly "red-lining" these suburbs - the policy of denying bonds in high-risk areas regardless of the buyer's credit rating

"Two *Saturday Star* reporters, posing as home buyers, were turned away by bank managers when they applied for

loans to buy in Hillbrow

Cash sales, however, are still very welcome

"We have people from Zaure, Nigeria, Angola and Namibia who bring in cash," said Walker Rosin of Sheraton Estate Agents, who has been selling property in these areas for the past six years

Another estate agent, who did not want to be named, said fully 90% of her clients were foreigners who had no dealings with the banks

"When these guys say they like the property, they don't even barter but bring in a suitcase full of notes," she said

"I was selling a block of flats in Hillbrow and these two guys from Nigeria came inquiring about the number of flats in the block and the price per unit. Two days later they came with two suitcases stuffed to bursting with R4-million in notes and told me they wanted to buy

"I was shocked because here in South Africa we don't do business in this fashion," said the

estate agent "But I have found foreigners much easier to deal with. There are no delays waiting for a bond to be approved and they don't waste time making a decision"

Many foreign purchasers buy purely for investment purposes and then go "straight back to Kinshasa," leaving their associates to administer the properties, one agent said

'They came back later carrying two suitcases stuffed with R4-million'

Another estate agent, Nicholas Neube, discouraged us from buying property in Hillbrow, saying the area was for foreigners "I would not encourage you to buy in Hillbrow. It is not a good area for people like you to live in

"This is a place where foreigners live. They do terrible

things like robbery and there are plenty of prostitutes. But we can get you some really good property in Bez Valley," Neube said

Most of the estate agents operating in this area say they survive through cash sales and government employees who receive subsidies

Asked where the foreigners got their money and whether they checked if the buyers were in the country legally, estate agents said they had only one function - to sell property

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A visit to a branch of First National Bank revealed Hillbrow had been classified as a slum

"Yes, we don't finance that area because it is a slum. If we put our money there we might as well kiss it goodbye," an official told the *Saturday Star*

An official at Nedbank was

enthusiastic until she learnt that our application was for a flat in Hillbrow. "I would not encourage you to apply for a loan in that area. Why don't you try another area?" she asked

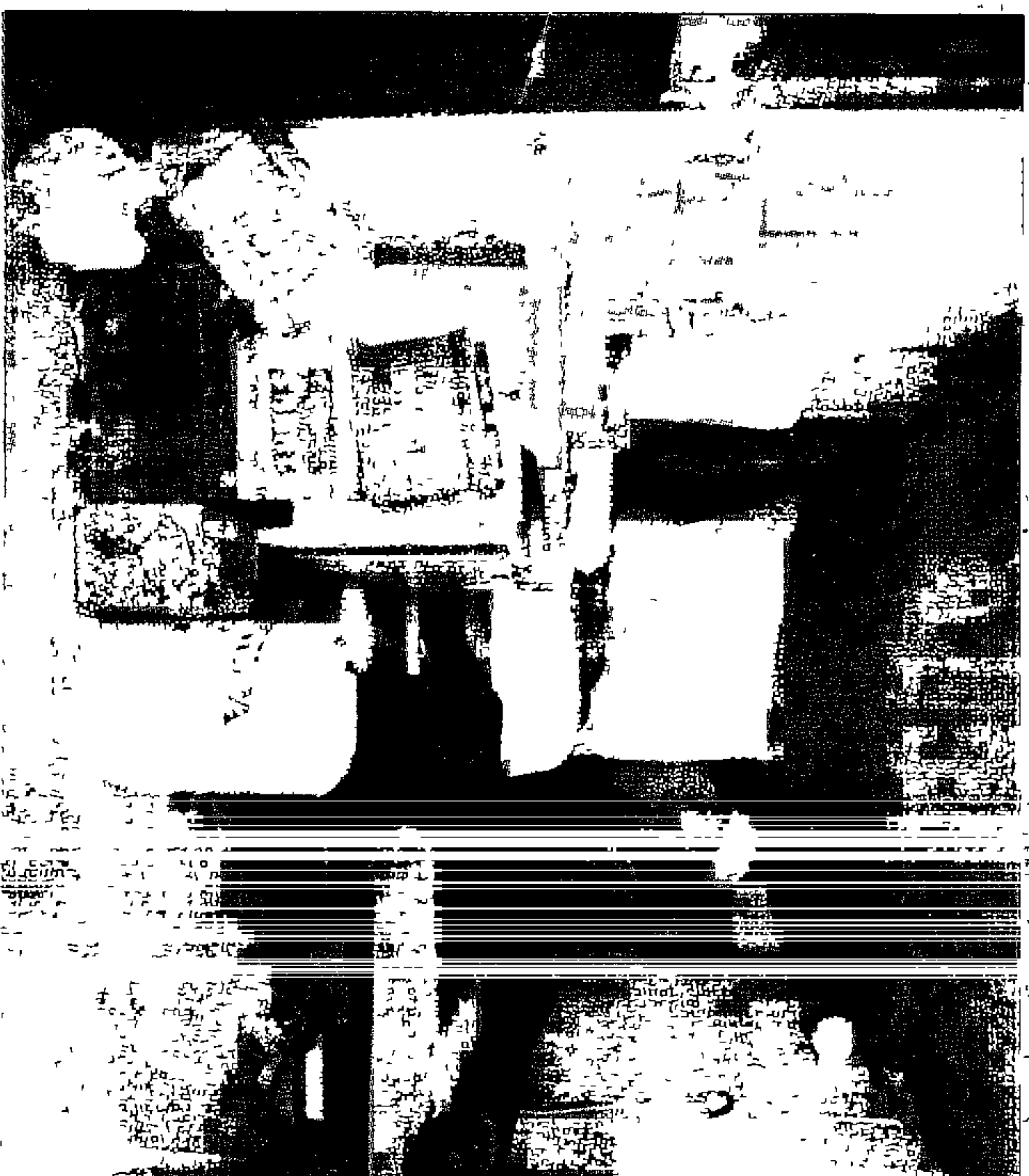
At Standard Bank, the story was essentially the same

Estate agents are normally told that an application has been turned down because the bank has already financed the maximum 40% of the units in a building

Going for a song

"Also, they aren't at liberty to tell you which ones they've financed. They don't say it, but it amounts to red-lining," said Rosin. Calle Neman of Bellair Real Estate said the red-lining policy was mostly hurting elderly people who were desperate to move to greener suburbs

"The majority of people who are selling are old and they are giving away their properties for next to nothing. Property in Hillbrow is going for a song"



HIDDEN ASSET: Squalor such as this has led to inner-city property being blacklisted by finance companies, but it has not discouraged big-spending foreign buyers

PHOTOGRAPHS JOHN HOGG

NTWIKKELING

**To some,
a slum,
but to
others,
a castle**

All available space in Bertrams, no matter how cramped and humble, is being snapped up by the homeless and jobless, many of them immigrants



Once strongly Portuguese white area now Portuguese-speaking black one, with almost all jobless

Star 17/5/97

(127)

By JOHN MAKONI

Eastern Johannesburg has always had a strong Portuguese character

It is still like that, only the Portuguese you are likely to hear in the suburb of Bertrams today is more likely to be that of the new Angolan and Mozambican immigrants who, along with thousands of other "economic refugees", are packed into every nook and cranny of the area's once prime real estate

You might still find a large flat with a view for R1 000 or so a month, but for R100 to R300 you can take your pick from a rooftop shack, a section of a subdivided underground garage or a dormitory-style room in one of the older blocks

Thandi Dube and her husband share a tiny room, which was once part of a larger flat, with a bachelor in Farissy Court in Gordon Avenue "The people from up the roof come down to share the toilets," said Dube (not her real name)

Her husband, like many other men at Farissy, does not go to work and the couple split the R225 rent with their unmarried roommate

Downstairs on "G1", in what was once a parking bay, a couple and a single woman share the R200 rent for a cold, concrete space with no natural light

Everyone in the block shares the few taps and toilets.

All four of Farissy Court's original four flats have virtually disappeared because they were converted into individual rooms. The block, which might

have once held no more than 10 people, is now occupied by close to 90

Bertrams' new residents come from diverse backgrounds but one thing is common to all of them - unemployment

Some of the Mozambican immigrants, however, are lucky. They often find jobs with Portuguese businesses in the area, many owned by families who fled Lisbon's former colonies 20 and more years ago

The office of Gauteng Health MEC Amos Masondo told the *Saturday Star* that the health risks posed by overcrowding in Farissy Court and other buildings would be addressed by the recently adopted Residential Landlords and Tenants Bill

Small subsidy

Urban overcrowding is, however, usually a local government matter, and metropolitan councils receive a small subsidy from the province to monitor and rectify this problem

Christine Walters, a councillor for the Eastern council, said the council and the province were working together to alleviate such conditions

Inspectors from the council's environmental management department were often sent to investigate complaints about poorly maintained buildings, Walters said

"The dormitory-hostel approach which is becoming prevalent in some areas is not in the interests of the families who live in these places," she said

Masondo's office said it usually gave owners of these buildings 21 days to rectify conditions, failing which they would be prosecuted

Councils get nod to wipe off R574-m deficit

By ANNA COX

Greater Johannesburg and its four councils have the go-ahead from the auditor-general to write off a R574-million deficit for 1996 even though "the current level of service delivery could be seriously affected"

The councils already have an accumulative income shortfall of R1,6-billion because of the non-payment of rates and services over recent years

The R574-million will come from capital reserves and represents about one-third of the total capital reserves available. Capital reserves are used to fund projects such as roads, sewage, stormwater, housing projects and street lights.

Local authorities are not permitted by local government legislation to write off deficits against capital reserves but the auditor-general recommended this move so that the debts from

Star 19/5/97
the old administrations could be cleared and the councils could start with a clean slate

Last year, the auditor-general expressed concern that the councils' credit control measures were inadequate and that not enough was being done to address outstanding debts

The auditor-general also issued a disclaimer saying he was unable to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statement of Greater Johannesburg because of "the deterioration in the rates, services and rental arrears debtors of the council"

He said factors which contributed to the increase in debtors included the ineffectiveness of collection procedures, the uncertainty regarding the write-off of amounts owing in respect of multi-unit dwellings; the culture of non-payment that currently exists among ratepayers and con-

sumers of services, and uncertainty as to the completeness of debtor records

He also slammed the fact that the councils' assets registers were not satisfactorily maintained.

Although the report was tabled before the Greater Johannesburg Council last week, the ANC decided not to allow it to be debated until the four local councils had discussed it

The Democratic Party has condemned the council for refusing to face up to its financial crisis and "take the necessary steps to avert disaster"

Said DP councillor Mike Moriarty "The auditor-general's disclaimer is a black mark against the council. The R574-million deficit has happened because councils have not chased their debtors. We will now be unable to carry out many capital projects unless we borrow a lot more money"

Moriarty also slammed the council for failing to get a refund of R125-million from national Government for boycott arrears up to February 1 1994, written off by the Government

DP councillor Frances Kendall said "ANC councillors refuse to crack down on the habitual non-payers in their own constituency because it would make them unpopular. Instead they increase rates and charges so as to penalise higher income residents who are traditionally reliable payers. This is already leading to disinvestment"

"The metro and local councils also refuse to cut costs by handing service delivery over to the private sector. Instead they pour money into an increasingly unproductive bureaucracy and raid reserves to stay afloat. Johannesburg is deteriorating before our eyes and all the current signs point to a continued spiral downwards."

Gauteng delivers 71 000 houses

BD 20/6/97 (127)

Vuyo Mvoko

THE Gauteng legislature yesterday unanimously approved the 1997/98 budget votes of housing and land affairs (R1,9bn), and development planning and local government (R238m).

Housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said statistics from the national housing ministry showed Gauteng, at 71 276 units, had the highest number either built or under construction. The Western Cape was second with 25 321.

Mofokeng said Gauteng delivered a third of all SA's low-cost housing built last year, increasing delivery by 150% over the previous year.

"The department has taken a firm stance on corruption," he said, citing two people convicted in Pretoria "for allocation malpractices", a department official standing trial for theft, and a developer arrested last week "for

fraudulently obtaining money from the department." Names of the offenders would be released once investigations were completed, he said.

Other recent successes included the passing two months ago of the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act. He said other policies that had been implemented, "which do not exist anywhere in the country", included the provision of "transitional housing" for the homeless, releasing land to emerging farmers, upgrading informal settlements and making available publicly owned service sites.

A key constraint facing the poor was that high interest rates made credit for them unaffordable and inaccessible. The department would soon be putting forward a proposal on how high interest rates for the poor could be eased.

Mofokeng promised that in this financial year the department would deliver 61 824 stands and 84 056 houses

Legislators urged to pledge to pay municipal accounts

(127)
BY FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA

City Desk

Star 20/5/97
Members of the Gauteng legislature have, for the first time, been asked to sign a public pledge to pay their municipal accounts or face possible expulsion.

Delivering his annual budget speech yesterday, Local Government MEC Sicele Shiceka invited MPLs, officials, businesses and communities to sign a pledge to this effect.

At present, only local councillors have been asked to pledge their commitment to paying for services or risk losing their seats.

"Our vision of financially viable, sustainable and self-sufficient local government does not only depend on fiscal discipline and the delivery of services to our communities, but also on every community playing its role," Shiceka said.

He also announced that his department was the first in Gauteng to meet its rationalising targets when 62 officials were granted severance packages, saving the department R3,5-million.

Gauteng leads the way in putting roofs over heads

Star 20/5/97

71 000 homes have been built or are under construction in drive to crank up housing provision in the province

By HOPEWELL RADEBE
Provincial Reporter

Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng told the provincial legislature in Johannesburg yesterday that Gauteng was leading the way in housing with a delivery record of 71 276 units, followed by the Western Cape with 25 321

According to the National Housing department statistics, Gauteng had spent R567-million in the 1996/97 financial year

Mofokeng said his department had distributed a total of 65 788 serviced sites between 1994 and 1997. This was done in about 17 land release projects in the province, like the Mayibuye rapid land programme in the Khayalami Metro region where a community of about 115 000 people presently living in squatter camps would be set-

(127)
tled. On average, Gauteng was distributing about 50 sites per day, he added.

The Katlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus (Katorus) special presidential project has renovated about 885 damaged houses and the department has also renovated an additional 237 houses in Meadowlands and Dobsonville in Soweto and the Vaal area

He said Gauteng was successful because it quickly set up institutions like the Provincial Housing Board to oversee the projects and the Mortgage Indemnity Fund to provide insurance to banks investing in high risk areas, established the National Home Builders Registration council in 1995 and because it had set up the Housing and Land Affairs department

Mofokeng praised hostel residents for doing better than

township residents in paying for services, attaining a record level of 78,3%.

Addressing the legislature during his department's budget vote, he thanked IFP MPL Humphrey Ndlovu for the party's role in encouraging hostel dwellers to pay. Payment had risen because of development programmes and improved consultation between local authorities and hostel communities

Mofokeng assured the legislature that his department was always on alert to identify maladministration and corruption by officials and contractors

Two officials had been convicted of malpractice in allocating funds and another was standing trial on similar charges. A contractor was arrested last week for allegedly attempting to defraud government funds.

Low-income earners can look forward to new rental flats in Jeppestown

By BONGWE MLANGENI

A breath of fresh air will soon blow through Johannesburg with the completion of more than 200 low-income rental flats in Jeppestown - the first residential development in the city in three decades.

The 243 one-and two-bedroom flats have already provided a beacon of hope for hundreds of low-income earners looking for affordable homes.

The flats, some of which are painted bright pink and yellow, stand on a piece of land known as Jepe Oval, which is a national monument.

The new two-and three-storey blocks of flats are the first of their kind so close to the central business district, and are part of the Johannesburg Housing Company's (JHC) revitalisation drive in the city.

Sabie Thabethe, JHC com-

munity relations co-ordinator, said upgrading the east of the city was a boost for the entire CBD. "It will reverse urban decay. The provision of stable tenancy in this regard is vital."

The new blocks of flats will not only upgrade Jeppestown and neighbouring Fairview, but will also provide jobs in an area which, according to a study done by the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust, has a 13% unemployment rate.

SAW 21/5/97
The study also showed that 14% of Jeppestown and Fairview's 2 550 residents are retired people living in old-age homes and derelict houses.

The first block of flats will be officially opened next month and tenants are expected to move in by August.

Thabethe said monthly rent would range from R650 to R850 and would benefit people earning between R2 000 and R3 500. The building will be sub-

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sidised by the Government's institutional subsidy, which is granted to a group of people who wish to build or buy homes which they can rent out or sell to low-income earners.

This project is one of four undertaken by the JHC. Other projects include the refurbishment of three buildings in the city centre using funds from the Government, the European Union and the Flemish government.

Sandton ratepayers reject council offer to pay arrears over 6 months

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

(127)

for 21/5/97

Sandton ratepayers have turned down an offer by the Eastern council to pay off arrears over six months, interest-free

The task team formed by local government MEC Sicela Shiceka to resolve the rates' crisis made the offer last week as a step towards resolving the nine-month-old rates' boycott by Sandton residents after some taxes were increased by up to 285%

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' (Sanfed) advised the task team meeting last night that the organisation did not have a mandate from all the 24 ratepayers' associations it represented and was therefore unable to accept the offer

The Eastern council executive meeting is expected to meet today to approve the offer

Sanfed spokesman John Lambson said: "No settlement has been reached on the unreasonably increased rates and services, on equitable services, valuations of properties or flat rates

"None of these issues has even been discussed in the meantime the boycott continues," he said

Payment levels in Sandton dropped to 76% in March with R12-million outstanding

Gauteng local government spokesman Prince Hamnca said Sanfed should get a mandate from residents. The task team would still negotiate with residents

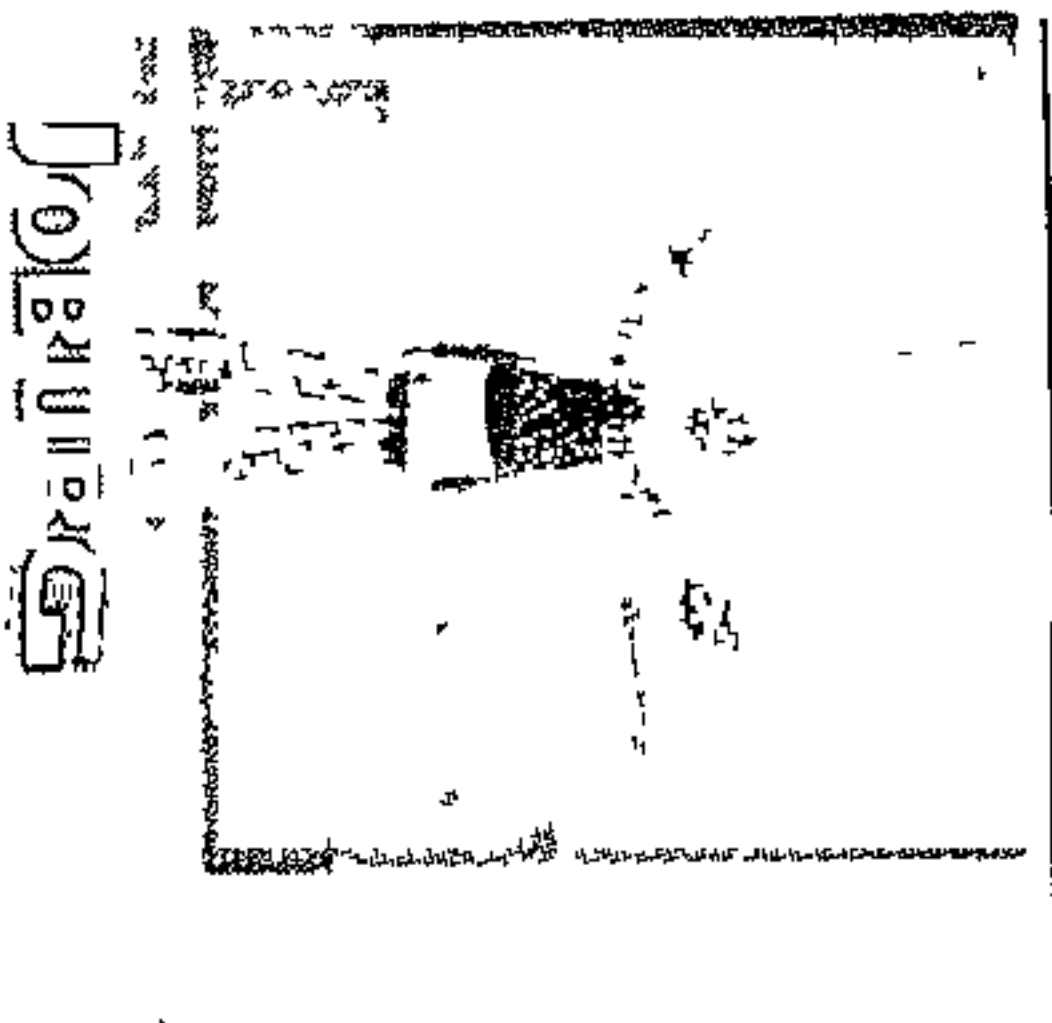
Sandton residents have expressed anger at the offer

Rotting core just a myth, survey finds

From 26/5/77

(127)

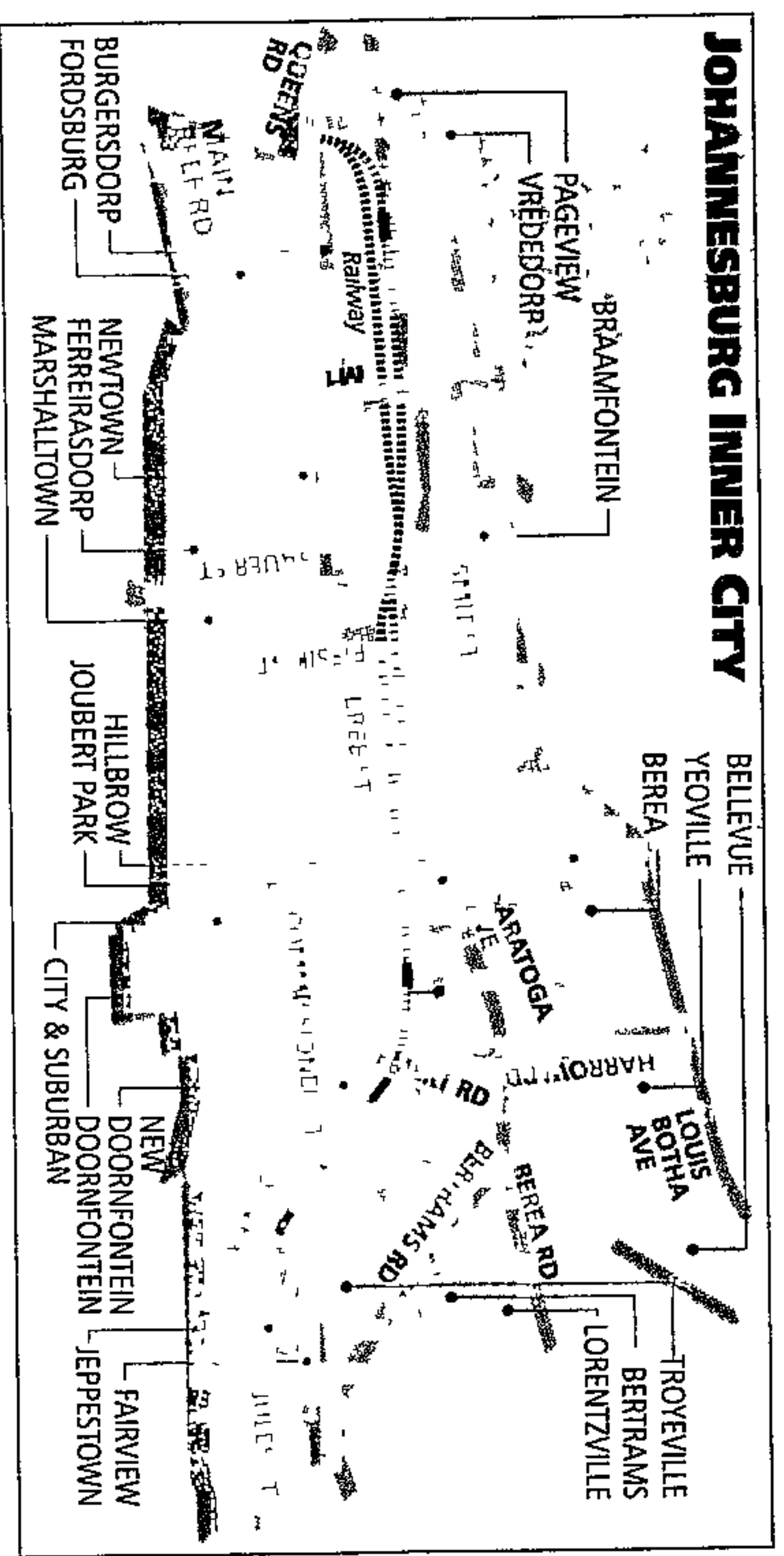
Trust reports that perceptions of decay are far from the reality of a bustling, prosperous area



RISING
BY BONCIWE MLANGENI

It is a myth that most Johannesburg inner-city residents are poor, unemployed and are occupying overcrowded buildings, according to a survey conducted by the Inner City Housing Upgrading Trust.

The survey revealed that the average resident earns more than R2 000, many households have dual incomes and most flats are occupied by not more than four people



The inner city includes areas such as Hillbrow, Bertrams, Fordsburg, Braamfontein and Pageview.

Myths about Johannesburg emerged when the character of the city changed in the late 1980s after the eradication of the Group Areas Act, which made it possible for blacks to move into the city.

The survey shows that there are about 111 000 people living in the inner city, 71 000 of whom are in the central business district, Hillbrow, Berea and Joubert Park. The lowest density is in Braamfontein, which has about 2 300 people.

Trust chairman Gerald Leissner said most people lived in the city because they enjoyed

the lifestyle and wanted independence from their parents and extended families.

Contrary to the myth that the inner city is overcrowded, research shows that about 85% of households are made up of four people or fewer.

Households in Yeoville, Bellevue and Berea tend to be a little smaller than those in

Bertrams, Lorentzville and Troyville.

Leissner said the survey found no correlation between poverty, deteriorating buildings and overcrowding. Instead, overcrowding and decay could be attributed to poor building management and maintenance.

Although there are pockets of poverty in the city, about 68% of the city's population is formally employed, 8% are part-time workers and a further 9% are self-employed.

The survey also shows that 89% of inner city residents are South Africans, mainly from Gauteng townships and Kwazulu Natal.

Leissner said residents were concerned about crime and the deteriorating public environment. They complained about litter, congestion caused by hawkers and taxis, prostitution and drug dealing.

Greater Johannesburg housing chairman Lindsay Bremner said it was part of the council's vision to improve services and provide a stable environment

Councillors 'owe thousands in arrears' (127)

Star 26/5/97

Report says council members have
municipal accounts in family names

BY RODNEY VICTOR

Councillors from Kempton Park, Midrand and Eden-vale still owe many thousands of rands on unpaid municipal accounts, according to a confidential report drawn up for the Khayalami Metropolitan Council.

Some of the councillors have opened municipal accounts in the names of their wives or other family members, the report indicates. This makes it difficult for the councils on which they serve to act against them, despite government regulations which say councillors who are more than three months in arrears must be removed from office.

The confidential report was drawn up after councillor Mike Waters (DP) asked further questions in the Khayalami Metro Council in February about the number of councillors in arrears.

Waters, who has been campaigning for more than a year for councillors to get up to date with their accounts or to be thrown off the council, asked for a detailed breakdown of the payment levels of all councillors or the households in which they live.

Three months later he has not yet had a reply, and the confidential report remains confidential. "A lot of councillors are hiding behind family members to avoid paying their accounts," Waters said last week.

"Others are not even doing that - they are simply not paying their accounts and are getting away with it because the councils are not taking action."

Part of the reason why payment levels in the townships were so low was that the councillors themselves were not paying, he said. Councillors had a moral obligation to pay up before they could go out and ask other people to do so, he added.

Zimbabwe in joint venture for

new power station

Star 26/5/97

By Robin Dren



A British-based company, National Power International, is going into partnership with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (Zesa) to build a new coal-fired power station in the remote Gokwe North area of Zimbabwe.

The station will be developed alongside Rio Tinto Zimbabwe's coal mine on the Sen-gwa River. It should be operational by January 2004.

The joint venture will consist of four generators.

A letter of intent has been signed and this will be followed by a feasibility study to examine the economic and environmental impact on the country and the benefits it would derive. Zimbabwe's existing power station at Hwange is to be expanded under a joint venture with a Malaysian company - Star Foreign Service.

R10 000 Masakhane plan for Alexandra angers DP

Star 26/5/97

(127)

Johannesburg's Eastern council will involve 'all stakeholders'

By Anna Cox
Sandton Bureau

The DP has lashed out at Johannesburg's Eastern council for organising a two-day Masakhane launch in Alexandra in June at a cost of R10 000.

The DP said most of the money would be spent on refreshments, while all that Sandton residents - who had been regular ratepayers - were getting was final notices.

DP Eastern leader Claire Quall said a carrot was being dangled in front of Alexandra residents while Sandton residents were being threatened with a big stick. Quall also slammed the re-

cent council offer made to boycotting Sandton residents to repay arrears over a six-month interest-free period. She said the offer was discriminatory, unfair and unconstitutional.

In October last year, the Greater Johannesburg Council gave local councillors 60 months to pay off their arrears, she said. Sandton residents were being offered only six months.

"This discriminatory approach is not the only cause for criticism. The major issue in the whole Sandton rates debate - the 300% to 400% increases in rates - remains unresolved.

"Reducing the increase has not even been addressed by the negotiating task team. In fact,

the task team has no authority to negotiate anything. It has no status in the Eastern council and does not even have a mandate from the council. It is an ANC task team chaired by an ANC chairman," she said.

The council's executive committee yesterday voted to adopt the recommendation. It was voted in by the ANC with a majority of six. Three DP councillors voted against it and the three NP councillors abstained.

Eastern council communications officer Keith Peacock said the Alex Masakhane campaign was "a very important conference which sets out the development of Alexandra at which all stakeholders will be present".

Defaulters face water and lights cutoff

SAF 27/5/97 (127)

Gauteng local authorities are owed about R3-billion, so services will be stopped in August unless residents pay up

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS

Gauteng residents who refuse to pay their municipal bills will have their services cut off in August, Local Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka announced yesterday.

Speaking after a meeting with the province's mayors, council chairmen and municipal chief executive officers, Shiceka said the crackdown was aimed at improving the financial viability of Gauteng's 51 local authorities, which are owed about R3-billion in arrears.

He said the drastic action was part of Gauteng's re-launched Masakhane campaign to increase payment for municipal services.

Shiceka said people who could not afford to pay could register with their local authorities from mid-June through July to avoid having their services cut.

All other consumers would have to pay - both their arrears and their current accounts.

"By August, Gauteng goes dark. People won't get electricity, they won't get water if necessary, waste won't be collected.

People have got to understand where the buck starts and where the buck stops."

Shiceka said residents who

failed to pay would have their furniture attached or their houses sold to defray costs. They would also be listed with credit bureaux.

Shiceka said the province hoped to improve the rate of payment by 10% every month, with 60% of residents paying by December.

Intergovernmental grants would be used to assist indigent people, he said. "We'll subsidise what we think are basic necessities," he said.

Criteria for qualifying as indigent were being drawn up.

Shiceka also said flat rates would be levied in informal settlements which did not have meters. Consumption would be divided by the number of residents, each of whom would have to pay a flat rate.

There was mixed reaction to the announcement yesterday. SA National Civic Organisation spokesman Donovan Williams said it was right to take action against people who refused to pay, while assisting those who could not pay.

DP spokesman Jack Bloom said he believed Shiceka was losing credibility by continually having to relaunch Masakhane. He said Shiceka should make an example of ANC councillors who owed thousands in unpaid municipal accounts.



Life in limbo .. Christina Erasmus and her foster child Whitney Woest could soon be among 34 Benoni families who may lose their homes after allegedly being misled by a pastor in a scam to be investigated by Gauteng's housing department.

Dismayed families find homes they've been 'buying' don't belong to them

BY BONGIWE MLANGENI

A dream of living in a safe community with amenities nearby has turned into a nightmare for 34 Benoni families who have been paying for homes which they recently discovered they do not own.

According to residents' spokesman Ella Lombard, they were invited to buy houses in Van Rhyndeep in Benoni by

Pastor Dennis Joubert of the Ecclesia Evangelica Network.

The church's plans to build low-cost houses, a cathedral, 28 mini factories, a university, a clinic, a gym and a school were reported in local newspapers.

But instead of building new houses, the pastor sold the families very old ones at R50 000 each with a 13% fixed interest rate.

The families moved in in

1995 and were paying monthly bonds of about R590, and about R300 for water and electricity.

Lombard said the residents paid bonds and services at the church every month, hoping that all was in order. They were also told their bonds would decrease as soon as the church received a government housing subsidy.

Residents became suspicious when their electricity

was cut off last year despite the fact that they had been paying their bills. The Benoni council said the community was in arrears of about R300 000.

Lombard said last month that they were told to move out because the land and the cluster of houses they had "bought" were being auctioned.

"The bank was shocked to find out there were people living on the land. We were not

even known as bond holders. If we lose these homes, where will we go?" asked Lombard.

The residents have called on the Gauteng government to intervene.

The housing department said it would investigate the matter further and the auction has been put on hold until July.

Pastor Joubert could not be reached for comment this week.

(127) Star 27/8/97



CHRIS ADLAM

Home base and an end to desperation for some of the new tenants at Windmill Park in Boksburg.

Thousands of squatters look forward to becoming first-time homeowners

By **PATRICK PHOSA**
AND **FIKILE-MSIKELELO MOYA**

Thousands of squatters on the East Rand, who are already braving a very cold winter in their makeshift shacks, will move into their new low-cost houses during the next few months.

About 450 squatters from the Pinnoy Farm informal settlement will be relocated to a new township in Windmill Park, Boksburg, opened by Gauteng

Premier Tokyo Sexwale and housing MEC Dan Mofokeng yesterday.

The move comes as a relief to Emma Kwena, who says she is tired of living in a shack and putting up with unhygienic living conditions at Pinnoy Farm, which is situated on dolemitic land east of Vosloorus. "I cannot wait to move into my new house as the farm is a health hazard for us and not fit to be occupied by human beings," she said.

The new township has taps

on individual sites, proper sewerage systems, electrical connections, tarred roads and street lights.

The housing project is a publicly owned serviced sites programme run by the Gauteng housing department intended to empower small and emerging builders and developers. The project was initiated last year and construction began in January.

Gauteng housing spokesman Jubile Matlou said 490 stands

had already been handed over to builders in the area. At least 200 homes out of 680 were being completed. A total of R10-million was given to builders and contractors who could not access bridging finance from financial institutions.

The Gauteng government also provided 680 beneficiaries with R15 000 individual subsidies. Development manager Geoff Mendelowitz said each house cost R17 250 and the site house cost R7 500. If she receives a subsidy,

Kwena will pay in about R9 750. Meanwhile, 214 families have moved into their two-and-half-roomed houses in Moleleki Section in Katshehong. The 313-unit project targets people earning less than R800 a month. The project cost R5-million, with the house and site costing R15 000. The project is expected to be completed next month.

As with the Windmill Park housing developments, local developers and labour have been used.

Star 28/5/97 (127)

Star 28/5/97
No rates
increases this
year – ANC

(127)

The ANC, the majority party in Greater Johannesburg's metro council and its four substructures, announced yesterday that there would be no rates increases this year.

ANC regional secretary Parks Tau said last night that the local ANC caucus decided not to propose, or support any moves to increase rates in the metro area this year. He said the decision would not affect service delivery and the party would issue a detailed report today. The 1997/98 budgets of Greater Johannesburg are due to be announced in the next few days.

Opposition parties refused to comment last night, saying they would wait to see what service increases were imposed. Sandton residents boycotted rates payments in protest against massive increases last year. They are still embroiled in a dispute with the Eastern Council over the increases.

Also, 10 businesses affected by the increases took the council to court this year to have the increases set aside. They lost the case and are appealing against the High Court decision – Staff Reporter

► Councils have two years

Impasse in Krugersdorp council goes on and on

By BUNTY WEST

(127) Star 30/5/97

Six ANC councillors at odds with the Krugersdorp council failed to make an appearance at Wednesday night's monthly meeting

The councillors - Lindiwe Ndzondo, Serge Mokonyane, Ben Ntsimane, Bafana Mdlalose, Francis Moalosi and Eric Molimi - were absent for the second consecutive meeting, but "made apologies" by phone earlier in the day

The council has been in turmoil since the beginning of the year, when battle lines were drawn over alleged irregularities involving a housing company headed by Ntsimane, a member of the council's executive committee at the time

Ntsimane, head of the Krugersdorp Development Trust, was charged with applying for a R19-million housing board subsidy for the trust "without first obtaining permission from the council"

He and fellow executive committee members, Ndzondo and Mokonyane, were kicked off the committee, but remain councillors

The head of the council's recon-

struction and development programme, Christine Crowley, who worked under Ntsimane, was caught in the crossfire Ntsimane and Crowley were cleared by external investigators of any wrongdoing, but the trust itself is still under investigation.

Ndzondo and Mokonyane supported Ntsimane and were joined by the three other ANC councillors in condemning mayor Stephen Motingoa and executive committee chairman Issy Dinat for their treatment of Ntsimane.

The breakaway councillors, who are backed by the regional office of the ANC, say Motingoa and Dinat have a hidden agenda. The ANC demanded the ousted exco members be reinstated, but the councillors who replaced them, Meshack Pule, Boyce Maneli and Mirriam Maluleke, refused to step down

"At this week's meeting, we decided to seek legal help to appeal against the disciplinary hearing's not guilty ruling on Crowley," said Motingoa

Crowley has not been allowed to return

Home-seekers wait up to six months for state subsidies

By TOMMY MAKOE



SUCCESS: Home-buyer Zwell Shange holds the state housing subsidy application that took six months to be approved. With him is estate agent Walter Royzman.

PHOTOGRAPH CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE

Zwell Shange had almost given up hope of buying his own home, when his state subsidy was finally approved this week - almost six months later than he was promised by the Gauteng housing department.

The 35-year-old supermarket shelf packer, who applied for a subsidy in November, is one of hundreds of prospective first-time homeowners in the province who were left in the lurch because of a massive backlog in subsidy applications.

"The bank had granted me a bond and I was only waiting for the Government to approve the subsidy," said Shange, who had applied for a R9 000 subsidy as part-payment for a small R24 000 flat in Hillrow, with the rest of the money coming from the bank.

Shange said the housing department had told him that his application would be approved within six weeks. "I have been waiting since last year

and I started to get worried after four months without getting my subsidy approved. I thought my bank would withdraw because of the delay," said Shange.

The housing department approved Shange's application this week, during the course of a *Saturday Star* investigation into his complaint.

But Rose Matlou and Maria Khumalo, who have heard nothing from the department about their applications, have not been as lucky.

Both had applied twice for their subsidies after they were told that their first applications had gone missing.

They reapplied about four months ago but neither of them have got their subsidy. The backlog which started late last year, has not only left buyers frustrated but has also raised concerns among estate agents.

Estate agent Joe Mahasha said he is so fed up with the department's delay that he no longer deals with clients who have to get state subsidies.

"You wait so long that your client,

whose hopes have been raised, gets discouraged and cancels the deal," Mahasha said. "They will say they're waiting for somebody's signature to approve the subsidy, which could take more than six months. Banks approve loans in less than three days - the delay is with the subsidy."

Realtor Walter Royzman said more than 50 of his clients who applied between five and nine months ago were still waiting for their subsidies to be approved.

"Before, we never had problems with the approval of subsidies but since late last year there have been all sorts of problems. Sometimes when you inquire about your client's application they will say it is missing. Recently they said the delay was because of a lack of staff but they claim to have attended to the problem and there has not been any improvement," Royzman said.

John Katz, of John Katz Real Estates, said, however, that while there had been delays at the housing department, the

system had improved since April. Katz said the waiting period was now down to three months.

The department confirmed there was a backlog, but it blamed the delays on a lack of co-operation from some financial institutions and conveyancers regarding the reconciliation of funds they are administering.

It also said a shortage of staff had led to delays in processing subsidy applications and that 26 contract workers were appointed in March to ease the workload of permanent staff.

Jubie Matlou, a spokesman for Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng, said the banks often took a long time to pay developers of new housing projects.

"This led to the department placing a moratorium, which has now been lifted, on some of the financial institutions," Matlou said.

The department of housing said last month it had processed 7 400 applications this year and an average of 1569 were processed daily.

(127) Star 31/5/97

A new life rises from the rot

JHC workers are giving Jozi's sad inner city a sorely needed face-lift

THE MONOTONOUS hum of a drill drowns out the mid-morning hubbub of Hillbrow, and in a cloud of dust debris falls two storeys to the ground.

Men are at work high up on a wing of Tower Hill, a flat building that belongs to the Johannesburg Housing Company (JHC)

They are demolishing the part of the building that used to serve as offices and preparing to convert it into flats

In the residential section of the building, old flats were recently given a face-lift

Meanwhile, at another construction site across town, more men in blue and yellow overalls are toiling hard to be on target for the scheduled completion of the JHC's pet project in Jeppestown

Some of the residential blocks in the 243-unit complex are almost complete

The Jeppie Oval wouldn't be disgraced next to any of the city's more upmarket townhouse buildings. But the comparisons end there. For starters, the Jeppie Oval is in



THE NEW JEWEL OF JEPPESTOWN

Nearing completion, the Jeppie Oval will offer many residents an escape from Johannesburg's inner-city slumlords

Picture: SIWE RADEBE

BREATHING life into Jozi's decaying inner city, the Johannesburg Housing Company is bringing new hope to those who have long suffered under slumlords, writes ANDILE NOGANTA.

the not-too-popular area near the inner city of Johannesburg

And the one- and two-bedroomed flats will be rented out to the city's low-income group, the ghetto people of Hillbrow and Berea, long suffer-

ing under unscrupulous slumlords

In the 16 months since the JHC's birth, it has acquired Tower Hills and two other flat buildings in the inner city - San Martin and Tasmum Heights, both in Joubert Park

Tasmum Heights is a model flat building. Past the security gates the foyer is surprisingly gleaming and the walls freshly painted

And the lifts work!

Sabie Thabathe, the JHC's community relations co-ordinator, says the average rent is R350 a month

The JHC's stated mission is to provide low-cost rental in the inner city and surrounding areas

"We are dealing with three tasks - converting existing commercial buildings, upgrading and refurbish-

ing existing residential buildings and building two- and three-storey walkups set in gardens," explains Thabathe

The City Press team donned helmets to inspect the construction site at the Jeppie Oval

The project has provided jobs for more than 20 men. Part of the agreement with the main contractor was to sub-contract to emerging contractors

Thabathe says the men spend time every day in literacy and numeracy classes at the nearby Bertha Solomon Recreation Centre. Linda Malaza and 26 co-workers have been selected to attend construction skills upgrading courses designed for the JHC in conjunction with the South African Black Contractors Assis-

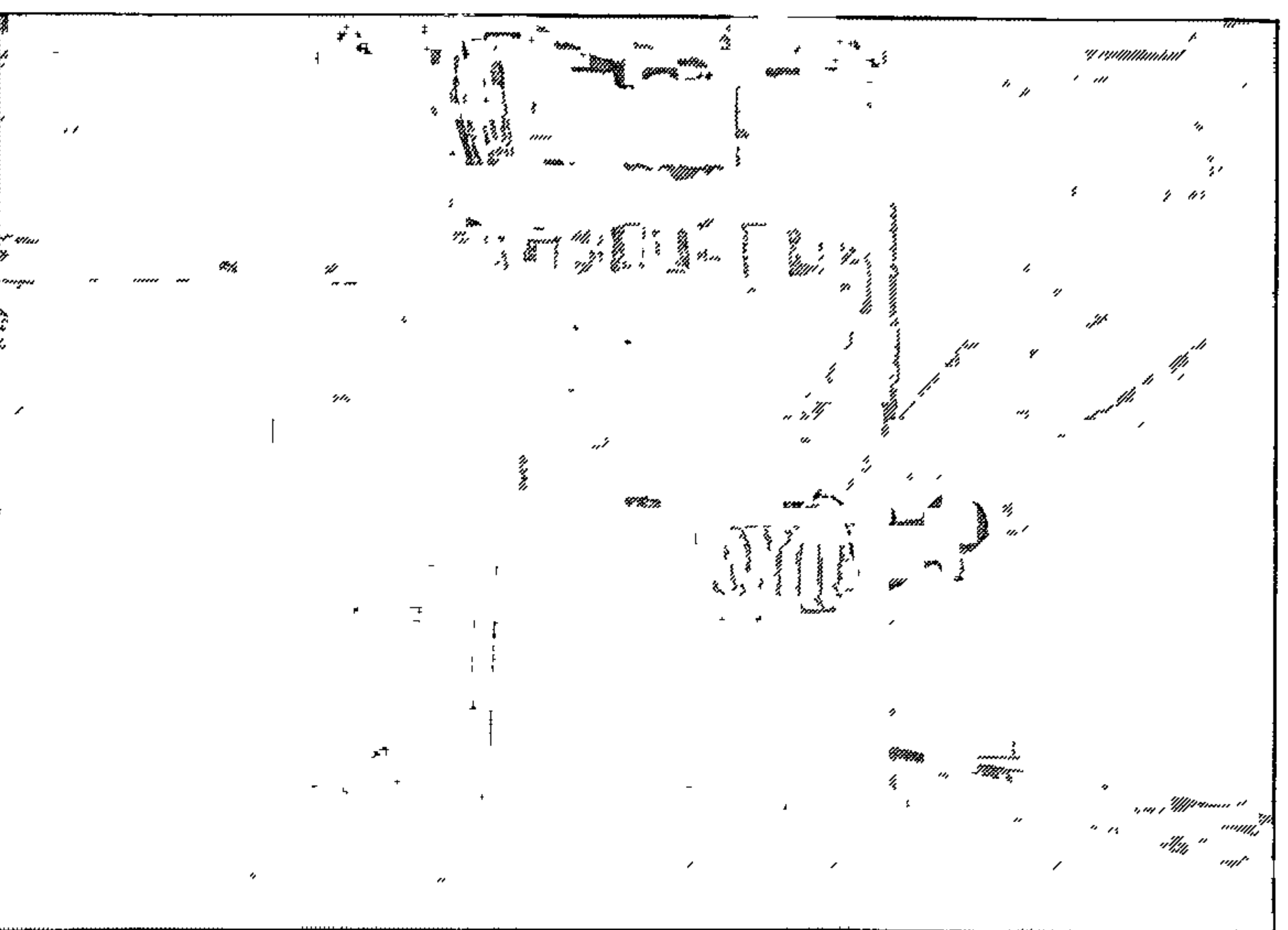
ance Programme

The overall impression? It is easy to see why Thabathe is so excited about the project. Jeppie Oval looks set to be the crown jewel of Jeppestown

But putting up new flat buildings and refurbishing those that are not yet beyond redemption will not do much for the bleak inner-city landscape of Johannesburg as long as the most dilapidated flat buildings - the worst of the worst - remain untouched

These are your Polly Lodges, your Castle Blaneys and the entire block of rotten flats running along the Wanderers Street taxi rank in Joubert Park

Nobody expects five-star accommodation to suddenly mushroom



RESIDENTIAL RENAISSANCE. Renovation work is in full swing at Tower Hill in Hillbrow - where old offices are being turned into flats

around the inner city, but some of the flat buildings are a horror to behold

Even the poorest of the urban poor who cram the inner city deserve better accommodation

Taking over and rebuilding such buildings is the true test of any social housing company. If, in reclaiming the inner city from those who raped it, the JHC had shied away from such projects, one might have dismissed them as simply being in it for the money

But the JHC is now finalising the acquisition of the rundown Douglas Rooms, a block of 82 one-room units in Troyeville, one kilometre east of the inner city

The 94-year-old building used to belong to a slumlord, who absconded after he had failed to pay his rates,

water and electricity and even stopped servicing his bond

It is a picture of the dark side of the city. The more than 150 men, women and children share filthy communal washing and cooking facilities

One of the communal toilets was blocked when City Press visited - but people continued to use it, according to a woman resident

Thabathe says the JHC is using the Douglas Rooms experiment to measure how viable such projects can be

At least they have shown the courage to experiment. It was about time someone did something about the rot in which people live in the inner city of Johannesburg. Now the Johannesburg Housing Company is doing it

(127) 28 116197

Legal fight looms over Sandton budget dispute

Deborah Fine

BD 2/6/97

YET another legal battle may be looming for the greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council after the Democratic Party and two independent councillors prevented the Sandton-based Eastern local council from passing its 1997/98 municipal budget on Saturday.

Delays in the adoption of the budget and the implementation of various municipal tariff hikes in the east could have serious implications for service delivery in the whole of the greater Johannesburg region, especially in the south and west where significant budgetary deficits were to have been covered by revenue generated by the eastern local council.

However, the budgets of the metropolitan council's other three substructures were approved at special council meetings on Saturday. The northern local council approved a budget of R905m, of which R211m will be spent on capital projects. The southern local council, which governs most of Soweto, passed a R1,2bn operating budget with a capital budget of R317m, while the western local council gave the nod to a capital budget of R258m and an operating budget of R399m.

The metropolitan council itself passed a total budget of R4,8bn. Of this, R4bn will make up the council's operating budget, while the remaining R800m will be spent on infrastructure projects (R409m), electricity (R185m), economic development, sports, art and culture (R144m), and public safety and emergency services (R45m).

The budgets will result in increases of 30% for water charges, 25% for sewerage, 15% for refuse and a 12% increase for domestic electricity across greater Johannesburg.

Businesses face a 10% increase in the regional services council levy on turnover and staff.

In terms of the metropolitan council's "balanced budget" for 1997/98, the eastern local council was to have paid over a levy of R401m to subsidise deficits of R161m and R105m in the south and west, respectively. The levy would be used also to fund a R121,6m deficit in the metropolitan council's operating budget. The eastern council, though dominated by the African National Congress, could not hammer through its budget because it failed to obtain the two-thirds majority — in this instance 40 votes — required by law to pass the budget.

The council consists of 31 ANC councillors, six National Party members, two Inkatha Freedom Party representatives — all of whom were in favour of the budget — and 18 DP members and two independent councillors, Liz Clogg, representing Bryanston, and Bruma ward councillor Ivor Blumenthal.

Together, the ANC, NP and IFP made up 39 votes, one vote short of the crucial two-thirds majority. With the DP and Clogg against the budget, the council had hoped that Blumenthal could be persuaded to give his support to the budget.

However, he withheld his vote and the budget was defeated.

The DP voted against the budget on the grounds that the levy was inequitable, because the eastern council was the only Johannesburg local authority called on to pay such a levy.

After the budget's defeat, the council decided to refer the budget back to the executive committee for further debate.

DP councillor Mike Moriarty said his party would take legal opinion on the matter because in terms of local government legislation, the council was not authorised to re-debate the budget.

The council was now legally obliged to refer the budget to Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale for consideration, he said.

The DP would take legal advice also on the council's contention that the tariffs contained in the budget were a separate budget item and had required only a simple majority to be approved. On this basis they had been approved and could be implemented as planned on July 1.

Moriarty contended that the tariffs also required a two-thirds majority.

He argued that for this reason they had not been passed in the east.

DP councillor Alan Fuchs said the party might consider bringing an urgent application in the Johannesburg High Court this week to prevent the council from re-debating the budget should it not be authorised to do so.

Council gets tough on defaulters

Deborah Fine

(127) 60 3/6/97

THE Johannesburg southern local council no longer had any "qualms" about cutting off the electricity of municipal payment defaulters following the introduction of a register for indigent and destitute people and a generous offer to allow defaulters to pay off their arrears, budget and finance committee chairman Shan Balton said.

Confirming yesterday that the council had cut off the electricity of more than 1 700 defaulters since March, he said the cut-offs would continue "at a fairly rapid pace" as part of the council's programme to increase payments from present average levels of 84% to about 95%.

A positive sign in this regard had been what seemed to be "an important change in mind set" whereby defaulters whose electricity had been cut off had either applied to register for a council subsidy or had taken advantage of the council's offer whereby they could pay off their arrears over a period of 60 months, interest free.

This was in stark contrast to previous cut-offs which had provoked sometimes violent protest.

The council, which governs Johannesburg South, most of Soweto, the Johannesburg central business district as well as areas such as Lenasia and Eldorado Park, had cut off the electricity of 220 defaulters in March, 442 in April and 968 last month, he said.

Balton said 10 186 people had already applied to be registered under the council's indigent and destitute scheme. The scheme separated those people who genuinely could not afford to pay for services from those who simply neglected to pay their accounts.

The council had agreed to provide municipal services subsidies of R62,09 a month to such people, of which R54,15 would be in lieu of water, sewerage and refuse removal charges, and R7,94 for rates. The subsidy did not include electricity, which the council felt people should pay for themselves.

People would be screened in order to renew subsidies. Subsidies at present would cost the council R19m a year.

Troops to help wage water and lights war

(127) Mar 3/6/97

BY RODNEY VICTOR

The army will help Boksborg council officials today when they cut electricity and water supplies to people in the Popcorn Valley area of Reiger Park who have not paid their municipal accounts

A similar operation in Popcorn Valley last week was unsuccessful.

Residents erected barricades and threw bombs at officials, who managed to cut off supplies to only a few homes.

Residents later broke into electrical substations to restore the power themselves, but they damaged expensive electrical switchgear in the process, plunging the entire Popcorn

“
**If we can
win this one,
we can win
in other areas**
”

Valley area into darkness, and knocking out a sewage pump station.

Raw sewage was running in the streets until the damage was repaired.

By the end of the day all those who had had their supplies cut off were again enjoying free electricity.

“The residents are organised and they are going flat-out not to pay for the services they are using,” said Boksborg’s city electrical engineer, Al Fortmann.

“It’s an unbelievable battle, but if we can win this one, we can win in the other areas as well,” he said.

Members of the defence force would remain in Popcorn Valley for three weeks, Fortmann said.

Massive electricity scam (127) unearthed

Mar 4/6/97

BY CECILIA RUSSELL

More than two-thirds of the 6 000 Ennerdale households with pre-paid electricity meters have bypassed the system and are using electricity without paying for it, according to the Southern council.

Shan Balton, head of the council's finance committee, said the scam was uncovered in the course of implementing a harsh cutoff policy for people who refuse to pay their electricity, rates and service accounts.

Balton said many residents in south-western Johannesburg had managed to bypass the meters soon after their installation in the early 1990s and had not been paying for electricity since then.

He said the council was considering legal action against the culprits.

R60-m lost in non-payment by residents in Jo'burg south

Star 4/6/97 (127)
By LEE ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Johannesburg's Southern council has lost about R60-million over the past two months because residents of Johannesburg's traditionally white southern suburbs have stopped paying for municipal services. And there are fears the culture of non-payment will grow.

Southern councillor Shan Balton told The Star yesterday that payment levels in Johannesburg's southern suburbs had shown a "2 or 3% drop" over the past two months. This amounted to R50-million or R60-million in lost revenue, he said.

Balton said the council was investigating, but it was uncertain why residents were not paying.

"We haven't received any information of any organised attempt for non-payment," he said. "If our May figures confirm there's a trend, we will be very, very seriously worried about it," he said.

However, an organisation called the New South Community Forum said yesterday there was no doubt it was responsible for the drop in payment levels. The forum is a residents' association operating in the wealthiest suburbs of the south, including Bassonia, Mulbarton and Glenvista.

Forum spokesman David Carser said the organisation had embarked on a services boycott last June to protest against the development of Liefde en Vrede - an open piece of land south of Mulbarton - as an informal settlement area.

Carser said residents had not paid at all until February, when they started paying a flat rate. Residents ended the boycott on May 29 after reaching an agreement with the council. He could not say how many residents had heeded the call for the boycott, saying people refused on "individual" basis.

But Mondeor and Hills Village Community chairman Margo Holt denied there was an organised move to boycott paying for services.

Holt said Mondeor residents were paying for services, but said residents of Turffontein and Rosettenville might not be paying "because they had a stupid rationale that they won't pay for other people".

■ The Masakhane campaign, aimed at improving the level of payment for municipal services, is to be relaunched in Gauteng today for the fourth time. It was first launched in 1995.

► More reports

South's payments boycott denied

(127) Star 5/6/97

The Rosettenville and Townsview (Roseview) Ratepayers' Association yesterday denied that any of its residents had boycotted paying for municipal services.

The association was reacting to a report in The Star yesterday stating that the Southern council had lost between R50 and R60-million over the past two months because residents of Johannesburg's traditionally white suburbs were not paying for services. It reported Mondeor and Hills Village chairman Margo Holt saying that residents of Turffontein and Rosettenville might not be paying "because they had some stupid rationale that they won't pay for other people".

The association's secretary, Elaine Duncan, said they had been approached in the past by various organisations to support a rates boycott, but had consistently refused to participate.

"In every instance our committee has unanimously agreed to refuse to be part of any boycott. It is our firm belief that such boycotts are irresponsible and extremely damaging to the efficient functioning of the metropolitan council," she said. Duncan said she expected Holt to provide evidence to support her statement. — City Reporter.

Ratepayers foot bill for water worth millions lost yearly in Joburg

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Johannesburg's councils lose millions in unaccounted-for water annually - and ratepayers have to pay

The Southern council said yesterday it lost more than R10-million in unaccounted-for water every year

An average 14% was lost in the South, with Soweto's leakages as high as 25%, Southern council water spokesman Connie Ras said

Northern council water spokesman Kurt Rohner said it lost up to R9-million in unaccounted-for water every year

But he said this was "very good" as it was way below what was considered an ideal amount of water to lose. Any council which lost under 10% to 12% was doing well, Ras said

Both Ras and Rohner said the cost of the lost water was borne by ratepayers because the amount was incor-

porated into the tariffs consumers were charged.

Although they could not say exactly how much this was, Rohner said it was a portion of the 30% to 40% levy in the water tariff to finance the municipal infrastructure.

"We need to balance the books. We have to account for the maintenance of the system," Rohner said.

Ras said consumers had always been charged for unaccounted-for water because it was part of the operating costs. Ras and Rohner said that in any extensive reticulation system, water would be lost

According to Ras, a lot of the South's water is lost through outdated plumbing which would take millions to replace. It would be about seven years before the system was improved

Both councils said they were installing systems which would make it more efficient to monitor water consumption

(127)

star 6/6/97

Gauteng leads country in building of new homes

Nov 6/6/97 (127)

SAPA AND STAFF REPORTER

Gauteng is delivering one-third of South Africa's low-cost housing, beating all other provinces hands down, Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng reported to Parliament in Cape Town today

The 71 276 units (completed and under construction) were almost three times higher than the Western Cape's 25 321 units.

National Department of Housing statistics showed Gauteng's 1996/97 expenditure was R567-million. In November Gauteng spent R71-million, nearly half of the total of R136-million spent that month.

Figures over three years showed delivery of 18 714 stands in 1994/95 and 1995/96. In the past financial year, delivery topped 47 074. Gauteng was delivering more than 3 800 units a month. "In a single year we have increased delivery by 150%," said Mofokeng.

A further 17 projects involving the release of 23 023 sites to benefit about 115 000 people had been approved as part of Gauteng's Mayibuye Programme for release of land for landless people. About 9 500 people had been settled on 1 900 sites and land was being released at a rate of 50 sites a day.

Nine other projects, part of

the upgrading of informal settlements programme, had been approved and 22 115 sites were to be upgraded.

The programme, which had created jobs for 12 900 people, had also repaired 885 damaged houses in Katorus and 237 in Meadowlands, Dobsonville and the Vaal, Mofokeng said.

The province would introduce the Gauteng Housing Bill this year, to deal with the establishment of the Gauteng Housing Fund and the institutional arrangements for the management of housing, including consultative forums and the provincial housing board, Mofokeng said.

Bond boycotters sign landmark deal with loan company

SAW 9/6/97

(127)

By **CECILIA RUSSELL**

More than 170 homeowners in the Chiawelo area of Soweto yesterday pledged to pay their bonds after signing an agreement with finance company Khayaletu Home Loans

This marks the end of a five-year bond boycott in the area

Residents stopped paying about a year after occupying the properties because of a dispute with Khayaletu over the cost of the houses, said Lesley Bonoko, chairman of the Chiawelo Residents' Association

In return for regular repay-

ments, Khayaletu has agreed to scrap the accumulated interest on arrears owed by the homeowners, to fix their bond interest rate at 17% for five years, and to reschedule payments as if they were newly acquired bonds

The houses originally cost between R25 000 and R30 000

The structures have been re-evaluated and the new prices are R27 000 for the smaller units and R29 000 for the larger ones. Residents will be able to apply for the R15 000 government subsidy for first-time home buyers

The newly signed deal will

come into effect on July 1

"Khayaletu has bent over backwards to help us and we must now begin to pay our bonds," Bonoko said

Camuel Dikotla, a mortgage bond consultant, said this agreement could prompt banks to change their attitudes towards financing Soweto home buyers

"The banks have red-lined areas in Soweto due to the high number of people in arrears with their bonds," said Dikotla

He said Khayaletu had lost about R300-million in the past 10 years because of bond boycotts

R100-m loss for Eskom if it scraps debts

(127)

BY FIKILE-NTSKELELO MOYA

City Desk

Star 11/6/97

National electricity supplier Eskom stands to lose almost R100-million if its plan to write off arrears owed by Gauteng residents goes ahead, communications head Peter Kgame said yesterday.

Eskom had distributed pamphlets to Soweto residents, offering to write off all debt accrued between January 1992 and July 1995, if residents settled what they owed Eskom from July 1995 to date.

Kgame said other areas where households bought their electricity directly from Eskom would also have their arrears written off.

The amnesty scheme is already working on the East Rand.

Most former white, Indian and coloured areas were not included because they received electricity from local councils.

Some, like Sandton, which Eskom supplied directly, would not be included because "there had never been a repayment problem" in these areas.

Eskom had decided to offer the amnesty because it realised it would be difficult for people who had not paid for years as part of the rent boycott to find the money to settle these debts.

Boksburg power cut

Boksburg mayor Eric Xayiya has called for all community leaders to help solve problems in Popcorn Valley, Reiger Park, following yesterday's unrest.

The Boksburg Town Council, owed R132-million in arrears, cut electricity to the area at dawn. About 100 residents gathered to protest. Only one arrest was made. - Staff Reporter.

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Homeowners at mercy of tenants

Squatters threaten to burn houses down when asked to leave, and nothing is done by either council or police to help

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

(127) (11/6/97)
The harassment of Alexandra property owners by tenants living illegally in their homes is increasing daily, according to the Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association spokesman Keke Koalepe

The owners are often terrorised by the tenants - who don't pay rent - and find themselves in a position where not even the law is on their side.

Koalepe himself fell victim to this situation last weekend. He had two people living in his house who had not been paying rent since 1994. He obtained an eviction order and the sheriff evicted the tenants. Koalepe removed the door and roof of the rooms but last Friday - a day later - they returned and laid a charge of theft against him.

Koalepe is desperate: "It seems there is no law which protects property owners. This is my property, it is my private place - I paid for it but it is taken over by other people who do what they like and live here for nothing. I want the rooms for my daughter who has finished her matric."

"We are terrorised by these tenants and have no legal protection. We don't know which way to turn," he said.

Koalepe is one of hundreds of Alex property owners who face the same problem. Yet no one appears to be able to help them.

The Human Rights Commission's (HRC) head of the legal department, Mogam Moodliar, said the commission was seeking legal opinion to ascertain whether the owners had rights in terms of the Land Restitution Act.

DP Gauteng MPL Jack Bloom said he was disappointed in the approach of the HRC which had attempted to mediate the issues rather than directly ensure that legal rights were upheld.

Eastern Council communications officer Keith Peacock said a registration process was in progress to find out who the legal owners and tenants were, but until such a register was complete it would be impossible to carry out evictions.

The land dispute started under the Group Areas Act when the Government expropriated properties and then granted owners permission to rent their own properties back from the State. Many repurchased their homes in the 1980s.

Caroline Nkosi is another victim of tenants. She has 10 living on her property. Her children want to move in, but they are unable to do so because the tenants refuse to move.

"People come here and build their shacks on my property wherever they want and I can do nothing. If I dare tell them to leave they threaten to burn the house down. Nobody at all is helping us - the councillors and the police do nothing."

Sandton rates boycott is set to continue

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The boycott of rates by Sandton residents and sectional title owners is set to continue despite the zero increase in rates announced for the 1997/98 financial year.

Sandton ratepayers started boycotting rates in July in protest against increases of up to 300%.

Sectional title owners in Johannesburg's Eastern and Northern councils have decided to continue with their rates boycott in protest against the 40% rebate granted to them in the new budget.

Residential Sectional Title Owners' Association spokesman William Chiles said residential property owners received a 60% rebate while sectional title owners got only a 40% rebate. The rebate was raised from 35% to 40% for the new financial year, but owners are still unhappy.

It was decided this week to recommend to members that 1995/96 rates plus an escalation as decided on by the trustees or bodies corporate of their complexes be paid, said Chiles.

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers is also still continuing its rates boycott. Even though the association has recommended to its members they may take the option of accepting the Eastern coun-

cil's offer of repayment of arrears over six months interest free, it is encouraging members to pay only R14,50 a month for water - the same as people in Alexandra and Soweto are paying.

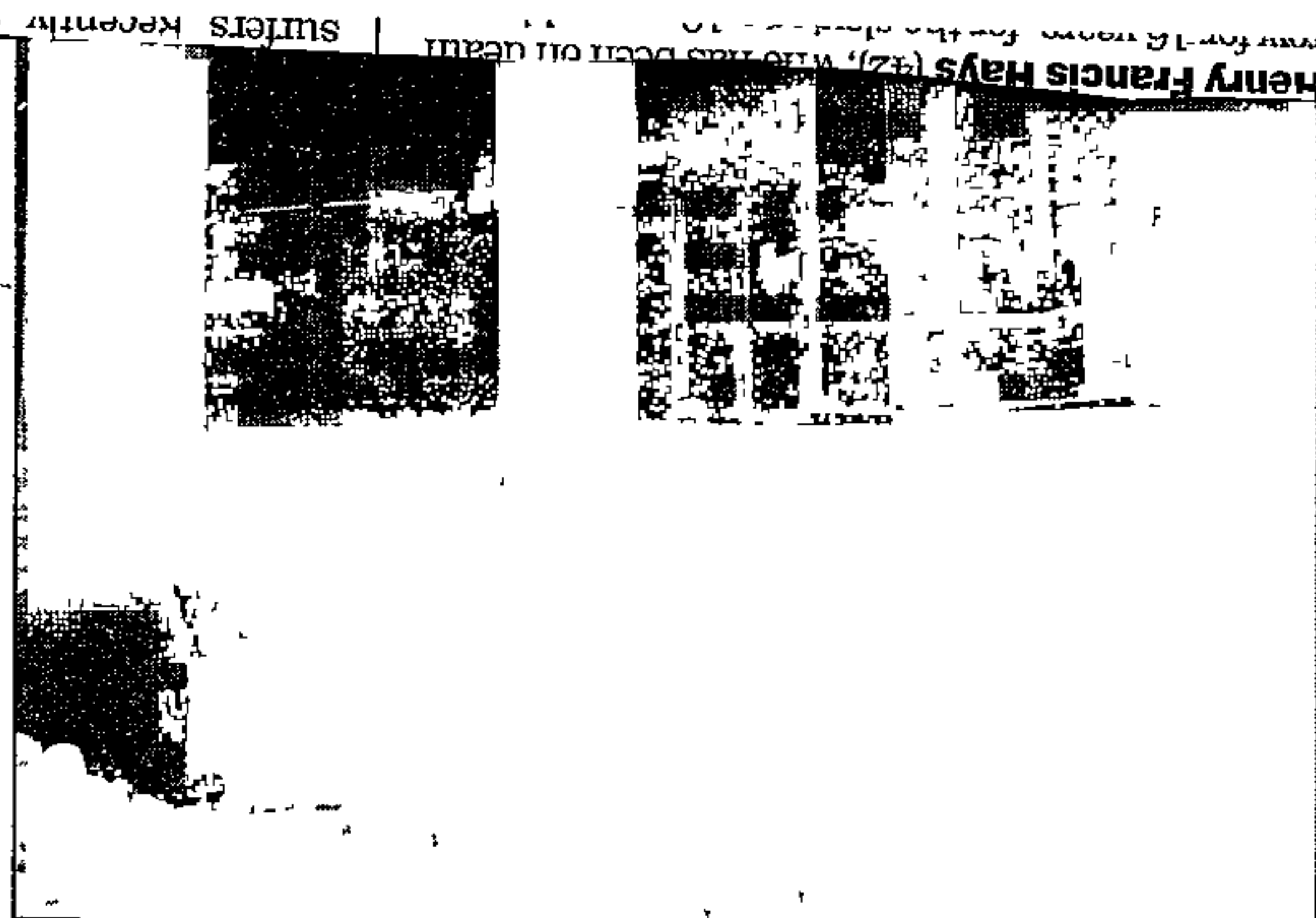
Said Sanfed chairman Peter Harmsen: "Ratepayers are not capitulating on the rates boycott. In fact, we are widening our focus to include other areas of activity in which the municipality is not providing ratepayers with the services they are paying for."

"The rates issue and the extortionate imposition of rates has not been resolved, nor has the unfair land valuation procedure, nor the discriminatory levying of different charges in different communities for equivalent services."

He said Sanfed also rejected the Eastern council handing over its R401-million surplus for cross-subsidisation to other councils.

"The principle is still to be tested in the Appeal Court and ratepayers are advised under no circumstances to make payment of any rates without formally protesting that they are doing so because of threats by the authorities and that they reserve their rights to reclaim overpayments when the court decision is handed down. A proforma letter to this effect is available from the Sanfed help office (telephone 883-5001)."

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Star 11/6/97



Lax controls: The Gauteng Housing Department had more than R8-million stolen from its low-cost housing kitty PHOTO SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

Gauteng official stole R8m from housing fund

M+G 13-19/6/97 (127)

Mungo Soggot

A TOP official in Gauteng's Housing Department has confessed to stealing more than R8-million from the province's low-cost housing kitty.

Senior accountant Louis Botha handled the province's disbursements from the National Housing Fund — the central reservoir of funds for the government's low-cost housing drive.

But lax controls within the provincial department enabled Botha to siphon cash into front companies for almost four years before he was exposed.

Botha used some of the proceeds to buy properties in Johannesburg's eastern suburbs, where several of his friends are living rent-free.

He was only caught last year when Standard Bank noticed a strikingly large amount of money flowing into his credit-card account. The bank alerted the department, which then contacted the Transvaal attorney general's office.

The Gauteng province accounted for roughly one-third of the R3-billion national housing fund budget for the 1996/97 financial year, and has been praised by central government for its speedy disbursement of low-cost housing funds

Provincial housing officials plan to release a formal statement next week. The department has also sought "professional advice" to tighten up its systems.

Botha was convicted on 95 counts of theft in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court last month, after handing over a full confession.

He told the court he had "taken advantage of all opportunities" to pillage the fund from November 1992 until the middle of last

year, when he was caught.

Botha set up a string of fictitious creditors on the department's computer, forwarded them cheques from the fund and printed fake invoices.

He set up the front companies with the help of some of his friends, who shared the proceeds. The fictitious companies' titles included three variations on the name of top estate agent Lew Geffen (who was not connected to the scam)

In his tell-all confession, apparently made in the hope of securing a lenient sentence, Botha also described how he drew up false invoices in the names of so-called creditors. He either forged the second signature required for the cheques or asked one of his department colleagues to sign — without letting them in on the swindle.

"I admit my behaviour was wrong and forbidden and I could be punished," Botha said in his written confession.

"The concept of intent to steal has been carefully explained to me and I acknowledge that I had intention to deprive the state of its property permanently.

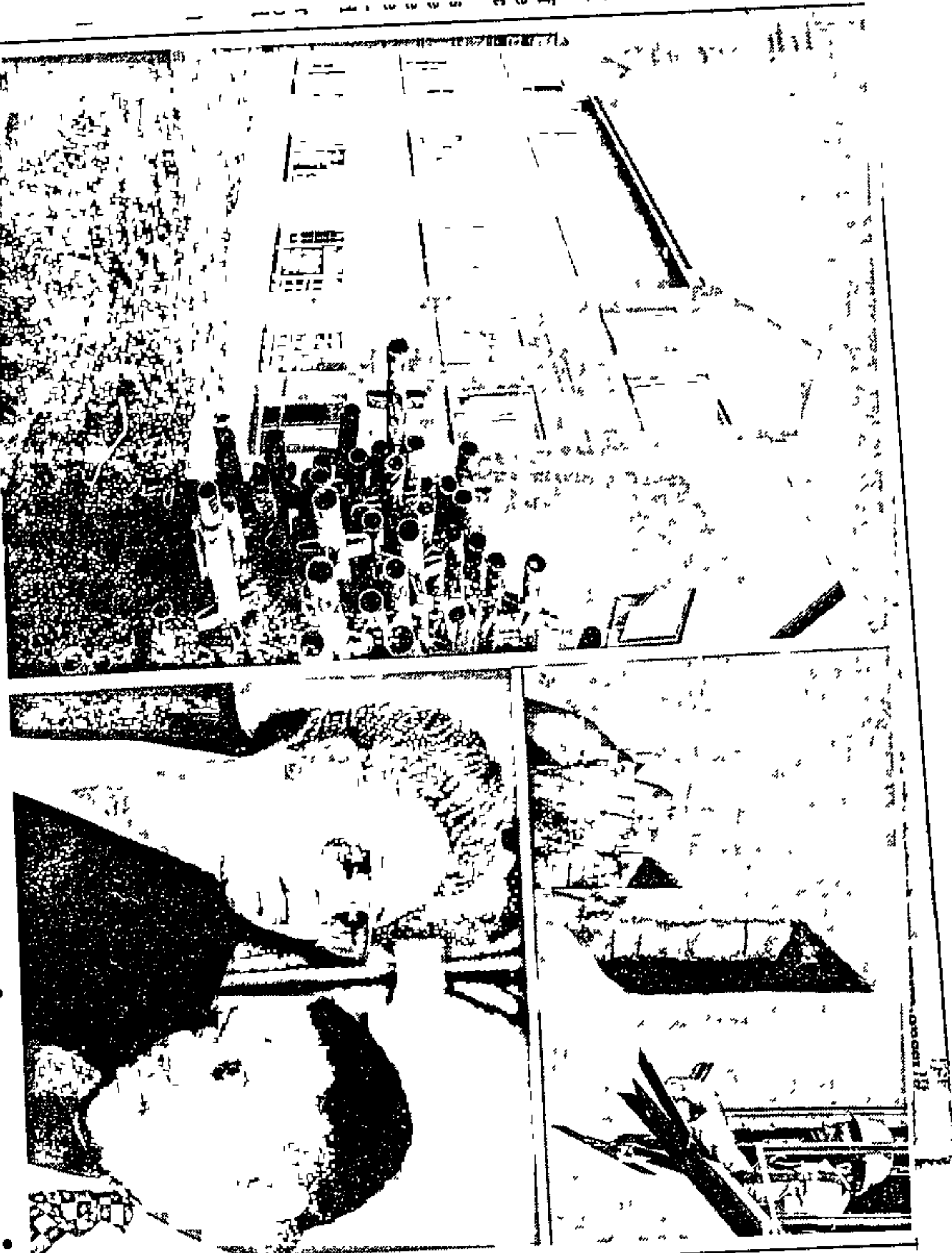
"I took advantage of all opportunities. I particularly acknowledge that I allowed payment to the fictitious creditors at every opportunity. I admit I wrongfully and with thieving intent stole R8 337 552 and 28 cents, the property of the state.

"It was possible to generate documents which created the false impression that payments by the department were legally owed to [the fictitious creditors]," he said.

The Transvaal attorney general's office is investigating Botha's accomplices. Botha is due to be sentenced in August, when the court will hear evidence in mitigation.

He was not available for comment this week.

'I acknowledge that I had intention to deprive the state of its property permanently'



Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele and Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng, below right, at yesterday's launch of the Jeppe Oval housing project
Picture: TYRONE ARTHUR

Major social housing project launched

Robyn Chalmers

A MAJOR social housing project was launched near Johannesburg's city centre yesterday by the Johannesburg Housing Company as government's social housing policy begins to get under way.

Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele said yesterday the Jeppe Oval project in Jeppe was the first scheme where government's institutional subsidies were used to provide greenfields rental stock.

"This project is adding more than 240 new units to our housing stock, as well as meeting needs for the provision of affordable, well-located and decent housing."

She said that between December 1995 and last month, the housing department had reserved 2 228 institutional subsidies, which was less than 0,5% of the more than

555 000 subsidies reserved overall.

There was strong interest in institutional subsidies coming from local authorities who were looking to increase the amount of affordable rental stock available from their constituencies.

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said that the province was paying close attention to the city centre and was looking particularly at quality and management.

"We are concerned about the standards of products being delivered and we are grappling with the management of housing projects. Unless we have proper management, housing stock will deteriorate and payments become a problem," he said.

The standards being prescribed by local authorities for services were eating into the funds available for top structures, and Mo-

of major new initiatives.

On debt relief, the "highly indebted poor country" initiative to forgive eligible countries big portions of their debt to Paris Club of government creditors and multilateral institutions like the IMF and World Bank, in return for policy reform, is in place, with Uganda having become first beneficiary.

"What we are looking for at Denver is a commitment for our G-7 partners to move forward deliberately and for a debt reduction plan for other African countries," said chief White House adviser on international economics Dan Terrillo.

On trade benefits, Terrillo said the US would be pressing each partner to expand its existing preferences for Africa rather than adopting a co-ordinated approach, which would take too long to negotiate.

Thyne was of the essence, Deputy US Trade Representative Jeffrey Lang, said. This was because with tariffs falling generally under the World Trade Organisation agreements, the comparative advantage of developing country exports offered under the generalised system of preferences, was shrinking, Lang said.

Half the goods on the US tariff schedule would enter the US duty free in six years, Lang said, "and we also provide zero benefits beyond that to developing countries."

On conflict resolution, White House Deputy National Security adviser, Jim Stenberg said summit delegates would issue a statement "indicating their intention to try to co-ordinate their efforts" to strengthen Africa's peacekeeping abilities.

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(127)

to R10,6m," he said

Major social housing project launched

(127) 13

20 20/6/97

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The standards being prescribed by local authorities for services were eating into the funds available for top structures, and Mo-

fokeng said the housing subsidy, which was introduced in 1994, should be worth at least R19 000 by now as compared against the current R15 000.

Mofokeng said continuing disputes between landlords and tenants in the inner city had to be regulated, and the Residential Landlord Tenant Act would be implemented by August 1997.

Gauteng provincial and local authorities had embarked on a number of projects to improve the city centre, including the inner city housing programme which comprised of 1 400 units at a cost of R20m in subsidies plus 600 transitional units involving R8m in subsidies.

"There are seven institutional housing projects in Johannesburg's inner city, representing 1 061 housing units amounting to R10,6m," he said.

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — An investigation by the Office for Serious Economic Offences (OSEO) looms for the KWV co-operative after a meeting of Parliament's agriculture, water affairs and forestry committee yesterday.

A motion from the African National Congress (ANC) before the committee asked for approval for a call to the office for an investigation into the disclosure that sparkling wine was marketed as champagne in the early '90s by the KWV.

The committee decided it would hold back its motion until it had been established whether

police had reopened an investigation of the allegations.

The resolution before the committee said the office should investigate the matter because of the enormous damage the allegations were doing to SA's image abroad, to the wine industry as a whole and to the tourism industry in the Western Cape.

National Party MP Manie Schoeman said police were investigating the allegations and that the co-operative was co-op-

Economic offence body may investigate KWV disclosure

erating fully with them.

He said the alleged fraud happened more than five years ago when sanctions against SA agricultural products were still in place. He asked whether it was the intention of the committee to investigate all sanctions-busting activities.

Schoeman said sanctions-busting had been necessary at the time and referral of the matter to the OSEO should not be approved because it would pre-

empt the police investigation. Committee chairman Janet Love (ANC) said the seriousness of the allegations against the KWV went to the "heart" of our international standing, because it was about fraud and faking French champagne.

She said she could not see how these alleged actions by the KWV could have helped SA producers sell their products.

ANC MP Jonathan Arendse said it was not the committee's job to sit in judgment which was why there was a recommendation for OSEO to get to the bottom of the matter. He said the committee had to be certain police were investigating.

20 20/6/97

The Star, 1 June 1997

Tenants accuse Sanco of attempting to evict them

Star 25/6/97 (127)

Flat-dweller's door lock broken and furniture smashed

By **FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA**
City Desk

Tenants at a Joubert Park, Johannesburg, building have accused the South African National Civics Association (Sanco) of trying to evict them from the building "because they refuse to join the organisation".

Tenants of the Castle Blaney building at the corner of Wanderers and Leyds streets claim they are being removed because they will not contribute to a trust fund set up by the organisation to manage the building, which apparently has no landlord.

They said they were awoken by sudden violent knocks on their flat doors last week by armed members of the organisation, who threatened them.

They have taken the matter to the Small Claims Court to ensure that Sanco members pay

for the damage they allegedly caused.

Tenant Moss Skosana said he was not at home at the time, but found the door to the flat as well as furniture and appliances broken.

Several attempts to get Sanco comment earlier this week drew a blank "You can go on with your article, we will just have to respond to it," said Sanco official Lizzie Melapi.

One of the tenants who declined to be named "for fear of reprisals" said about 50 Sanco members, armed with an assortment of weapons, converged on their building after holding a meeting at a local hall.

She said a senior Sanco official told her that she and 10 other tenants would be evicted because they were "stumbling blocks" to Sanco plans.

The tenant said Sanco wanted to set up a trust account

into which all tenants would contribute money to help manage and renovate the building.

She said tenants had expelled local councillor and Sanco leader Sandi Mgidlana from a tenants' meeting a week earlier, a move that made her unpopular with "the few" Sanco members in the building.

"We agreed as tenants that no outsider, irrespective of standing in the community, would address our meetings, yet Mgidlana, who does not live here, insisted on chairing it," she said.

Responding to the allegation, Mgidlana said "I don't want to waste my time with this. You can use your newspaper for propaganda if you wish."

Said the tenant "How do I join an organisation that does not understand that people have a right to freedom of association and of speech?"

Sandton budget still in crisis as Jo'burg hires debt collectors

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

As the ANC in the Eastern Council moved towards compromise with opposition parties on the stalled 1997-98 budget, Greater Johannesburg and its councils announced that they were to hire private debt collectors to recover R1,8-billion of arrears.

The hiring of debt collectors has been condemned by Sandton residents as a heavy handed attempt to victimise rates boycotters in the area.

The debt collectors stand to earn a whopping R380-million. Each of the city's five councils will appoint its own debt collectors. Because such companies stand to make profits of 20%, the Eastern Council yesterday decided to put the contract out to tender.

Anyone who is in arrears for 90 days or more will be targeted.

Eastern Council communications officer Keith Peacock said this was a pilot project and the methods used would be in line with the best the industry

could offer.

"It is unfair that the overwhelming majority of law-abiding, rate-paying citizens have to subsidise a selfish minority. We intend to ensure that the culture of non-payment, irrespective of its source, comes rapidly to an end," he said.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said this was a waste of money.

"They are obviously targeting Sandton ratepayers who are boycotting rates. They should be targeting people who have

been in arrears for years, not those who are in arrears for a few months," he said.

At a council meeting last night the Eastern Council agreed to renegotiate its 1997-98 budget and to examine demands being made by opposition parties blocking the budget.

Acceding to these demands could result in the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and the Southern and Western councils being overturned. The budgets of these councils, which are running at a loss,

will have to be redrawn as they are relying on the Eastern Council's surplus of R401-million to cover their deficits.

The budget, which was to have been voted on again last night, was withdrawn and will be reconsidered again on Friday morning. During the next two days, officials and councillors will attempt to reach a compromise between the current budget and those proposed by the DP and NP.

The ANC had previously refused to reconsider the budget saying it was a "good one"

25/1/97

Straw 25/6/97

THE STAR

Big financial incentives for residents to pay their rates

(127) Star 26/6/97

BY FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
City Desk

Greater Johannesburg's Southern council is to give one resident, who pays his or her June and July rates bill and who is not in arrears, R10 000 as part of an incentive scheme to boost payment levels

Two other residents will get R5 000 each

The measure to entice residents to pay their rates was approved by the executive committee and is expected to be adopted at the council meeting today

Councillor Shan Balton said it was not a lottery because it did not require ratepayers to buy tickets. All residents needed to do to stand a chance of winning was to pay their rates

The R20 000 prize money will come from council coffers

Balton said the council was trying to get business to spon-

sor the competition, but had decided to go ahead with the competition in July to coincide with the new financial year

He said although it was the duty of all citizens to pay their services without being rewarded, the culture of non-payment demanded incentives.

"If we lived in different times it would be fair to say that we don't have to reward people for doing their civic duties, but we are living in abnormal times now. We have to reward those people who have been loyal while trying to get those who have not, to pay," Balton said

The plan was initially proposed in March but had to be shelved while the council investigated its legality

The scheme will be monitored for six months. Balton said "If it improves our cash flow we will definitely go ahead with it"



we se la le wall
 ambulise

Decaying a Klipptown child runs near one of the walls which residents fear could collapse any day unless the Southern council intervenes and fixes them

Historic 'Freedom Charter' township crumbling, Klipptown residents warn

CITY REPORTER

Klipptown residents believe their southern Johannesburg (township) could fade away if the council does not intervene in its continuing decay

Residents said the few

houses originally built in the area were rotting away and soon there would not be a Klipptown to talk about

A walk on the creaking wooden floors of Christina Williams' house has become a test of courage

"We fear that the floor could collapse any day. When the rainy season comes, you can't walk barefooted because the place becomes full of snails," said Williams

Another resident, Cecilia Chaval, complained that her

roof had been blown away several times in the past three years, and she had called on the council to fix it. Council chairman Prema Naidoo said the council was not obliged to help residents because the houses were privately owned

Star 26/6/97 (187)

Residents said the area was of historical importance because the ANC's Freedom Charter was adopted there on June 26 1955. But it had been forgotten while the Reconstruction and Development Programme went ahead elsewhere

By Joshua Raboroko

HUNDREDS OF disgruntled home-seekers in Gauteng are waiting up to 12 months for government subsidies to be approved by provincial authorities, lawyers and banks

A *Sowetan* investigation has uncovered a string of disgruntled home-seekers and contractors who said the delays in approving individual and project-linked subsidies was frustrating them

Applied for subsidy

Mr Bheki Masondo of Soweto applied for a subsidy to buy a house in Tshiawelo, Soweto, last August

He applied for a bond at Nedbank in Johannesburg. The bank applied for a subsidy – but without success

Masondo is one of more than 300 000 people who are on the waiting list for homes after registering with the provincial government. Most have applied for subsidies

The housing backlog has not only frustrated first-time buyers, but also worried developers who claim bureaucratic bungling and insufficient staff are causing delays in the approval of subsidies

Masondo said the bank was prepared to grant him a bond and he was waiting for the Government to approve the R9 000 subsidy as part payment for a R56 000 house

Approved

The housing department told him that his application would be approved within six weeks. He was paying occupational rent and feared the owner of the house would evict him

A desperate Mr Isaac Vilakazi of Sebokeng has not been able to pay off the R35 000 to a home-owner. He has been waiting for the subsidy to be approved since October 1995

Vilakazi has given up and asked his employers to give him a loan from his provident fund

"I do not know what the problem is, but I believe the Government must do something about

People wait for up to 12 months for approval

this bungling," Vilakazi said

South African Developers and Residents Association (Sarda) chairman Mr Hendrick Kekana said getting a Government subsidy was a nightmare, and he singled out problems and delays with banks and conveyancers

Sarda has recommended to Government that guarantees should be issued within three weeks of subsidies having been approved. These guarantees will enable contractors to speed up the delivery of houses

The office of Gauteng housing MEC Mr Dan Mofokeng has confirmed that there is a backlog, and said delays were caused by lack of cooperation from some banks and conveyancers

The department employed more staff in March to resolve these problems and hoped the backlog would be reduced within the next few months

Liaison officer

Gauteng housing department liaison officer Mr Jubie Matlou said banks often took a long time to pay developers of new housing projects, leading to the department placing a moratorium (which has since been lifted) on them

The department processes an average of 569 subsidy applications a day

The Government is also doing its best to ensure that the subsidies are approved within two months

The Ministry of Housing is consulting provincial housing boards to work out strategies to shorten the waiting period

"We would like to see more people acquiring shelter this year," a spokesman said. "This is the year of housing delivery"

Another concern is whether the standard of housing provided through the subsidy will

Since those who receive the larger subsidies are in the lower-income group, they can expect serviced sites, sites with small structures or upgrades as their options

Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng ... his department is trying to end the delay in approving housing subsidies.

viced site, a site plus starter house, a conventional house or for upgrading sites, services or structures

All these options are subject to secure tenure and health and safety requirements set by the local authority – portable water, adequate sanitary facilities, including water disposal and domestic electricity supply

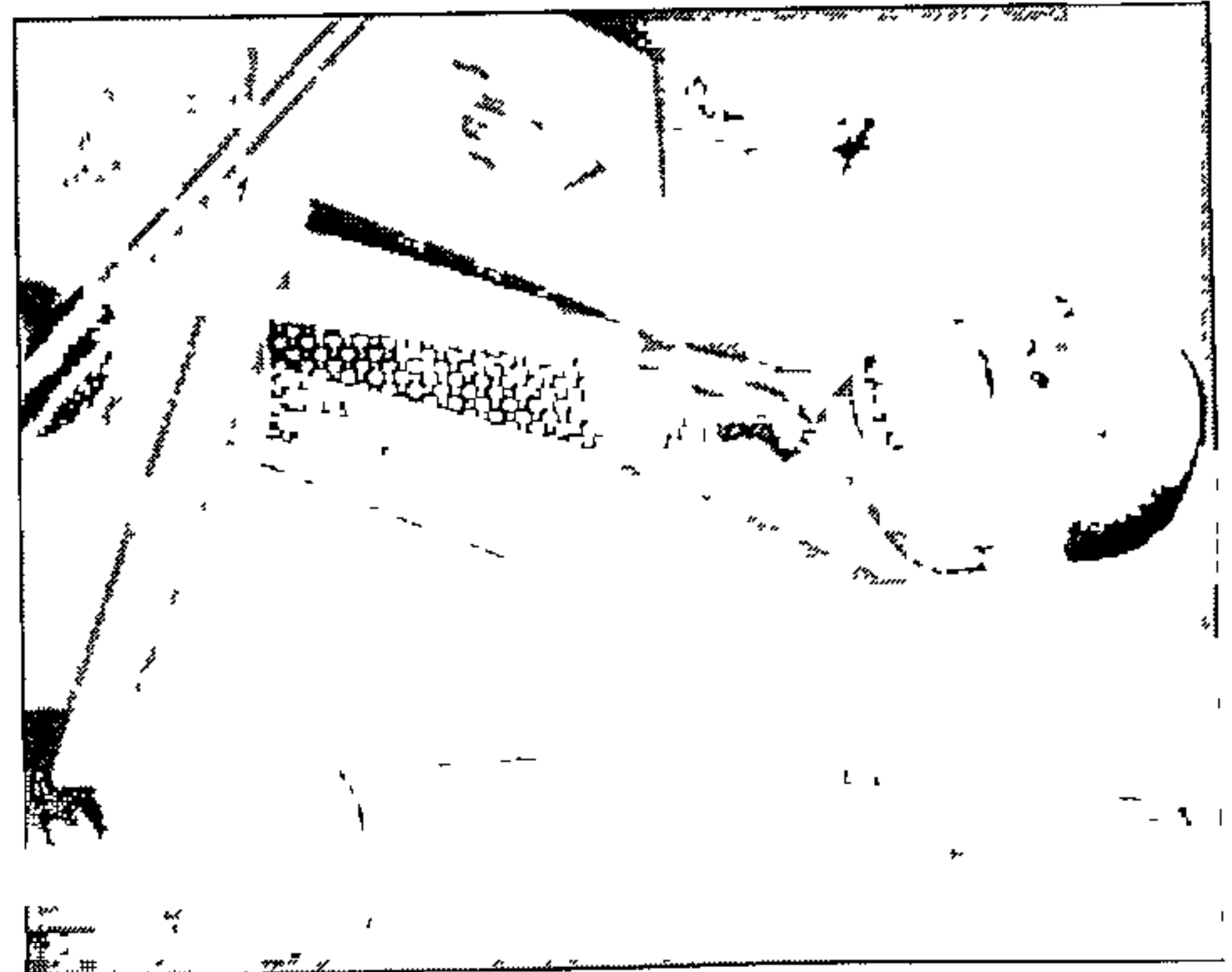
satisfy beneficiaries

The new subsidy is a one-off capital grant, with the level of subsidies varying according to household income

These subsidies are used to acquire a fixed residential property, a ser-

Subsidy nightmare for home seekers

Sowetan 27/6/95 (127) F



(127)
**Councillors
told to pay up
or be exposed**

Star 30/6/97

BY RODNEY VICTOR

Councillors from Midrand, Kempton Park and Edenvale who are in arrears with their municipal accounts will soon be exposed.

A long-outstanding report into councillors in arrears would be available "within the next two weeks", the Khayalami Metropolitan Council in Kempton Park was told last week.

The report was called for in February by DP metro councillor Mike Waters, who believes that councillors on the metro council and its three substructures owe many thousands of rands in unpaid accounts.

"The fact that councillors were not paying—and were getting away with it—was contributing to the culture of non-payment in the townships," Waters said yesterday. If councillors were forced to pay up or get kicked off the council, it would send a message that the council was serious about payment.

Waters criticised the metro council for delaying the report for more than five months.

"Some people don't want it to be published, so they are dragging their feet," he said.

Tribunal hears case on low-cost housing

Deborah Fine

THE Khayalami metropolitan council applied for approval of a controversial low-cost housing project, vehemently opposed by residents in the formerly white adjacent areas, at the first hearing of the Gauteng development tribunal in Kempton Park yesterday.

The panel, chaired by attorney Nomonde Mgqibisa, heard that the housing development, Commercial Ext 34, would begin to address the imbalances caused by "apart-squatter families" by moving 1 800 could be exposed to job opportunities and accessible transport.

The development would be one of the first in a proposed "low-cost housing corridor" stretching from Alexandra in the east of Johannesburg to Tembisa, near Kempton Park. The corridor has already been approved in principle by local government MEC Siculo Shiceka.

ED 2/9/97

Businesses in the nearby Commercial Industrial Park and residents from the median to high-income suburbs of Glen Austin, Austin View and President Park, all of which would only be separated from the new housing development by a provincial road, have opposed the application. They contend that they were not adequately consulted by the council and that the development, as now planned, would have a negative impact on their property values.

Metropolitan Council executive manager Keith Naiker told the tribunal that the old apartheid dispensation had deliberately separated white and non-white communities by placing vacant land or "buffer zones" around formerly non-white townships.

The non-white townships were also placed some distance from municipal centres and central business districts, forcing residents to travel vast distances to work and denying them easy access to jobs. He said the new housing development would begin to address these problems by

(127)

relocating families from the Winnie Mandela, Chris Hani and Hani Park informal settlements, near Tembisa, to the proposed Commercial residential site where they would have access to job opportunities in the nearby industrial areas of Olifantsfontein, Spartan, Isando, Chloorkop, Midrand and Edenvale.

Building new houses in the former buffer zones was also in line with both the principles of integrated communities and a "compact city" to prevent urban sprawl.

The residents and businesses have submitted that while they were not opposed to the location of the new project, the development was of an inferior quality as it did not allow for streetlights, full electricity, grass and trees or fully tarred roads in its initial stages. The residents have commissioned plans, at their own expense, for an alternative development which they believe would provide a superior, fully serviced housing project at a cost lower than the council's estimates.

Landmark court battle over valuations

(127) Star 3/7/97

About 18 000 property owners out of
400 000 have objected to their ratings

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

A Greenside, Johannesburg, couple yesterday lodged a landmark court application to compel council valuers to justify their valuations, used to set monthly rates bills

If successful, the application could enmesh Johannesburg's four local councils in an administrative nightmare for months

The application was brought in the Johannesburg High Court by Elmira and Michael Adams, who are objecting to the valuation of their property on the provisional valuations roll, which will determine what they pay in rates for the next three years

They are not alone in their objection. About 18 000 of Greater Johannesburg's 400 000 property owners had objected to the valuations of their property, Johannesburg Metropolitan Council spokesman George Nel said. But only 20 to 30% had turned up at the hearings to voice their objections

If the Adamses succeeded it would be a "tremendous administrative burden" on the council, Nel said

"The workload will be tremendous and the resultant costs on council. I don't think the case is necessary. Everybody is afforded equal opportunities to object"

He said objections normally had limited success, which meant there would not be little impact on the revenue generated by local authorities.

In their application, the Adamses have asked Mr Justice

Basil Wunsh to force the Northern council's valuations board to provide them with written reasons - at least one day before a hearing on the objections - of how they arrived at the valuation for their property.

The next hearing has been set down for Monday

The Adamses said they had applied to the court because they had to prove the valuers wrong if their property's value was to be reduced.

Their property has been valued at R423 000 - R149 000 for the land and R274 000 for the house and other "improvements" (such as a pool)

They argue that R340 000 - with the land worth R90 000 and improvements R250 000 - is a truer estimate. If their estimate were accepted they would save about R100 a month on rates, according to Michael Adams

Elmira Adams, an advocate, argued that objectors needed information - to which she was entitled in the constitution - to adequately prepare for hearings and protect her interests

Counsel for the valuation board, S J Grobler, argued that the regulations provided sufficient opportunities to voice objections and that objectors were told at hearings how a valuer had come to his conclusions

Grobler argued it would be "impossible to value a city like Johannesburg with all its substructures if a valuer has to give reason for each and every value that he makes"

He added that the constitution restricted access to information where matters were still being finalised

Judge Wunsh will rule on the application today

Councils fight the 'lost water' battle

Deborah Fine

BD 3/7/97

(127)

EFFORTS by the greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council and its four local councils to account for and solve the problem of "lost water" in the region were being hampered by a lack of bulk and individual water meters, metropolitan water executive officer Dave Fox said yesterday.

Confirming that about 50-million *kl* of water were unaccounted for each year, Fox said all the councils had embarked on programmes to reduce the loss by "sweeping" municipal plumbing systems, hydrants and reservoirs for leaks and faulty valves.

Faulty systems in many individual homes had also been repaired.

The lack of bulk water meters in strategic positions and meters on individual stands to indicate how much water was being consumed made the councils' task of isolating areas where water was being lost at an abnormal rate very difficult.

The shortage of meters also made it difficult to determine where people were illegally tapping into mains or using fire hydrants for personal use.

Fox estimated that the greater Johannesburg region would have to install at least 140 000 new meters at a cost of about R75m to begin to address the problem. This was in addition to updating and repairing old meters.

Stressing that the installation of new meters would be a long-term project given limited resources, he said the council was examining the implementation of systems similar to those in the UK. There, consumption estimates based on socioeconomic criteria were used in areas not universally metered.

Fox said, however, that councils were committed to universal metering and would be obliged to install such a system in terms of the Department of water affairs and forestry's new Water Services Act, expected to be in place by September.

Councils could be expected to issue "meaningful" water audits based on actual consumption figures within the next 18 months to two years, he said.

Meanwhile, Rand Water Board operations general manager Attie van Rensburg confirmed yesterday that the board had reduced water pressure in the Leandra municipality, near Bethal, by up to 88% last week after the municipality had failed to pay its water account of R188 000 for three months, the first time the board had taken such action.

He said the board had progressively reduced pressure from June 17 in an attempt to force the municipality to pay the outstanding account. The municipality had finally paid last week.

Payment of services drops sharply

By BUNTY WEST

Monthly service payments dropped sharply in the greater Krugersdorp area between March and April, according to a council report

While the traditional white areas of Krugersdorp showed a drop of 1%, Azaadville payments dropped by 50%, and Kagiso and Munsieville by 30%. In April, Krugersdorp's payment level was 84%, Kagiso 18%, Munsieville 40%, Azaadville 51%, and Swanieville 0,89%

(127) Stan 4/7/97
The report tabled this month said all of the areas, including the informal settlements, had water meters, but few people paid their accounts.

It said council officials were sometimes prevented from accessing meters and, of a total of 2 158 meters in Kagiso Extension 12, only 174 were read. Accounts were, therefore, sent out with an average charge on them.

The final figures for service payments in May are not yet available

Attempt to halt valuation hearings fails

Story 4/7/97 (127)

Couple in urgent application to force board to provide written justification

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Valuation hearings are set to go ahead next week after a High Court judge dismissed a landmark application to force the Northern council's valuation board to provide written justifications of their valuations before a hearing.

The case was brought by a Greenside, Johannesburg, couple on Wednesday, days before they were to attend a hearing to voice their objections to the valuation of their property on the provisional valuations roll.

Once finalised, the valuations will be used to determine rates for the next three years.

In his ruling, Mr Justice Basil Wunsh said the urgent application by Elmira and Michael Adams was "premature". The Adamses had objected to a valuation of R423 000 being made on their property. They argue their property was worth R340 000.

Judge Wunsh said that because the valuation was still provisional, a decision was not being made that would prejudice the Adamses. They would receive information as to how and why the valuer had made his valuation at the hearing set down for Monday.

"The decision is not going to be made behind closed doors. All information will be available to them during the hearings."

The request for further information - other than a list provided to the Adamses' ward councillor of three properties used as a comparison - had also been vague.

Metropolitan valuation services executive officer George Nel was not available for comment, but earlier indicated it would be a huge "administrative burden" if the application were successful.

About 18 000 of Greater Johannesburg's 400 000 residents objected to valuations on the provisional roll.

► Costly, long process

“
**No decision
behind
closed
doors**
”

Valuation hearings long, costly process

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

(127) Star 4/7/97

Valuation board hearings in Greater Johannesburg have been slow off the mark. Although expected to start in January, only the Western council has completed its hearings and has started hearing appeals.

The Eastern and Southern councils are expected to start the hearings in August and the Northern council is

Ratepayers will bear the brunt

currently underway with them.

Almost 20 000 objections to property valuations throughout Greater Johannesburg have been received from residents.

Valuations are done every four years, but for the first time in the city's history, all properties within the Greater Johannesburg area, including former "township" areas, were valued last year.

The majority of objections came from the Sandton area where residents, over

and above having to pay increased rates of around 285%, also faced increases on their property values which led to even further rates increases.

A total of 10 077 objections were received from Eastern Council residents, 4 917 from the Northern council, 2 798 from the Southern council and 400 from the Western council.

The hearings, especially those in the East, could take months at an enormous cost to ratepayers. Hearings are expected to start in August.

The three valuation board members receive about R500 a day each. The board consists of a chairman, who is an advocate or attorney or retired magistrate, and two other members who have sufficient knowledge and experience in the valuation of immovable property.

Objectors or their representatives appear before the boards in person to give evidence and cross examine people, a process which could take days for just one objection.

And if the property owner is still not satisfied, he can appeal to an appeal board

Valuation hearings suspended as Chartwell landowners dispute their incorporation

By ANNA COX

The dispute between residents of the Jukeskei Crocodile Catchment Area (JCCA) and the Northern council over its incorporation into the Northern council has resulted in the suspension of valuation board hearings. The Chartwell Landown-

ers' Association and two community leaders argued that the board had no jurisdiction over the area because it was illegally incorporated into the council area.

Residents in the JCCA, which include Lanseria, Nietgedacht, Nooitgedacht and Chartwell are objecting to being incorporated into the

Northern council area, claiming the community is rural. They want to form an independent local council with Lanseria as a focal point. Some want to be incorporated into Krugersdorp.

The area comprises 6 500ha, 5 000 of which lies in the JCCA. Last year the full bench of

the Transvaal provincial division of the Supreme Court found the June 1993 proclamation by the administrator, incorporating the land in the JCCA into the Northern council area, was invalid and set it aside. Leave to appeal was refused.

The council, however, claims that the incorporation

was validated by the premier's proclamation regarding Greater Johannesburg boundaries in December 1994, which superseded other proclamations, and that these areas are therefore legally incorporated.

However, JCCA member Wessel Swart, who brought the court action, says that the

premier's proclamation 24 was also legally incorrect. Residents would, however, prefer to negotiate with the council than go the legal route again.

But council spokesman Rudi Bosman insists that the areas were legally incorporated by a proclamation which has not been set aside.

(127)

Staw

4/19/97

R600-m grant allows low-cost housing to take off in Dobsonville

Star 7/7/97 (127)

Land has been set aside for urban agricultural projects so crops can be raised

By BUNTY WEST

Housing is taking off in the Roodepoort/Dobsonville area, where about R600-million has been earmarked for low-cost housing with a target delivery of 700 houses a month

About R300-million has been approved by the Western council for low-cost housing in the short-term, with housing worth another R300-million planned for the future.

The first bricks are due to be laid in Slovoville in September, with a second project starting in Brinkvlakfontein in November.

"The Western council has the majority of housing projects under way in Greater Johannesburg and is possibly the recipient of most subsidies throughout Gauteng," said David van Niekerk, executive officer for urban development

Despite the eight projects on its books, the Western council housing list shows an immediate need for 33 000 homes, but, in reality, Van Niekerk believes this total could be higher as the

housing list doesn't necessarily include domestic workers living in rooms on their employers' premises

Twelve thousand subsidies have already been received for project sites, all of which lie on mainly mining land to the south

A conservative estimate has the sites, which include a shelter for the homeless, accommodating up to 58 000 families

Sites include a shelter for homeless and electricity

The council believes it can deliver 700 houses (of 30sq m each) a month from January 1998, all with mains sewerage, electricity and water

But the council is not just delivering houses. It hopes to build social, community, employment and business opportunities into the projects as well

At the Brinkvlakfontein

project, where 5 000 subsidies have already been approved, a major marketing exercise is under way to bring the formal sector and informal businesses into the area

Land has been set aside for urban agricultural projects where plots of about 1ha will be given to people to enable them to grow crops and raise cattle

A community centre with a clinic, recreational facilities, pension and service pay points, a police station, library, fire brigade, taxi rank, administrative offices and informal stalls will also be built

The centre will be built in stages and the estimated cost is R15-million

Bulk services are being installed and the housing project will start officially in November

At Durban Roodepoort Deep, tenders for the building of houses have been received and a short list is awaiting approval. Building will start in early 1998

Slovoville, where 750 subsidies have been received, will be

the first to be built and work starts there in September

Two hundred homeless people will be accommodated in a new shelter in central Roodepoort

Council officials have approved the development of the old Sanco building, near the town hall, and negotiations are under way to buy the hall

If there are no hiccups in the transaction people could be living in there as early as August

Van Niekerk pointed out that, although housing was a priority, bulk services had to be installed in many of the new areas, and it was this which cost the most

Funds were available from the province for the provision of bulk services, but the money would be deducted from the subsidies

"Nevertheless we are going ahead with our projects with the agreement and participation of all roleplayers, including the province, the community, and our partners in the building industry," Van Niekerk said



Property valuer Dijkhuis will she get ratepayers on her side?

recent home buyers will find it difficult to raise a few thousand rand extra a month to meet their rates commitments"

Dijkhuis says all ratepayers will be fully involved in establishing final rates. If the outcome were to be a big rates hike, it could be phased in, with help for those worst hit financially.

Almost anything, it seems, would be preferable to a replay of Sandton's rates boycott and court action. *Ian Fife & Alison Goldberg*

URBAN DEGENERATION

(127)

Sanco terror for landlords

PM 11/7/97
Disputes between owners and tenants open way for thugs

Hijacking buildings is the latest crime to hit Johannesburg. Recent incidents in Hillbrow and the inner city implicate the SA National Civics Organisation (Sanco), whose members have been arrested in recent months for trespassing, and breaking and entering several blocks of flats and houses. These actions follow High Court eviction orders.

Though common practice in East Berlin, hijacking buildings has taken on a hybrid form in SA by engaging Sanco and its causes. The body became well known during the apartheid era and thereafter as an organiser of bond and rent boycotts.

Claiming that landlords are charging excessive rentals in run-down buildings in downtown Johannesburg, tenants in at least six buildings have been withholding

payments. This year Sanco was reported to be advising them to deposit rentals into trust accounts. But some monies have been deposited in more accessible club accounts.

In the case of the Hoffman New Yorker building in Hillbrow, where a High Court order and police action evicted 200 illegal tenants placed by Sanco, landlord Adele Blacher says that of the R110 000 rent collected since January R60 000 was paid by Sanco to the City Council.

Asked whether the organisation is receiving poor legal advice from its attorney Stefan Krams and his brother Veit — both have represented tenants of several buildings in opposing High Court eviction orders — city councillor and Sanco housing director Sandi Mgidlana says "it works as with all lawyers and clients. We instruct them."

Not all tenants are happy to have Sanco as landlords. In industrial buildings in Marlboro on the outskirts of Alexandra, tenants say Sanco is charging them exploitative monthly rentals of R200 for small, partitioned spaces used as living areas.

Sanco retorts that before it negotiated terms with the factories' owners, the latter were charging R400 for the same space. At the same time, Sanco co-founder Moses Mayekiso denies all knowledge of any criminal activity by Sanco.

Tenants of Castle Blaney, a Joubert Park building owned by an absentee landlord, are taking Sanco members to the Small Claims Court for damage to property after Sanco members allegedly broke into their flats demanding they join the organisation. Tenants say the incident followed their refusal to allow Mgidlana to chair their tenants' association. They were allegedly accused of blocking Sanco's plans.

The board of the Seven Buildings Company in Joubert Park, where tenants have now bought their own flats, has obtained a court interdict against Sanco not to interfere with their project, after its alleged attack on the building late last year. Mgidlana, voted out by tenants as leader of the project in 1994, has since sought to undermine it through Sanco despite being the ANC

councillor for the area.

Sanco inner city "legalising" officer Eric Mplwane says tenants in eviction cases have to pay their own legal fees. Those in the Hoffman New Yorker have paid a total of about R30 000 to Krams so far, he says. He thinks Sunnyhoek tenants still owe Krams a similar amount.

Hillbrow landlords have now employed a rival civic organisation, United North East Civic Organisation (Uneco), with its own



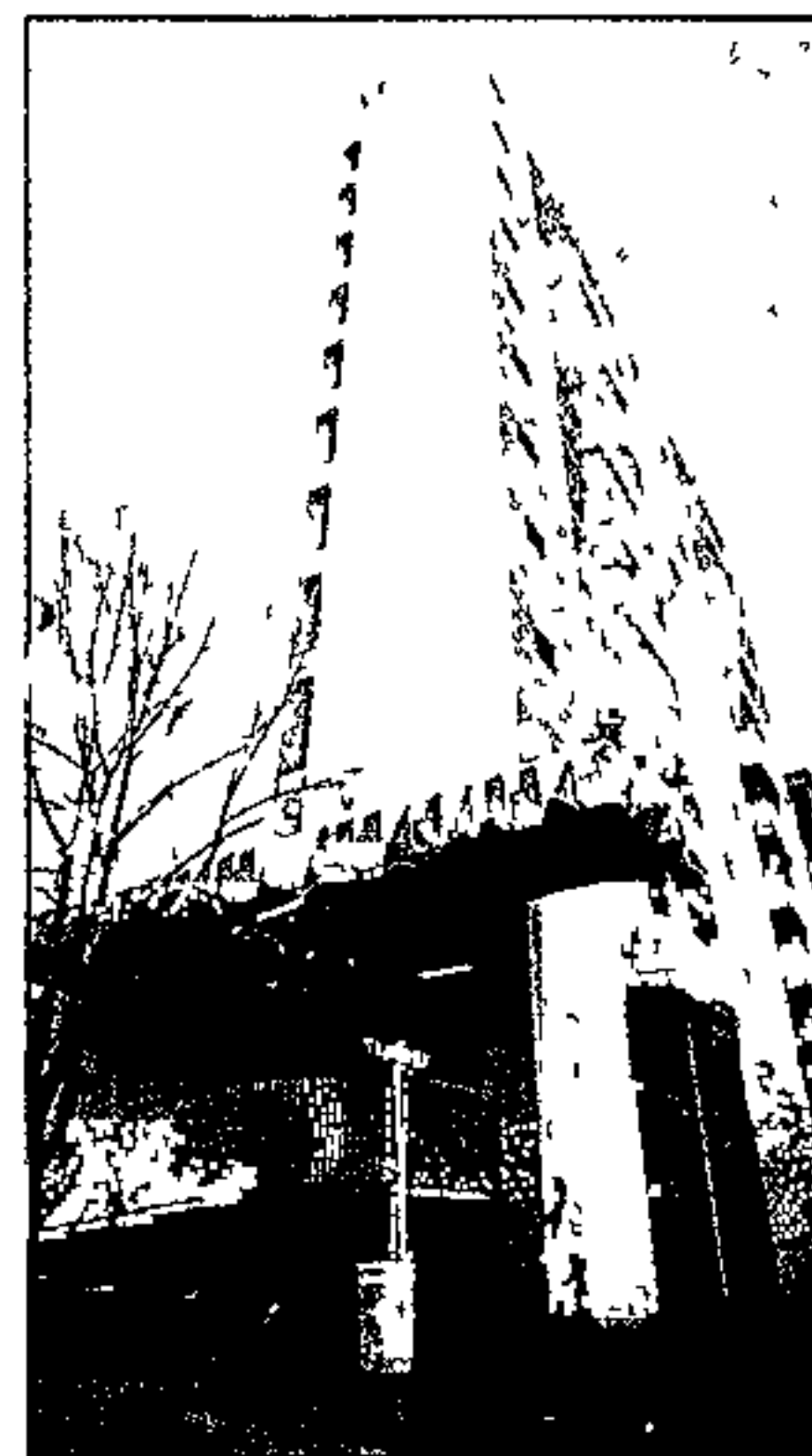
Robbie Tshabalala

Sanco's Mayekiso no personal knowledge of any illegal activity

security firm, to protect their assets. Uneco, which launched itself as a national body last week, draws its members and employees from hostel residents, long the enemy of Sanco on the East Rand and elsewhere.

Landlords say Sanco member Patrick Mdlalose and Krams have issued them and their lawyers with death threats. The son of one of them, Dr Iqbal Joosup, was shot six times last year — not lethally — outside his father's building. All 21 tenants in landlord Baby Naidoo's building have refused to pay rents of around R300/month. Taps are left running, she says. Though she is seeking help from the Small Claims Court, the City Council has issued her with a court order for unpaid services.

While the seeds of property-related anarchy are allegedly being watered by Sanco and others, the State is only now starting to prosecute people. In June it fined 21 tenants R500 each with further R2 000 fines suspended for five years. It has a further two tenants in hand who also broke into buildings owned by the same landlord. *Alison Goldberg*



Robbie Tshabalala

Hillbrow's Hoffman New Yorker nice pickings for lawyers

Gauteng's drive to enforce payment suffers new setback

Deborah Fine

EFFORTS by Gauteng local authorities to extract market-related payments for electricity appear to be hitting snags as communities continue to resist the installation of prepaid meters and electricity cutoffs in response to nonpayment.

In the latest incident, in Tembisa on the East Rand, the Democratic Party has said residents intimidated and held hostage 15 council technicians sent to install prepaid meters in the area at the weekend.

The DP also said "rampaging residents" trashed many of the meters, demanding reconnections for those whose electricity had been switched off as result of nonpayment.

The incidents take place against the background of increasing attacks on town councillors in recent weeks. The Gauteng government is spearheading a clampdown on municipal rates and services defaulters.

Tembisa residents have previously expressed reservations about the accuracy of the meters and the council's billing systems, and have accused the

17/7/97 (127)
Kempton Park/Tembisa town council of reneging on an agreement whereby residents could pay a flat rate for electricity of between R3 and R80 a month.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that Gauteng local government MEC Siceko Shiceka has lashed out at residents involved in attacks on councillors, accusing them of being "bent on undermining councillors' powers".

Shiceka was speaking at Tsakane township, also on the East Rand, where Brakpan mayor Ace Phiri and councillor Tshidi Ntshoane's homes were petrol-bombed at the weekend.

Shiceka said those attacks, as well as the recent attack on Bronkhorst-spruit's mayor and the murder of Krugersdorp councillor Eric Ndeleni, showed "symptoms of a counter-revolution that is beginning to attack and reverse democracy in this country".

Shiceka said the Tsakane attacks had allegedly been masterminded by ex-askari Nelson Mogudi, and local police had allegedly aided Mogudi with the attacks. Shiceka said he had called on East Rand police area commissioner Len van Tonder to conduct an urgent investigation into the allegations.



Scores of elderly residents from all over the Soweto townships braved the chilly early morning weather to be first in the queue at various Eskom offices to settle their electricity debts. This scene was captured in Dobsonville.

PIC ANTONIO MUCHAVE

Service cuts crisis looming⁽¹²⁷⁾

Sowetan 17/17/97

Sowetan Reporters

A FULLSCALE confrontation is looming between residents and local authorities after the government's latest attempt to extract payment for essential services from black townships

Sporadic incidents erupted on the East Rand this week where houses belonging to councillors were burnt down. Residents were protesting because local councils cut off water and electricity to force them to settle their arrears.

In Bloemfontein yesterday the mayor had a narrow escape when residents stoned his car. They were venting their frustration about the slow delivery of low-cost housing.

The South African Civic Association has asked local government authorities in Gauteng to review their decision to switch off electricity in defaulting areas.

Sanco provincial secretary Mr Ali Tleane said that "such cocky and selfish actions will only serve the purpose of furthering polarisation between authorities and communities."

"If the department is still keen on cooperative governance, peace and prosperity, it must utilise the little time it still has to communicate effectively with Sanco structures to find solutions."

He warned that failure to comply with this "friendly but frank advice may lead to total anarchy which will be difficult to manage."

East Rand residents were demanding that a R30 flat rate be introduced for electricity instead of the current pay-as-you-consume system.

In Soweto residents - who have been flocking to their local councils and Eskom offices to

settle rent arrears and electricity bills before the big switch-off - expressed frustration at the "high" service bills.

They claimed that in the past three months Eskom had charged exorbitant amounts and that it had reneged on its 1995 undertaking to write off arrears accrued over the past two years.

A Dobsonville pensioner, Mrs Violet Moabi, claimed that she had been saddled with a R6 000 arrears bill since she started paying a R30 flat rate for electricity.

"I don't understand how the account went up so high as I have been paying for my electricity every month without fail."

"Eskom once said they were writing off our debts, so I fail to understand why they now say I owe them R6 000," Moabi said.

Return to normal

However, Eskom public relations officer Mr Peter Adams told *Sowetan* yesterday that Eskom had written off R1 billion arrears for consumers in Gauteng so far.

Adams said most households consumed a lot of electricity during the cold winter days, which explained why tariffs were high. It was expected that bills would return to normal soon.

Earlier this month the Greater Johannesburg council, which is owed about R500 million in rates and rental arrears, announced an increase of between 12 and 25 percent on water, refuse removal, sewerage and electricity charges.

Other local authorities in the country have announced similar increases and in the Free State town of Bloemfontein, local residents stoned the car of their mayor, whom they accused of raising rates while ignoring residents' grievances.

Sandton ratepayers barred from task teams

(127) *Star* 17/9/97

Shiceka banishes his critics, who maintain his previous efforts at negotiations have been a 'shambles'

By **ANNA COX**
Sandton Bureau

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) has been banned from the task teams set up by MEC for local government Sicele Shiceka to look at the budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern councils again.

Shiceka's spokesman, Prince Hamnca, said Shiceka was refusing to allow Sanfed to participate because it had continually criticized a previous team set up by him to resolve the rates boycott and which

Goal is to trim council's operational budget

was dissolved when ratepayers and officials deadlocked. Sanfed had also continually

called for the intensifying of the rates boycott while negotiations were going on, which undermined the process and showed they were not interested in resolving the crisis, Hamnca said.

"Unless and until Sanfed members abstain from this kind of behaviour, and show good faith, the minister will not allow them to sit on the task teams. Besides which, residents are already being represented on the task teams by political

parties they voted for," he said.

The task teams were set up to look at ways of trimming the operational budget of the Greater Johannesburg council. They consist of all political parties, the department of finance, local government experts on finance and the Gauteng local government department itself.

Sanfed spokesman Brian Stolzenberg said that without the participation of Sanfed, which represents thousands of

ratepayers through its 25 residents' associations, talks would get nowhere.

No access, no solutions, to problems, says Sanfed

"The minister is treating us like schoolchildren. Just because he doesn't agree with

what we say, he is excluding us. "But we are all business people with legitimate gripes and we will not allow him to ride roughshod over us," Stolzenberg said.

"We have no confidence in his task teams. The previous task team set up by him was a shambles and a waste of time and nothing was resolved.

"If he denies Sanfed access to the task teams, he denies himself a solution to his problems," he said.

Thousands queue to avoid big switch-off

By Joshua Raboroko

THOUSANDS of households in Gauteng could find themselves in the dark and cold when Eskom switches off its power supply from August 1 to those in arrears with electricity payments - which now amount to more than R1,4 billion

The situation in black townships could worsen if local authorities carry out their threats to cut off water supplies, stop refuse removal and other essential services on the same day in a bid to recover R3 billion owed to them by residents

Warnings have been issued by Eskom spokesman Mr Peter Adams and Gauteng MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicele Shiceka as the deadline draws closer

The approaching deadline has sparked off panic in the townships. Desperate householders continue to stand in long queues to settle arrears.

Residents have been going to several Eskom offices - especially on the East Rand and in Soweto and the Vaal Triangle - for the past three weeks to benefit from a new scheme to write off part of their electricity arrears.

Fullscale confrontation

Residents are now required to pay the present tariffs plus part of the arrears over five years.

There are fears of a fullscale confrontation between residents and local authorities after warnings by councils that they might recoup their losses through tough measures such as court action and the attachment of residents' assets. However, Shiceka

said yesterday there was no reason to fear further eruptions of violence.

Fear is also looming in the wake of attacks last weekend on the homes of councillors in Secunda and Tsakane on the East Rand.

Shiceka has appealed to residents to use forums in his department that have been created to deal with complaints. He urged defaulters to break the boycott culture.

Adams said Eskom would handle complaints at its depots in the townships or residents could phone the following numbers: Omnipark (011) 494-4320, Diepkloof 938-8292, Dobsonville 988-4104, Klipspruit 933-1181, Mapetla 980-8101, and Zola 932-0436.

Adams warned residents to avoid disappointment by making arrangements to pay immediately and not waiting for the

(127)

Sowetan 18/7/97

Bad old days are back ... councillors still face violence over services costs

(127)

By TOMMY MAKOE

History is coming full circle in Gauteng's black townships

In the 1980s, unpopular local councillors elected under the National Party government were targeted by anti-apartheid groups who saw them as puppets of the regime. Their homes were razed and the councillors and their families were driven from the townships.

In 1997, new, democratically elected local councillors are reeling under a fresh wave of public anger. Their homes are being razed and the councillors and their families are being driven from the townships.

Since May this year, five councillors have been attacked by mobs protesting, ostensibly, against the high cost of rates and services.

Many African National Congress councillors are living in fear of what they perceive to be well-organised violent campaigns against them before the next local elections scheduled for 1999.

The councillors claim that disgruntled individuals who stood in the first democratic local elections in 1995 and lost to ANC candidates, are behind the attacks.

Assaults

Ironically, some of these failed candidates have banded together with the former apartheid-era township councillors to form new civic organisations.

Most of these civic organisations were formed before and after the 1995 local elections.

This month, in four violent incidents in Tsakane, East Rand, two councillors were assaulted and the homes of two others were burnt down.

In another incident a councillor in a Witbank township was assaulted by a member of the community following an argument.

Chairman of the Gauteng Mayors' Forum, Isaac Mahlangu, said the councillor was assaulted by a member of an unidentified civic organisation while addressing a meeting in a squatter camp.

In Soweto, like other areas in Gauteng, councillors have turned down invitations to attend meetings of the newly formed civic organisations which are demanding their resignations.

"They say they cannot attend our meeting unless we guarantee their safety. We can-

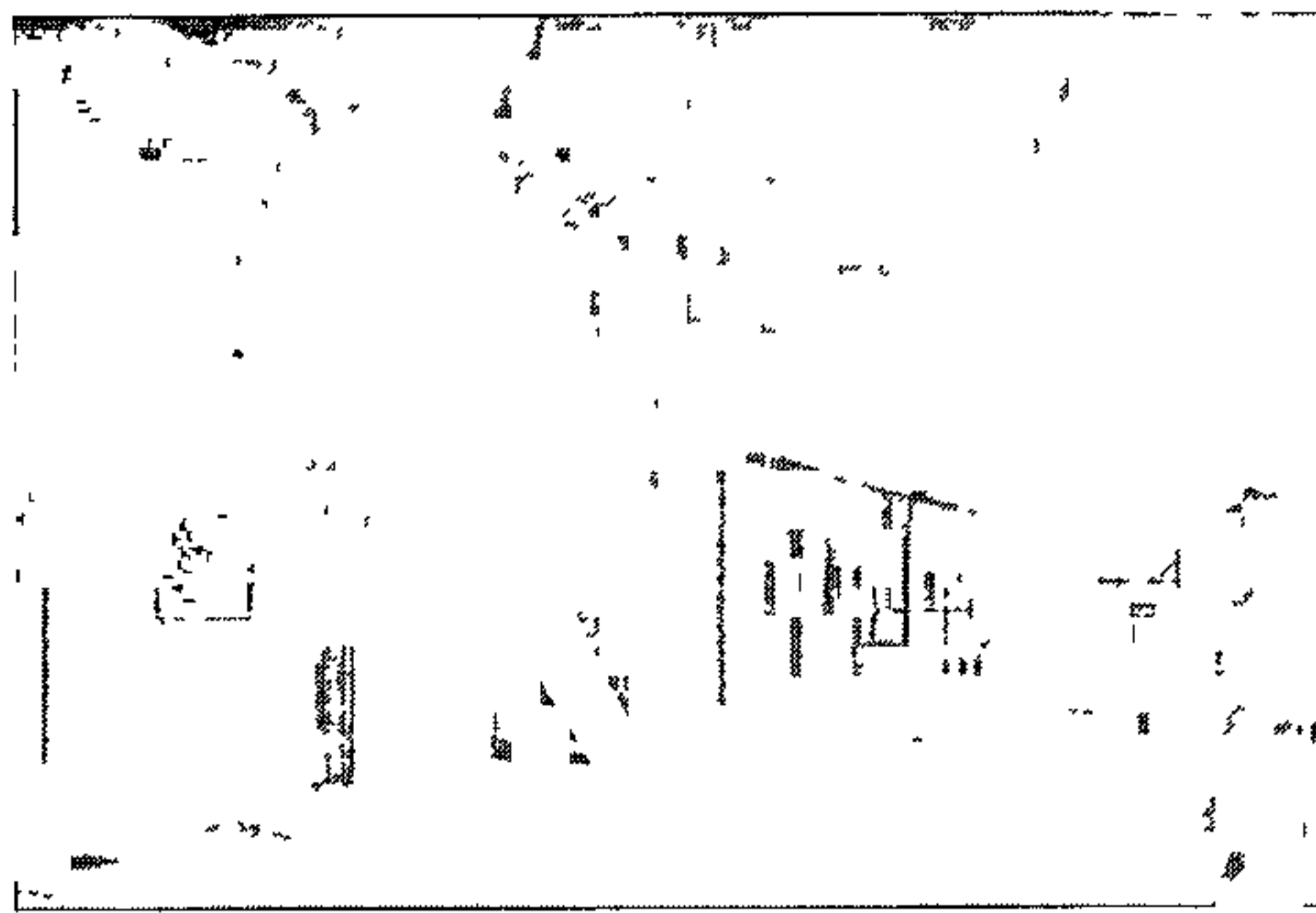
not because crime is all over in this country. But the people are also angry and they want them to resign.

"The people want them out. That is why they are afraid to come to our meetings," said Gauteng's chairman of the Combined Community Organisations (GCCO), Weston Shabangu.

The GCCO is a combination of more than 10 newly formed and existing civic associations which include a breakaway of the Soweto Civic Association and former unpopular National Party councillors.

A Soweto councillor who did not want to identify himself said local councillors were afraid to go to such meetings as "anything" could happen to them.

"Once you are in such a meeting you are exposed to irresponsible and dangerous people who want nothing but just to hurt you



FLASHBACK: Police stand and watch as the Kagiso council office is set ablaze by residents protesting at service charges in 1990.

They are not prepared to negotiate but they want to use force. It is a well-organised conspiracy aimed at removing us," said the councillor.

He said in one ward, 10 members of a council forum had resigned because they feared they could be attacked by members of the newly formed organisations.

The attacks in Tsakane, according to the victims, were spearheaded by the newly formed Simunye Civic Organisation whose leader, Nelson Mogudi, failed to win votes after he stood as an independent candidate during the 1995 local elections. Mogudi is on R1 500 bail after he was arrested and charged with arson following the attacks on the councillors' houses. Tsakane councillor

Tshidi Tsoane was in the house with her husband and children when a mob marched into their yard looking for her.

"They were all armed with bricks. My husband and I had to protect our children with two garden forks when the group tried to force entry into our shack. My husband stabbed one of them with the fork and the rest started stoning the house. We gave up and ran away with the children. We have nothing apart from the clothes we were wearing after our property and furniture were burnt and some of it looted by members of Simunye Civic Organisation," said Tsoane.

She said she was now living in a flat after they fled the area fearing more attacks on her family. The pregnant wife of the mayor of Brakpan, Ace Phiri, also had to run for her life after members of the Simunye Civic Organisation looted her house before burning it.

"These are the people who lost the election in the 1995 local elections who are trying to come back at the people in ways that are not right. They are mobilising people not to pay for the services they use," said Phiri who also lives in another area after his house was gutted and his furniture stolen.

Eruption

The latest violent attacks in Tsakane are another eruption in a fight between councillors and Simunye members that has been going on in the area since the beginning of the month.

Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale and the MEC for local government had, before the recent upheaval, tried in vain to

put a lid on the explosive situation.

Recently councillor Lunga Nxiba was assaulted and his car stoned by people who had demanded to pay half for their services.

"He drove into the group after it stoned his car. They demanded that he get out of the vehicle. The councillor was assaulted by the same group," said Tsoane.

A week before both councillors' houses were gutted another councillor, Chivie Sibiyi, was assaulted after he was invited to Simunye's public meeting.

The violence has not been confined to black areas. In Eldorado Park on Sunday, a violent situation was averted when Soweto members were stopped from attacking councillors after a meeting on service payments.

Civic leaders vow to pay rates

RAY HARTLEY: Political Correspondent

(127) ST (CM) 20/7/97

LED by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Gauteng politicians and officials have pledged to pay their rates and services fees in a drive to help recover an estimated R3-billion in debt

Those who signed the pledge yesterday will have their names published in a monthly list of defaulters and disciplinary action will be taken against them if they do not pay

Mbeki, Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, Gauteng finance MEC Jabu Moleketi and Johannesburg Mayor Isaac Mogase were among those who signed the pledge

Mbeki said he believed Gauteng residents were committed to uplifting their communities. "The responsibility to lead, educate and inspire this trend lies in the hands of politicians"

Earlier, Sexwale had said that uniting black and white sports audiences was also "a Masakhane (the name of government's campaign to get residents to pay their municipal accounts) challenge"

Referring to yesterday's rugby international against New Zealand at Ellis Park and the soccer cup contest at FNB Stadium, Sexwale said: "Somewhere, rugby will be played and the spectators will be all white. At FNB Stadium, most of us will be black. Therein lies the challenge of Masakhane"

'Negative focus on Sandton having effect'

BY ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The continued negative focus on Sandton had started to have an impact on house prices and business investment in the area, which was not in the interest of ratepayers, said Johannesburg's Eastern council deputy executive chairman Sol Cowan.

Reacting to the news that ratepayers, opposition political parties, independent councillors and Sandton businesses in the Eastern council area, who claim they

are "gravely concerned" about the future of local government in Johannesburg, had formed a new alliance called the United Front, Cowan said the international media had consistently contrasted Sandton with Alexandra

"While this has not been the intention of Sandton Federation of Ratepayers, it has clearly had a negative effect on our ability to develop our tax base because business, and in particular, international business, does not wish to be associated with areas which are per-

ceived to be a legacy of the past," said Cowan.

"What may appear to be reasonable and rational to Sanfed, is unfortunately having a negative impact on house prices and investment in the area and on the very ratepayers they believe they are helping."

Although the rate in the rand paid in Sandton was the same as all other parts of Greater Johannesburg, the continued negative criticism by Sanfed had led to a perception that rates were higher, which in turn had led to home seekers looking else-

where, although their rates bill, in the price range, would be exactly the same.

"Our residential and business rates are competitive with other South African cities. However, to ensure that the rates bill continues to decline in real terms in future, we must widen our tax base by attracting new economic activity as well as retaining existing businesses.

"With every new campaign, Sanfed is becoming more hysterical and unrepresentative of those they claim to represent," he said

Star 21/7/97 (127)

Politicians publicly pledge to pay for their rates and services

BY FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA

City Desk

(127)
21/7/97
Politicians were leading by example when publicly pledging to pay for their rates and services ahead of the Gauteng local government department taking tough measures against defaulters, local government MEC Sicele Shiceka said yesterday

Shiceka said weekend

pledges by politicians and civil servants to pay up or be exposed and possibly be removed from office were a challenge to residents, community organisations, trade unions and businesses to pay up

High-profile politicians including Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale and other elected politicians signed the pledge at the weekend

Shiceka said most of the Greater Johannesburg debt was owed by businesses in the city

Eskom spokesman Peter Adams said Gauteng residents owed the parastatal about R900-million. Eskom expected to recoup about R700-million of the debt. The remaining R200-million would be written off, he said. The parastatal is owed about R1,2-billion nationally with Gauteng owing the most

Fraud probe of deputy speaker under way

Wynndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Opposition parties in Parliament will attempt to force Deputy Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile from office if allegations that she has been involved in fraudulent attempts to get an illegal driving licence included in a new identity document are found to be true.

It was also confirmed yesterday by the SA Police Service that a fraud investigation into Mbete-Kgositsile is in the process of being completed by Capt Rhinome Hartdegen of the Nelspruit fraud unit.

Senior Supt Theo de Bruin said Hartdegen had confirmed that the investigation would be completed this week and handed to the attorney-general for a decision on a prosecution.

Opposition parties said if it was true that she allegedly attempted to have the illegal licence, which she was ordered to destroy recently after it was found to have been issued irregularly, included in a new identity document, she would "have to go".

A report in the Sunday Times said that Mbete-Kgositsile allegedly attached a copy of the illegal licence to an application for a new ID book two weeks ago, and claimed she had a valid licence.

Democratic Party (DP) leader Tony Leon said he was amazed that Mbete-Kgositsile had continued to occupy her post as deputy speaker after the findings of the Moldenhauer commission that she had obtained an illegal licence. If it was shown that she had again tried to have a licence illegally included in her identity document "it would be intolerable for her to remain in her post and intolerable for the DP to have any regard for her status as deputy speaker".

Leon said that the response of National Assembly Speaker Frene Ginwala and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had so far been "underwhelming".

Senior National Party (NP) whip in the National Assembly Gert Oosthuizen welcomed the police investigation.

"If the police investigation reveals that the allegations are true, the NP will table a

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motion calling for her resignation and replacement as deputy speaker," he said.

DP member of the National Council of Provinces James Selfe said that, constitutionally, the speaker or the deputy speaker could be removed from office only by a resolution of the National Assembly.

He said that before this happened it was likely that an ad hoc committee of the National Assembly would have to be established to investigate, which would then report to the National Assembly. What this means is that Mbete-Kgositsile's position as deputy speaker is entirely at the discretion of the ANC, which holds a 62% majority in the National Assembly. Attempts to reach Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal, who chairs the ANC's ethics committee, proved fruitless as he is away until later this week.

Attempts to reach Mbete-Kgositsile also proved fruitless. Her legal representative was quoted in the Sunday report as saying that suggestions that Kgositsile was attempting to get the illegal licence validated through the back door were "preposterous".

Politicians sign pledge for tough new Masakhane campaign

Deborah Fine

ALL elected political representatives, including senior Cabinet members, who live in Gauteng are now obliged to pay their monthly municipal service charges and property assessment rates or face having their names published in a monthly defaulter's list.

This follows the signing of a new Masakhane pledge in Johannesburg at the weekend, seen as symbolic of the seriousness with which government reviewed it and its aims of nation-build-

ing through, among others, the payment of municipal rates and service charges.

The pledge was signed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale, Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Gauteng local government MEC Sicele Shiceka, Gauteng provincial legislature speaker Trevor Fowler, Johannesburg mayor Isaac Moggase and about 70 provincial MECs, mayors, local councillors and provincial legislature members. Included on the list of officials

obliged to pay up or face the consequences are members of President Nelson Mandela's office with residences in Gauteng, cabinet ministers, national MPs, staff of Sexwale's office, provincial MECs, MPLs, mayors and councillors as well as senior civil servants including directors-general, deputy directors-general, chief directors and departmental heads.

Payments defaulters will also face being disciplined by their respective political parties or administrations. Similar pledges are expected to be

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signed in other provinces shortly. Sexwale said it was important to remember that Masakhane was not only about the payment of municipal tariffs, but was also a campaign to "pick up the pieces of our society's broken moral fibres and re-establish moral values".

The campaign was not aimed only at the townships, but at all levels of society including big business and multinationals, often the "first to point fingers" yet run by directors of whom some had committed varying degrees of fraud.

Amnesty International general secretary which he was critical of it leaves SA for Malawi today

1977

Councillors to be shielded from angry non-payers

(127) STAR 22/7/97

Residents furious they will have to start paying for services they consume

By RODNEY VICTOR
AND CECILIA RUSSELL

The Gauteng provincial government has announced measures to protect local councillors and mayors from angry residents, as the campaign to recover more than R3-billion in unpaid service charges gets under way.

Recent attacks on the homes of Brakpan mayor Ace Phiri and councillor Tshidi Tsoane in Brakpan's Tsakane township have increased fears that councillors will bear the brunt of a wave of public anger at having to pay rates and service charges.

The attacks were condemned yesterday by the Gauteng MEC for development planning and local government, Sicelo Shiceka.

Councillors' security would be improved by increasing the police presence outside their homes, Shiceka said.

The Government was committed to delivering water, electricity and refuse collection services to residents, but this could be achieved only if people paid for services they consumed, Shiceka said.

He accused "popcorn organisations" of mobilising on the

genuine concerns of people and of trying to undermine democratically elected local governments.

Councillors had to ensure that the supporters of civic organisations such as Simunye on the East Rand, and of the South West Joint Civic Association in Gauteng's predominantly coloured townships, were given the facts about credit control, he said.

Mbulelo Musi, spokesman for Gauteng safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte, said a task team had been created to investigate "with maximum urgency" ways of protecting councillors.

Democratic Party spokesman Shelly Loe yesterday accused the ANC of having brought the crisis on itself.

The ANC had failed to provide proper leadership to its supporters who had grown used to receiving services without paying for them, said Loe.

National Party spokesman Daryl Swanepoel said the ANC was responsible for the culture of ungovernability in the townships, and it should commit its resources to reversing that.

There was no reason why councillors should receive special protection, Swanepoel said.

Door-to-door refuse collection scheme should help create jobs

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

EnviroServ Holdings and the newly formed Soweto Development Forum (SDF) have announced plans to empower Soweto entrepreneurs to operate door-to-door refuse collection services in the township, EnviroServ Holdings chairman Rufus Maruma announced this week.

Maruma told the launch of the SDF that the programme would help alleviate the unemployment problem and nurture new business initiatives in Soweto as a requirement by the Reconstruction and Development Programme to create jobs.

He said a similar project was running in the East Rand where Wade Refuse, a subsidiary of EnviroServ Holdings, has a contract with the Tembisa and Daveyton local authorities to develop local entrepreneurs

to handle door-to-door waste collection service.

"This is an important programme to ensure that communities take ownership of the



METRO BEAT

management of all the waste it generates.

"Our plan involves dividing Soweto into several sections, perhaps on similar lines with the existing Community Development Forum (CDFs).

"We will then facilitate through the CDFs to enable communication and thus identify entrepreneurs for training," Maruma.

He said Wade Refuse will facilitate further entrepreneurial development by setting up recycling co-operatives for aluminium cans, paper and plastic.

"From the transfer station, Wade Refuse's larger long over-haul trucks will be managed through highest professional standards taking into cognisance requirements of waste management by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry," added Maruma.

EnviroServ handed a cheque of R 5 000 towards the launch of the SDF.

The SDF - officially launched by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki - aims to improve and uplift the quality of life for people in Soweto.

Star 24/7/97

(127)

Tension as big switch-off continues

Star 28/7/97 (127)

STAFF REPORTERS AND SAPA

Local authorities are to continue with switching off electricity to residents who refuse to pay for services as part of its credit control measures, despite growing tension and opposition to the measures on the East Rand at the weekend.

In Tsakane yesterday, jeering residents prevented Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte and Development, Planning and Local Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka from addressing a rally.

In Tembisa, where 13 residents were arrested on Saturday after a protest over electricity cutoffs, residents reported several clashes with law enforcers yesterday.

Shiceka told The Star this morning the switch-off campaign would reach a climax on August 1. "This is not harsh action, there is no justification for continuing to provide services without people paying for them," Shiceka said.

He said generally there had been a positive response to the credit control measures with "people queueing for hours to pay".

Shiceka said the local authorities could not be "held at gunpoint" and all the security agencies, including the police and army would be used to protect councillors, law abiding citizens and property.



Jessie Duarte ... wasn't given a chance to speak.

However, councillors are still fearing bearing the brunt of residents' anger. Khayalami councillors pleaded with the council on Friday to insure their homes and possessions against attack by residents resisting the payments.

The series of attacks on councillors in Brakpan, Secunda (in Mpumalanga) and other parts of the country made insurance policies imperative, they said.

ANC councillor Beki Khumalo said councillors who had not moved to the suburbs were risking their lives every day.

Both Brakpan's mayor Ace Phiri and councillor Tshidi Tshoane have had their homes

burnt by angry residents.

After the commotion yesterday, Shiceka said SCA members were responsible for burning councillors' houses.

He regarded the organisation's leader, Nick Mogudi, as "dangerous and known to be plotting the death of councillors in the area".

Shiceka said he would ask the Justice Department to revoke Mogudi's bail after his arrest for an alleged plot to attack councillors' homes. Mogudi's followers said anarchy would prevail if their leaders were arrested or killed.

Brakpan's CEO Thys Human said today the council had applied to Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale for permission to provide security to councillors who were vulnerable, but were "relying on traffic officers and police in the interim".

East Rand police spokesman Captain Kamal Shivanand said police were maintaining a strong presence in Tembisa after defaulters vandalised street power boxes in a bid to reconnect their electricity.

Thabiso Mokose, a resident of Hospital View, on the outskirts of Tembisa where some electricity supplies were cut off on Friday, claimed that, since the installation of new metering systems, people were being charged between R800 and R1 000 for electricity consumption every month.

Residents enraged by service charges

(127)

Semeta 29/7/97

By McKeed Kotlolo

HUNDREDS of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville householders in Pretoria are complaining about the "exorbitant" rent and service charges accounts they receive every month

The amounts reflected in the June 1997 accounts received by township residents ranged between R700 and R2 500 a household

Disgruntled residents said they approached the Pretoria City Council offices in Schoeman Street hoping to get the amounts reduced but were told that the amounts were correct

Residents also claimed that

meter readings had not been taking place even before the blaze that partly destroyed the Munitoria building, the operational headquarters of the Pretoria City Council

"One wonders where they get their readings from," said Ms Sophie Manganye of Atteridgeville

Complaining

Spokesman for the Pretoria City Council Mr Harry Matolong confirmed the problem, saying that even those people staying in the city were complaining about their accounts

He said trouble started with the

gutting of Munitoria early this year. Some of the council offices and equipment were destroyed

Matolong said some meter reading equipment was also destroyed in the fire and as a result some meters, with the exception of big business, had not been read

He said that the current accounts were properly read and reflected the correct readings and amounts

He added that those householders who were still not happy with the explanations given by council officials, should apply for their meters to be tested

The testing costs R90 per household

Owners told to stop renting empty factories to homeless

Star 30/7/97 (1a7)

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Johannesburg's Eastern council has issued orders to 21 property owners in Marlboro, Sandton, who are renting their factories to the homeless, to stop doing so.

There are many empty and abandoned factories in Marlboro because of the high crime rate in the area and the council issued the orders to prevent the further invasion of factories, communications officer Keith Peacock said.

Business owners, unable to trade from their premises or let the buildings, are renting them to the homeless.

The owners believe the area could be put to better use for the provision of jobs for the thousands of unemployed, claiming that Marlboro could provide 8 000 jobs if it was running at full potential, which would be a lifeline for about 40 000 dependents.

Marlboro Business Forum spokesman Shocket Khan said a town planner had been employed to re-plan the area.

Although the business forum had prepared its own papers to evict tenants from empty factories, they were prepared to negotiate with the council,

which had shown good faith in making Marlboro a secure, industrial business park.

"We will be giving the council a time limit in which to act against the owners who are renting their properties out, failing which we will proceed with legal action," he said.

Peacock said the council was committed to the revitalisation of Marlboro.

"We are developing proposals for the area to be tabled at council. At present there is deterioration, but services are being reinstated to the area. It is critical that the area be stabilised and no further invasion can be tolerated," he said.

This involves the conversion of empty factory buildings in Marlboro into transit shelters for homeless people of Alexandra.

Coupled with the accommodation would be rehabilitation and development programmes including skills and training programmes.

Democratic Party councillor for the area Alan Fuchs said a mixed-use of residential and industry was a recipe for disaster.

He said the council had to decide if the jobs provided by industry were important before deciding to turn the area into a semi-residential one.

Families living with hazards will have to wait

Star 30/8/97

(127)

By ANNA COX

The 5 000 Greater Johannesburg families identified as living in hazardous conditions, who were granted preference for urgent housing, are still living under the same conditions because of administrative delays and numerous objections from neighbouring residents

The families were to have been moved on to five sites identified around Greater Johannesburg by August 1996.

There were 20 000 objections from neighbouring residents of all racial groups throughout the area

The main concerns were property devaluations because of the erection of shacks. Residents voiced fears that with only a R15 000 subsidy, part of which would be used to pay for infrastructure, people qualifying for the 250sq m sites would only be able to afford to build shacks and not be able to

upgrade or integrate with host communities

The five sites falling under the Rapid Land Development Programme include Lombardy East, near Sandton, Bloubostrand and Witkoppen, near Randburg, Liefde-en-Vrede, near Alberton, and Misgund North, near Naturena

The beneficiaries of the Lombardy East site, where there are 770 stands, are the Alexandra displacees who lost their homes in political violence in 1992

Beneficiaries of the 1 130 Bloubostrand and 970 Witkoppen sites are squatters living on privately owned land in the area, such as Zevenfontein. Recipients of the two Southern Council sites - 800 in Misgund North and 1 500 in Liefde-en-Vrede - are residents of Dlamini in Soweto, where people are living below the 50-year floodline, and Thembalihle squatters near Lenasia, who

have erected shacks on dolomitic ground that is unstable

Lombardy East is the only one which is moving ahead, although not as fast as the recipients would like

The Eastern Council had R12,5-million available for housing last year but, because it failed to spend the money, it was absorbed back into this year's budget

This year only R5-million is available and only 150 homes will be built

Officials have promised that construction will start next month and homes will be ready by December

The two applications in the Northern Council area were withdrawn because they were defective

They have been resubmitted and the town planning tribunal hearings are likely to be held within the next two months. Construction of homes is likely to begin only next year.

'Negotiations the key to successful cut-offs'

Deborah Fine

NEGOTIATIONS with community and civic organisations appeared to be the key to cutting off electricity to payment defaulters without serious backlashes, Eskom spokesman Peter Adams said yesterday.

His comment follows several attacks on the homes of councillors in Gauteng townships in the past two weeks which have been linked to electricity cut-offs carried out by local authorities as they have begun to clamp down on municipal payment defaulters.

Eskom and local councils supply electricity to township residents. Gauteng local government MEC Sicele Shiceka has blamed the attacks on individuals and new civic organisations which he claims have

politically exploited communities' concerns about the manner in which future cut-offs would be effected.

He and Gauteng safety and security MEC Jesse Duarte were prevented by members of the Simunye Civic Association from addressing a rally in Tsakane township where the homes of two councillors were petrol-bombed recently.

The rally had been to inform communities that the planned electricity cut-off throughout the province after August 5 was simply part of the local authorities' commitment to stepping up credit control measures against those individuals who could afford to pay for their municipal services but had deliberately avoided doing so. The cut-offs would not affect those who had made arrangements with local councils to pay off

their current municipal accounts and past arrears. It would also not affect those who had registered with councils as pensioners, or were unemployed or genuinely unable to afford service payments.

There would not be a blanket cut-off of services to large areas affecting all residents, but would be an increase in the number of disconnections to individuals who had defaulted for no valid reasons.

Sapa reports that the Pretoria city council announced yesterday it had cut electricity between April 7 and July 25 to 8 120 households that were in arrears.

Fifty-two customers made full settlements to the value of R2m and R3,6m was received from residents who partly paid their arrears. The council said arrangements for pay-

ments worth R22,6m were made.

About half the 8 120 households had made no arrangements yet to get their electricity supply switched on again.

The council said legal proceedings could soon be instituted against individuals illegally reconnecting the electricity supply to households whose electricity had been cut off due to nonpayment.

Adams said that Eskom had always carried out credit control procedures against defaulters, and would continue to do so.

Explaining that Eskom had encountered past resistance to cut-offs in the form of threats to officials and protest marches on Eskom offices, he said there were certain areas where cut-offs could be now carried out without any form of backlash.

This, he believed, was due to the "endless time and a lot of money" spent by Eskom in negotiations and consultations with civic organisations like the SA National Civics Organisation (Sanco), community groups and church organisations.

Sanco has accused central and provincial governments of failing to address "the real issues" behind local authorities' financial crises and directing governmental "anger" at communities through the "blatant and indiscriminate cutting off of services to the poor, the unemployed, pensioners and the disabled".

Sanco national president Mlungisi Hlongwane said it was not nonpayment that was causing the financial crises, but the failure of government to pass down sufficient subsidies to local authorities.

HOUSING & HOSTELS - GAUTENG

1997

AUG. — DEC.

Gauteng to get tough on residents in arrears

Nomavenda Mathiane

THE Gauteng local government department would enforce stricter credit controls from Tuesday, including cutting electricity supply to residents in arrears, local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka said yesterday.

Shiceka said Gauteng local authorities were owed R3bn of the R6bn owed to local governments across the country.

He said government had now gone beyond the threatening phase and, with the blessing of central government, would go "all out" to collect the money residents owed.

"Hopefully in 18 months' time we will report that the Masakhane campaign has been successful," he said.

Shiceka said with the introduction of stricter credit-control system there was a marked increase of payments in certain areas.

127

130 118197

In Pretoria, where the city council had started implementing credit-control measures last September, R3m in arrears had been recovered. The total amount now outstanding was R22,6m.

Areas that were doing well so far included Vereeniging, which in March had 101% payments and 147% in May; Alberton, which had 93,2% payments in March and 107% in May; Meyerton, which had 89,3% in

March and 94,8% in May; and Boksburg, which had 87% payment in March and 93% in May. Vanderbijlpark, Johannesburg and Centurion had about 91% in March and 96,65% in May while Sandton showed 76% in March and 86,6% in May.

Townships continued to fare badly with Tsakane on the East Rand and Bopatong both netting the lowest figures of 7% payment in March and 8% and 12,5% respectively in May.

Townships west of Soweto also did badly with only 12,5% payment in March and 15,6% in May. Alexandra township also fell behind with 19,8% payment in March and 21,5% in May.

Shiceka said council security would be stepped up in areas such as Kaitleng where problems were being experienced.

The army and the police would be deployed in areas where cuts would be effected, he said.

Power cut set to jolt Gauteng payment defaulters

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
City Desk

Thousands of families will be left without electricity in Gauteng on Tuesday, when the provincial government sends a tough message to defaulters who don't pay for municipal services

Tuesday's clampdown is an attempt by the authorities to accelerate payments for services which have started to trickle in over the past year, making inroads into the R3-billion in arrears owed to Gauteng's 52 local councils

Local Government MEC Sicele Shiceka said the decision

to switch off electricity from August 5 was a move to intensify the Masakhane campaign and recover the billions in arrears owed to local authorities

"We have to take the pain for now for a better Gauteng," Shiceka said

Security arrangements are being discussed with the police and the army to prevent violence, which has broken out in the past when electricity has been switched off

Local government department director-general Silas Mbedzi said payment levels in Gauteng had been rising steadily, with about 45% of households and businesses in

the province, who had been billed, paying for services. This had increased from about 23% in June last year

He said R300-million in arrears had been recovered and the department was optimistic that a further R600-million to R700-million would be recovered by December

"By the end of the year we hope the outstanding debt will be about R2,2-billion. In 18 months we should have reduced the deficit to an acceptable level"

Statistics released by Shiceka show payments in Dobsonville, Soweto, have risen from 18 to 30% and in Diepmeadow/

Meadowlands from 16 to 29,1%. Payments in Sandton have risen from 76 to 86,1%, in Johannesburg from 87 to 88,6%, Lenasia from 53,3 to 59,1% and Ennerdale from 31,4 to 44%

Mbedzi said the payment level in Orange Farm, one of the fastest-growing settlements, was only about 3,9% and in Tsakane, where councillors' houses had recently been burnt, is 8%

He would not comment on exactly how many households would have their electricity cut, saying figures were still being collated. But the cutoffs were expected to affect thousands of people

Star 1/8/97 (127)

Net to close on rates dodgers

By JACQUI REEVES

Councillors who thought they had beaten the system are about to be caught in the same "debtor-catching net" that will sweep across Gauteng's suburbs and townships next week.

The across-the-board community action will expose councillors who have been avoiding detection on their rates and services arrears by registering their properties in the names of family members.

Taking the Masakhane campaign to a new level, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) has been called in to assist Gauteng MEC for Development Planning and Local Government Sicelo

Shiceka in his battle against non-payment for rates and services.

The joint venture between the NIA, the defence force, police and local authorities is being treated with the secrecy of a military manoeuvre, aimed at targeting those in arrears.

Speaking to the *Saturday Star*, Shiceka said he did not wish to disclose the number of soldiers who would be called in to patrol "problem areas", fearing the information might endanger the mission.

The vigorous implementation of the credit-control measures, planned to begin on Tuesday, may be the deciding factor in catching out all residents owing money to their councils - as well

as the councillors themselves.

Mike Waters (DP), a councillor with the Khayalami Metropolitan Council, said he believed some councillors were still getting away with not paying their rates and services accounts.

"Although all the councillors who have properties registered in their names are fully paid up, this is not an accurate reflection of the real amount, as some still have their properties registered in the names of family members," he said.

Areas such as Katlehong and Phomolong, where resistance to the credit-control mechanisms is anticipated, can expect to see armed police and soldiers protecting workers as they dis-

connect electricity and water supply lines.

Sheriffs of the court, who may have to issue summonses to residents in arrears, will also be accompanied by security personnel.

The decision to call in the NIA is, according to Shiceka, a sensitive matter that he would make public within the coming week.

He would only be drawn on the fact that ongoing NIA investigations had revealed "organised forces" operating within certain areas that were actively seeking to undermine the authorities.

"We want to know what is being planned so that we can stop their activities," he said.

(127)
Star 21/8/97

2,000 defaulters facing power cuts

CITY REPORTERS

At least 2 000 defaulters faced having their electricity cut off from today as Greater Johannesburg's four councils stepped up their campaign to recover millions in unpaid arrears

The campaign is part of a provincial operation to speed up the recovery of about R2,7-billion owed to Gauteng's 52 local authorities in unpaid arrears since 1994. Greater Johannesburg's councils aim to recover about R500-million this month, a source said

First to be targeted for electricity switch-off will be those who owed in excess of R5 000 and who have made no attempt to make arrangements to pay

off their debts. A metro council spokesman, Keith Peacock, indicated that about 2 000 defaulters would have their electricity cut every day.

Ahead of the cut-offs, hundreds of people came forward yesterday to pay outstanding accounts in the Western council. Western council spokesman Sabantu Ndlangaluvu said about 1 500 people came to pay or make arrangements to pay off debts at the council's paypoints yesterday. This did not include people who had paid their accounts at Pick 'n Pay stores or at Post Offices.

Council officials expected the pressure on paypoints to continue today, and the council has made arrangements for

paypoints to stay open until at least 10pm to accommodate people wanting to pay.

Peacock said cut-offs would not discriminate in favour of or against any geographical region but for logistical reasons, including the safety of the officials involved, he would not give the areas where cut-offs are expected today.

Once electricity was cut, security measures would be taken to ensure it was not reconnected illegally. Peacock warned that it would take about three days to reconnect electricity to households and businesses.

► Tighter security

Page 2

(127) STW 5/8/97

Council proposal on electricity rise rejected

BD 5/8/97 (127) ~~(127)~~

Deborah Fine

THE National Electricity Regulator has rejected the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's proposals to increase the nondomestic electricity tariff for large power users by 7%, and has instead recommended a 3% increase.

The proposed increase was adopted by the council during its 1997/98 municipal budget debate in June, but was subject to approval by the regulator. The council also proposed a 12% domestic tariff increase.

The 7% increase in large power nondomestic tariffs would have resulted in additional income of R74,4m for the council. This, combined with the domestic tariff increase as well as other adjustments in small power tariffs, would have yielded a total additional income of R149,6m.

The 4% decrease, which has been accepted by the council, has meant a reduction of R38,6m in the council's original estimated additional income from electricity.

National Electricity Regulator spokesman Johan du Plessis said yes-

terday that the regulator had rejected the council's original proposal because the current large power-user tariffs in Johannesburg were still regarded as "very high compared to the tariffs paid by large power users in some other metropolitan areas".

While the regulator would have preferred a zero tariff increase for large power users, it was decided to allow the council a 3% increase given the council's financial considerations and the fact that there had been no tariff increase in the 1996/97 financial year.

The regulator had, however, approved the 12% residential tariff increase and had recommended further increases to bring residential tariffs in line with distributors in other areas.

Council strategic development support executive officer Alton Lock said yesterday that the council's electricity department would now be looking to other revenue sources to offset the income loss.

The council would also be holding meetings with Eskom with a view to reducing purchase costs an electricity unit to compensate for the loss.

Moosa backs power cuts but will probe plight of those who cannot pay

(127) Star 6/18/97

THEMBA HADEBE

By THEMBA SEPOTHELE,
CECILIA RUSSEL AND SAPA

As Gauteng's provincial service cut-off programme gains momentum, Provincial Affairs Minister Mohammed Valli Moosa undertook to explore the plight of those who are genuinely unable to pay for services

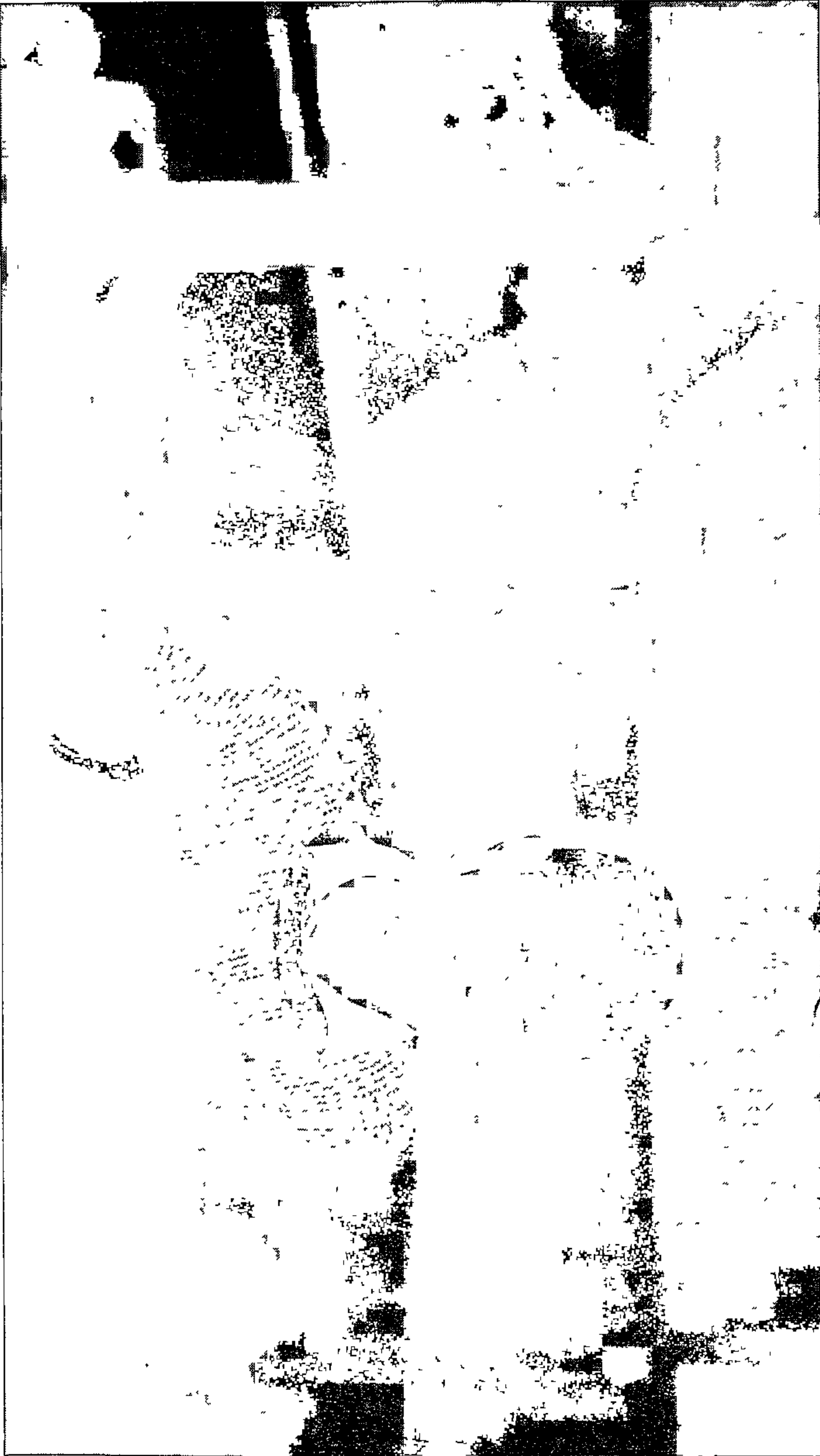
The cut-off programme began at KwaThema, Springs on the East Rand, where electricity was cut to 12 000 consumers. About 300 more consumers are expected to have electricity disconnected today. The Gauteng government is planning to recoup R2,7-billion in arrears owed to 52 municipalities in the province.

Moosa said while the Government had no intention of telling the local authorities to halt the cut-off campaign, it would hold urgent discussions with national, provincial and local government and the civic organisation to explore ways of accommodating legitimate concerns about blanket cut-offs.

The South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) has criticised the province and the local authorities for the cut-offs.

Sanco national president Mlungisi Hlongwane said Sanco fully supported the Masakhane campaign provided it was aimed at those who could afford to pay for services.

An unspecified number of households, shops and taverns in KwaThema, Springs, were left in the dark and cold yesterday as council workers, assisted by security police, ripped out underground electricity ca-



Powerless... shop assistant Lehlohonolo Radebe at the Thanda-Bantu shop in KwaThema had to sell his wares by candlelight after the council cut defaulters' electricity supplies in the area.

bles to prevent defaulters from illegally reconnecting their supply

The entire area had been left without electricity from as early as 9am, when council workers began uprooting cables in Tornado Section of the

East Rand township

The cut affected the KwaThema police station, petrol stations, traffic lights leading to the townships, shops and households. A petrol generator was used at the police station

Ardent viewers of soap

operas such as *The Bold and the Beautiful* were shattered after learning that their supply had been cut

Yesterday afternoon, two council workers restoring power to ratepayers who were not in

arrears or who had paid up after their power was cut. Smoke curled from hundreds of chimneys as people started making coal fires, while others hurried to buy candles.

Resident Josinah Runo said the council workers and the

police arrived in the morning and ripped out electricity cables. "I saw the police cutting the cable to prevent people from reconnecting electricity."

There were also cut-offs in other parts of Gauteng and in Greater Johannesburg.

Boksburg takes up housing challenge

Star 6/8/97

(127)

BY PATRICK PHOSA AND
BONGIWE MLANGENI

The Greater Boksburg Council has set a trend in the delivery of low-cost housing to fill the gap left by private developers who snub the subsidy housing market, mayor Eric Xayiya said yesterday.

Speaking at the Afribuild Exhibition '97 at Gallagher Estate in Midrand, Xayiya said the challenge of low-cost housing delivery had undergone significant changes recently, with local authorities assuming a major role in the process.

Xayiya said Boksburg had come to grips with the challenge of delivering houses through the Khulisa Project in Vosloorus. The council had donated R900 000 and two commercial delivery vehicles to the project, which had built about 1 000 homes for those at the

bottom of the income scale

He said private developers, no matter how willing, could not provide community housing within the R15 000 subsidy

A project to repair houses damaged in violence in 1994 in Katlehong, Thokoza, Vosloorus and informal settlements on the periphery "is a typical example of concerted efforts by the Government, political parties, civic structures, trade unions, the private sector and the army".

About 1 500 houses have been evaluated and the cost of repair estimated at R48,5-million. Repairs to about 1 150 houses have been completed.

Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele said the draft housing bill to be tabled in Parliament soon would hold local councils responsible for ensuring that their communities had enough access to housing.

Gauteng services clampdown begins

Deborah Fine

BD 6/8/97
GAUTENG local authorities began their programme of action against non-payment yesterday with electricity cut-offs to municipal payments defaulters in several municipalities

Municipalities have threatened to intensify credit control procedures in order to recover the R3bn in outstanding debts owed to the province's 52 local councils since 1994

Sapa reports that Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister Valh Moosa said talks would be resumed in a bid to prevent innocent and poverty-stricken residents from falling victim to the cut-offs

Speaking after meeting the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco) in Pretoria, Moosa said discussions would explore ways to accommodate legitimate concerns about blanket cut-offs

Eastern council spokesman Keith Peacock, speaking on behalf of Johannesburg's five local metropolitan councils, said Johannesburg residents could expect at least 2 000 cut-offs a day throughout the city from early next week. This included the switching off of electricity and the reduction of water supplies to a trickle.

People who were 60 days or more in arrears would be targeted first

Councils have been quick to stress that there will be no bulk cut-offs to whole areas, and that it only the services of individual defaulters would be disconnected. But they have appealed to defaulters either to pay their accounts, make arrangements to pay their arrears or register as being genuinely unable to pay for services before the crackdown begins in earnest within the next few days

Gauteng local government MEC

Sicelo Shiceka said the cutting off of services should be viewed as a signal to nonpayers that local authorities were "extremely serious" about collecting outstanding payments to enhance their service delivery, and should not be considered a punishment

The Springs town council began cutting electricity supplies to more than 1 200 homes in KwaThema township yesterday, with council task teams — guarded by heavily armed traffic police — digging up and cutting cables to prevent illegal reconnections

East Rand police spokesman Supt Wickus Weber said one man had been arrested for pointing a firearm at a municipal worker

North Rand police spokesman Supt Eugene Opperman said that petrol bombs had been thrown at police and municipal workers in Actonville, near Benoni, on the East Rand

Youths on rampage over electricity cuts

JOHANNESBURG: Angry youths went on the rampage in KwaThema at Springs on the East Rand yesterday stoning cars and torching a Telkom van to vent their frustration with electricity cuts

Police said a man was arrested for pointing a firearm at council officials cutting electricity supplies.

City electrical engineer Mr Christo Nortjé said the council had ripped out about 185 cables and aimed at cutting power to 300 to 400 houses a day because of arrears.

The trouble started when traffic officers and council workers left Tornado Section after uprooting cables. Youths stoned a car of the Springs traffic department.

Later, the youths started stoning cars at the entrance to the township while others set the Telkom van alight.

Local Sanco chairman Mr Isaac Makgabutlane said the council had reneged on its July 29 resolution not to begin cutting power until negotiating with community organisations. He said discussions with the council over the cuts were to have begun on August 14. — Own Correspondent

Crunch day for Johannesburg defaulters

Star 8/8/97

(127)

By **CECILIA RUSSELL**

Greater Johannesburg residents and businesses, who owe more than half of Gauteng's R3-billion in service arrears, have been given until tonight to pay up or face having their electricity cut off.

Metro spokesman Keith Peacock said today is crunch day for consumers. "If they have not made arrangements by tonight, they could face cutoffs this weekend."

Consumers in the metro owe R1,7-billion, more than half of Gauteng's total debt. "We have some debtors who owe the council nearly R500 000 each," Peacock said.

The intensified cut-off campaign would begin at the weekend and was expected to be stepped up during the week. "By Wednesday the council will be switching off up to 2 000

defaulters each day," Peacock warned.

While it is hoped that consumers, residents and businesses who are in arrears will come forward to settle their debts, the response has been disappointing, and about 30 000 people face having services cut off during this period.

Although, initially, electricity payment defaulters will be targeted, the council is also considering reducing water pressure to the households in arrears.

Peacock said the council would target defaulters who were more than 60 days in arrears and had not made arrangements to settle these accounts. The metro would not discriminate in terms of area or size of the debt.

Peacock warned that consumers who attempted to reconnect their electricity were

risking their lives because the council would switch off power at high-voltage boards and not at meter boards.

"The council would not hesitate to prosecute anybody whose electricity was 'miraculously' resumed," he added.

Meanwhile, Sandton Federation of Ratepayers treasurer Brian Stolzenberg said he was horrified that local government had resorted to "underhand, intimidatory tactics" in its decision to cut power at the weekend when it was always difficult to get hold of a magistrate.

"The council must look into their legal rights - they're not a law unto themselves. We'll fight them to the bitter end."

"We'll get a judge, get an urgent interdict and force them to switch electricity back on."

■ Consumers who need information can phone a 24-hour hotline on 0800-11-22-585.

Pay up or face cut-off, consumers told

CT 8/8/97

(127)

JOHANNESBURG: Greater Johannesburg residents and businesses — who owe more than half of Gauteng's R3-billion unpaid arrears — have been given until tonight to pay up on their service arrears or face having their electricity cut

Metro spokesperson Mr Keith Peacock said yesterday that today "is crunch day for consumers who refuse to pay their accounts, if they have not made arrangements by tonight they

could face cut-offs this weekend"

Consumers in the metro owe R1,7 billion, which is more than half of Gauteng's total debt of R3 billion

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The intensified cut-off campaign would begin over the weekend and is expected to be stepped up during the week

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They would target defaulters who were more than 60 days in arrears —
Own Correspondent

Payment defaulters face reconnection, penalty fees

Deborah Fine

MUNICIPAL payments defaulters whose services have been cut will have to pay a reconnection fee to have their services restored and could be forced to pay a penalty fee if they damaged council property by attempting to reconnect the services illegally.

This was confirmed yesterday by Zakes Ximba, assistant Masakhane coordinator at the Gauteng local government, planning and development department in the wake of a crackdown on non-payment by local authorities.

He said reconnection fees would be charged in line with normal, statutory municipal procedures, but that the amounts would differ from council to council. This could range from the R110 fee charged in the greater Johannesburg area to the R850 reconnection charges imposed by the Springs local

council on the East Rand.

Ximba stressed that reconnection fees would be open to negotiation in cases where people were genuinely unable to pay the full charges, but urgently needed services restored. A greater Johannesburg council spokesman said yesterday, however, reconnections in the city area would have to be paid up-front before services were reconnected.

He said services to an estimated 30 000 homes and businesses would be cut if people did not come forward to pay their accounts in full or make arrangements to pay off their arrears.

The city would begin cut-offs in earnest at the weekend, building up to 2 000 cut-offs a day from Monday.

The head of the task-team co-ordinating cut-offs in the greater Johannesburg area, Western local council CEO Geoff O'Connell, said yesterday that people or businesses with signif-

icant arrears or those who were capable of paying but had defaulted would be targeted. He confirmed that this would include Sandton residents who had embarked on a property assessment rates boycott last year to protest against rates increases of up to 300%.

Meanwhile, Gauteng local government chief director Bamba Ndwanande said yesterday that the provincial gov-

ernment would use "all the measures within its authority" to counter "pockets of resistance to the restoration of law and sustainability at local level."

"We think we are doing what is right for the nation. If local authorities are allowed to collapse, the whole of SA is doomed. Municipal services are a yardstick by which standards in a society are judged," he said.

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"We think we are doing what is right for the nation. If local authorities are allowed to collapse, the whole of SA is doomed. Municipal services are a yardstick by which standards in a society are judged," he said.

Sentracchem

Continued from Page 1

chem shares had offered to sell their stock to the international company ahead of the offer to minorities. This was probably because they feared that Dow would walk away from the deal if

shares must be taken up, or a lesser amount subject to its discretion. Old Mutual, which holds about 16% of Sentracchem, has remained tight-lipped on whether it will accept R10,50 a share, saying it was "premature to comment". The price tag would be a major factor.

An analyst said it was likely several minority shareholders would take

Don't be fazed (127)
over power cuts,
Sandtonians told

It would be illegal to cut services to residents who fell under the former Sandton council who paid for services but withheld rates payments, it was claimed yesterday.

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers and Residents Associations said threats to cut services were an indication that the authorities intended to take illegal action.

It warned residents not to fall for the intimidatory tactics that "were calculated to frighten law-abiding citizens into abandoning their protest."

■ East Rand police yesterday reported 12 cases of public violence in KwaThema, Springs, relating to the electricity switch-off that began there on Tuesday. Sapa

Star 9/8/99

Cutoffs spark payment rush

(127) ARG 11/8/97

Defaulters flock to settle arrears as council cuts power:

hospitals (one owes R500 000) reprieved until Wednesday

By **CECILIA RUSSELL**

Defaulters have been rushing to pay their arrears as the municipal electricity cutoff campaign moves into Greater Johannesburg this week following last week's East Rand blitz.

At the weekend more than 500 Greater Johannesburg consumers had their electricity cut - but the threat of action resulted in a 25% increase in payment levels by Friday.

The campaign will intensify during this week until about 2 000 households and businesses who are in arrears are cut off each day.

Among the biggest debts paid by defaulters fearing cutoff was the R266 000 paid by a Johannesburg CBD business.

"There was an overwhelming response to the call to pay up," metro spokesman Keith Peacock said.

Greater Johannesburg consumers owe about R1,7-billion - more than half of Gauteng's R3-billion service arrears.

During the campaign to recover the money, big business and household consumers are being targeted unless they make and honour agreements with their councils.

Peacock said council staff would be among the first to be hit by the cutoffs because they ought to be role models.

Hospitals had been granted a reprieve until Wednesday.

"Admission to private hospitals is notoriously strict. For those not in possession of a medical aid, money upfront is the selection criteria.

"In much the same way hospitals expect their patients to pay for services provided, so too must they pay for services provided to them," said Pea-

Councils criticised, threatened over policy

cock, adding that one hospital owed nearly R500 000.

He also urged banks to apply their strict loan policies to payments for their own rates and services accounts. "It is clear that many businesses use the council for short-term credit."

Peacock said councils would treat with sympathy all consumers who approached them to make arrangements.

Newlands, Claremont and Montclair concerned residents

committee chairman Claudius Strydom said households with incomes of less than R1 050 in Johannesburg's Northern, Eastern and Western local councils had not been given the opportunity to register for subsidised rates and service charges - as residents from the Southern council had been allowed to do.

He called for a moratorium on disconnections until they could be conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

Opposition parties and other residents' associations have also criticised the manner in which the Gauteng government has, through local councils, implemented the cutoff.

DP chief whip Claire Quail said ongoing credit control rather than a "big bang" intensified cutoff campaign should be implemented.

Sandton Federation of Ratepayers and Residents Associations chairman Peter Harmsen said it would be illegal to cut services to residents under the former Sandton council who had paid for services but withheld rates payments.

He said legal action would be taken against the council if consumers who did not pay their rates bills had their electricity disconnected.

ET 11/8/97 (127)
Cuts spark arrear payments

JOHANNESBURG. There has been a 25% increase in payments in response to the threat to cut electricity to Greater Johannesburg consumers in arrears.

A business in the city centre paid its outstanding debt of R266 000 on Friday afternoon

"There was an overwhelming response," said Metro spokesman Mr Keith Peacock

Greater Johannesburg consumers owe about R1,7 billion — more than half Gauteng's R3bn in service arrears

The campaign to recover the money targets big business and householders who have not con-

tacted their local councils to arrange to pay off their arrears.

Peacock said yesterday council staff would be among the first to be affected

"They should be role models and ought not to have outstanding accounts," he said

Hospitals have had been granted a temporary reprieve until Wednesday

The SA National Civic Organisation chairperson, Mr Isaac Makgabutlane said they would seek a court interdict unless authorities agreed to an immediate moratorium on electricity cut-offs — Own Correspondent

Residents are warned over electricity bills

Bonile Ngqiyaza

BD 11/8/99

(127)

THE Johannesburg council last night warned Gauteng residents in arrears to contact their local credit offices to arrange for payments, saying it expected its clampdown campaign on municipal account defaulters to build up to 2 000 people a day this week.

Council spokesman Keith Peacock said it was expected that the numbers of debtors who had their electricity disconnected would increase.

"We regret that this has to reach such a stage, but debtors also have to realise that it is time they paid what is due to the council."

The council last night said there had been a good response to the accelerated credit control campaign of the greater Johannesburg council. Receipts, it said, had gone up 25% in the past few days.

A large number of disconnections had already taken place with accounts of more than R2m targeted. The council did not specify which businesses had had services disconnected.

Peacock also warned that once services had been disconnected, it might take a few days before they were restored.

The council's records had reportedly been found to be in chaos at a time when the council was gearing up to implement its clampdown.

The reports said the council's records seemed to be inaccurate and incomplete because of outdated computer systems, new boundaries and different methods of billing.

The council planned to disconnect power to 2 000 debtors a day this week in an attempt to collect about R1,5bn owed to it by 30 000 defaulters — a collection rate which would enable it to head off a crisis.

Govt forks out R4,8-m arrears owed to Jo'burg

(127)
Star 12/8/97

Transport network, education department, and Bara hospital settle huge bills in face of electricity cutoff campaign

By CECILIA RUSSELL

Government departments in Greater Johannesburg coughed up R4,8-million yesterday ahead of threatened electricity cutoffs to consumers 60 days or more in arrears

Sources in the council told The Star that three cheques, one from the Gauteng education department for R2,5-million, one from Intersite, a subsidiary of the parastatal South African Rail Commuter Corporation, for R1,1-million, and one from Chris Hanu Baragwanath Hospital for R1,2-million, were paid to Johannesburg's Southern council yesterday

The Greater Johannesburg metro council, in line with Gauteng's initiative, has improved its credit-control procedures and threatened to cut electricity to consumers more than 60 days behind and where arrangements had not been made to pay off arrears.

The council is owed R1,7-billion. At the weekend, the council cut off about 500 consumers

Chris Hanu Baragwanath Hospital spokesman Ester Hlongwane said the cheque was for the usual monthly payment, but council sources said it also covered arrears

Gauteng education department spokesman Aubrey Matshiqi said the department was still in the process of verifying the correctness of the accounts

"The department decided to pay despite the fact that there may be discrepancies in the accounts, because it is committed to Masakhane," Matshiqi said.

Intersite's senior strategic marketing manager Roeloff Crowther agreed that the payment was more than 60 days overdue but said it had been made within 30 days of receipt of the invoice for May.

Metro spokesman Keith Peacock said: "It is up to the consumer to ensure their account is paid and up to date, and that the information on the account is correct."

There had been a good response to the threats of service cutoffs, with hundreds of consumers paying their arrears

The Gauteng Lions Rugby Union settled its arrears of R250 000 yesterday.

In the Eastern areas, the payment level is up about 25%. Figures for the Northern and the Western councils were unavailable but sources say payments to the Southern council increased from R9-million on August 1 to R12-million on Friday.

The Sandton Ratepayers' Federation (Sanfed) is investigating a case in which a Sandton resident had his electricity supply cut at the weekend

"If the resident is up-to-date as he claims with his service bill but is behind, due to the boycott, with his rates account then the action of the council is unlawful and we will take the matter to court," said Sanfed chairman Brian Stoltzenberg

The metro would not be going into top gear with cutoffs today, but intended to give consumers one extra day to sort out arrears

From tomorrow the council plans to cut up to 2000 consumers each day

Gauteng releases 50 housing sites a day

Robyn Chalmers

(127)
BD 12/8/97

THE Gauteng provincial government was releasing 50 sites a day for informal settlements to meet the province's huge housing demand, land affairs department director Carien Englebrecht said yesterday.

Englebrecht said the provincial government had initiated its Mayibuye Programme early last year to cope with an expected influx of people to the province.

"It became essential that government agencies responded to the growing need (for housing) by addressing the problem of landlessness. This is being achieved through the release of land for settlement as a complementary strategy to other existing housing programmes," she said.

The programme involved the release of unserviced land for residential settlement with an emphasis on tenure security to establish the basis for future upgrading programmes.

A government document outlining the programme showed it was meant to facilitate the acquisition and release of land. Funding under the programme was restricted to a number of costs which totalled almost R1 200 an average site, excluding land, with all of the costs to fall under the national housing subsidy scheme.

The programme covered the cost of land bought from private landowners — to be recouped under the national housing subsidy scheme — and the cost of preplanning investigations such as environmental impact assessments.

All costs associated with preparation of detailed layout plans, such as engineering design costs and costs linked to surveying and pegging of individual and community sites were covered. Transfer and legal costs, project management costs and the cost of engaging with communities and other beneficiaries would fall under the programme.

"Every effort should be made to reduce land acquisition costs and local authorities will be required to submit valuations for land acquisition prior to purchase," said the document. Participating local authorities would have to conclude a standard funding agreement with the housing and land affairs department.

Big business escapes electricity cut-offs

Star 13/8/97 (127)

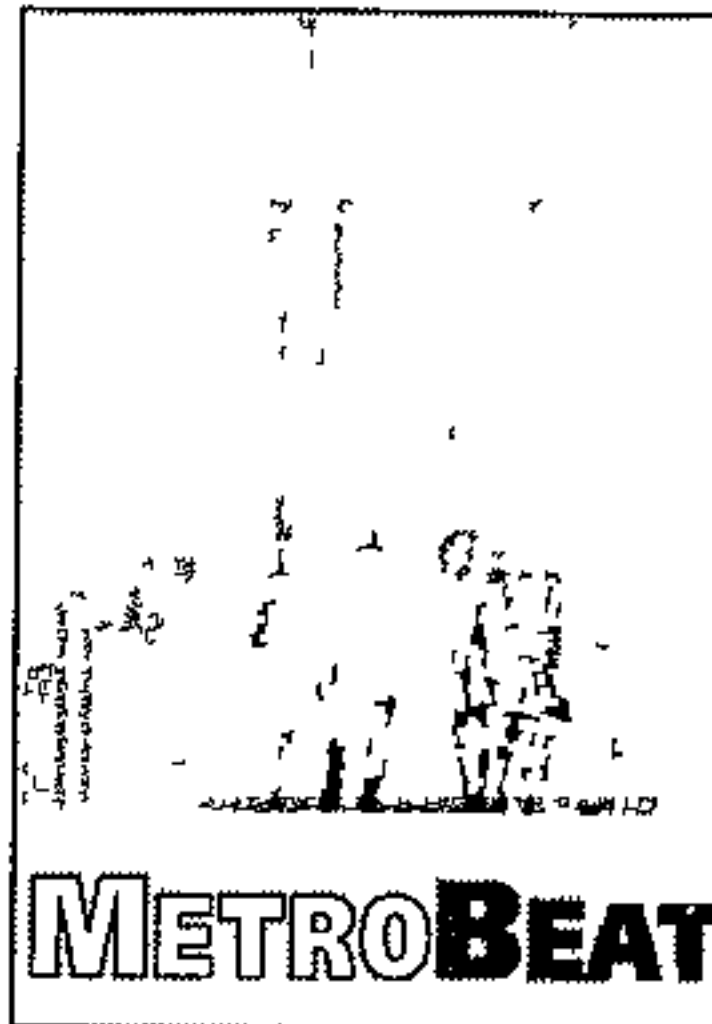
But residents are hit for being eight days late

By **BUNTY WEST**

While Krugersdorp residents' services are being cut without warning just eight days after their accounts' due date, nearly 200 businesses are getting away with service arrears running into millions of rands.

During last month's council meeting councillor Michael Bester said a number of large businesses owed thousands each in service payments and were more than 120 days in arrears. Yet electricity to several Burgershoop residents was cut last week after being only eight days in arrears.

Irate residents attacked municipal offi-



cials sent out to do the work

According to Bester, one company owes a massive R275 000, while the top 20 non-payers on the list have accounts owing of more than R150 000 each

"Not one of the companies on the list, which range in size from small

enterprises to large companies, owes less than R30 000, and they are all at least 120 days in arrears," said Bester

Council does not send out final notices to residents any longer and the monthly account to ratepayers is the only notice of payment given

A note at the bottom of the account warns that, if the bill is not settled by the due date (normally around eight days later), officials are likely to cut off electricity.

■ Irrecoverable debts of under R500, amounting to R18 090 from 90 debtors, were written off by council last month after the process to trace them proved too costly. All debts were more than three years old.

Defaulters scramble to pay ahead of mass switch-offs

Daborah Fine

MILLIONS of rands have poured into the coffers of greater Johannesburg's local town councils as municipal payments defaulters scramble to pay up their services accounts ahead of intensified electricity switch-offs in the city either today or tomorrow.

Southern local council communications officer Marina Penders confirmed that about R12m in services arrears had been handed over to the council on Monday, while Eastern council spokesman Keith Peacock said unnamed debtors had paid up more than R1,1m

yesterday.

An anonymous source claimed the bulk of the R1,1m had been paid over by a large Johannesburg outdoor advertising company.

Peacock also confirmed that the Midpark Clinic had paid the R570 000 owed to the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council for services arrears, while Penders said that the Gauteng education department, the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto and SA Rail Commuter Corporation subsidiary, InterSite, had handed over cheques amounting to R4,8m to settle their arrears.

The Gauteng Lions Rugby Union had paid R250 000 after being threatened with legal

action to recover municipal debts.

The payments follow the city's announcement last week that it would be embarking on a tough credit control campaign to recover the R1,7bn in outstanding municipal debts owed to the Johannesburg metropolitan council and its four substructures.

Local authorities began switching off electricity to defaulters over the weekend, and plan to build up to at least 2 000 daily cut-offs by today or tomorrow. Other credit control actions include the reduction of water supplies, debt collection and legal action.

Meanwhile, two of the large institutions named in the media as being in arrears with

their services payments have strongly commented the allegations.

First National Bank spokesman Alec Grant said yesterday that the bank no longer even owned the Diepkloof property on which it was supposed to owe R43 950, while Periskor financial director Gerbrand Bothma said the R126 000 it was supposed to owe was under dispute and may have been as a result of faulty meter readings.

Transnet executive manager Gideon van Zyl confirmed that two outstanding municipal accounts relating to the company's pension fund were being investigated, while Total SA corporate affairs manager Clarence

(127) 80 12 8197

Keyser said an arrears default relating to a service station in Randburg would be cleared up by the end of the week.

Meanwhile, the Southern local council went ahead yesterday with 32 electricity cuts in Ennerdale and Eldorado Park, south of Johannesburg, where members of the South Western Joint Civics Association, under the leadership of expelled councillor Basil Douglas, engaged in violent protest action against power-cuts in February this year.

The Inkatha Freedom Party warned that power cuts across the province would only serve to exacerbate the "ungovernable conditions prevailing in the townships".

No repairs now, only cut-offs, says council

Star 14/8/97 (127)

Some street lights have been out of action for a long time

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
City Desk

Routine electrical repairs and maintenance have been severely disrupted by the disconnection of electricity to defaulters and the situation is expected to continue for weeks

Street lights are not being repaired and there is a delay in restoring the lights of households which have been accidentally disconnected

The problem came to light after Johannesburg North resident Glen Grant-Grierson told The Star that street lights in his area had been out for more than two weeks

He said he had been informed by an electricity

Situation is expected to continue for weeks

99

spokesman that there was no money to repair the lights "They said that for the next six weeks they are only going to do cut-offs I'm a paying customer, but there's nothing I can do," he said

Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council spokesman Keith Peacock confirmed he was aware "problems had oc-

curred in the last week", affecting routine electrical repairs.

He said the problems would continue in "the near future" because all resources were being spent on cutting electricity to defaulters to recover R1,7-billion owed in arrears. Electricity to about 2 000 households is expected to be cut every day

But Peacock apologised for any street lights which had been out for a long time, saying it was unacceptable.

Metropolitan electricity spokesman Alan Milne said the lack of manpower meant the electricity department would only be able to deal with critical problems

"We can't handle as many outages (power failures) and complaints," he said

Electricity cut-offs pay off

(127) CT 14/8/97

JOHANNESBURG The intensified credit-control campaign in Gauteng has netted R500 million in arrears since councils started cutting off defaulters' electricity last Monday.

About 6 349 consumers have had their electricity disconnected, with the Greater Germiston council heading the cut-offs list with 2 537, Local Government MEC Mr Sicelo Shiceka said yesterday.

He said 2 209 consumers had had their electricity reconnected and 3 568 had made arrangements to pay off debts. The Randfontein council had made arrangements with 90% of its residents.

About 18 027 households with incomes of less than R1 050 had registered for subsidised rates and water.

Shiceka said the Boksburg

council was the only municipality disconnecting water, with 528 households cut off. About 321 homes had been reconnected.

"This campaign has been a resounding success," he said. "Persuasion hasn't been taken seriously, so we are now at the stage of coercion, and it's paying dividends."

About R600 000 had been paid in KwaThema, near Springs on the East Rand, where there were mass cut-offs and government departments settled their bills on Tuesday.

Shiceka said the Gauteng Education Department had paid its bills as had hospitals in arrears.

"I am still investigating why government departments were not paying, but people believed if they didn't pay, nothing would happen," he said.

Shiceka said the campaign had

been necessary to restore the financial viability of councils.

He said a number of municipalities were on the verge of collapse, but Johannesburg wasn't among them.

● Figures released by the Constitutional Development ministry yesterday show Gauteng was owed close on R4 billion in unpaid municipal services by March this year — an increase of almost R1 billion on last year.

The number of regular payers in the province has increased from 69% to 73%, and payment by all municipalities in the country dropped by 20%.

A Constitutional Development spokesman said the increase in debt was due to accumulation and the increased number of people being billed. — Own Correspondent

Councils collect 13% of overdue payments

B0 14/8/97 (127)
GAUTENG local authorities had recovered more than R500m in rates and service payments since the government began cutting defaulters' electricity on August 5, local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka said yesterday.

Sapa reports he said this constituted 13% of the R3,8bn owed to Gauteng local authorities by ratepayers.

Shiceka made the announcement at a news briefing which followed a march by about 300 Soweto pensioners in support of government's payment drive.

Deborah Fine reports Shiceka also said more than 8 800 electricity cutoffs and 528 reductions in water supplies had been carried out since the start of the credit control campaign. Several councils still had to send statistics

He said 3 568 agreements had been struck with various councils for paying off municipal debts and arrears

Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister Valli Moosa said the campaign was an indication of the "maturation" of the local government system

Local authorities were now undertaking consolidation processes and gaining an understanding of effective financial management and credit control measures, he said.

However, the SA National Civics Organisation has said that the "brutal and draconian measures" taken against payments defaulters could result in violent confrontations between communities and local authorities. It believed that the way to resolve the nonpayment issue was through further negotiations

Jo'burg defaulters face gas and water disconnections

Star 15/8/97

(127)

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Greater Johannesburg's councils are cutting off gas and will soon cut off water to defaulters as local authorities step up their campaign to recover about R1,7-billion in municipal services arrears.

The intensification of the campaign comes as Johannesburg resumes mass disconnections of electricity after a day's layoff on Wednesday for routine maintenance to be carried out.

Electricity to defaulters is also expected to be disconnected this weekend, with power cuts to about 500 consumers planned for today. About 6 349 consumers in Gauteng have had their electricity disconnected since the cutoffs started on August 5.

Thousands of defaulters are expected to be affected by the water cutoffs.

Greater Johannesburg metro spokesman Keith Peacock said gas cutoffs had started yesterday.

He warned bulk users of gas - industries, hotels and cater-

ing companies - to settle their bills to avoid being cut off. Domestic gas users will also be cut off if they are in arrears.

Peacock said water cutoffs would start on Monday.

The council had decided to cut off water after being advised that while the constitution stated that people must have access to water, it did not stipulate that it had to be supplied to houses.

This meant water supplied to houses could be cut off but access at other points would not be affected.

Peacock said money was continuing to flow in as a result of the campaign.

The "old Sandton part of the east" had reflected an increase of 91% in one day, bringing the council's income to R1,7-million, he said. About R500-million had been netted in Gauteng since the start of the campaign.

■ The Kempton Park/Thembisa local council has denied rumours that Thembisa will experience a total blackout on Monday.

The council said only individual defaulters would have their electricity cut off.

R22,5-m earmarked to subsidise struggling rates defaulters

STAFF REPORTER

The Gauteng housing department has allocated R22,5-million to subsidise elderly and disabled rates defaulters who cannot afford to pay their monthly bills, Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng announced yesterday.

The announcement comes after the department received a R1,3-billion budget for 1997/8. Mofokeng said the province received such a large sum because it was delivering more

houses than other provinces.

He said the subsidy would enable elderly and disabled people to stay in their homes, or help them to find alternative accommodation.

The province, which is the smallest but one of the most highly populated, has a delivery target of 243 000 houses - almost a quarter of the 1 million houses the ANC has planned to build by 1999.

Gauteng is leading in delivery and has already built

about 35 000 houses.

It has also been successful at developing sites and installing

Gauteng leads delivery race, with 35 000 houses built

infrastructure ahead of the building of houses.

About 85 000 stands have

been serviced with water, electricity and roads since the 1994 election.

Mofokeng said this year's budget would be spread across several projects, some of which did not include the actual building of houses, but were associated with housing.

Some of the projects planned for this year include:

- The transfer of houses, and open township registers, for informal settlements. The province has so far transferred

6 950 state-owned houses to the occupants. About R37-million has been allocated for the transfer.

■ The upgrading of 14 hostels, for which a sum of R119,7-million has been set aside.

■ The opening of five housing-support centres through which individuals will be assisted to build their own houses. About R9-million has been set aside.

■ The building of 6 800 houses at a cost of about R59-million on some of the serviced sites.

Star 15/8/97 (1a7)

Sanco rides popularity wave as

Nomavenda Mathiane

THE protests and violence which accompanied electricity cuts in Kwa-Thema this month are nothing new in this area outside Springs, with conflict starting between residents and the local council soon after Tornado Section was built in 1952.

Tornado residents came from Payneville township — east of Springs — after it was destroyed by a tornado in 1950. Pensioner Elias Nkosi said when they moved into their houses, the council told them they could not buy the houses because they were "sub-economic" and council property. However, in the late 1970s they were told to pay a levy of R14 towards the installation of electricity. Cables were installed but by the time the council moved in with reticulation some

residents had already paid private companies to wire their homes.

Residents, however, continued paying for the cables and this was reflected in their rent payment slips. By the time Kwa-Thema joined the national rent boycott in the mid-1980s, Tornado residents were expected to pay R19,25 towards the "electricity master plan" over and above their monthly electricity consumption.

The cycle of nonpayment took a new turn last week with the Springs local council clamping down on residents of Tornado and Overline sections who were in arrears with their service payments.

Many residents owed as much as R8 000 when the council cut off the electricity and dug up cables. Some residents resorted to buying cables and illegally reconnecting their electricity supply.

Residents believe the council had no right to remove the cables as they had paid for them. They said there were numerous ways of cutting off electricity without removing the cables.

Residents were reluctant to give details about where they bought the cables and who reconnected the electricity. Some said they paid "comrades" R50 for the cables, others said they paid R19 a metre.

However, this course of action also had its problems with the workmanship being of a poor standard.

Some residents said they feared that they might be electrocuted because the wiring had not been properly earthed.

Although most trenches where cables were dug up in Tornado and Overline sections have been covered up, mounds of

earth in bear test power sur Torna African porters, cally tary were "old Kwa- isation Gabotlan Gauteng Shiceka about the Makg. He said had begun the pov mentione

Study w

Olympic

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Government has met certain preconditions and implement recommendations such as greater private-sector involvement in Cape Town is to host an affordable and beneficial Olympic Games in 2004, search released yesterday says.

The independent environmental impact study, commissioned by Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Committee, warns that the games could entail macroeconomic risks and cause government a long-term net loss.

"This risk is associated with a likely than-expected increase in gross domestic product (GDP), which could result in government revenue generated by the games not being sufficient to offset the government's capital expenditure for the period 1997-2006."

If the recommendations were implemented, "the financial burden on the public sector could become unacceptably high, which would undermine the government's ability to meet its construction and development programme, and growth, employment and redistribution (Gear) objectives."

The report also warns that games could become a divisive issue if they are not truly developmental, if the organisers fail to communicate their developmental goals.

The report was commissioned to assess the long-term social, economic and environmental impact of preparing for and hosting the games, and to identify specific proposals in the bid plan which needed to be reconsidered.

SA will know on September whether Cape Town will host the 2004 Olympic Games. Bid planning and environmental impact studies were completed by director Peter de Tolly said it was the first time...



Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka in Kwa-Thema working on electricity cables

Gauteng's share of housing fund grows

Lukanyo Mnyanda

ED 15/18/97 (123)

GAUTENG had increased its slice of the national housing fund's allocation to provinces for the 1997/98 financial year to 30%, receiving R1,3bn — more than double its closest rival, KwaZulu-Natal, housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

The increase in Gauteng's share, from 24,3% last year, was in recognition of the province's leading role in the provision of housing, he said. It had the most successful rate in the country, with about 71 000 houses already built or under construction.

Gauteng was confident of meeting its target of 250 000 houses by the turn of the century, Mofokeng said.

"The rationale behind this was that budget allocations should be made on the basis of taking into account past performances in terms of housing delivery. The more a province delivers, the larger the slice of the national housing fund it will get."

Mofokeng also called on the private sector, local authorities and communities to take responsibility for delays in housing delivery, instead of blaming central government. Lack of performance by the private sector and local authorities' inability to make decisions on projects had a negative impact on delivery.

"The department is reviewing a number of projects with a view to cancelling because of nonperformance by the private sector," he said. A number of projects had been de-

layed because local councillors failed to agree among themselves on necessary resolutions.

"Differences within communities have made social contracts a process of unending negotiations," he said.

Projects to be targeted in terms of the new national housing fund allocations included R37,7m for the transfer of houses and the opening of township registers in informal settlements.

The department would also spend R119,7m upgrading 14 hostels and R15m to kick-start priority projects submitted by developers.

Mofokeng said that a number of developers had submitted about 40 projects, valued at about R2,2bn, but the provincial government was unlikely to fund all the projects due to a shortage of funds.

"In many cases these applications do not meet the priorities as determined by the land development objectives which were prepared by local authorities," he said.

Almost R10m had been allocated for housing support centres to assist individuals build their own houses.

The department would sign a memorandum of understanding with building materials suppliers to deliver materials to three pilot projects at competitive prices — a R59,5m investment which should deliver about 6 800 units.

Mofokeng said Gauteng would also introduce a R22,5m relocation subsidy to assist elderly and disabled people who had defaulted on their payments.



Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng unveils the province's share of the national housing fund's allocation for housing delivery in Johannesburg. Picture: TYRONE ARTHUR

N BOARD

Star 16/8/97 Police stoned, shot at in cutoff protest

Police yesterday retaliated with rubber bullets, teargas and shock grenades when about 500 protesting residents pelted the Eersterus, Pretoria, police station with rocks and bottles.

Police spokesman Inspector Gideon Thessner said one policeman was injured when a rock struck him on the head.

Several shots were fired at police from the crowd

The group, protesting against the cutting of electricity supplies of resi-

dents who have not paid for their services, earlier blocked the two main entrances into Eersterus by placing burning tyres in the streets

Minibus taxis were pulled off, cars damaged, and commuters assaulted and prevented from going to work

Two protesters were arrested

After peacefully picketing the Eersterus civic centre, the group marched on the police station to demand the release of the two people arrested, and the trouble began - Sapa

(127)

DAY 3

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Sanco calls for Tembisa stayaway

(127)

sowetan 18/8/97
Civic organisation says residents do not want pre-paid electricity meters

By Steve Moti

THOUSANDS of Tembisa residents near Kempton Park have been urged to heed a voluntary stayaway organised by the local South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) today. The stayaway is in solidarity with about 26 residents of Hospital View who were arrested three weeks ago while protesting against the installation of pre-paid electricity meters. Sanco general secretary Mr Mandla Gumede said the stayaway was intended to register the community's unhappiness at the forced installation of the metering system. The meters have been a source of dispute between the residents and the African National Congress-led Kempton Park Tembisa metropolitan local council since March. Gumede said the stayaway would

be preceded by two marches, one to the offices of the town council and the other to the local police station.

He said a memorandum calling for a moratorium on further installation of the meters would be submitted to the council.

Hospital View has been tense since the installation of these meters.

The situation became unbearable about four weeks ago when the community had a confrontation with the police, army, reservists, traffic police and a security company.

Dogs were unleashed on the protesters who included Sanco branch chairman Mr Mlungisi Majola.

Gumede said the stayaway had the blessing of all relevant stakeholders, including members of the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) and the Pan Africanist Students Organisation (Paso) in the area.

Residents heed call for stayaway

South African 19/8/97 (127)
Angry Tembisa township dwellers call for
the resignation of Shiceka and councillors

By Dan Fuphe

MORE than 8 000 irate residents of Tembisa, near Kempton Park, yesterday, heeded a call for a voluntary stayaway and marched on the local council offices demanding the immediate removal of all pre-paid meters installed in Hospital View

The march was led by several local and national South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) officials and members of the Tembisa Ministers Fraternity Forum

The otherwise disciplined march was only marred by the shooting of Mr Sello Malisole (29)

He was allegedly shot by council police using rubber bullets

Two elderly residents were arrested on charges of damaging meters

Malisole, who was shot twice in the left leg, told reporters that the attack was unprovoked

Placards denouncing local councillors and calling the MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka a "coward" were carried by a number of demonstrators

Shiceka had apparently earned the wrath of the residents for his insistence that punitive action be taken against rent defaulters

Addressing the residents, Sanco local chairman Mr Mphori Mosomane disparaged the Kempton Park Tembisa Local Council and accused the council of being intransigent and of causing the impasse which resulted in the stayaway

Sanco national deputy secretary Mr Toenka Matila received thunderous applause when he called for Shiceka's resignation

"We will not stop until Sicelo Shiceka has resigned. As a community, we must isolate from our society those councillors, police and traffic officers who work against us

"If they shoot you, you must shoot back," Matila told the cheering crowd

Councillor Alpheus Makadi said that he was saddened by what he called the unprovoked attack on residents by council policemen

Sanco and the community accused the council and Shiceka of threatening to cut off the supply of water and electricity to households and of imposing the pre-paid metering system on residents

'More support' for Masakhane

ET (BR) 19/8/97 (127)
Johannesburg — Increasing numbers of South Africans were supporting the Masakhane campaign and paying for municipal services, Valli Moosa, the minister of constitutional development, said yesterday

He said it was essential that the country united in support of the activities planned for the Masakhane national focus week,

which runs from September 1 to 7. Moosa said the campaign was improving the ability of local governments to deliver services.

A spokesman for Moosa's ministry said the perception that the campaign was only relevant to the black population had to change. The involvement of everyone, was essential to its success — Mpho Mantjui

Poor must not be asked to pay for 'power to the people'

As the success of the Gauteng electricity disconnection campaign is trumpeted, Helen Meintjes questions whether the strategy is fair

BD 19/8/97

THAT local government is in dire financial straits is certain. Whether flogging the poor is an acceptable, or for that matter effective, route to edging back into the black is less so.

The headline process of electricity disconnection being conducted by Gauteng's 52 local authorities plans to plunge all debtors into immediate darkness. Pay up now, they demand, or lighting up will require a scratch of a match, not the flick of a switch. Pay up whether you are the owner of a smart home and luxury cars, or a cash-strapped shack dweller.

The punishment for nonpayment seems to be meted out on the basis of the questionable assumption that any household in arrears must be trying to freeload by refusing to pay for services. The cutoffs fail to consider the practical problems that poor households face in organising and budgeting for survival.

The amassed debt of R3bn does, of course, create a desperate situation for Gauteng local authorities. But this does not justify their bundling together of all defaulting businesses, hospitals, industries, wealthy households and the real poor, as culprits of the same crime. It muddies the point. It suggests that for each of these categories, not paying for services is a case of consciously being against the Masakhane campaign.

Take Joyce, a self-employed Sowetan mother, for example. "Where was I to get the money to pay last month?" she said. "The children's school was demanding money, and I am still owing on Strive (a small business loan). The interest is getting bigger and bigger." Not paying her electricity bill for a month or two was part of a tricky financial balancing act, an

economic fire-fighting exercise, rather than an attempt to get power free. Joyce is embarrassed to piggyback on government funds. However, she is faced with tough constraints in covering the barest costs of her family's living.

Joyce's struggles are aggravated by the manner in which her electricity is metered. She, along with a majority of other households in Gauteng, has a credit meter nailed to an outside wall of her matchbox home. Unlike prepayment meters, these are tricky to monitor, making electricity expenditure difficult to control. The bills slotted into post boxes and under back doors each month-end are often way over the limits of poor households' affordability. Giant arrears accumulate as people pay only amounts they can afford. Debts of R2 000 and more a household are not uncommon.

Credit meters have further (dis)advantages. They taunt. They tempt. They dangle the proverbial carrot. With these, electricity is available without upfront cash. At the flip of a switch, living can be safer, warmer and brighter. To expect poor people to use only as much as they can afford when a degree of comfort is so readily available, is flagrantly unfair. As one shivering user exclaimed at a suggestion that she would save money by unplugging her inherited bar heater, "What warmth is a plug-hole away, and the cheaper alternatives (paraffin or coal heating) are unpleasant and in some cases unsafe, it is hardly surprising consumers opt for the former."

In areas where prepayment meters have been introduced,



Switching off power is it flogging the poor?

Picture: TYRONE ARTHUR

higher costs are paid a unit of electricity than where it is credit metered. The higher tariff is instituted in order to cover the costs of the prepayment infrastructure. However, there is no promise of reduced tariffs once this is achieved.

Local authorities in Gauteng claim to have payment facilities which accommodate the poor and unemployed. Houses will not be disconnected if users apply for

payment "arrangements". The nature and flexibility of these vary from one authority to the next, but the minimum down-payment required seems to be 35% of the total debt. Some councils peg it as high as 75%. Users who cannot cough up the cash on the spot are disconnected. Where theft of electricity through illegal connections, underground cables

are being dug up and cut Johannesburg's metro electricity helpline, for example, reports that households owing less than R1 500 "are safe for the moment (but only for the moment)". Higher arrears, they say, require immediate payment of at least 50% of the amount. For a minimum of R750, then, plus a legally binding commitment to paying the rest in regular instalments, targeted

debtors are safe. Fees for reconnection shoot up as high as R350 (in instances of cut wires) to be paid with the 50% of the debt that could not be gleaned in the first place. For many poor households, then, being cut off now is likely to mean exiting electricity usage for good.

The successes reported by authorities in their "pay up or lights off" campaign should be seen for the injustice they sanction threats of this kind result in furies of payment, but only from those who always had the means to pay. In other words, these measures absolve the real culprits — those who have been freeloading — while unfairly punishing the innocent those like Joyce, who genuinely cannot afford to pay.

The problem of nonpayment for electricity needs to be considered as a conglomerate of different but integrated factors, and not merely as an attempt by all users to procure free electricity. It is unlikely that a purely punitive approach to nonpayment will solve the problem — for authorities or users — no matter how effectively policed.

The strategy of disconnection has a role to play, but it cannot in fairness be uniformly applied. For until electricity is supplied in a controllable form, providers cannot expect poorer customers to use only as much as they can afford.

Expecting low-income users to pay higher prices for mountable prepaid electricity is equally inequitable. If government is to live out its promise of electricity as a right for all, it should stop treating access as a privilege.

Helen Meintjes is a researcher at the Centre for Policy Studies

Residents
refuse to pay
for damage

The South African National Civic Organisation said yesterday its members in Thembisa would not pay for the damage done to pre-paid meter systems.

About 2 000 display units (part of the new pre-paid meter system) have been illegally removed from the houses and damaged

Henriette Weeseman, spokesman for the Kempton Park/Thembisa Metropolitan Local Council, estimated the damage at R13-million.

She said residents would have to pay for the replacement of the damaged display units.

About 60 residents, who were among 2 000 protesters who marched to the civic centre, were arrested on Monday for removing the units and damaging them

The arrested residents face charges including theft of council property, possession of stolen property and tampering with council property

Sanco branch secretary Mandla Gumede said: "It is wishful thinking on the part of the council if they believe our people will pay for the damaged display units. In the first place, those things were installed in our homes without our consent"

— Staff Reporter.

Star 20/8/97

(127)

Eskom bills tenants with no electricity

Star 20/8/97

(1997)

Schools and houses which have never been electrified are receiving huge bills as complaints are ignored

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE
City Desk

Several households and two schools in Dube Village, Soweto, are receiving astronomical monthly bills from Eskom, but their only sources of light are candles and they use paraffin and coal stoves to cook.

The houses have never been electrified, yet tenants receive monthly bills amounting to thousands of rands.

This occurred even after lodging a complaint with Eskom to rectify the situation.

The Star is in possession of a letter from Cosmos Morudu of Eskom's offices in Klipspruit, dated May 7 1997, responding to various issues including a concern about houses without electricity which are receiving statements.

In the letter, Morudu requests residents to supply Eskom with statements of specific houses so that the matter can be addressed.

Mzikaise Kubheka, deputy chairman of Dube Youth Alive Block Committee, said yesterday that Belle and Sholomane Primary Schools and several households were being charged for electricity consumption but were not electrified.

Efforts to have the mistakes rectified proved fruitless. Kubheka said, because Eskom maintained that people were being billed for the electricity they had consumed.

According to Eskom's records, the owner of house number 2143, Johannes Ndllovu, is in arrears of R17 000. In February 1996, Ndllovu owed Eskom R8 800 and this has since increased.

Zanele Kela, Eskom senior service clerk in Klipspruit, confirmed that Ndllovu owes Eskom R17 000.

She said that in 1996 Ndllovu was billed R479 a month, and R529 monthly this year.

She said the account was created in December 1995 and Ndllovu's bill was based on esti-

mations because a meter had not yet been installed.

Late yesterday, Eskom's communications manager Angie Dubbini acknowledged that Eskom was not supplying Ndllovu with electricity.

"We don't supply stand number 2143 with electricity. When we (Eskom) took over from the council in 1995, we assumed that they were also consuming electricity. It could have been an administration problem," she said.

Dubbini said there would be an in-depth investigation into the situation, adding that the problem would be rectified.

■ Pensioners marched on the offices of the Soweto branch of the South African National Civic Association at Ipelegeng Community Centre yesterday to hand in a memorandum demanding that some of the clauses in the debt agreement be scrapped because they put ratepayers in a tight corner if they could not afford to pay their bills.



Powerless . . . Sthembile Mkheleni, who lives in Dube Village, Soweto, boils water on a coal stove to make tea because the house has no electricity.

Deborah Fine

WHILE the Pretoria city council conceded that it had discriminated against white ratepayers by allowing black ratepayers to pay a flat rate for services last year, the discrimination had not been unconstitutional because it had been justified by the circumstances, advocate Wim Trengrove SC said yesterday.

He was presenting argument for the council in an appeal to the Constitutional Court to overturn a ruling by a full bench of the Pretoria High Court earlier this year that said the council's actions had been in conflict with the constitution.

When Pretoria ratepayer Johan Walker was ordered by the Pretoria Magistrates' Court to pay the council more than R4 700 in outstanding municipal payments, he appealed to the High Court.

Discrimination 'justified by situation'

He argued that he was entitled to pay a flat rate for water and electricity because residents in Pretoria's black townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi were allowed to pay flat rates, even where they had meters to measure their actual services consumption.

Moreover, the council had agreed not to take legal action against payment defaulters in black areas, but had strictly carried out credit control measures in white suburbs.

The court found the council had acted in breach of the anti-discrimination clause in the constitution.

Trengrove said the council had been faced with the challenge of reversing a culture of nonpayment in the townships.

It had decided to start charging consumption-related tariffs in the townships only once meters had been installed for all residents, because it felt that people might resist the installation of meters when they realised they were paying more than nonmetered homes. Credit control measures had been eased to allow the council time to negotiate with communities.

Although this had meant a difference in the treatment of white and black ratepayers, the dignity of white ratepayers had not been impaired because they were merely being "compelled" to pay for services they were legally obliged to pay for, Trengrove said.

Advocate Eberhardt Bertels-

mann SC, appearing for Walker, said the discrimination was unfair because it had not only been carried out for economic reasons, but also because the council had lacked the "political will" to speed up the installation of meters and carry out the politically unpopular task of credit control action against nonpayers. The council had also tried to "hide" its actions from white ratepayers.

Advocate Gilbert Marcus, representing the National Electricity Regulator, which had intervened in the case as an interested party, said his client had been concerned about references in the High Court to the cross-subsidisation of services. He said that cross-subsidisation was integral to the costing of electricity.

Cash flowing in, but non-payment culture still too strong

(127) 21/8/97

Shaw 21/8/97

By Cecilia Russell
City Reporter

While Gauteng province has recorded big successes with its "stick" approach to credit control -

with R500-million in arrears paid up in the first two weeks - careful management is needed to break a habit of non-payment built up over a generation

Local government MEC Sicele Shiceka estimates that "at least a handful" of local authorities in Gauteng are on the brink of financial disaster. With an arrears bill hovering around the R4-billion mark, poor payment habits from businesses, government departments and individual consumers contributes to the fiscal headache

Local authorities are required to retain their financial independence from central government and intergovernmental grants are set to shrink in the future.

Democratically elected national, provincial and local governments, a foundation of service rendering and a Masakhane campaign means the call for non-payment for rates and services has lost its moral legitimacy.

There has been some evidence in recent weeks that the non-payment culture is on the wane, but much of this has been due to "harsh" and consistent credit control procedures

Eskom's spokesman Peter Adams said while non-payment was still the major problem, the parastatal had evi-

dence showing "the tides had turned" and there had been a notable response to Eskom's credit control measures, especially in Soweto

He said Eskom's deficit nationally had decreased since the beginning of the year from about R1,4-billion to R1,1-billion.

Small gains have also been experienced in local authorities. But the question remains why, nearly two years since the local elections, is the problem still not resolved?

Consumers, who pay, see the offenders as freeloaders who are benefiting from the subsidisation of law-abiding citizens who faithfully keep the coffers tinkling. While there may be some

truth in the stereotypes, recent research has shown that a complex interplay of factors is affecting people's ability to pay and their willingness to pay

Research by Helen Meintjes and Caroline White for the Centre for Policy Studies has shown that a deep suspicion of Eskom as a service provider developed during the electrification of Soweto. The community was forced to pay a levy to recoup the cost of the infrastructure

The suspicion was reinforced over the years by poor customer care practices and a "dearth of accessible information" about electricity usage

A lack of stigma attached to non-payers and accumulated arrears added to the consumers' troubles. Limited budgets, stretched to capacity,

needed to be stretched again to pay off accumulated arrears

The unfulfilled expectation that things could be better, services more effective has also reinforced the non-payment syndrome.

"Why should I pay when the street outside is not paved, there are no street lights, crime is rife and the world is grim", is a perception which emerges often in the research literature

Research done by Rand Water into attitudes highlights this

Rand Water's marketing services manager Meggie Ramasingh said consumers tend to lump all services together, although the quality of water received in a household may be considered to be good, because mail is not delivered efficiently, the roads are not

paved and there is a poor public transport service, there is a reluctance to pay

The "radical democracy" concept, which closely allies payment with development, as practised in Ivory Park, has had a dramatic impact on payment levels which increased from just 3% to 68% in a year

But Ramasingh has reservations about whether this model can be used in areas where people are already experiencing a reasonable level of service.

"People should start paying because it is their responsibility, not because they have been promised something," she said

Inefficiencies, consumers not getting their accounts and, when they do, they are incomprensible to people with low levels of literacy, also need to be addressed

The Fromeman Commission of Inquiry into the violence in Eldorado Park earlier this year recommended that bills be simplified and information presented in an accessible way. Paypoints far from home and only open during office hours compound the problem

Ramasingh welcomed recent changes which enabled people to pay at shopping centres and she predicts that electronic payments will make a big difference as they gain popularity

But if one myth has been debunked during the past month it is that the problem is confined to the township dweller

128 97
For comfort

Residents refuse (107) 'toilet homes'

Sowetan 21/8/97
By Joshua Raboroko

HOUSES built by a company alleged to have links with the National Party are standing empty in Sebokeng because of opposition by groups aligned to the African National Congress

Civic organisations and hundreds of home-seekers who live in shacks have described the low-cost homes as "National Party toilets" after clashes in which two people lost their lives

National Party chairman of the Vaal housing forum Mr Daniel Maluleka (45) who was also a home-seeker was shot and killed during rivalry over the controversial housing complex

The houses - built by Vesco, a Section 21 company (not for gain), came under the spotlight when it was discovered that the land had been bought dirt-cheap from the Transvaal Provincial Administration in 1991

More than 1 000, mostly black homeseekers in the Vaal Triangle, have stubbornly refused to occupy the houses "because they are too small, and have no yards and no electricity"

It is possible the company will earn R56 million from this project

The project was approved by the Government of National Unity and started in 1994, but the houses are vacant as a result of vilification and political bickering in the area

Homeseekers told *Sowetan* that "Vesco had aimed to make huge profits after receiving R15 000 a unit from the government's housing subsidy

Said Mrs Martha Buthelezi "The houses are worse than the apartheid match-boxes. The rooms have no walls and there is no privacy. I prefer to stay in my big shack than to be crammed with my family in those toilets"

Iscor subsidiary

Vesco, a subsidiary of the giant Iscor, ventured into the low-cost housing market about two years ago

It has built homes for Iscor employees and for some low-income earners

Vesco manager Mr Konnie Nel is a member of the NP. The National Party formed the Homeless People's Forum, which is now accused of promoting the construction of the "NP-toilets"

Nel said most of the houses had been extended and residents were happy. However, those who did not occupy their homes would forfeit them

He said the company intended to build more homes as part of its social responsibility programme

Several members of the forum who supported the low-cost housing project in Zone 20, Sebokeng and Tshepiso, near Sharpeville, told *Sowetan* that they were intimidated by members of the warring factions



Saved from the hammer: The deputy speaker has settled her R121 000 bond debt.
PHOTOGRAPH: KIM DE WEES

Baleka pays up in time (127)

M+G 22-28/8/97
Mail & Guardian reporter

Only three days before the sheriff's office was due to swoop and auction off her home in Berea, Johannesburg, Deputy Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgotsitsile this week settled her R121 000 bond debt.

The last minute intervention saved her from further embarrassment in the same week that she was finally granted a reprieve from her driver's licence "scandal".

Western Cape Attorney General Frank Khan had studied the police fraud investigation into Mbete-Kgotsitsile's alleged attempts to insert a false driver's licence into her identity book, and exonerated her completely from any criminal liability.

But, still hanging over the divorced mother of five, was the threat that she could lose her three-bedroomed flat, which is occupied by some of her children.

It had been attached by Nedcor Bank after she failed to make bond payments for several months. An auction had been scheduled for Thursday, but an urgent fax from her bank's lawyers on Monday requested that the sale be put on hold. Mbete-Kgotsitsile had paid her arrears in full.

This financial hiccup appears to support the deputy speaker's arguments since 1994, that there is no gravy train in Parliament — at least not for her.

Mbete-Kgotsitsile has a teenaged son who requires expensive hospital care. She is believed to earn in the region of R203 400 per year compared with the R143 750 average for other MPs.

She is not the only member of Parliament to have run into trouble with a bank for bond payments. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was served with a judgment by a bank when her bond arrears topped R500 000 in 1995.

Many other politicians are also finding it difficult to fund their dual residencies in Cape Town and Pretoria or Johannesburg. This is believed to be one of the reasons why many are supporting the proposal to have Parliament based in one city instead of two.

Mbete-Kgotsitsile was not available for comment.

Judging the white man's jury

It's a compliment to pay for blacks' upliftment, advocate tells the Constitutional Court

CARMEL RICKARD

ST 24/8/97

(127)

ONE of the hottest issues in local politics — whether the Constitution would approve the controversial practice of making white residents cross-subsidise the electricity and water costs of black townships — was debated in the Constitutional Court this week.

The Pretoria city council had appealed to the court against a decision by the Pretoria High Court, which held that it had acted unconstitutionally by maintaining a dual system for residents — a metered system for formerly white suburbs and a flat-rate system for the townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi.

The High Court said that the dual system, in operation in the mid-90s when the new council took over the administration of the city, and which was continued even after meters were installed in the townships, amounted to cross-subsidisation and unfair discrimination.

However, Wim Trengove SC, the council's legal representative, told the Constitutional Court that even though white residents might not realise it, it was a "compliment" to them that they were asked to help redress the imbalances of the past.

Trengove said the council's decision to continue charging all Atteridgeville and Mamelodi residents a flat rate, even after meters were installed, had been a temporary measure.

If the system had been scrapped immediately after the meters were installed, it could have prolonged the "boycott culture". He argued that even if the difference between the systems amounted to cross-subsidisation — which he disputed — it was justified.

In the past, the quality of service in the white areas had been far better than in the townships. In the transition phase, the white group was "asked to support their indigent brethren".

The president of the court, Judge Arthur Chaskalson, interjected at this point with a reference to the compulsory nature of the service charges, and said that the white residents were "hardly asked" to assist.

Judge Chaskalson then turned to the fact that the council had taken court action against white residents who fell into arrears, but had taken no legal steps against black debtors. He asked Trengove if it would not be an infringement of someone's dignity to say to them "If you do not pay your neighbour does not pay he will not be sued".

Trengove said white residents were merely "kept more strictly to the rules" so that people in the black townships could be helped. There had been relative chaos in the black townships and some burden to put matters to rights had to be shouldered by the white community.

As the more affluent group they had been told "We will keep you to your obligations but we will be more lenient on your more indigent brethren". Trengove added "It was a strategy to facilitate the transition from the old to the new".

Several of the judges expressed concern about the "dishonesty" of the council. They referred to the finding by the High Court that the council had misled residents about whether people in the black and white areas were paying under the same system.

The council's deception was also strongly stressed by Johan Walker, a resident of the formerly white suburb of Constantia Park. Walker had refused to pay any

more for his services than the flat rate charged in the black townships. As a result he ran up an unpaid bill of over R5 000 and the council took him to court to force payment.



CHASKALSON

Asked if it would not be an infringement of someone's dignity to say to them: 'If you do not pay you will be sued, but if your neighbour does not pay he will not be sued'?

TRENGOVE

Even though white residents might not realise it, it was a 'compliment' to them that they were asked to help redress the imbalances of the past



possible

Judge Kate O'Regan and other judges then took up an aspect of the High Court's decision which worried them.

That court, had ruled that Walker legitimately owed the money, but that the court would only order him to pay up once the council had got its house in order and removed practices which discriminated unfairly.

Judge Chaskalson said if it took a year for the council to correct the situation, it could mean that the council would be under-funded for all that time while protesters stopped paying.

Judge O'Regan expressed concern about the message of approval which the High Court's decision might send to people who did not pay their municipal services accounts.

Bertelsmann said that if the High Court decision was overturned, it would send a message to local authorities that they need not observe the fundamental rights in the Constitution or practise honesty and straightforwardness in relation to their residents, and that their deception of the residents did not matter.

Judgment in the case was reserved.

crimination (*skuldskrymnis*) and tried to keep this truth from those discriminated against by misleading them in its official newsletters.

He said that when the council decided to continue the flat-rate system even after meters were installed and not to take action against black residents who did not pay, they were really trying to protect "their official green cushions and their votes".

Both a metered system and taking defaulters to court would be "politically dangerous", he said, and the council decided to hold off such an unpopular step for as long as possible.

Council's 'new boy on the block' tackles culture of nonpayment

BUSINESSSES and government departments owe more money to the Johannesburg metro council than tardy payers in the townships or rates boycotters in Sandton.

This emerged as the city cracked up its inadequate credit-control machinery in preparation for this month's crackdown on electricity, water and gas defaulters.

When prominent businesses owing hundreds of thousands of rand were named, some of the information proved wrong, to the embarrassment of the council. But, with consumers owing R1,7bn out of a total council debt of R3bn, everyone is being targeted. And, as the council promises to disconnect 2,000 electricity defaulters a day until a culture of non-payment is reversed, the man suddenly in the limelight is council spokesman Keith Peacock.

It is Peacock who has been doing the explaining, setting out council policy on disconnections and providing details of the money owed and the money suddenly coming in as consumers realise the council is serious about cutting off long-term nonpayers.

His real title is communications officer for the accelerated credit control task team, which is headed by Geoff O'Connell of the Western council. This temporary task force is more than a tempo-

Keith Peacock, the man at the forefront of the Johannesburg metropolitan council's crackdown on payment defaulters, is interviewed by senior assistant editor Michael Acott

BD 26/8/97

rary debt-collection team. Consisting of officials from the four councils in greater Johannesburg plus the metro council, it has been set up to encourage payment by due date and to make suggestions on improving billing and debtor information systems to ensure the operation is sustained.

Peacock, spokesman for the eastern council which includes Sandton, was chosen by the communications officers of the other councils for secondment to the task team. He joined a few days before the promised electricity cut-offs began on August 5 and has hardly been out of the news in the Johannesburg area since then.

He says the involvement of a spokesman right from the start is part of the changing recognition, in both the public and private sectors, of the need to keep the public informed.

"Too often public relations is bolted on as an afterthought." Though he is an able communicator, public relations was not where Peacock started out. An English-

(127)

man who has been in SA since 1986, he trained as a telecommunications engineer. He has a degree in economics, studied industrial relations and labour law for an MBA and has a post-graduate diploma in education.

Peacock says the task team hopes to finish its work within three months, but that the deadline is tentative.

He denies that the payments crackdown has only come because Johannesburg is broke. It is part of the national Masakhane campaign, he says, and as such is focused on improved payments linked to improved services and upgraded billing systems.

It has also been more low key than some near-by Gauteng municipalities, where electricity supply cables have been uprooted and cut to prevent illegal reconnection. Nevertheless, those scenes have probably helped to concentrate the minds of Johannesburg defaulters.

Peacock stresses, as he has since the start of the campaign, that those in real need will not have their services disconnected. Nor will defaulters who come



Peacock believes in keeping the public informed

forward and make arrangements to pay off their debt to the council.

And, while he admits that the municipal administration is not yet a model of excellence, he resists the suggestion that poor people in the townships are being made to suffer now because of the council's inadequate billing and information systems.

That has largely been overcome, he maintains, albeit recently, and excuses that accounts were inaccurate or did not arrive are not acceptable. Consumers, including those in the townships, frequently have store cards and credit cards; to protect their credit record they make enquiries if those accounts do not arrive, Peacock says, and they are expected to do the same with municipal accounts.

The campaign is aimed at ending a situation where domestic municipal bills are unpaid or go to the bottom of the pile, and where businesses have used the council as a cheap extended credit facility by paying in 90 days or more.

Part of this is being achieved by stressing the link between payment and service delivery, by going continuously to keep the support of the communities concerned, and by making examples of all sectors of the community, including the wealthy, and businesses.

Encouraged by the positive response in the first two weeks, Peacock hopes the campaign will succeed in making nonpayment socially unacceptable.

Another part is making payment less easy to avoid. Credit controls are being upgraded; the aim is to ensure that the councils have not just a billing system but a management information system enabling analysis of problem areas.

Payment systems, too, need upgrading to enable far greater use of debt orders and standing orders. Then there is the improvement of service and services.

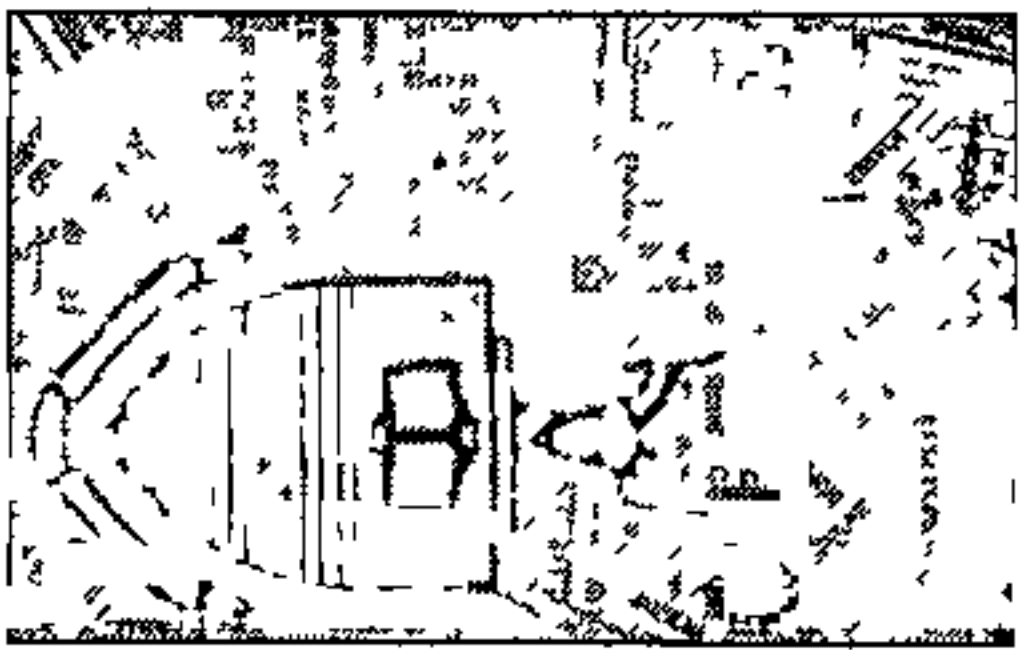
"We might be 20 years behind international best practices, but it will not take us 20 years to catch up. And a lot of the improvement can be achieved at relatively low cost."

It all needs to be less bureaucratic and more user-friendly, Peacock says; an emphasis on training and customer care will help council staff remember who pays their salaries.

Peacock describes himself as the new boy on the block. As Johannesburg cracks down on nonpayers, he is also the chief signalman in an operation which is sending messages in more than one direction

Getting a picture of Soweto

It's not all gloom but unemployment and poverty are huge problems, writes Alan Morris



In 1995, Danny Kekana, the then mayor of Soweto and now mayor of the Northern metropolitan substructure, found himself frustrated by the paucity of detailed information on the township. He approached his alma mater, the Department of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, to do a comprehensive survey of the area.

The survey was carried out this year and was done by dividing the area into six housing "domains" - council homes, private sector, backyard shacks, informal settlement, hostels and site-and-service. The council-housing sector was then divided into three domains, based on a combination of when the houses were built and where the tenants came from.

Within each housing domain, between 360 and 378 interviews were conducted and in total 2 947 households were surveyed. In this way an accurate picture of the average number of people in each dwelling was obtained.

Subsequently, using recent aerial photos, each structure in Soweto was counted and a total population figure ar-

rived at of 1 178 700. The 1991 census concluded that Soweto's population was 888 212. It is hoped that this study's finding will be confirmed by the latest census.

Most of Soweto's population live in council homes (601 500 or 51%). The next largest grouping are those resident in backyard structures (328 100, or 30%). The private sector accommodated 89 600 residents (8%), the various informal settlements 65 424 (6%) and the site-and-service schemes 44 400 (4%).

The population of Soweto is young. 48% are 25 or younger. An interesting feature of Soweto households is that 27% are headed by women. This figure rises to over 40% in council housing. The hostels are losing their male-only status - 23% of hostel residents are female.

Possibly the most disturbing finding is that unemployment in Soweto among young people, despite the fact that they are, in terms of formal education, the most educated grouping, has reached crisis proportions - about 74% of Soweto residents between the ages of 16 and 25 are unemployed. Overall, about 35% of

Soweto residents are unemployed.

Another distressing finding is that the household income of a large proportion of Soweto households is very low. In Soweto, generally regarded as the wealthiest township in South Africa, 37% of households earned less than R1 000 a month and about six in 10 households earned less than R1 500 a month.

Soweto is becoming a significantly stratified locality in terms of wealth. Whereas only 17% of households in the private sector reported household earnings of less than R1 500 a month, 90% of residents in informal settlements, 72% in hostels, 63% in backyard shacks, 66% of residents in site-and-service schemes and about 55% of residents in council homes reported having a household income below R1 500 a month.

Whereas only 8,5% of all households had a household income above R4 000 a month, 45% of private-sector households fell into this category.

It would appear that the stress ensuing from poverty and/or unemployment contributes to a high level of domestic violence. One in five married women reported that they were beaten by their husbands.

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On the health front there were also a couple of disturbing findings. About a quarter of respondents indicated that they did not know what Aids was - 38% of people with rural ties, a particularly vulnerable group, said they did not know what Aids was. A high proportion of respondents, 14%, knew someone with Aids. On a positive note almost all of the respondents who knew what Aids was, also knew how it was transmitted.

Although about 70% of residents said that crime in Soweto had increased over the last five years, only around 12% reported that they or their households had been victims of crime in Soweto in the past five years. Over half of those respondents who felt that crime had increased said that the main reasons for this were unemployment and poverty.

Another 22% said it was due to family disorganisation which, of course, is often related to unemployment and poverty. The survey's findings are not all gloom. Some very positive features emerged - it does seem *ubuntu* is alive and well in Soweto. The survey revealed a high level of social interaction and mu-

tual assistance among residents. Two out of every three residents reported that they had friends within walking distance and half said they had family within walking distance of their homes. These friends and family are visited regularly. Complementing this feature are strong neighbourly ties.

Remarkably, 69% of respondents said they had visited their neighbour in the past week and 62% said they had received help from or helped their immediate neighbour in the last month.

Most Sowetans identified strongly with their neighbourhood - 83% said their neighbourhood was pleasant or very pleasant, two-thirds said that they would recommend their neighbourhood to an acquaintance and only 15% of respondents said they intended to move out of Soweto in the next five years.

Although social cohesion appears strong, for many Sowetan residents, especially young people, the future looks bleak. There is a desperate need for investment in Soweto and, flowing from this, substantial job creation.

■ *Dr Alan Morris is senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand.*

Armed men sent to cut off electricity

(127)
BY ANNA COX

Sandton Bureau

STAN 28/8/97
An irate Waverley, Johannes-
burg, couple have expressed
anger and disgust after Eastern
council municipal staff came to
cut off their electricity accom-
panied by three men armed
with rifles.

To add insult to injury, the
Goldbergs had paid their
service account in full.

Joan Goldberg said the men
arrived and surrounded their
house, military style, with
their rifles ready. They banged
on her door and said they
had come to cut off the elec-
tricity.

"I went to fetch my receipts
to show them I had paid in full,
but they wouldn't even look at
them. They said they had
instructions not to negotiate
with people but simply to
disconnect. They would not
give me their names or names
of people I could phone to
clarify the matter," she said.

Goldberg then called her
private security company and
the police, and the men moved
down the road with their truck
but left one armed man on their
property.

A meter reader arrived,
coincidentally, at the same time
and she believes the men then
realised they had made a mis-
take. "Their behaviour was dis-
graceful and rude. We are law-
abiding citizens. It felt like we
were in the middle of a war
zone, not a residential area in
the suburbs," she said.

Eastern council communi-
cations officer Keith Peacock
said: "Cutoffs could lead to
dangerous situations. While we
don't want to have conflict with
residents, there is a need for
protection for our staff."

Council apologises over circulars

BD 28/8/99 (127)

Deborah Fine

THE Johannesburg eastern local council has apologised for sending out 16 000 incorrect circulars to Sandton residents who are in arrears with their rates payments

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed) has meanwhile claimed a victory, stating that the number of circulars issued indicated that the Sandton rates boycott was still in full swing, contrary to recent claims by the council that the boycott was beginning to end

Sanfed is an umbrella body representing various ratepayer organisations in the Sandton area which have deliberately withheld property assessment rates payments in protest against a 300% increase in the rates last year

Council communications officer Keith Peacock confirmed yesterday that the circulars represented 12% of the total ratepayers in the eastern council's area of jurisdiction

He said that the circulars had been sent to "a minority" of ratepayers in the Sandton area providing a rates arrears amount and offering the ratepayer the opportunity to pay off the arrears over a period of time.

It was discovered on Tuesday, however, that the amounts shown on the circulars reflected a lesser amount than the actual arrears. The errors were believed to have occurred as a result of a faulty computer program.

Apologising for any misunderstandings that might have been caused by the errors, Peacock said the council would send out correct circulars, which were also an acknowledgement of debt, by the end of next week.

He said, however, that the circulars were separate from ratepayers' normal monthly services accounts, which were "completely correct".

He also denied allegations that residents who wanted to take advantage of the offer to settle their rates arrears or make arrange-

ments to do so were being turned away.

Sanfed treasurer Brian Stolzenburg said yesterday that the 16 000 circulars indicated that "literally half" Sandton ratepayers were still withholding property rates payments in support of their demands.

He also said that the council had still not cut off the water or electricity of a single Sanfed member.

He claimed that this backed Sanfed's contention that the council was not legally entitled to cut off the services of people who were fully up to date with their services accounts but were in arrears with their property assessment rates.

Sanfed has threatened to take urgent High Court action "the moment" a member has his or her services cut off.

The council has not yet commented on Sanfed's contention.

Stolzenburg said the boycott would continue until the council agreed to reach a compromise with the ratepayers.

Hillbrow tenants conquer their own Everest

M+G 29/8 - 4/9/97 (127)

Swapna Prabhakaran

When the landlord of Navarone Court raised his tenants' rent to R339 a month in 1989, he pushed them too far. They decided it was time to push back, and began plans to buy the Hillbrow block of flats.

Eight years later, the building is theirs. Lyton Magwira, who represents the company which bought the building on behalf of all the tenants, says achieving this dream was not easy.

"The landlord tried all means to evict us. He sent a security company. He sent people who pretended they had bought the building from him. He tried taking us to court, but then he withdrew the case.

"But he didn't have a reason to evict us. We didn't refuse to pay rent. We just wanted to negotiate," says Magwira.

The landlord wanted nearly R1-million for the dilapidated four-storey building. The tenants talked him down to R277 000 cash and applied for a housing bond.

A development NGO called Cope Affordable Housing (Cope) stepped in to help in 1993, offering advice and management training to the tenants. "It was tough to get everyone organised, even in our building," Magwira says.

Miriam Mahlanyane, who has lived at Navarone Court since 1987, was scared when there was talk of buying the building. "I was happy, but I was also afraid about us running the building by ourselves," she said this week.

Magwira says "There was a time when we had to fight against the security guards, to fight with the police who were pointing guns at us. And the building was once nearly burnt down



Safe games: Navarone Court's children play with peace of mind. PHOTO: SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

It was during the day and even the police don't know what happened. That was in 1993, and we spent weeks sleeping outside, waiting for our building."

But through perseverance and co-operation the tenants managed to register themselves as a company called Everest Court Association. They plan to change the name of the building to Everest Court.

This April, their association was granted a government subsidy large enough to take the building off the landlord's hands. Now the tenants are on a rent-to-own scheme and changes are already evident.

Hillbrow has a reputation as an area of vice. At Navarone Court there used to be no security, "a shebeen on every floor" and the tenants had no way to stop strangers from walking in off the street into their homes.

Now they see their building as a haven of safety. "Everyone who enters the building must produce their identity. We have managed to close down the shebeens and we can even

control the overcrowding now, by ourselves," Magwira says.

A security guard patrols the foyer and the tenants' children happily play inside the new security gates of the building. "We know they're safe here."

This weekend, Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele will celebrate their success with them when she opens two social housing projects in the inner city — the other is Angus Mansions in Jeppe Street — which have been awarded institutional subsidies. The tenants are proud and excited about the visit.

Lybon Mpopo, also a tenant, says he's proud because "we own something in town. We had a very hard struggle, but we were united. We are the people of South Africa and we will show people how we go."

All the tenants have encouragement for other people who want to follow in their footsteps. "They must be brave enough to take this risk. They must be sure of what they're doing. It is a big risk," Magwira says.

THEMBA HADEBE



Home, sweet home ... Babazile Zwane (4), brother Tebugu (10) and their mother, Hlengiwe, finally have a place they can call home. They are among the first central Johannesburg residents who have received a government subsidy to buy the flats they live in.

Inner-city tenants to own their flats at last

BY BONKWE MHLANGENI
Star 29/8/97

Tenants of two buildings in central Johannesburg will now be home owners after years of struggling to buy the flats they were renting from landlords.

The tenants of Angus Mansions in Jeppe Street and Navarone Court in Esselen Street, Hillbrow, received a Government institutional subsidy scheme grant to buy the buildings. They are the second group in the city to benefit from the scheme which is given to people who earn less than R3 500 a month and who want to buy residential units as a group.

The first group to benefit from the subsidy was the Seven Buildings Project which received R6-million to buy seven buildings in the city.

Housing Minister Sankle Mthembu-Mahanyele will officially open the two blocks of flats tomorrow.

The transfer of the buildings to tenants serves as proof of the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council and inner city residents' efforts to rejuvenate the city and bring back pride through turning tenants into owners.

Court action looms over cutoff blunders

Star 29/8/97

(127)

Council officials facing several actions for damages
and intimidation following recent electricity short-circuits

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Johannesburg's Eastern council officials are facing several court actions for damages and for intimidation after recent cutoffs of electricity in the northern suburbs and Sandton.

A woman who works in a Bez Valley office block, Helen Edelstein, said municipal staff barged into her office with rifles this week and said they were there to cut off electricity. When she objected, a man pointed his rifle at her.

The police were called in and Edelstein was advised to lay charges of intimidation and of pointing a firearm.

It turned out that the landlord of the building had, in fact, paid the account in full.

"I still have nightmares about the incident," said Edel-

stein. "We were working when the door suddenly was pushed open and there were armed men all over the place. When I asked what was going on, one man pulled up his rifle and pointed it directly at me. I still shake when I think about it."

This follows another incident, reported in The Star yesterday, in which a Waverley couple, who had also paid their electricity account, were intimidated by council officials with rifles.

Eastern council communications officer Keith Peacock said it was normal procedure to send municipal police to protect staff carrying out the cutoffs because it could lead to dangerous situations.

There appear to have been several cutoffs of people who have paid their accounts. Sandton councillor Craig Stephens recently moved into a new

house in Athol but the previous tenant owed more than R7 000 in services. Stephens was in the process of sorting out the matter with the council when his electricity was cut off.

Some people who have had their electricity cut off despite paying their accounts are threatening to sue the council for damage to food in freezers.

Graham Meaker from Highlands North said he had paid his bill in full on August 9, the cheque was date-stamped by the council on August 12, yet he was cut off earlier this week.

"We lost over R2 000 worth of food in our fridge and freezer," he said. Armed men also arrived at his house to carry out the disconnection.

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers' help office spokesman, John Lambson, said this practice was blatant intimidation of peaceful ratepayers.

Jo'burg cutoffs continue despite accounts chaos

Star 29/8/97

(127)

Gauteng wants local authorities to scale down campaign next month, but Johannesburg takes tough line

By **CECILIA RUSSELL**
AND **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**

The Greater Johannesburg council is to forge ahead with its credit control clampdown - which includes electricity, gas and water cut-offs - despite a call by the Gauteng government to scale down cuts next month.

Johannesburg's tough approach comes in spite of administrative bungles which have seen thousands of ratepayers receiving incorrect bills.

Yesterday Gauteng local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka said local authorities would scale down the credit control next month to coincide with Masakhane Focus Week during the first week of September, which had been "dedicated to showing visible service-delivery".

He said Gauteng local authorities had collected more than R1-billion in arrears owed to them for rates and service charges.

With a quarter of the R3,7-billion arrears now in their pockets, most local authorities in the province will scale down the credit-control campaign next month.

But indications are that Johannesburg will continue with the cut-off campaign de-

spite the order from province.

"Our campaign is a low-key, long-term campaign and an integral part of Masakhane. We will be supporting Masakhane week and its associated activities, but we recognise that there can be no separation between service delivery and the development of the culture of payment," metro spokesman Keith Peacock said today.

Mogapodi Mokoena, strategic finance executive for the Northern council, said today the problems in the administration of the council would not change the cut-off policy.

"I have a responsibility to collect that which is legally owed to the council and where I am satisfied that a cut-off is justified, we will continue," Mokoena said.

Mokoena added that administrative problems were confined to the old Johannesburg area and did not affect Randburg or Soweto.

But in October, local authorities would resume the campaign and the mass service cut-offs that had characterised the past few weeks would resume.

Shiceka said the brief respite would give community organisations, which have vociferously criticised the cutoff campaign, a chance to consult with government.

It would also give those who

cannot afford to pay for services an opportunity to register with local authorities for subsidised rates and services.

But a Johannesburg council source told The Star the cutoff campaign was being put on ice to give the councils an opportunity to recover from the embarrassment of continuing the campaign while billing systems - especially those in the Northern council - were chaotic.

Shiceka admitted that "government is not innocent" and said incorrect accounts were inexcusable.

He told a press briefing it was a myth that black people owed the most.

"Whites and businesses owe the most, not Africans," he said. Of the about R700-million owed in Johannesburg's Southern council, which included Soweto, R600-million was owed by consumers in the city centre, Shiceka said.

In the past three weeks there had been 51 952 cutoffs in Pretoria, 8 129 in Alberton, 2 763 in Germiston, 1 771 in Krugersdorp, 1 601 in Springs, 1 100 in Lekoa-Vaal, 820 in Heidelberg, 551 in Benoni, 390 in Boksburg, 327 in Lethabong, 158 in Brakpan, 52 in Westonaria and 18 in Vereeniging.

► Court battle looms

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Millions to upgrade squatter camps into formal townships

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By TOMMY MAKOE

Star 30/8/97

Hundreds of Gauteng squatter camps are to benefit from a multimillion-rand provincial housing department programme to upgrade them to fully fledged townships.

This community-based programme, with a total budget of R35-million, is to be allocated to both the former Transvaal Provincial Administration informal settlements and other upgradable squatter camps, which mushroomed largely after 1990.

Gauteng director of land affairs Caren Engelbrecht said that before the 1994 general election, the now-defunct TPA had initiated a programme to formalise the informal settlements. The new provincial government is now implementing the long-promised plans as well as looking at more recently established squatter camps on both private and state land.

She said R6-million out of the total budget would be spent on the settlements identified before 1994. The remaining R29-million would be used to revamp nine other squatter camps that were not earmarked by the TPA for upgrading.

The provincial government has invited local authorities to apply for funding to upgrade informal settlements in their jurisdiction.

Already the Benoni Transitional Local Council has applied to upgrade four settlements in its area, and applications have also come from the Lekoa/Vaal, Boksburg, Khayalami and Thutuka local authorities.

Engelbrecht said the provincial government had identified 200 upgradable informal settlements.

"Formalising the other 200 upgradable squatter camps could take more than 10 years - this depends on the funding," she said.

"It is a long-term goal because the problem is that most of them were occupied without any formal planning. They have poor infrastructure and, besides, the legal process of formalising them is complex.

"Each site will cost between R1 200 and R1 600, which will be part of the subsidies for the upgrading of the sites. Because of budget constraints, our priority for now is low-cost areas," Engelbrecht explained.

Most of the provincial funding covered town-planning costs, surveying, transfer duties and the purchase of land.

Formalising

She said her department had completed all the paperwork for formalising Orange Farm, a squatter camp near Vanderbijlpark with 30 000 sites. Orange Farm will be declared a township next month.

The department is also investigating other former TPA squatter camps, including Zonk'iZizwe on the East Rand, Ivory Park and Rabie Ridge near Kempton Park, Doornkop in Soweto, Poortjie near Krugersdorp, two squatter camps in Rietfontein, and Soshanguve next to Pretoria.

"They will probably be fully formalised in the next six months," Engelbrecht said.

Jo'burg's southern council recovers millions in arrears

Deborah Fine

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802/9/97

THE greater Johannesburg southern local council had recovered more than R8m in municipal arrears last month by stepping up its credit control campaign against payments defaulters, senior council official Shaq Balton said yesterday

Balton, who is chairman of the council's budget and finance committee, said the council had collected a "hard cash" total of R28,6m in outstanding arrears payments between March and August. However, there was "still a long way to go" before optimal payment levels were reached.

The council was still facing total outstanding arrears of R566m, which increased to R758m if present outstanding payments were taken into account. The old Johannesburg southern suburbs and the central business district were responsible for R306m of the arrears, while the remainder of the south, including Soweto, accounted for R260m of arrears.

The R28,6m did not include instalments paid off in terms of financial arrangements with the council or voluntary payments.

During July, about 286 000 municipal bills had been issued, of which 111 000 had been paid in full, 45 000 had been partially paid and 130 000 had not been paid at all.

However, Balton said that he believed payment levels would improve "drastically" once the council had completed the installation and upgrading of water and electricity meters throughout the south and further intensified its credit-control campaign against defaulters. Payment would also increase as a result of visible service delivery and the "jacking up" of the council's communication strategies.

Between March and last month, the council issued 34 320 summonses involving more than R120m and carried out 5 183 electricity cuts. A further 10 765 summonses would be issued in coming months, while thousands of defaulters could face additional water and electricity cuts.

On a positive note, Balton said the council's payments strategy had resulted in a "steady" overall average payment level increase in the southern council's area of jurisdiction, from 82,1% in January to 83,1% in July.

Average payment levels in the old Johannesburg southern suburbs had increased from 89,5% in January to 90,6% in July, from 90,4% to 92,4% in the central business district, from 18,2% to 24% in Soweto and from 2,1% to 3,9% in the volatile Orange Farm informal settlement.

NEWS NATIONAL

Project to provide homes in CBD

By Joshua Raboroko

MORE THAN 500 HOME SEEKERS in Johannesburg's inner city stand to benefit in the new rented houses programme launched by a housing company with funds provided by overseas donors

The R20 million programme will provide shelter to hundreds of people who have been living in squalid conditions on street pavements, railway lines and on the waiting list for homes for many years. The programme was initiated by

Occupants will be expected to rent homes and later buy them

Sowetan 5/9/97

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the Johannesburg Housing Company owned by Kagiso Trust and the New Housing Company

It included converting old offices into residential accommodation in the CBD

JHC's coordinator of community relations, Sabie Thabethe, said their experience was that such conversions could be financially viable as they

provide an alternative to the grime, gloom and doom often associated with the CBD

Most of the buildings were upgraded into two-bedroomed units by small developers particularly in plumbing, plastering, bricklaying and electrical services, thus creating jobs for hundreds of people within Johannesburg.

The buildings are Jeppestown, Tatum Heights, St Martin-Troyeville Douglas Room and Tower Hill, all in the inner city.

The occupants will be expected to rent the homes and later buy them

Funds used for the project have been provided by the European Union and the Flemish regional government to capitalise on what is said to be a unique housing association dedicated to providing rental housing for low income earners

Mr Moses Ziba, one of the people who benefited from the Tower Hill scheme in Hillbrow, said they were

delighted that the upgrading of the building allowed for the upward mobility of tenants

He said "Another feature of the upgrading is the necessity to improve the provision of water and electricity for the buildings

Suffers same fate

"Tower Hill suffers the fate of almost all buildings in the inner city of having a single water and electricity supply"

Thabethe said the company would undertake many such projects in the inner city

As they continue to await their promised land, squalor and anger become part of their lives

By TOMMY MAKOE

Christopher Qunu (88) is slowly dying in the basement of a Johannesburg office building. There is no electricity, no ventilation, and the floor is flooded with human excrement from the blocked sewerage.

Qunu, who does not know what he is suffering from, cannot walk, has problems breathing and has no energy. He is confined to a sofa in the fly-infested, dilapidated building.

Like the other 540 residents, Qunu was part of the Mulbarton squatter camp group which was "temporarily" moved into what used to be the Department of Transport's building after they were evicted.

The then Johannesburg city council promised to relocate them after only three weeks. Three years later they are still waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. Conditions in the building have deteriorated. Qunu has been living in the fifth since December.

"I have nowhere else to go. This is the place I call home," he said.

Removing sewerage water from her room in the basement has become a daily task for Catherine Adams. She cannot get used to the stench.

"Every day the sewerage floods my room. I always get sick from the water. Who knows? I may be very

sick, I do not stop coughing," she said.

One cannot escape the strong odour of human excrement and perspiration, even when standing outside the building. Little wonder there are only nine toilets in this three-storey building.

"I am afraid to go to the doctor because I fear I have TB. My clothes smell of sewerage even though they are clean," said Dennis Nyembe who has bricks blocking sewage from entering his room.

About 16 people live in each former office.

Willie Dhlamini, who for the past three years has been leading the struggle to have the people moved, said they started negotiations with the Southern council more than two years ago and nothing had been done.

Dhlamini added that the anger of the people who had been promised homes was reaching boiling point.

But the people who live in these appalling conditions are not the only homeless people who have waited years for promises of relocation to be fulfilled.

Families in Soweto's Dhlamini squatter camp and Thembalitha near Lenasia have seen their living conditions deteriorate while they wait. Both squatter camps are in dangerous areas.

Thembalitha is built on dilapidated land, Dhlamini near a flood plain in what used to be a dumping area.

Dhlamini and Thembalitha squatters who have been waiting for their land for more than 10 years said they thought their dreams had come true when they were allocated

What can you do when you wait 10 years in a leaking shack? You build the house even though you know it can fall any time

Thembalitha is built on dilapidated land, Dhlamini near a flood plain in what used to be a dumping area.

Dhlamini and Thembalitha squatters who have been waiting for their land for more than 10 years said they thought their dreams had come true when they were allocated

Thembalitha is built on dilapidated land, Dhlamini near a flood plain in what used to be a dumping area.

They have been removed. Older people are the ones in trouble as they have no pit toilets like the rest of us. They have to ask neighbours for the use of a toilet," he said.

"They tell us the land is dangerous to live on, but why are they not giving us alternative land, because we cannot afford to buy it," Peter-son asked.

Thembalitha councillor Daniel Bony said the portable public toilets were removed for health and safety reasons.

"The majority of the people complain they cannot use the toilets at night because they can be easily attacked. People whose shacks are close to the toilets also complained about the stench. After much consideration we decided to remove them because most have pit toilets in their yards," Bony explained.

The long wait for allocated land has led many residents to build houses in dangerous areas.

In Dhlamini squatter camp, all the houses built on top of the dump have cracked.

"What can you do when you have waited 10 years in a leaking shack for a proper house? You build the house even though you know it can fall at anytime," said Thabo Rantel.

Residents of these areas are still going to live in these hazardous

conditions for another year according to the chairman of the urban town-planning tribunal, Norman Prince, all the people will be relocated between June and November next year.

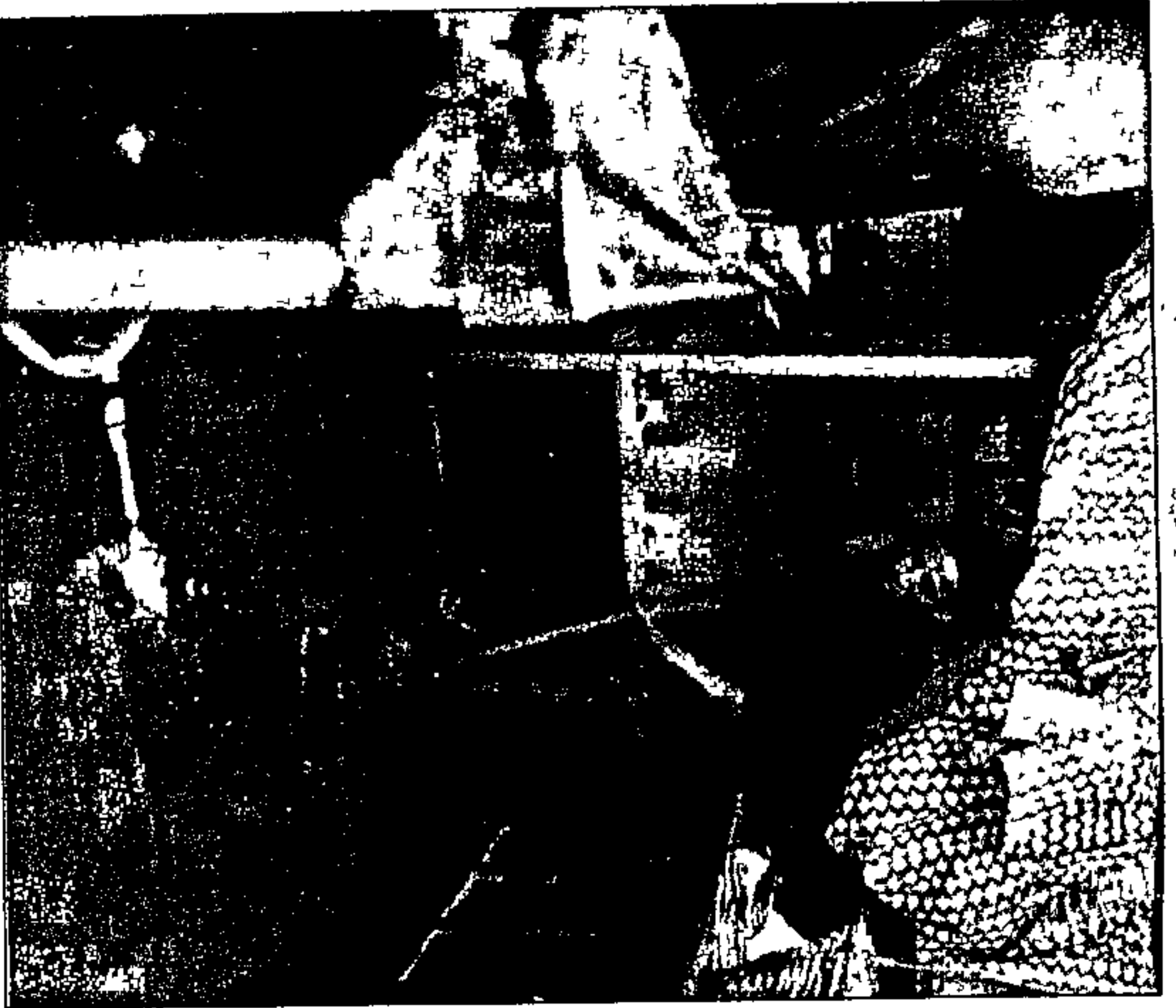
"Approximately 5 000 squatters from Thembalitha will be moved to their promised land at Mligund North and all the squatters in Dhlamini will be moved to Lielder-Vrede next year."

Prince added that last year's opposition of the people of Natlans to the relocation of the people was based on ignorance. "They thought the people were going to start another squatter camp. But after we had consulted with them and provided them with the plans of our intended formal and decent housing in the area, they agreed."

But the people who are living in the former Transport Department building will remain there for an undisclosed period.

"We are still going to conduct a survey to find out who lives in the building. We want to find out if they have properties elsewhere and whether they are working in the city," Prince explained. "From there we will consider if we can find them an alternative place around town."

He said the process of relocating people was part of the Rapid Land Release programme, aimed at housing 22 000 Gauteng people.



HUMAN STENCH: Catherine Adams sweeps the sewage from her room in the former Transport Department offices. PHOTOGRAPH CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE

New law is on its way to help douse the number of fires

Installation will cost R300, but existing homes won't have to comply

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
City Desk

Star 15/9/97

Tough new legislation to cut the number of fires in Gauteng will have little impact on existing houses and buildings, many of which do not comply to fire safety standards

The legislation, which will include the compulsory installation of fire detectors, at a cost of about R300 for households, in all new houses and buildings, is expected to be implemented next year.

Local government department spokesman Sakkie Lombaard said yesterday that some of the documentation was

ready, but the legislation still needed to be "workshopped"

The legislation will not apply to existing buildings and houses, many of which do not comply with fire standards

"It is not easy to backdate legislation," Lombaard said

He said the department was also investigating heavier fines for buildings which fail to comply with fire safety regulations. At the moment, violators can be fined only R500.

The Star reported earlier this year that at least half of Greater Johannesburg's high-rise buildings, defined as above 30m or nine to 10 storeys, have inadequate safety controls.

And across the city, ware-

houses and office blocks, which serve as housing, and informal settlements are mushrooming, increasing the province's already high risk of fire

Money lost through fire this year is expected to exceed R15-

Renovated blocks seen as a danger

billion - almost double that of last year, according to Greater Johannesburg's director in charge of management services, Andre Tomlinson

He said the losses, together

with the critical shortage of emergency services personnel, were seriously hampering the province's ability to fight fires - and could prove deadly Johannesburg is said to be operating on less than 66% of its manpower needs

As a result, Gauteng had launched an awareness programme to educate people about the dangers of fire

The programme, known as the Emergency Services Awareness Week, will run from today to Friday. It will be held annually

Activities during the week will include visits to schools, parades, demonstrations, and open days at fire stations

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Orange Farm residents get land rights as township proclaimed

Louise Cook

GAUTENG Housing and Land Affairs Minister Dan Mofokeng yesterday officially proclaimed Orange Farm — an area south of Johannesburg — a township and opened its first Housing Transfer Bureau

This meant residents of the more than 30 000 serviced sites of Orange Farm could now get legal ownership of their properties for the first time.

Southern metropolitan local council mayor Nandi Mayathula-Khoza said the proclamation was an attempt to correct imbalances of the past and to give people access to land ownership

She said Orange Farm residents could now get title deeds to their land,

BO 19/9/97 3(127)
have a better chance to get a home loan and know they would not be moved

Several registers for extensions of the township had been opened and more would be completed before the end of the year. However, the council said sales records, leases and land allocations by the previous government were incomplete — pamphlets inviting people to claim land would have to be distributed. The deadline for responses was December 13

Land Affairs director-general Geoff Budlender said the proclamation marked the end of policies prohibiting black people from owning land in cities. "Security of tenure is a basic human right, protected by the constitution. I am sure the Housing Transfer

Bureau will ensure that when the land at Orange Farm is transferred, this does not lead to dispossession or conflicts about the rightful owner." In cases of conflicting claims to the same land, more land must be made available, he said. For 75-year old Eugene Ngwane, reports Sapa, the proclamation signified the end of a long struggle to own a piece of land "in order to provide a roof over my family's head". He was forcefully removed from Soweto in 1962

Since then, he said, life had been difficult as people in the area — dubbed Palestine — because it accommodated 30 000 landless families — lived under constant fear of eviction.

"Today, I am pleased that Mofokeng and other government officials have come to my area to give us rights over land," the pensioner said.

to counter El Niño

Battle plans prepared

Rand Water's 11 million consumers urged to start saving now:

Cabinet approves measures to support rural communities

By SHIRLEY WOODGATE

Strong warnings have gone out to the 11-million consumers in the Rand Water supply area not to waste water, following dire forecasts by weather experts of the renewed effects of the El Niño phenomenon this summer.

Today's warning by Rand Water quality marketing manager Karl Lubout to Gauteng consumers comes as the Government for the first time in history announced a pre-emptive disaster management plan to counter the effects of drought well before El Niño hits the country.

El Niño triggers either drought or flooding in various parts of the world as the temperature of the Pacific Ocean drops by some 3C.

Local weather forecasters have issued a string of warnings that the current recurrence, which is the strongest in 50 years, will lead to well below average rainfall from November this year to March 1998.

Lubout said while El Niño would be a major problem for farmers relying on regular rainfall, the current situation in the Vaal River system - which supplied 60% of the country's industry - was extremely healthy.

"But while the bottom line is that we have supplies for up to four years, there is absolutely no guarantee where we will be at that stage," he said.

Swinging into action ahead of the expected drought, the

Cabinet approved several measures this week to tackle the problem facing South Africa and its neighbours.

Constitutional Development Minister Valli Moosa said an inter-ministerial committee for disaster management (IMC) had been set up to co-ordinate the activities of Government to combat El Niño.

Cabinet had approved an urgent ministers' meeting of the Southern African Development Community (Sadec) to address the consequences of El Niño and the Department of State

Drought is likely from November to March

Expenditure had to ensure emergency funds be made available.

Cabinet also recommended the implementation of action plans by all departments and provinces, and steps would have to be taken to establish provincial structures to deal with El Niño and other disaster related incidents.

Earlier, Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom warned farmers the Government would no longer provide drought relief, and Moosa said officials were liaising with agricultural bodies and farmers on how best the sector should reposition to cope with the expected drought.

Conservation measures introduced by Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal included the allocation of an extra R190-million from the poverty relief fund to help speed the removal of alien vegetation from catchment areas of major dams.

As the potential drought disaster period looms, dams which are currently at an all-time 91% full countrywide would be closely monitored, water savings promoted countrywide and restrictions introduced where necessary.

A more conservative operating rule for dams is due to be implemented to ensure at least a two-year water supply for domestic purposes.

Asmal stressed that special measures would have to be introduced for millions of mainly rural South Africans who still had no access to clean water.

They included the repair of waterworks in the former homelands and the sinking of more boreholes and close liaison with the army to co-ordinate water delivery in tankers to drought-hit communities.

Talks were due to be held with Eskom to facilitate a proposed national energy campaign to save water. Millions of rands would be contributed for a cloud-seeding programme near Tzaneen in Northern province.

Asmal stressed, although it was not absolutely certain that a severe drought would occur, the proposed measures would not only reduce the impact of a drought but be cost-effective.

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Johannesburg broke, cuts spending

BY ANNA COX

Johannesburg's metro council has been unable to pay its bulk electricity supply bill for two consecutive months, prompting a multiparty agreement yesterday to drastically scale back the metro's running costs.

The debt to Eskom for electricity supplied during June and July, estimated at R8,6-million, is only one of several hundred debts which the metro has yet to settle with creditors.

Eskom media spokesman Peter Adams told The Star: "We are taking the problem in a very serious light because both June and July accounts have not been paid.

"There will not be cutoffs, we will pursue the normal thorough procedures of negotiation and reminders."

The council, which is made up of all the parties represented in Johannesburg's four local councils as well as representatives of the metro council itself, conceded it was facing serious financial problems.

Motor dealers, office equipment suppliers and car hire firms are among the metro's creditors, The Star was told. They are refusing to do further business with the metro until the debts are settled.

In an unusual move yesterday, the ANC, which has a majority in all five councils, joined with the opposition parties in

R8,6-m owed to Eskom for electricity is just one debt

agreeing to cut the metro's budget by R121-million.

The ANC, the NP, the IFP and the DP also voted to raise local and foreign loans totalling R1-billion. The bulk of the loan will go towards capital projects.

The parties have instructed Johannesburg's chief executive officer, Nicky Padayachee, to disclose the full extent of the

metro's indebtedness, to find steps to permanently rectify the financial problems and to report publicly on initiatives taken to solve them.

The meeting also agreed to immediate steps to curtail expenditure by departments.

These include limiting expenditure to what is absolutely necessary to the daily delivery of services, capital expenditure to be limited to contractually committed projects only, the active collection of debts, an end to "soft loans" for employees, and a freeze on vacancies other than "critical posts".

Finance head Lucas Opperman said the R1-billion loan would enable the council to continue its capital projects as scheduled. It would not cost the ratepayer anything because it had been budgeted for, he said.

The seriousness of the crisis was underscored by the ANC's support for the financial rescue deal proposed by the DP, but the DP then voted against the motion because of the ANC amendments.

Money comes pouring in after council gets tough with non-payers

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

Greater Johannesburg's Southern council recouped R21-million last month due to credit control measures and revenue collection, the council's finance strategic executive Bethuel Jwedi said yesterday.

He said the council would continue issuing summonses and cutting services such as water and electricity to defaulters until the payment level reached 100%.

"There is progress. We are steering in the right direction," Jwedi said

"The level of payment is increasing but we will be satisfied only when it reaches 100%

Star 24/9/97 (127)
There has been an increase of R4-million in August over the previous months," he said.

During a presentation at the Soweto Civic Centre, Jwedi said

**The aim is
to get
revenue
up to 100%**

the council had recouped R9-million in Johannesburg, R7-million in Soweto, R1,8-million in Lenasia, R1,5-million in Ennerdale and R1,4-million in Orange Farm.

In August alone, the council

had also recovered R6-million from other areas such as Glenvista and Eldorado Park, and R3-million from the Johannesburg CBD

Meanwhile, the Institute of Municipal Finance Officers has established a new investment code for local authorities to determine investment policies

The investment code is used throughout the country and is also accepted by the national Department of Finance

As trustees of public funds, the council has an obligation to see to it that cash resources are managed effectively

The policy is aimed at gaining the highest possible return without undue risk

Soweto homeowners facing ruin

Sowetan 26/9/97
127

Govt committee told that nine badly built houses had to be demolished

NINETY-SEVEN Meadowlands, Soweto, families are struggling to save themselves from financial ruin after the houses they bought roughly 10 years ago began falling down about their ears

Council of SA Bankers general manager Ms Sharon Trail told Gauteng's standing committee on housing yesterday that nine of the houses were so badly built they were a danger to their occupants and had to be demolished. Eleven others needed to have their foundations shored to prevent the houses collapsing as they were built on uncompressed ash.

The debacle has led to 17 court judgments against the builders, Pentaxes, a partnership between a Piet Smit and a Ted Baxter.

They built houses under various names, but were operating under the name Pentaxes when they built the defective houses in Meadowlands.

The judgments have not helped the house owners. Baxter has gone to England, from whence he came, and Smit cannot be traced.

"This is the most egregious example of absolute exploitation of inexperienced first-time home buyers I've yet come across," Trail said.

Johannesburg's Western Metropolitan Substructure has pledged R1 million towards the costs of repairing the houses.

Trail said housing inspectors should be given more authority and the building industry should join the effort to help the Meadowlands 97.

Earlier, giving Cosab's view to the standing committee on the National Home Builders Registration Council Bill, Trail said Cosab was in favour of an indemnity fund, topped up by builders at a rate of 1,3 percent of the market value of the houses they built.

The fund would be used to repair defective houses.

An insurance scheme was another option, Trail said.

The Bill, if enacted, would make it an offence to be a house builder without being registered. It would require builders to give a five-year warranty on their products. — Sapa

Proud Ivory Park boasts 80% payment of accounts

By Rodney Victor

A record 80% of residents in Midrand's Ivory Park informal settlement paid their municipal accounts in August, according to Alan Dawson, chairman of Midrand local council's executive committee.

A year ago only 3% of residents were paying their accounts, he said, adding that the improvement was unprecedented. Payments in Ivory Park were now higher than in any other traditionally black area, and were comparable to those in many traditionally white areas.

Midrand had relaunched its Masakhane campaign in July last year, intending it to be a sustained campaign rather than a "one-day wonder", he said.

The council had divided Ivory Park into 12 zones and had promised residents that payments received from any particular zone would be earmarked for projects within that zone.

People were allowed to decide for themselves how the money would be spent. Since they could see what their money was being used for, they were much more motivated to pay their accounts.

Residents now had a completely different attitude to paying, Dawson said. Previously they had regarded boycotters as heroes. Now they saw boycotters as people who were retarding the community's development.

Prince Hanuqa, spokesman for the Gauteng department of development planning and local government, said Ivory Park was a shining example of what could be done to improve payment levels.

He did not know which area had the lowest payment rate in Gauteng, but information available to The Star suggests it could be the Winnie Mandela squatter camp in Benoni, where only 0,5% of residents paid their municipal accounts in August.

Emphasis of service cutoffs is now on easing tension

Star 26/9/97

(127)

Criticism of local authorities' militaristic stance that created 'us and them' attitude

By Cecilia Russell

Big guns and battle fatigues will no longer characterise service cutoffs in Greater Johannesburg.

The metro's security department has changed its approach from one that was confrontational to one designed to lessen tension in the community.

The implementation of cutoffs was dogged by harsh criticism of the local authorities' militaristic stance taken to protect council employees, especially in the "red" (dangerous) areas. Cutoff staff were accompanied by council security armed with shotguns.

But the head of security, Mpho Kubheka, said this cre-

ated more of a rift between the community and the council.

"I emphasised an 'them and us' attitude between the community and the council, when in fact we are part of the community," Kubheka said.

One of the challenges Kubheka faced when taking over as head of the department was to change it from a paramilitary "top-down" organisation to one in which all staff members were able to participate in decisions that needed to be carried out.

The step was one of the first

made to change attitudes in the security department.

Serious debate followed a suggestion that the heavily armed security which accompanied the cutoff team was raising tensions in areas where the cutoffs took place.

But a security department source said the decision was made because the council was worried about its image, rather than the safety of the council personnel.

"We don't go in with guns to show them 'hey, we're the main

name', but because the situation could turn nasty. This decision could compromise our safety," the source said.

He said security staff had experienced about six incidents of resistance from communities in the past month, including in Eldorado Park last Friday when the entire neighbourhood ganged up against the cutoff staff.

Metro spokesman Keith Peacock said the council was always striving to improve the way it relates to the public. He added that the drive to increase payment for services had brought in R48-million in arrears this month. The campaign would continue until most accounts were normalised.

In fact, we are part of the community

Jo'burg's disease time bomb

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
SALDRU LIBRARY

~~127~~ (127)

Star 27/9/97

Eight sewerage works allow raw waste into our rivers

By JACKIE CAMERON

Contaminated sewage is flowing into Johannesburg rivers – and health experts have warned that a deadly-disease time bomb is ticking in the city

At least eight sewerage works have allowed huge batches of raw human waste into rivers; one because it “ran out” of chlorine, another after a “power failure”, and the others because they “misjudged” the amount of chlorine needed or time taken for bacteria to be killed

Sewage is a fertile conductor for diseases such as cholera, typhoid, hepatitis and dysentery, which all start off with acute diarrhoea and, if left untreated, can kill the sufferer

The Department of Water Affairs has warned Erwat, a non-profit organisation responsible for treating most of the sewage on the East Rand, to clean up its act or face prosecution.

Results of government-commissioned spot tests on rivers in the East Rand reveal that at least seven sewerage facilities have allowed bacteria-infested waste into rivers. The water is considered highly hazardous to drink and is also unfit to swim in or even touch

Spillage from broken sewers on the Klip River is also believed to be responsible for the death of hundreds of fish in the Klip River; one government source said

Greater Johannesburg's Transitional Metropolitan Coun-

cil is struggling to consistently comply with health standards at four large sewerage works around the city

Russel Rimmer, of the council's Cydna Laboratories, told the *Saturday Star* this week that Northern Works, which treats water that goes to Hartbeespoort Dam, released sewage recently despite “running out of chlorine”

“I tried to find out why. To my mind it was a lack of delivery, and it was probably only one delivery of chlorine,” Rimmer, who had been asked to speak on behalf of the council, said

The Olifantsvlei works, in the south, was “not getting the results we should be getting” because the “right environment” for bacteria to die off was not being created at the plant

“Not a lot is being done about this because it is believed that the water going into the rivers is pretty much okay. The Government is expecting us to make sure we'll get the levels (of bacteria) down as soon as possible

“We cannot compare our situation to other countries. Our rivers are small, and what we discharge has a more exaggerated effect. Rivers are under greater pressure, particularly from informal settlements”

However, Rimmer said he did not believe the contaminated sewage posed a serious health risk. “You can get the cholera virus in rivers, but you need an awful lot of these things before you get infected”

But national director of communicable diseases Dr Neil Cameron warned that these test results should be regarded as “very serious”

“If these figures are true and water is going into rivers used for drinking water, it is cause for concern. The message is that this is serious, but I don't believe it affects tapped drinking water.

“Diseases which spread through water include cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A. We're expecting cholera. It has to do with the sanitary conditions in many rural areas

“Typhoid is also endemic in such areas. It's often spread by dirty toilets but you can get it through water and food. It's tied to the environment”

And a senior Department of Health official said. “If something is not done now, it will get worse. This may be the start of the whole service being in jeopardy. There seems to be a serious management problem at local government level”

Dr Quentin Espey, director of the Group of Environmental Monitoring, said. “Waterborne diseases are among the biggest killers in South Africa. About 50 000 people die each year from diarrhoea alone, and the contamination of rivers is a contributory factor”

Wits University microbiology department lecturer John Dewar said South Africa was sitting on a health time-bomb

P.T.O.

Housing MEC suspends department head

(127)

BD 11/10/97

Vuyo Mvoko

GAUTENG housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has suspended his head of department, Enos Ngutshane, for reasons "related to management".

Mofokeng confirmed the suspension last night but refused to give further details. Ngutshane also refused to comment until formal charges were brought against him.

The matter was sub judice, Mofokeng said, and Ngutshane would be given an opportunity to study the

charges when they were formulated and he would be given the chance to defend himself.

Ngutshane was suspended with "immediate effect" on September 16 without being given formal reasons.

Gauteng director-general Vincent Mntambo, to whom Ngutshane reported, said there was disagreement over "issues of management of the department". The matter was "under discussion" and would hopefully be resolved next week. Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale would be briefed today.



The new brochure, which will be distributed to all provinces

the influence of alcohol
 "To deliberately endanger the lives of fellow road users is a crime against our nation and such behaviour must be stopped once and for all," he said

"The successful implementation of the Arrive Alive campaign depends heavily on the support we receive from road users

"We consider the majority of road users to be our partners who have to play an essential role in declaring drinking and driving as anti-social behaviour

"We even have to get to a point where we ostracise our friends and family members who boast about getting away with drinking and driving

alongside the road while under the influence of alcohol, are the butchers of the road and should expect no mercy," concluded Mashatile



Paul Mashatile, Gauteng MEC for Transport and for Public Works

Three harrowing stories which illustrate the

If anyone has any doubts about the seriousness of drinking and driving, here are three cases to illustrate the point

On May 5 1996, Gerhard Titus woke up in a hospital ward in Cape Town and realised that he would never walk again

The previous evening, Gerhard and his cousin were on their way home after giving a lift to some friends in Kennard near Upington in the Northern Cape. Eric was driving and both men had had far too much to drink. Approximately 45 km from Keimoes, Eric lost control of the vehicle and it rolled 35 metres off the road. Gerhard was thrown out of the car, sustaining severe injuries.

Rescue teams immediately arranged that he be flown to the Conradie Hospital. Although he survived the crash, it was soon clear he would spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

He spent months undergoing rehabilitation and adapting to life without the use of his legs.

The decision to get into the car with a driver who had drunk too much had major implications for Gerhard. That decision will now affect him for the rest of his life and it is one that he regrets every day.

This was not the first time Gerhard had been drinking and driving. On December 2 1994, he was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol in the Keimoes Magistrate's Court. He was given a R300 fine and a suspended prison sentence.

"At the time I saw the court procedure as a huge joke. After the hearing was over, I went to the bottle store and bought another bottle of brandy. I wish now that I had listened to the magistrate. Perhaps my life would have turned out differently," says Gerhard.

Life for Gerhard these days is very different to the life he led before the accident. Then he was able to enjoy rugby and soccer and socialise with his friends. He had a job and planned to live in his own flat.

Today he has no job, his friends have all but forgotten him and he is dependent on his family for everything.

Gerhard says "The hardest part for me is to accept the idea of being in a wheelchair. I feel cut off from life. I started to rebel against people and against God. But I now believe that this was God's way of telling me to stop drinking. At the age of 28, I have to start all over again.

"After the accident I had to learn to do many things from the beginning again, like getting dressed, having a bath and going to the toilet. It's been very hard for me and my family.

"When I look back at the way I used to drink and how I used to joke about other people who had suffered in some way or the other because of drinking, I can't believe how stupid it all seems. Yet, at the time it was such an important element in my life. I seldom knew how I got home most nights."

Had law enforcement been stricter on Gerhard, perhaps he would have thought twice about drinking and driving, and about agreeing to be a passenger in a car with a driver who was under the influence of alcohol.

Administrative clerk Ivy Worthington (21) died in February 1995 in Pretoria when the vehicle she was travelling in overturned.

It was a rainy evening when Ivy visited friends in Valhalla, Pretoria. It was only 20 days af-

ter her 21st birthday and, like many other young women, she dreamt about marriage and the prospect of children.

The vehicle overturned on a curve near the Pretoria Central Prison. Ivy and her friend and a small boy who were sitting in the rear of the vehicle were killed instantly when their necks were broken on impact.

Winston and Ria Worthington were at home when the call came about their daughter. "A Sister from the HF Verwoerd



A picture of Ivy Worthington, aged 21, taken shortly before she

checkpoints, stop vehicles and identify drivers who be under the influence of alcohol.

"We have a clear message to people who wish to ignore their own safety and the safety of people who share the road with them - beware.

"The time has come to realise that traffic law enforcers are serious," the association said in a statement. "The possibility of getting away with not obeying the law is low."

The traffic chiefs warned however that normal law enforcement actions aimed at speeding, wearing of seatbelts and other moving violations would continue throughout the month.

The Gautrans Traffic Chiefs Association has compiled an extensive action plan for the Arrive Alive

"For those law-abiding road users, we would like to apologise for the inconvenience at times when stopped by traffic officials. Unfortunately, only by stopping all road users are we able to apprehend the small percentage of drivers who do not adhere to the law.

"You should see us as your partners and protectors on the road. We would like to remove those elements from the road who endanger your life, and the lives of your friends and family.

"The Gautrans Traffic Chiefs Association realises that it is essential that it receives the support of all citizens of Gauteng to make this campaign a huge success.

"This is the only way in which we can contribute towards making our roads safer for everybody to enjoy"

road hazards and politely asking drivers to buckle up or to drive safely. These warnings failed because road users did not take them seriously.

"For this reason, Arrive Alive has been implicitly structured so that people can't help but take notice. The time for niceties and polite warnings is over. As so many drivers dwell in a 'it won't happen to me' comfort zone, we, at the Department of Transport, have had to assume responsibility for the safety of road users.

"Harsh messages and images blatantly depicting the consequences of drunken driving, speed and negligence will be aimed at the public via the media and our enforcement campaign has been carefully

ple on a road safety mission as this has never been achieved anywhere else in the world.

"We have also taken the lead in piloting Project Victoria which is scheduled to be implemented next February. We have already invested R12 million in new technology and enforcement equipment so that that heightened enforcement, which will be executed during the campaign, will be sustained when we bridge into Project Victoria.

"We at the Department of Transport will continue our crusade to impact on driver behaviour and induce a safe culture on the roads. If drivers refuse to take road safety in heart, the sanctions of Arrive Alive will force them to think again," concluded Ndebele.

dangers of drinking and driving

Legislation is designed to protect the innocent

hospital asked us to please come in. She didn't want to tell us what the problem was.

"We were given a sedative, after which a doctor informed us that Ivy was killed in a car crash. It is the most terrifying experience. One cannot describe the feeling of having to hear that your child has been killed," says Winston.

Ria says she never thought it could happen to one of her children. "We are talking about a 21-year-old woman with her whole

life ahead of her.

"Although drinking and driving was suspected, the driver was found not guilty on a charge of culpable homicide.

"I keep on wondering what went through Ivy's mind when she saw the vehicle was going to overturn. She must have experienced terrible fear."

Both parents believe that if others can learn something positive from this incident, her death would make more sense.

The change in lifestyle from a professional dancer to a quadriplegic is a drastic one. Everyone thinks that it won't happen to them.

But, as Gerald Marais warns, if you drink and drive or get in a car driven by an intoxicated driver, there could be a whole new set of wheels waiting for you. This is his story.

Gerald (37) is quadriplegic and has limited use of his arms. He lives on a disability grant of R450 per month and requires 24-hour care.

Early one morning three years ago Gerald and a friend were on their way to a remote town at the coast.

The town was 10 minutes from the hotel where he was visiting another friend. His friend, still intoxicated from the night before, lost control and the car hit a telephone pole.

When Gerald recovered consciousness his first thought was that he could not feel his legs. He knew then that he would never walk again. He was trans-

ferred to a hospital where he spent the next seven months undergoing rehabilitation.

Gerald describes the hospital as being a safe haven. "The hospital cocoons you from the real world. It allows you to forget that the outside world exists, even if it is a temporary illusion. The staff are trained for dealing with para- and quadriplegics and they make you feel very comfortable in a period of your life that is exceptionally uncomfortable," says Gerald.

Before the accident Gerald enjoyed a varied life. He was a professional dancer and disc jockey, and had tried his hand at many different careers. Gerald was - and still is - sports mad, except now he is unable to participate in sports as he used to.

Gerald's love of music has also helped to carry him through difficult times and it remains one of his passions today. "I am still able to put a record on the record player even though I have limited movement of my wrists and fingers.

"I intend to use my story to help others not make the same mistake. My friend was not sober enough to drive but I ignored my own instinct for the sake of keeping the peace.

"I intend to talk to schools and anybody who will listen to tell them that the price of drinking and driving is higher than you may be willing to pay.

"I want to appeal to the public - think before you drink, before you drive."

How much is too much?

The Arrive Alive campaigns, against drinking and driving and walking comes at the same time as proposals to amend the legal blood alcohol level. The proposed levels are 0,05 grams per 100ml for road users and 0,02 grams per 100ml for professional drivers. These levels will only come into effect in the first half of 1998.

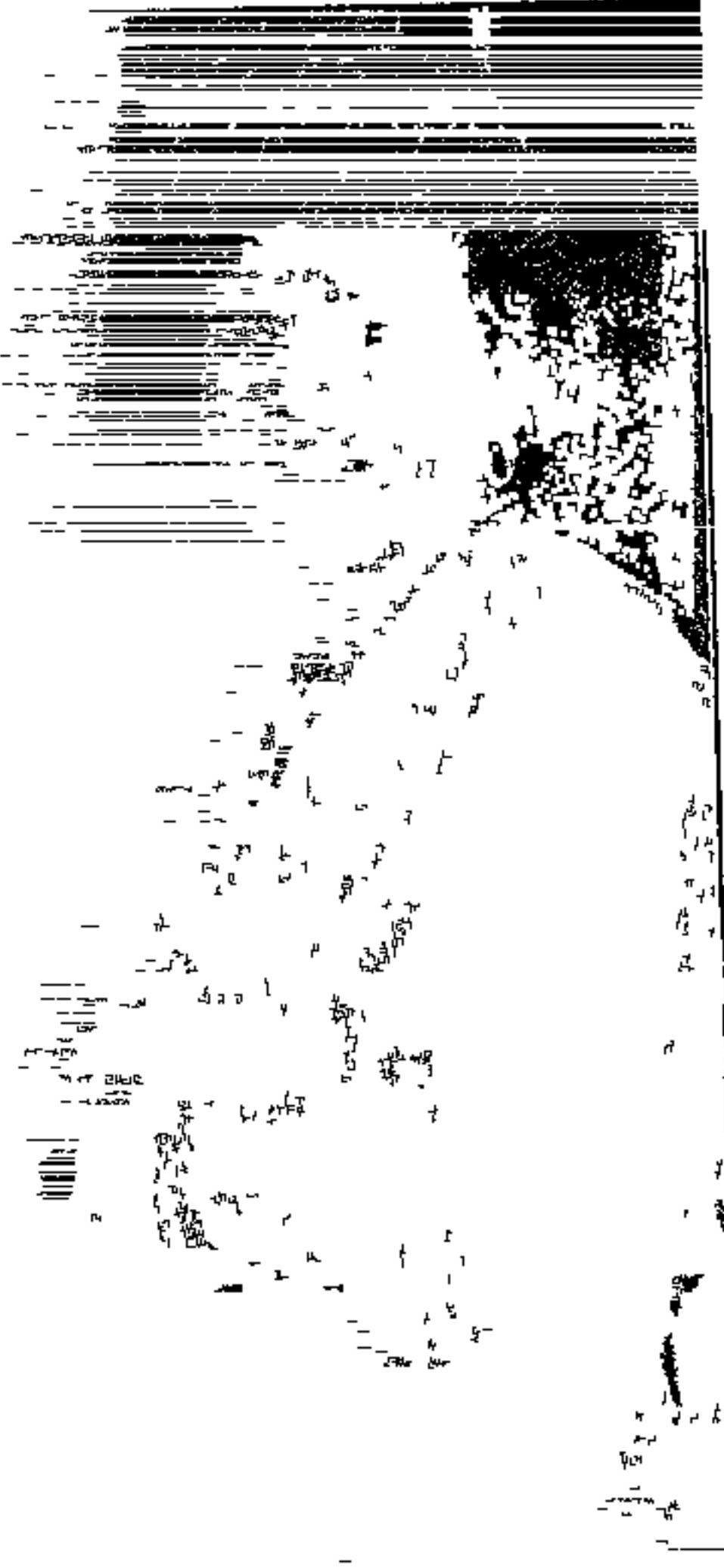
The message this gives is quite clear - if you are going to walk home or drive home, don't drink.

It is time South Africa joined the rest of the world in terms of managing their drinking habits. In Europe and America, friends take it in turn to be the "designated driver" and they do not drink anything.

Given our poor public transport system and lack of taxis at night, this may be the only solution.

Also, South Africans need to stop pouring drinks down the guests' throats and start being better hosts by either driving guests home or inviting them to stay at their home overnight.

The new regulations, coupled with stricter sentencing, mean that drunken drivers will no longer be allowed to ruin everyone else's lives.



in a drunken driving accident.

Tomorrow: An Aids vaccine is still years away but the virus is already unravelling South African families, and killing its children

INSIDE

Friday: Robert Brand previews the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's special hearing on the role of business during apartheid

Soweto rapidly becoming a 'normal' city

(127) Star 1/10/97

Many problems remain, but the millions spending on lighting, sewers, roads, recreation centres and better services are beginning to make a difference, writes Themba Sepotokele

THYS DILLAART



Call it what you like. You can call it "shadow city" or "the capital city of crime", but Soweto, South Africa's largest township, is undergoing major changes that will transform it beyond recognition.

Even the most critical person can bear testimony to developments such as the installation of street lights, consistent refuse removal, construction and upgrading of streets, paving of footways, the installation of genuine storm water pipes, upgrading of sewers and water reticulation, and upgrading of bus and taxi ranks.

Sowetans are enjoying the fruits of service delivery since the new dispensation and the inauguration of the local government in 1995. The township is now being serviced by the Greater Johannesburg's Southern, Western and Northern council's respectively.

The Greater Soweto Housing Transfer Bureau has made great strides regarding the transfer of houses. Thousands of residents have received the title deeds of the houses in which they had lived for 30 years. Although no official figures are available, the township managers' office mentions scores of claimants are being

resistance" continue to advocate the culture of non-payment.

Credit control and cash collection measures seem to be the best solution to pressure people to pay up. Payment has improved 25% since introducing the credit control measures, council's finance strategic executive Bethuel Jwedi says.

The Southern council had spent R164-million of the 1997/98 budget of R178-million on a total of 215 completed projects. R17-million was spent of technical support, R49-million on water, R11-million on sewers, R5-million for refuse, R54-million for roads and storm water, R39-million on fleets and other equipment and finally R3-million on parks.

According to Tebo Matlala, the council's spokesman, the council has provided R2-million in its new budget for community projects such as recreation and community centres, sporting facilities and stadiums and swimming pools.

In its development drive, the council will upgrade and refurbish libraries in Emdeni and Protea North. The construction of new clinics is under way.



dealt with every month.

Among those who received title deeds this year was Eva Marute (75) of Orlando East. Before moving there in 1963, Marute lived in Central West-

A counselling centre has been built in Dobsonville and a legal centre in Rockville. Soweto now boasts its first office of the Home Affairs Department in Orlando West.

Bacteria scare in city tap water

By JACKIE CAMERON

Rand Water is to start testing tap water at homes around the city after a snap survey revealed levels of bacteria above the acceptable drinking standard at a northern suburbs house

Rand Water tested five water samples from houses in the north, south, east, west and centre of Johannesburg after reports in the *Saturday Star* last week that sewerage works were allowing bacteria-infested effluent to flow into rivers

The water was declared free of faecal contamination, but a sample taken at a house in Gallo Manor, Sandton, showed up unacceptably high levels of other bacterial contamination

Traces of cyanide were also found in the water, but the amount was deemed acceptable in terms of SA Bureau of Standards norms, Rand Water said

Rand Water biologist Dr Machel Steynberg said the bac-

teria that showed up in the tests was "an alarm bell or risk measurement", but it could not be ruled out that the sample had not been taken correctly.

"Total coliforms (bacteria) are an alarm that there may be other things present in the water. If it was of human origin, one would have seen it in the faecal coliforms. This is unlikely to stem from sewage spillage. There could be something in the local reticulation system.

"Healthy humans would probably not be affected by water with this level of total coliforms. But someone with a low immune system - such as someone with HIV - may pick up a stomach complaint or something like that," Steynberg said

Karl Lubout, water quality marketing manager for Rand Water, said: "We've been monitoring bulk supply but we need to start looking at the end-user points. In future we're going to test water from taps more and more"

Lubout said he would retest the water from the Gallo Manor tap to eliminate the possibility of contamination through unscientific sampling, and "would also like to test the chlorine on site"

"If we get this level (of bacteria) again we may need to chlorinate on line. Bacteriological counts are dependent on chlorine. We may have to chlorinate more"

He said cyanide levels found in the samples were "very low" and did not pose a health threat

"They are within international norms. Water often assumes the characteristics of the water catchment area. Mineral content of water doesn't necessarily mean you have a good or bad quality"

"There has been quite a push to drinking distilled water. That isn't necessarily correct (that drinking bottled water is healthier). Water without minerals is unhealthy. Natural minerals supplement those in your body"

FROM PAGE 1

◆ Bacteria scare

Lubout also said they would be monitoring developments on the heavily polluted Klip River, where a sewerage works is at the centre of a Department of Water Affairs and Forestry investigation.

"We can only act in an advisory capacity. They must comply with their permits. We will assist them with analyses. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has to take action against them if they don't comply"

Water from the Klip River is used for drinking purposes, particularly in towns further afield, such as Parys.

See page 7

(127)

JOHANNESBURG HOME PRICES

Still affordable in global terms

fm 10/10/97

Local estate agents dispute international property consultant's assessment that Johannesburg homes are expensive

Johannesburg executives planning to emigrate may be elated to read global property consultant Knight Frank International (KFI)'s assessment that homes in many cities abroad are cheaper than Johannesburg's. KFI says higher executive salaries make houses in Montreal, Milan and even San Francisco, New York and Sydney more affordable than in Johannesburg.

But local agents urge caution, arguing that Johannesburg prices may actually be the lowest of any major world city.

KFI's 1997 Lifestyles survey compares the average Houghton house at R1,4m with Chelsea in London (R3,75m), Pacific Heights in San Francisco (R2,35m) and 16 other world cities.

Bottom of the list, they say, are Brussels (R900 000), Bombay (R1m), Milan and

Moscow (both at R1,2m)

But when they calculate prices as a ratio of executive salaries (see graph), Montreal's R1,65m is only 1,75 times the average executive's R950 000 salary. Milan's price-salary ratio is 2:1 (R1,2m/R600 000), as is Madrid's (R1,4m/R700 000) and Brussels' (R900 000/R425 000).

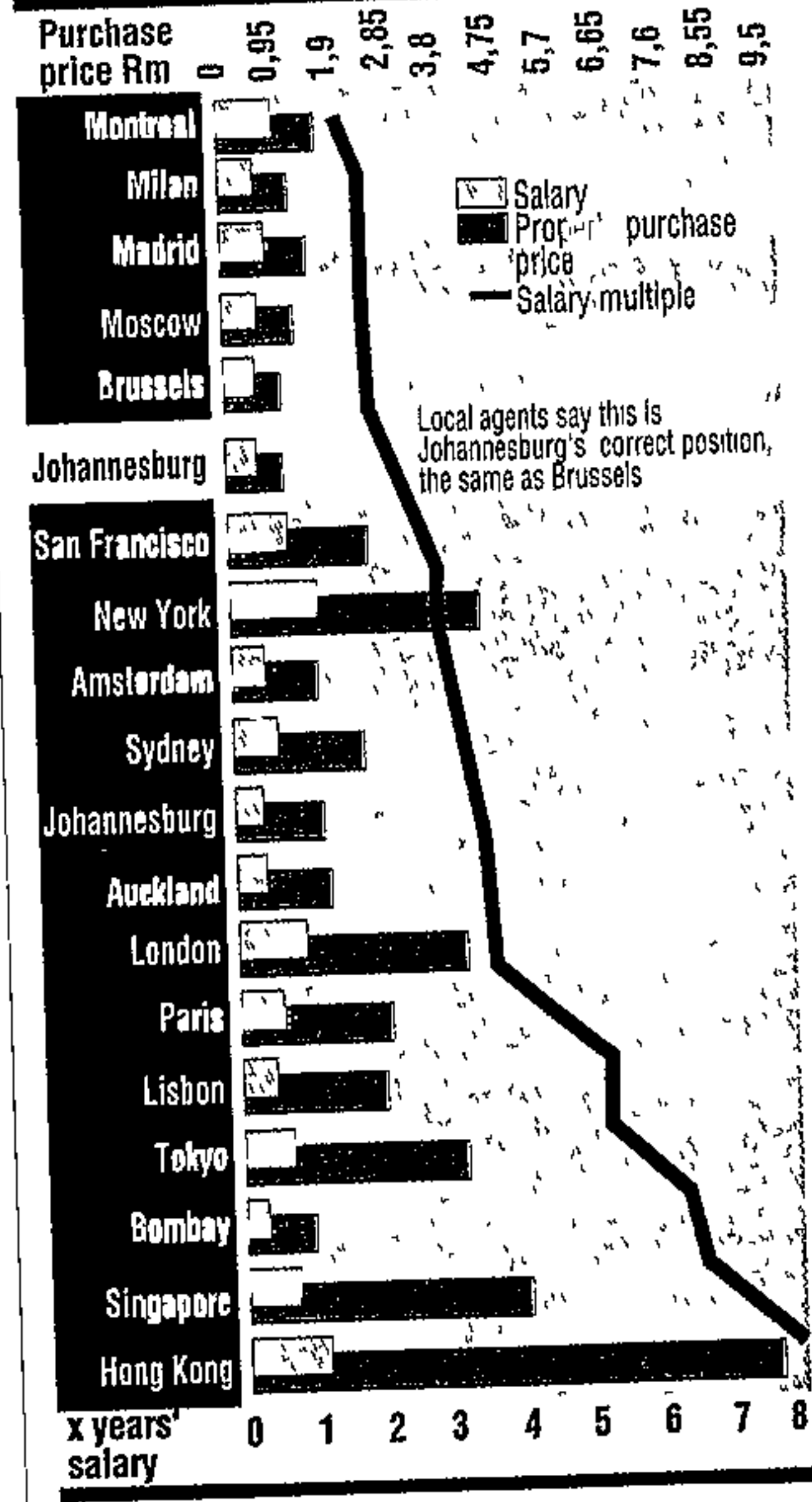
Sydney's is 3,2, at R2,1m/R658 000, while Johannesburg's is 3,33 (R1,4m/R425 000).

Most expensive is Hong Kong at 7,92 (R9m/R1,15m).

KFI's research director Steve Mallen warns from London that the survey is only a rough guide.

"It's particularly hard to compare your country with others because executive homes in most cities are apartments, but not so in Johannesburg where almost every

WHAT EXECUTIVES CAN AFFORD



senior manager lives in a detached house," he says

Nonetheless, observers feel KFI's survey — which appeared in *The Sunday Times* in London last week — will influence potential SA emigrants and international executives considering a move to Johannesburg.

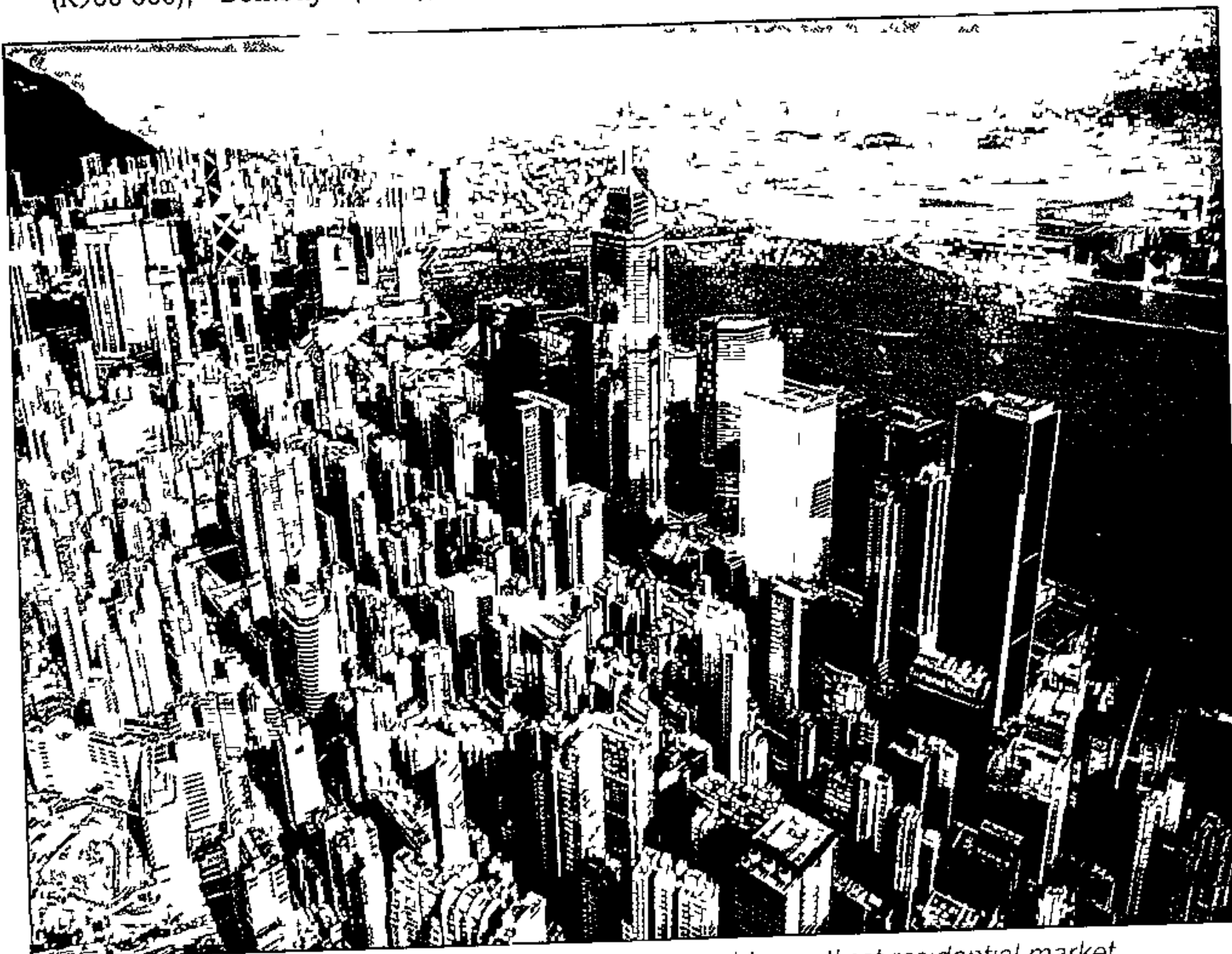
Pam Golding Properties Gauteng MD Ronald Ennik says the average Houghton home costs R900 000. This is confirmed by sales statistics from competitor Lew Geffen, which puts Johannesburg at the same ratio as Brussels — 2:11 times the average annual executive salary — at the lowest end of the survey.

"We've done no formal research into international prices," says Ennik. "But we have lots of contact with executives from cities worldwide and they keep remarking about our uniquely low house prices."

"We also know that Cape Town is consistently voted one of the top seven resort cities in the world and its house prices are ridiculously low compared to those of the other six."

"Johannesburg house prices are much lower than Cape Town's so I have little doubt we are more affordable than other major world cities," he says.

Ian Fife



Hong Kong & harbour eagle's eye view of the world's costliest residential market

EXPOSED

We track down man behind rubbish-dump homes scandal

ST 12/10/97

(127)

CHRIS BARRON

THIS man was responsible for one of the most disgraceful housing scams in South African history

The people he ripped off have been trying to find him for years — this week we tracked him down to a mansion in Bryanston, Johannesburg

Building contractor Piet Smit and a partner built homes on a rubbish dump in Soweto and sold them to eager buyers for around R65 000 nearly 10 years ago

Within two years the rubbish subsided and the houses started cracking up, literally

Smit and his partner, Tony Baxter, were branded "unscrupulous" by a commission of inquiry. A top bank official said their behaviour was the worst example she had seen of a community being "totally ripped off"

Just two years after the houses were built, the SA Bureau of Standards found "very serious signs" of construction defects

Furious residents won 17 default judgments against the developers' company, Group Housing Corporation. But when lawyers tried to execute the judgments, which were not contested, the company was found to be an empty shell with no assets

The residents were left high and dry, committed to repaying banks for worthless houses

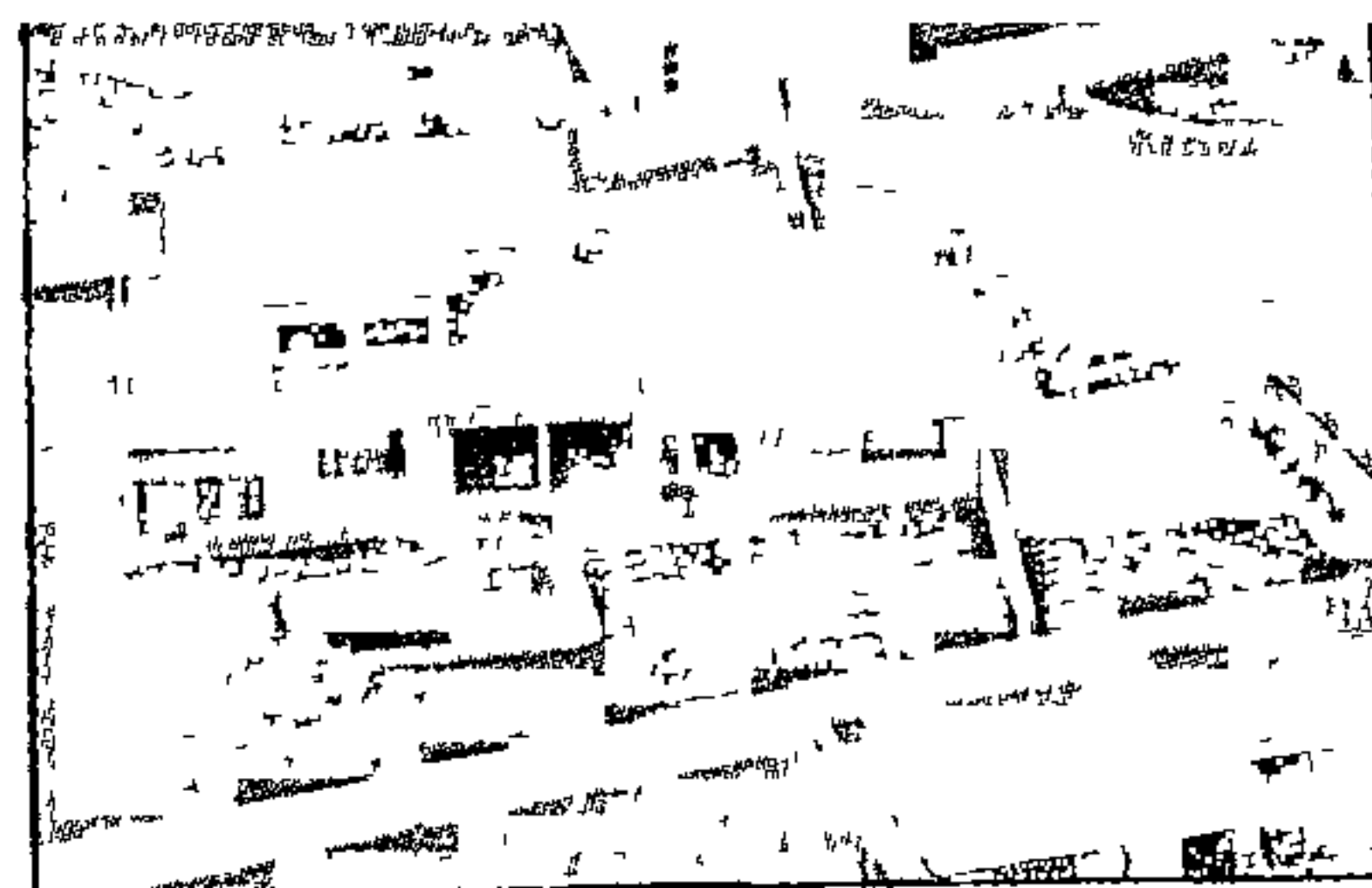
Meanwhile, the men who sold them the houses vanished. Baxter went to England and Smit remained in the building industry under the guise of closed corporations and firms with constantly changing names

A commission of inquiry called in 1994 by the administrator of the then Transvaal accused both men of having had only one aim: maximising profits at residents' expense

Two weeks ago a geotechnical survey of the houses found that some of them were built on a rubbish dump. Between four and six were so dangerous they would have to be demolished and rebuilt from scratch

Ian Cruickshank, the architect commissioned to prepare a report on the houses, said essential repairs would cost about R2,5-million, more than a third of the original cost of the entire project

"This is an indictment of the system, that we have allowed these kinds of developments to be



LAP OF LUXURY: Where we found developer Piet Smit
Picture: RAYMOND PRESTON

HIS VICTIMS' HOUSES



THINGS FALL APART: When the cracks started showing, Themi Ntlheng (above) and Michael Nong (below) were among residents who were left repaying bank loans for their worthless houses
Pictures: ELIZABETH SEJAKE



built," he said "Ninety percent of the blame is the developer's"

Sharon Trail, general manager of the Council of Southern African Banks, told a recent hearing of the Gauteng legislature's committee on housing and land affairs that this was "the most egregious example of absolute exploitation of inexperienced first-time home buyers I've yet come across"

When the Sunday Times tracked down Smit, 50, to a palatial house in Bryanston, he blamed the fiasco on his former partner. He claimed he had been in charge only of marketing and selling the houses and had had nothing to do with the way they were built

"The allegations against me are completely false and untrue," he said "I was never personally trying to do anyone in I didn't make a fortune, I lost a fortune"

He said he knew nothing about judgments against him. But Odette Geldenhuys, the lawyer acting for the residents, said she personally had handed the relevant papers to him

Brian Leveson, managing trustee of the National Housing Forum Trust, said consumers in South Africa had no statutory protection against developers who went insolvent or disappeared

He said black home buyers had been "ripped off outrageously" by developers in the 80s, after the government allowed them to own their own houses



BUILDER

Samwu slams town council

ET (OR) 17/10/97
FRANK NXUMALO

(127) LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg — The South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) slammed the Nelspruit town council yesterday for allegedly allowing Bwater, the British multinational company, to set township water and services rates using infrastructure subsidised by government

Bwater has been selected as the "preferred bidder" in a 30-year water and sanitation privatisation contract valued at nearly R250 million

Samwu said it was "a complete disgrace" that a few members of the town council had pushed through the privatisation process despite opposition from Cosatu

Roelf Kotze, the chief executive officer of the Nelspruit town council, said Bwater had been selected as the preferred bidder and there had been "all sorts of allegations" against it and the other bidder

"We are not interested in investigating these allegations. The company was chosen solely on its technical ability and because it satisfied the requirements of the request for proposals," said Kotze

NEWS

The shame of Hillbrow's slumlords

(127)

Star 17/10/1947

Buildings are infested with rats, and some are fire hazards or have structural defects

By **ROSEMARY VICTOR**

Many Hillbrow slumlords are neglecting their buildings and leaving residents to live in squalor, according to Johannesburg mayor Isaac Mogase. "There are buildings that are infested with rats living in piles of garbage, and many buildings are fire hazards or have serious structural defects."

On Wednesday, municipal teams collected nearly 9 tons of rubbish from the streets and lanes of Hillbrow, said Richard Brown, co-ordinator of Johannesburg's metropolitan police research unit. Some lanes were so clogged with builders' rubble the teams could not even enter, he said. The neglect had made Hillbrow a breeding ground for crime, Mogase said.

He was speaking after the first day of a massive cleanup of the area, which has the reputation of being the Johannesburg suburb with the most crime. Police have increased their patrols of the suburb to crack down on criminals and illegal immigrants. Rory Robertshaw of the metro council said 60 suspected illegal immigrants were arrested yesterday. A total of 80 illegal immigrants were

arrested on Wednesday, the first day of the campaign. Three suspects were arrested yesterday for possession of stolen property. The crackdown had brought an astonishing array of problems to the fore and revealed a disturbing picture of a community in crisis, Mogase said. "We have to adopt a new approach to crime. We cannot always go in with the big stick

— we have to uplift the living conditions of law-abiding citizens so that we can restore the area and make it safe and crime free," he said.

The focus moved yesterday to Goldreich and Van der Merwe streets, where environmental health teams continued to inspect buildings and issue statutory notices to those landlords whose buildings posed health and safety hazards.

Residents blame Sanco for 'scam'

CP 19/10/97

By JIMMY SLLE

(127)

Residents and back... the spirit... his... and north... the East Rand... been... found... women... The... collision... the Metropolitan... and Sanco... scam... distancing themselves from the... insist that their... Sanco... the organisation's executive... has confirmed... ed that various... opened against... ready tied the township' but... was... of... have... Already some of the helpless... are said to be demand-

... from... that the... house... turned... had been... request... person Give Ndhlalane told City Press that his office has had many complaints from many of the residents who have been allegedly defrauded. Ndhlalane said it was scandalous... were not "taking money away from the pool." Ndhlalane called on Sanco to "come clean" on the matter as it risked losing all credibility with the community. He also appealed to residents who have fallen prey to the alleged scam to come to the ANC offices in Tembisa so that proper investigation could be conducted. Sanco's majola said his organisation had already tried to... and tried to... her. "But when we went to try and lay charges against the... that because it was not us who were allegedly defrauded. They said that the residents had to lay charges," he said.

Housing delivery on deadline, but state threatens budget cuts

CP 19/10/97
(127)

ANY BUDGET allocations of less than R4.6 billion for the 1998/99 financial year would fail to meet the national housing target.

He said the department of finance and state expenditure had reneged on commitments for allo-

clear understanding of project cycles was required.

Mofokeng said the country faced an estimated backlog of between 1.5 million houses, of which 750 000 were said to be in Gauteng.

There were indications that the backlog had increased from the previous figure of 1.5 million and that it would continue to increase.

The delivery rate required to clear the backlog and cater for new households over the next 10 years was 375 000 houses annually.

During the year 1996/97 the national housing department and provincial departments were not allocated any money because of roll-over funds unspent in the previous year.

Mofokeng said it was unheard of that any depart-

ment - never mind one as important as housing - could not receive an allocation in a financial year.

"The crippling effects of this ill-informed strategy are being felt now." - Sapa

He said the department of finance and state expenditure had reneged on commitments for allocations to the housing department and the African National Congress in particular.

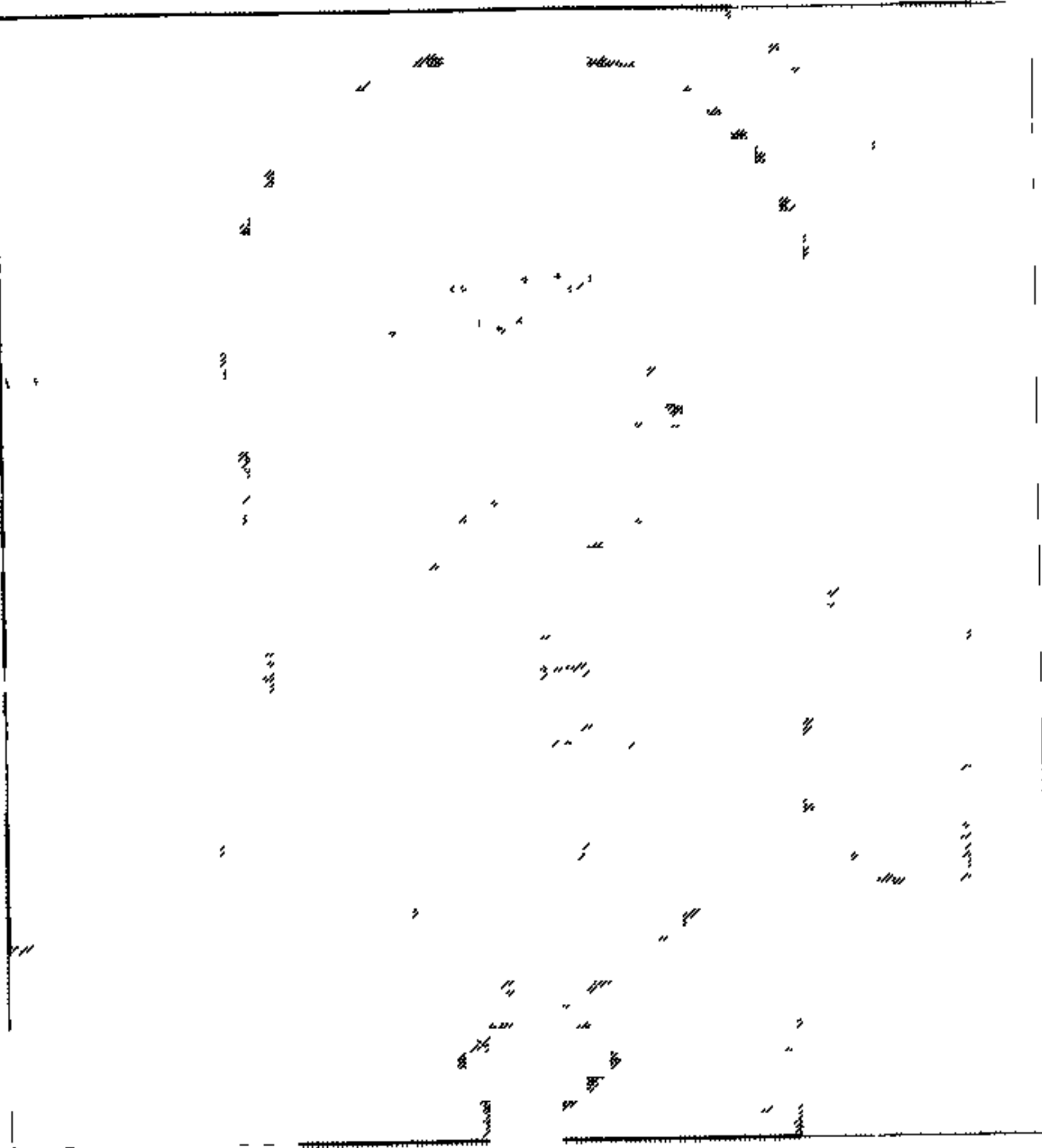
Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng will be presenting the 1998/1999 budget to parliament next Wednesday.

She will report on progress and provide plans for the future.

Mofokeng said at this stage housing delivery had picked up and indications were that the national housing target would be met. He said the department's commitment to meeting the target was funding, which would enable provinces to deliver.

cations to the housing department.

This year alone, the department was promised R3 billion but was instead allocated only R2.4 billion. For targets to be met, a



'DELIVERY'S PICKED UP'... Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs MEC, Dan Mofokeng says housing targets can be met

Housing official to face music

(127)
Sowetan 22/10/97

Official fails to organise induction courses and performance appraisals

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG head of housing and land affairs, Mr Enos Ngutshane, who has been suspended from his position, is to face several charges, including neglecting or failing to introduce proper accounting systems that could have prevented the theft of R8,5 million earmarked for low-cost housing.

Ngutshane, who was suspended by MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng, is due to answer the charges at a special hearing to be held in his department next week, department spokesman Mr Manase Sefatle said yesterday.

The charges include failing to introduce a proper accounting system to regulate the management of the housing subsidy with regards to housing finance.

This negligence in failing to implement the accounting system allegedly allowed abuse to take place, such as the theft of about R8,5 million by Mr Louis Botha, a senior housing department official.

Botha was subsequently found guilty and sentenced in the

Johannesburg Magistrate's Court earlier this year to 31 years' imprisonment.

Ngutshane is also alleged to have failed to act against Mr Chris van den Heever, administration officer in the department, when it was brought to his attention that he (Van den Heever) had allegedly stolen R3 220 from a member of the public.

He is also alleged to have appointed consultants Adonisi and Associates without proper regard for treasury instructions and tender board regulations.

According to the charge sheet, some of the members in that company were Ngutshane's friends.

Appraisals

He is also alleged to have failed to organise induction courses and performance appraisals on staff on a quarterly basis, and is alleged to have failed to restructure the department tender board despite a decision to this effect at management level.

Another charge is that he disregarded and disobeyed instructions from MEC Mofokeng not to enter the department's offices while on suspension.

Dismay over Jo'burg council services cuts

(127)

Bid to rein in R130-million a month overspending will hit
roads and pavement maintenance

Nov 24/10/97

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
AND **CECILIA RUSSELL**
City Desk

Ratepayer groups in Johannesburg today expressed dismay at the cutbacks in some services which the cash-strapped Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council is to implement.

They says the cutbacks mean further deterioration of what they perceive as an already low level of service delivery

The council announced yesterday that attempts to rein in overspending of about R130-million a month are set to hit some services.

"Non-essential" services such as the cutting of grass and the maintenance of roads and street lights will be the first to suffer.

The cuts - which are not expected to affect basic services such as the provision of electricity, water and refuse removal - were announced yesterday at the first briefing of a technical task team established

to rescue the local authorities from bankruptcy

The Observatory Ratepayers' Association treasurer Thelma Hurley said her suburb already had an "air of deterioration and neglect".

Hurley said cutbacks on road maintenance were particularly worrying as already roads in the area were potholed and badly in need of repair.

DP councillor Claire Quail said her party was concerned with the deterioration of services, particularly of roads. The road maintenance budget had already been cut from R12-million last year to R3-million this year which was not adequate to keep the roads in Johannesburg's Eastern council maintained.

The NP's Johan Killian said while the service provision, deterioration was inevitable because of the overspending, once "infrastructure is allowed to deteriorate it would cost ten times as much to fix it up".

The cutbacks are part of a range of austerity measures the councils are implementing

in an attempt to break a crisis which has seen workers sit idle because of a lack of supplies

Other measures to cut costs include retrenching staff to reduce the salaries bill, the councils' major expense.

"We've been trimming the fatty excess. Now we are going to cut the meat we can afford to do without," said Kenny Fihla, chairman of the "Committee of 10" created this month to revise the five councils' budgets.

The committee - which has to report back to local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka on November 10 - is advised by a technical task team comprising independent consultants and headed by chartered accountant Jeff van Rooyen.

While it was too early to confirm which services would be affected, Fihla indicated that grass-cutting and the frequency of refuse collection in certain areas would be reduced.

The task team also revealed yesterday that about R30-million from regional services council (RSC) levies had gone missing every year since 1993.



Security firm employees prepare to evict 87 Vosloorus families for defaulting on their bond repayments yesterday, shortly before the evictions were called off to prevent possible disruptions to the writing of matric examinations.

Picture TYRONE ARTHUR

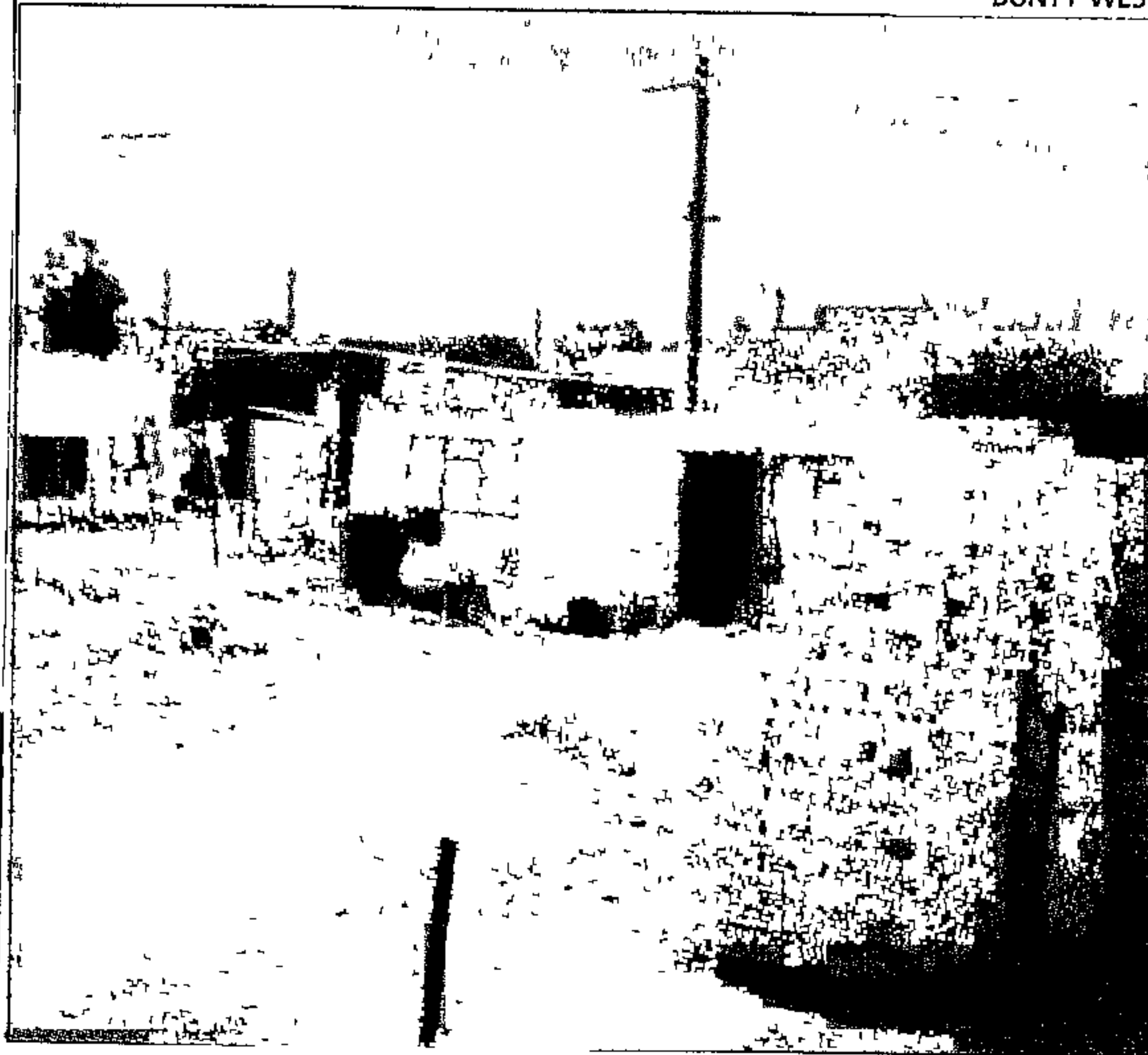
Nedcor calls off evictions

~~34~~ (127)
Pule Molebeledi
BD 22/10/97
THE fear of jeopardising the writing of matric examinations was the main reason behind Nedcor Bank's and Vosloorus community leaders' decision to suspend yesterday's planned eviction of 87 families in debt to the bank.

The evictions were called off after an urgent meeting between officials of the African National Congress (ANC), SA National Civics Organisation, Servcon and Nedcor. The houses are believed to have already been repossessed.

ANC branch chairman Mthutuzeli Sibozza said the major concern was fear that unscrupulous elements would use the potentially explosive situation to derail the matric examinations.

Sibozza said most of the people not paying had genuine hardships, but did not want to come forward and be put in the Servcon programme, which tries to resolve the issue of nonpayment with the banks.



With a "savings deposit" of bricks which she has bought, this Tshepong client will lay a new foundation while continuing to live in her house in the back of the property. Yet tens of thousands of homeless people in Gauteng may not be as fortunate.

The homeless arrive more quickly than new houses do

Star 28/11/97

(127)

BY THEMBA SEPOTKELE
City Reporter

The future of Gauteng's homeless people, who are waiting to be allocated land, hangs in the balance because of the large numbers that migrate to the province and occupy vacant land illegally.

According to recent research, a third of the about one million foreigners waiting to be granted South African citizenship are in Gauteng. About 20 000 people from other provinces migrate to the province every month.

The acting head of Gauteng's housing and land affairs department, David Lefutso, said the department's Mayibuye programme, aimed at identifying and allocating land to the homeless, might have to increase its R30-million budget because demands for land had rocketed.

He said the programme aimed to allocate land to 35 000 families by the end of 1999, but 67 000 applications for land had been received.

Lefutso said that while the Government was committed to spending more money to speed up housing delivery, the number of immigrants had increased drastically.

However, Lefutso said the Housing Ministry, in conjunction with the South African Police Services and the

Justice Department, had taken measures to prevent land invasion and to arrest culprits.

"The department is concerned about the slow progress in releasing land. As indicated by the Gauteng migration statistics, our province is hard pressed to release land. At the same time people have resorted to illegal occupation of land, especially land earmarked for development," Dan Mofokeng, the housing MEC said.

**About 20 000
people
migrate
to Gauteng
every month**

■ A squatter hotline has been set up by the Western council which will accept complaints about illegal squatting.

The council is concerned about the situation and has set up a 24-hour service to control and monitor informal settlements and land invasions.

The telephone numbers are 766-2166 extension 3111 (during working hours or, after hours (011) 760-5845.

New data casts doubt on next phase of Highlands Water Project

Water shock for Gauteng

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL

INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

Johannesburg — The second phase of the \$4 billion Lesotho Highlands Water Project, an interbasin water transfer scheme to supply Gauteng with water from the Orange river, may be scaled down or dropped altogether, sources close to the project said recently.

The sources said new data indicated that there might not be sufficient water available for a fully fledged second phase of the project.

Sources within the water affairs department said initial studies into the available water were "over-optimistic" and were hampered by poor rainfall data.

Paul Roberts, the deputy director-general of the water affairs department, said there was some capacity of further water to draw but the exact quantity had not been determined. The final quantity would be influenced by environmental and political concerns over the quantity of water that would flow down the Orange river to Namibia.

Roberts said a report on the

(127) ET (BR) 29/10/97
Orange River Planning Study, which will examine the quantity of water that could be drawn off, would only be released next year.

The report is likely to have significant economic consequences for Lesotho because it could lead to a downward adjustment of the royalties paid by South Africa to Lesotho. The fixed royalty of R5,4 million a month (in 1995 rands) was based on the original estimates of water flow.

Mike Muller, the director-general of the water affairs department, said a new calculation of the royalty and further phases of the project were discussed earlier this month between Kader Asmal, the water affairs minister, and his Lesotho counterpart, Shahkane Mokhehle.

Govt dismisses Samwu's water concession jitters

Deborah Fine

PO 30/10/97

(127)

THE provincial affairs and constitutional development department has reacted strongly to claims by the SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) that the proposed greater Nelspruit water concession will lead to job losses and massive increases in service tariffs.

The 30-year concession was awarded last month by the greater Nelspruit town council to private SA consortium Metsi A Sechaba, which is backed by British firm Bwater. The council said the public/private sector partnership would dramatically speed up the delivery of affordable water and sanitation services in the area, especially in previously disadvantaged areas.

Samwu members, the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the SA Communist Party marched on the council's offices on Monday, demanding the suspension of the concession on the

grounds that privatisation led to large-scale retrenchments and unaffordable service rates for poor communities.

The concession has received the support of the department which views Nelspruit as an important pilot project in the department's investigation into public/private sector partnerships as a means of furthering the reconstruction and development programme.

Dismissing Samwu's claims regarding Nelspruit as "absolutely wrong", department deputy director-general Chippy Olver said yesterday the consortium was chosen as the preferred bidder because of its commitment to service charges which were even lower than the council's tariffs. Moreover, the project would not result in a single retrenchment because the consortium would absorb all the workers affected by the concession at better salaries and conditions of employment, as well as greater training opportunities.

NO POWER to the people as limit drops

Star 30/10/97

(127)

In wake of court decision, even small arrears can lead to electricity cuts by cash-strapped councils

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Cash-strapped local authorities will have to cut off electricity water and other municipal services to people who owe as little as R50 if they take action against defaulters who owe hundreds of thousands.

This is the result of a landmark court judgment, handed down by the Johannesburg High Court on October 16, which breaks with the tradition of councils deliberately targeting people who can afford to pay for services but don't.

Local government expert David Solomon said the judgment entered a fairly dangerous area because credit-control measures were discretionary. He said the judgment meant councils would be forced to act against residents who owed just R100 as well as those who owed thousands, hindering councils from initiating steps to recover billions owed to them in arrears.

Another expert, Professor Servaas van den Berg, said the judgment could result in stricter discipline being enforced in townships, or in measures to recover payments from former white areas being relaxed.

The court ordered the Kempton Park/Thembisa Metropolitan Substructure to cut off electricity to any defaulter who had not made financial arrangements, to maintain a blackout until the account had been paid, to take steps, including legal action, to recover

Jaap Kelder in 1995 after it failed to cut off electricity to Thembisa defaulters, despite resolving to do so. The Kempton Park council argued that cutting off services did not take into account 10 years of rent boycotts and said it would require education and patience to break the culture of non-payment. But the court found Kempton Park had defaulted on its duty by not enforcing its decision.

Where a local authority did not put an end to the abuse, a court would order it to do so at the insistence of an aggrieved ratepayer, the court said. While Kelder hailed the judgment as a sign that the "courts could still be relied upon to stop lawlessness", the council said it set a bad precedent for South African local authorities by taking away their right to exercise decisions. Spokesman Bheki Khumalo said Kempton Park would appeal because it had implemented strict credit-control measures and because the court "does not want us to apply discretion". Greater Johannesburg metro council spokesman Geoff O'Connell said the actions introduced were not in violation of the judgment. "Credit-control measures are applied in all areas. It applies to everybody, it's just the sequence (that varies)."

Civil case brought by resident to cut off defaulters

The civil case was brought against the council by resident

Doing business in the shadow of

MTC 81/10-6/11/97

(127)

A decade after the removal of restrictions Soweto remains a ghetto but a development plan is on the cards, writes Charlene Smith

In the 1980s, when the vision of the creation of a black middle class became fashionable, businesspeople almost salivated at the tremendous opportunities they saw opening up with the removal of apartheid business restrictions. As is often the case, the fantasy proved better than the reality.

Almost a decade after the removal of restrictions on trading in the township for white business, and in and outside the township for black business, Soweto, but for minibus-

loads of tourists, proliferating fast-food outlets and the occasional small shopping area, is still the same old ghetto. Growth has been strangled

by poverty, the remnants of the boycott culture and the endless community interest groups that want to vet every move business or the public sector makes.

Bohannu Shubambu, investment officer manager for Soweto, which falls under the Southern Metropolitan Local Council, says the lack of a solid development plan for Soweto has hampered investment. "The private sector cannot commit resources because it cannot see what will happen in 10 or 15 years' time."

However, this shortfall is being remedied. The council's planning department is finalising a Soweto development framework and Wits Uni-

versity has almost completed a sociological survey of Soweto, which will help guide future strategies. A similar survey conducted by Vista University gives a dismal view of the shadow city.

● Of the estimated 1-million population (an estimate that hasn't changed in almost two decades), Vista says 600 000 people live in council houses, 90 000 in private homes, 328 000 in backyard rooms or shacks, 65 000 in informal settlements, 50 000 in hostels and 44 000 in site and service homes.

● 84% of homes have electricity, ● 52% of the population are female and 48% male, around 40% of households are headed by women, 57% of whom had their first child before marrying with many not marrying at all. One in five of married women said they were beaten by their husbands.

● 42% of employed Sowetans are in service industries, 34% are manual workers and 18% are in middle-class occupations, ● The median household income is between R1 000 and R1 250,

● 31% of adults are unemployed and looking for work, ● 74,2% of youth between 16 and 25 are unemployed and looking for work,

● The unemployed have on average been seeking jobs for 30 months

Based on this picture of acute poverty and social deprivation there is little wonder that businesses are not flocking to Soweto, and those that have are finding it an uphill battle. But the future is never static and perhaps the clearest and

most optimistic vision comes from Sanlam general manager for investments, Alan le Roux. Although Sanlam's Dobsonville shopping centre was held up as an example of the dismal failure of shopping centres in townships, he remains

unfazed and says that developments in new previously under-resourced areas form the most exciting portfolio in property today.

"We have developments worth about R900-million in undeveloped areas. The Chatsworth centre in Dur-

ban is an example, it and the centre in Phoenix have been adopted by the communities they are in, and are doing very well," says Le Roux.

"In Dobsonville and Daveyton the centres are doing reasonably well, the main challenge is to get people to shop at their local shopping centre. In the 1970s when shopping centres were first built in the suburbs, white people would still go to town. It took a long time to get them to switch their shopping habits to shopping centres."

Le Roux notes "People are leaving townships and finding life is not better in the suburbs, they miss that community spirit and their social life disappears. The middle to upper class will move away and settle in richer suburbs, but as the townships develop and improve, more people will stay in their communities."

"We are all on a steep learning curve. Retailers are learning to stock the right goods for the community they are in. Dobsonville is a very specific market in Soweto, they need to understand their community well."

"There are too many interest groups involved, everyone says they want the development and then goes out of their way to hamper it with ever-changing demands," the managing director complained. The low incomes earned by many of those who live in townships and a culture where rentals have never been paid by shopowners mean that property managers may find they spend month after month chasing rentals,

they had stuck to already developed areas. "There are too many interest groups involved, everyone says they want the development and then goes out of their way to hamper it with ever-changing demands," the managing director complained. The low incomes earned by many of those who live in townships and a culture where rentals have never been paid by shopowners mean that property managers may find they spend month after month chasing rentals,

But there is still resistance to white business coming into black areas. Developers find that months of negotiations with the community may ensue and sometimes community leaders change and negotiations have to recommence. One major emerging black company that has tried to make headway in township developments has found it a struggle, with the rewards lower than it

Investment Office notes that Jabulani central business district will soon see Checkers and OK Bazaars stores opening. The OK is also planning a store in Orlando West and developments are expected around a new sports and recreation centre to be built in Naledi.

Le Roux says that over time other developments will spring up around shopping centres such as small office blocks. "There is more growth in the Dobsonvilles and Daveyton, however, than at a Fourways or a Sandton City, which have less potential for growth because the rich population they serve is finite, while in Soweto more of the population are likely to double their income over the next five years."

Gauteng limits cost and size of houses

Robyn Chalmers

(127) BD 3/11/97
GAUTENG has set limits on the cost of stands and the size of houses to be built under its low-cost housing programme, says housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng.

The total cost of site provision is limited to R7 000 a stand and the size of the building — which must be designed so it can be extended — to 30m².

Mofokeng last week outlined a new strategy to improve value delivered by the subsidy, saying 65% of people in the low-cost housing market had no access to additional end-user finance.

"We have taken a decision to limit the cost of land, servicing of stands and transfer of property to R7 000 per stand," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Houses

(127) BD 3/11/97
Continued from Page 1

"If local authorities wish to improve the standard of internal services they must make financial contributions from their own resources."

Gauteng had 120 000 houses and stands completed or under construction and had delivered water and sanitation to more than half a million people in three years, Mofokeng said.

Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele has criticised the construction sectors' hesitance to enter the low-cost housing market because they

"claim the profits are little, the processes and procedures cumbersome".

Mthembu-Mahanyele said the 12m², 18m² and 20m² shelters produced in certain cases were "an embarrassment to all of us and a blatant insult to the beneficiary" South Africans could no longer be the victims of developers who did not take affordability levels into account, or of municipalities that demanded unrealistic service levels.

She also took banks to task, saying 104 000 minimal loans valued at R7bn had been issued to date to applicants who earned more than R1 500.

"Those below remain shut out of the credit mortgage systems of our conventional banking institutions," she said.

Housing subsidy increase 'unlikely'

Robyn Chalmers

DD 6/11/97

(127)

IT WAS highly unlikely that the housing ministry would accept Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng's recent proposal to increase the top subsidy to R19 000 from the present R15 000, industry sources said yesterday.

The sources said that constraints on government's budget and recent warnings from the finance ministry about provincial overspending meant the proposal was unlikely to be approved.

Earlier this week, Mofokeng

said his department had proposed a R19 000 subsidy which was discussed at a meeting attended by the nine provincial housing MECs and Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele. Mthembu-Mahanyele could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Mofokeng said the proposal was influenced by the inflation rate which had pushed up the cost of building materials and labour.

As the increase was a proposal to the national ministry, Mofokeng said he had requested that the ministry investigate the effect

of the proposed hike on the housing-subsidy budget and on the subsidies available.

Mofokeng also warned that the target of 1-million houses by 1999 would not be met unless government allocated R4,6bn in the next financial year to housing and R5,2bn the following year. He said housing departments had not been allocated new money this year because of the roll-over of unspent funds. "What this ignored is the expenditure pattern in any mass-delivery programme. Low levels in the first year are typical."

Land affairs director warns of imminent land invasions in

Robyn Chalmers

GAUTENG is expecting a wave of land invasions next year and legislation to deal fairly with the homeless is vital, says Gauteng land affairs director Carren Engelbrecht.

Engelbrecht said international experience had shown a country was seen as a particularly "soft" target in the year before an election, and it was likely the spate of land invasions around SA would gain momentum.

"It is impossible to provide formal housing for the estimated 20 000 people flooding into Gauteng each month, the majority of whom have a right to housing. A range of strategies is needed to cope with this situation."

The majority of invasions to date had taken place in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. A provincial spokesman said Gauteng's Mayibuye programme was going into overdrive to cope with the problem. More than 4 000 sites had been

released to date and it was expected that 36 000 sites would be released for settlement over the next year.

Engelbrecht said the land invasions were highly organised, and targeted people who had nowhere else to go. People tended to settle on flood plains, rubbish dumps, dolomite land and school, church and clinic sites.

Typically, it cost squatters R80 a month for a site. Of this, R50 was rental, R20 protection money and R10 for a legal defence fund.

(127) 82 711197

"The organisers tend either to be grassroots leaders or people who promise they can deliver housing when elected politicians cannot," she said. This action had the potential to undermine local government. "These people have no safety or security and no access to social services. Effectively, it allows them to jump the housing queue and impedes development."

She said legislation was desperately needed which would allow for a fair eviction procedure. This was part of

the thinking behind the Unlawful Occupation of Land Bill, which is likely to be redrawn.

One of the more controversial clauses in the draft bill is that an in-depth inquiry is needed where land owners wish to evict people who have been resident for more than a year. Engelbrecht said the aim was to differentiate between new invasions and longstanding settlements where people had, in many cases, built their own social structures and formal housing.

Gauteng

Council plans to blacklist defaulters

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Residents who consistently refuse to pay for municipal services could be blacklisted from next month, when the Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council and its four local authorities are expected to take a hard line on defaulters.

The potential blacklisting is part of a move to tighten up credit-control measures to recover the R1,8-billion owed to the five local authorities and forms part of a review of the councils' books and operations.

The review was ordered by Local Government MEC Sicele Shiceka last month to try to

break a crippling cash crisis which had forced the local authorities to default on payments to all their creditors and to abandon certain projects and services in favour of others. The review, to be finalised by Monday, is being undertaken by a technical task team of independent accountants.

In terms of the new policy, "habitual defaulters" could be blacklisted from December onwards by having their names included on credit bureau listings. The councils are considering establishing an "internal blacklisting register of evasive customers". All new customers will also have to pay two months' deposit from next month.

(127)

STAN 7/11/97

Johsburg poised to put squeeze on ratepayers

Cash-strapped city will cut corners and put pressure on even the smallest debtors to pull itself out of crisis

By Lee-Ann Alfreds
City Desk

Tough new measures to recover money from defaulters and a R1.5-billion parring of this year's budget are expected to allow the Greater Johannesburg metro council to break even for the first time in years.

The strict new credit-control policy and 12% cut in the budget were announced at the weekend as part of a review of the financial situation of the Greater Johannesburg council and its four local authorities.

In terms of the new credit-control policy, Greater Johannesburg is to target residents who owe R50 as well as those

who owe hundreds of thousands, to recover about R1,8-million in service arrears. Any resident with an outstanding account of more than 30 days will be targeted.

For residents who owe between R301 and R1 500, letters of demand will follow the normal monthly statements. If the letter of demand is ignored, the defaulter's electricity will be cut.

Residents who owe more than R1 500 will receive telephone calls and personal visits from senior officials, followed by letters of demand and the cutting of electricity and water. "Habitual defaulters" could also be blacklisted. The new credit-control pol-

icy will be implemented immediately.

To effect the 12% cut in the R5.5-billion operating budget, the councils will freeze vacant posts and increase the interest rate charged to residents to prime.

Essential services, such as the provision of electricity and water, will not be affected.

The review was ordered by Local Government MEC Sicele Shiceka last month to rein in monthly overspending of R130-million, and stave off a crippling cash crisis which had forced the councils to default on payments to creditors and to abandon certain services in favour of others. A technical task team com-

Star 10/11/97

(127)

prising independent accountants and a "committee of 10", composed of two executive members from each council, undertook the review.

Technical task team member Steve Durrant said close on R500-million would be cut from the operating budget, which is used to pay salaries, contractors and materials.

This would be done by freezing about 19 000 vacant posts, not filling positions which will go vacant during the year, cutting general running expenses, having to pay reduced charges for capital projects, and increasing the interest rates.

He said a further R200-million would be saved from "other operating items" and R50-mil-

lion from the reduction in capital charges.

The council would make an additional R75-million from increasing the interest it charged residents.

About R1-billion would be cut from the capital budget (the money used for building roads and drains) by funding only already-committed projects, task team member Phil Smnett said.

This would leave the councils with capital projects of R645-million, most of which would be funded by a loan from the Development Bank of SA. The R585-million loan will be signed today and will be used to pay Eskom and other creditors. The first R200-million in-

statement of the loan is expected almost immediately, task team chairman Jeff van Rooyen said. He said the cuts in the budget, together with the tougher credit-control measures, would allow the councils to break even this year.

But Van Rooyen said that to succeed, the task team and councils would have to work extremely hard over the next couple of months.

He said he also believed that if the budget were balanced, it would restore investor confidence in the councils, which would allow them to raise the money they needed for capital projects. (Capital projects are traditionally funded by long-term loans.)

Settlement's R13-m for water

By Jimmy Tloti

(127)

Source: n/11/97

THE Chris Ham informal settlement on the East Rand will receive a grant of R13 million to fund water supply and sanitation services

The project is backed by the Greater Benoni City Council and the Gauteng government. There are 2 250 stands in the township situated near Daveyton.

The government, parastatals, councillors and communities unanimously agreed to the township's layout.

The stands will be allocated to residents of the township according to their length of stay in the area.

This means that the longest staying residents will receive first option to purchase stands.

Chairman of Greater Benoni City Council's Executive Committee Naweed Hassan said "Stands will be pegged and a general plan will be submitted to the surveyor-general. The installation of water and sanitation services and the promulgation of the township will follow shortly."

Residents in for a ⁽¹²⁹⁾ big shock

Sowetan
By Joshua Raboroko

11/11/97

HUNDREDS of thousands of consumers – particularly residents of Soweto – will be in for a shock this week when the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council introduces new strict control measures in an attempt to recover R1,7 billion owed to it.

The council has proposed strict control measures and a R500 million cut on its operating budget to overcome its cash flow crisis, a spokesman for a team investigating the council's financial problems, Mr Willie Ramoshaba, said yesterday.

The team was appointed by Gauteng MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka.

In terms of the new credit control policy, the council aims to target residents who owe R50 as well as those who owe hundreds of thousands of rands, to recover about R1,8 million in service arrears. Any resident with outstanding accounts of more than 30 days will be targeted.

For example, a resident who owes between R301 and R1 500, will be served with letters of demand following the normal monthly statements. If the letter of demand is ignored, the defaulter's electricity will be cut.

Residents who owe more than R1 500 will receive telephone calls and personal visits from senior officials, followed by letters of demand and the cutting off of electricity and water.

Ramoshaba said teams would be formed to oversee billing, arrears and resultant legal proceedings.

Anyone found tampering with water or electrical equipment could face the removal of the service completely or have legal proceedings instituted against them.

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RENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

2 BUSINESS DAY, Thursday, November 13 1997

Nelspruit council's water plan on 'temporary' hold

Deborah Fing *BD 12/11/97*

THE proposed 30-year water and sanitation partnership between Nelspruit's council, private SA consortium Metsi-a-Sechaba and UK firm Biwater has been "temporarily placed on hold" to allow further consultation with trade unions and other stakeholders, Nelspruit town clerk Roelf Kotzee said yesterday.

The African National Congress-dominated council — which has hailed the partnership as the only way of extending affordable water and sanitation services to all residents in the greater Nelspruit area within a reasonable time — has been accused by the SA Municipal Workers' Union, the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the SA Communist Party of unilaterally deciding to privatise service delivery without sufficiently consulting other interested parties.

An ANC alliance-partners summit would be held in Nelspruit within two to three weeks to allow all stakeholders to debate the matter further

ANC's Turok criticises green paper

Jacob Dlamini

CAPE TOWN — Plans to draw up local government legislation could suffer from the same problems as the reconstruction and development programme unless adequate emphasis was placed on community involvement, African National Congress MP Ben Turok warned yesterday.

Addressing Parliament's constitutional affairs committee hearings on the local government green paper, Turok said the document did not go far enough in recognising the role of municipalities in economic development.

He said the paper failed to strike the right balance between what government could deliver and what community participation could achieve, and unless this was redressed municipalities would suffer.

Turok, who sat on the team which drafted the RDP, said the idea of local develop-

Jailbreakers to serve 80% of sentence before parole

Business Day Reporter *BD 13/11/97*

PRISONERS who escaped from jail and were recaptured would have to serve at least 80% of their total effective sentences before they would be considered for parole, the department of correctional services said yesterday.

The move forms part of the department's tough new measures to clamp down on increasing incidents of jailbreaking, and will apply to awaiting trial prisoners, any person found guilty of attempting to escape from custody, and persons aiding or attempting to aid such escapes.

Any prisoner or awaiting-trial prisoner who escapes more than once will not be considered for parole and will have to complete the full term of effective sentence.

The new measures exclude convicts sentenced to life imprisonment.

ment forums had been contentious and had proved difficult to inscribe in the Development Facilitation Act

He said the green paper, published last month as part of a process aimed at developing a comprehensive framework for new local government legislation, was too loose and too general and that it should encourage the emergence of local economic development forums.

In his submission, Monhla Hlahla, the head of the Development Bank of Southern Africa's private sector investments, urged municipalities to adopt private-public sector partnerships. He said government alone could not fulfil SA's infrastructural needs and that partnerships between municipalities and business would enhance efficiency, improve services and give local government access to additional sources of capital.

He warned, however, that poorly structured partnerships could lead to job losses.

ANC remarks keenly

Agreement ends civics (127) bond boycott

Sanetan 13/11/97
By Joshua Raboroko

CIVIC organisations have ended the bond boycott which cost the South African Housing Trust (SAHT) subsidiary, Khayaletu Home Loans, about R50 million in the past five years

The South African Civic Organisation (Sanco) signed a new agreement with Khayaletu Home Loans after a meeting in Johannesburg, the organisations said in a joint statement yesterday

In terms of the agreement, KHL reaffirmed that it would rectify structural defects to some of the 15 000 low-cost houses built by the financial institution in the past five years

Sanco agreed to end the boycott after KHL promised to repair the defects 18 months ago but resumed the protest in August this year when the repairs were not made

Hundreds of consumers boycotted payment of their bonds after they complained that "serious cracks" and other defects occurred in the newly-built homes

The new agreement involved the Housing Ministry and the Government-created Mortgage Indemnity Fund

The statement said that a major outcome of the negotiations was the recognition of all parties of the need for the Government to be a signatory to the new agreement

Sanco general secretary Mr Mbongeni Ngubeni said yesterday that stakeholders in the agreement could not afford to undermine the important role civics played in resolving problems

KHL managing director Mr Siza Khampepe said they would do their best to honour the new agreement and not jeopardise their relationship with Sanco

Crime-ridden Johannesburg in siege mode

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Local northern suburbs residents have closed off more than 200 roads during the past few months in bids to cut crime. But at least half the closures are illegal, and local councils have served removal

notices on many residents. Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council says barricades - usually booms manned by armed guards - are illegal if they are erected before council approval has been given. The Northern council says all 20 of the blockades in its area are illegal. However, residents tired of wait-

ing for permission to close their suburbs to criminals have gone ahead, at their own expense, and are employing full-time security guards at the entrances to their suburbs.

The Eastern council claims this has led to traffic congestion on certain roads, concentration of pollution, difficulties with refuse removal and increased operating costs. But residents, worried about their safety, have vowed to fight the council all the way.

Rivonia resident Reinoud Boers said no crime had been reported since the beginning of October, when three roads were closed off and one access point with a boom was opened.

AR 14/11/97 (127)

Council amends death row prisoner legislation

CAPE TOWN — The National Council of Provinces' justice committee yesterday amended legislation dealing with prisoners sitting on death row to allow courts to make substitute prison sentences effective from the date on which they were sentenced to death.

Committee chairman Mohseen Moosa (African National Congress) said this was being effected at the request of Chief Justice Ismail Mohamed.

After argument from Democratic Party delegate James Selfe, the committee agreed its report to Justice Minister Dullah Omar would say that courts should feel compelled, when resentencing death row prisoners to jail terms, to take into account the period they had already served.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, introduced after the Constitutional Court's ruling that capital punishment was unconstitutional, provides for setting aside all death sentences and substituting them with other punishments.

In a second amendment to the bill, which was passed earlier this month by the National Assembly, the committee inserted a provision that a court should, if necessary, also hear oral evidence on written submissions in the resentencing procedure.

Its report will also say that in resentencing, courts should take into account all legislation dealing with parole.

The amended bill is to be considered by a council plenary tomorrow, and the National Assembly will be required to ratify the legislation when it reconvenes next week. — Sapa.

~~BD 18/11/97~~ **BD 18/11/97**

Biology exam goes ahead

THE Gauteng matric biology examination was written yesterday despite reports that the paper had been leaked, the province's education department said.

Sixteen people were arrested on Sunday by the department's investigation team after they were allegedly found selling copies of the biology paper at Lenasia, south of Johannesburg.

Gauteng education MEC Mary Metcalfe earlier said the arrests were a breakthrough in the investigation into exam paper leaks, which have dogged examinations in the province. — Sapa.

ANC decides on referendum

Kevin O'Grady

AN EXTENDED African National Congress (ANC) national working committee would decide before the end of the year how to involve the public in the debate on where Parliament should be situated, ANC spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said yesterday.

Addressing a news briefing on a weekend national executive committee meeting, Mamoepa said an earlier executive committee decision that the ANC should have made up its mind about the future seat of Parliament by the end of the year no longer stood.

It was now hoped that by then the extended working committee would have set out deadlines for involving the public and making a final decision.

To suggest that a public referendum might be held on whether Parliament should remain in Cape Town or be moved to Pretoria, Midrand or Bloemfontein would be to pre-empt the outcome of the working committee's deliberations, he said. The issue was not discussed at length at the meeting and would not be on the agenda at next month's conference.

SA NATIONAL Civic Organisation (Sanco) branches in greater Johannesburg announced the disbandment yesterday of its interim regional executive and its replacement by a four-man ad hoc committee.

Sanco Soweto branch chairman Maynard Menu told reporters the interim executive — made up by Nkele Ntingane, Simpiso Thusi, Nick Moghatusi, Philemon Mashitela and Nomsa Mabaso — had been disbanded for failing to set up a "proper" regional structure.

The vote of no confidence followed a meeting of greater Johannesburg branches on Sunday.

Menu said three years was a long time for the structures to have been in place and gave the new committee — made up of himself, Emmanuel Tseleli, Godfrey Kgapola and Mzwanele Mayekiso — until March next year to set up the structures.

"The new committee was mandated to formally inform the members of

~~BD 18/11/97~~ **BD 18/11/97**

Sanco disbands interim executive

the defunct interim committee about the dissolution," Menu said.

He alleged the interim committee undermined branch and provincial committees by ignoring resolutions and decisions arrived at democratically.

He said the interim committee had misguided the national executive on the issue that led to the expulsion of Alexandra branch chairman Mzwanele Mayekiso and the pending court case against him.

Challenging Mayekiso's expulsion, Menu said the branches had not been fully briefed on the reasons by the national executive.

"The Sanco branches in Johannesburg believe that organisational matters cannot be resolved in the courts, but can only be resolved internally, politically in terms of the

organisation's policies and regulations. Sanco cannot be seen to be taking itself to court."

Sanco national general secretary Mbongeni Ngubeni dismissed the allegations and the disbandment of the interim regional executive.

"Mayekiso was expelled from the organisation for violating national executive council decisions and his expulsion still stands.

"We are still going to court on Tuesday and we are not going to withdraw," he said.

He declined to give the reasons for the expulsion, saying the case was sub judice.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee contravened Sanco's constitution, he said.

Interim executive member Simpiso Thusi called the disbandment "a joke" — Sapa.

Zimbabwe

Continued from Page 1

guerrillas' payments were the root of Friday's crisis but said a programme to find money for them — estimated at Z\$4bn maximum — had been put to an International Monetary Fund team.

The team would leave today with "no reason to refuse" resumption of US\$62,5m budget support, he said.

Reserve bank governor Leonard Tsumba said Zimbabwe retained 2,5 months import cover of foreign currency reserves.

Murerwa accused banks of using foreign currency accounts, introduced under post-1991 economic liberalisation laws, to speculate rather than fund development as intended.

They would now be barred from holding more than US\$5m in foreign

currency balances.

Reuter reports economists said SA was not at risk of infection from the currency crisis in Zimbabwe.

"To imagine a direct impact on the SA market because of what is happening in Zimbabwe is unrealistic," said Neil Anderson, forex trading head at UAL Merchant Bank in Johannesburg.

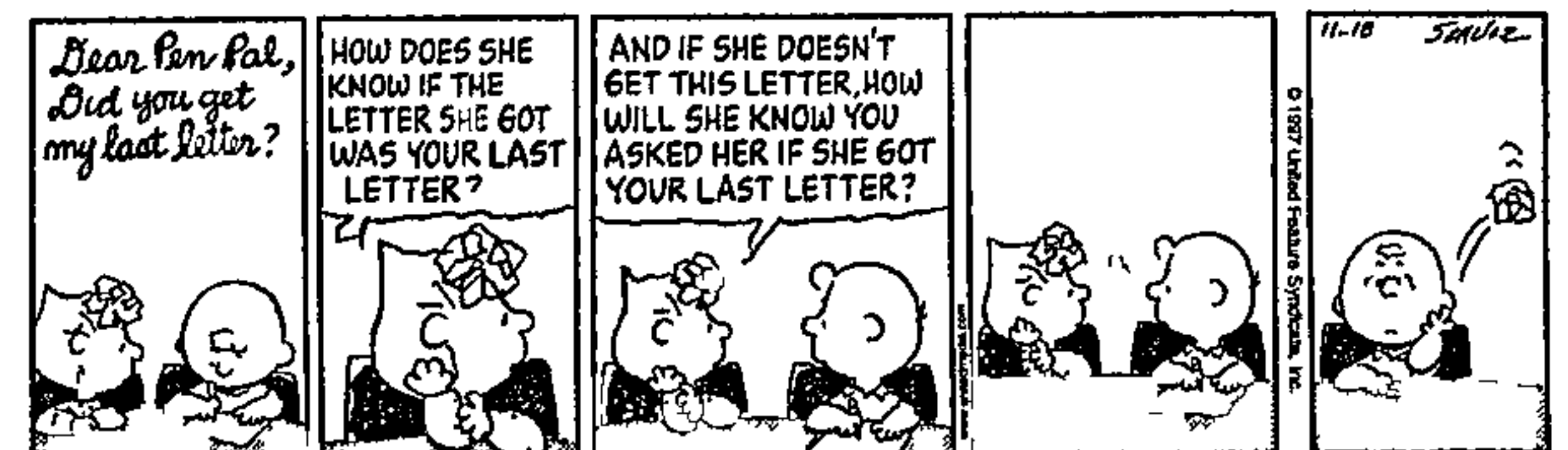
"If the rand gets hit then the other currencies in the region catch a cold, but it doesn't work the other way around," said sub-Saharan analyst James Whittington at ING Barings.

The rand also took comfort on Monday from Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals' assurance that the rand had little to fear from falling gold prices or economic slowdown in east Asia.

Stals said the days of gold calling the shots for the SA economy were long gone and dismissed reports that the rand would suffer from east Asian economic slowdown.

PEANUTS

By Charles Schulz



Sandton rates proposals to be considered

(127)
Pule Molebedi

BO 2111197
THE Gauteng Democratic Party (DP) and ratepayers' associations were considering proposals made by the technical task team appointed by development, planning and local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka to resolve the longstanding Sandton rates boycott.

This followed the DP's extended caucus meeting with the Johannesburg "committee of 10" appointed to solve the city's liquidity crisis, and the technical task team, together with Deloitte & Touche senior partner Jeff van Rooyen.

Van Rooyen said this week it was difficult to point fingers at any particular individual or group for the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council's cash crisis.

Van Rooyen was appointed head of an expert team tasked to revise the budget of the metropolitan council, together with its four local councils, and bring expenditure in line with incoming revenues.

DP leader in the metropolitan council, Mike Moriarty, said the task team informed the meeting of the proposals contained in the report about the budget review.

After the proposals were discussed, the task team invited further input from the residents' associations.

Official's case postponed a second time

(127)

By HOPEWELL RADEBE

Political Staff

Star 25/11/97

The hearing of suspended Gauteng Housing Department director Enos Ngutshane was postponed for the second time yesterday to give his lawyer time to prepare the case.

Ngutshane, who is facing nine charges ranging from misconduct and maladministration to mismanagement, was suspended by Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng in September.

Premier Tokyo Sexwale has appointed attorneys Ratha Mokgoatheng and Johannes Malane to preside over the hearing.

The case was first postponed on November 18 until yesterday be-

Housing director's new lawyer needs more time

cause Ngutshane's former lawyer stopped representing him.

Yesterday, Ngutshane requested a further postponement to give his new lawyer, labour consultant Joe Tshabalala, a chance to familiarise himself with the case. The hearing has now been set for December 8.

Among other charges, Ngutshane has been accused by the Housing Department of nepotism, unbecoming behaviour towards a woman assets manager, and of appointing a firm of consultants without regard for treasury and tender-board regulations. The department alleges that he was on friendly terms with members of the firm.

CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE



Key to the door ... the walls may be bare, but for John and Zena Godlo their new home in Slovoville, on the West Rand, is more than a house, it's a sign of victory.

A new life in their own home

Star 26/11/97

Old mining land becomes township

By BARRY WEST

A five-year battle to save a small township on the West Rand was finally

won this week when residents of Slovoville, formerly South Rodepoort mine, took possession of the first 50 homes to be built on what was previously mining land.

For new homeowners John and Zena Godlo - the first of 50 families to be handed the keys to their own homes by Western council mayor Isaac Padi - it was the beginning of a new life.

"We have been living in a garage for the past five years. Tonight I will sleep in my own home right here," Zena said.

Johannesburg Consol- dated Investments originally owned the land on which Slovo-

(1997)

ville now stands and, when it took over South Rodepoort mine to build Doornkop, decided to bulldoze all the old mine houses.

The residents who still lived there stopped the bulldozers before the last 60 homes were turned to rubble and appealed to the Western Council for help.

The new mine grew up next to Slovoville, but residents held on to the idea that one day the land would be theirs. Finally their pleas were answered. Council bought the land and laid plans for 1 600 homes to be erected.

Built by Stocks and Stocks, the 30 sqm houses were erected with running water and a mains toilet for R8 300 each.

Bulk services and the cost of the land brought the figure to R15 000.

Squatters delay construction plan

(127) Star 26/11/97

BY THEMBA SEPOTKELE

Despite threats of eviction, squatters have erected shacks on the vacant land between Jabulani Amphitheatre and Jabulani Civic Centre, further delaying the construction of a multi-million-rand shopping complex in the area.

The squatters vowed to continue to build shacks despite the council's threats to have them evicted after it obtained a court interdict to pave the way for the construction of a shopping centre by Metropolitan Life.

Two weeks ago squatters from surrounding townships and hostels invaded the land and council security officials demolished their shacks.

When the squatters returned, a person was shot in the leg and arrested after pointing a firearm at council security officials.

Greater Johannesburg's Southern council's Lawrence Boya said: "The invasion has put the process back

According to Metropolitan Life, the first phase would cost R60-million."

Boya said squatters were not aware that the invasion was hampering job creation and delaying investment in the sprawling township.

Council's security services head, Sean Coetzee, said the council had applied for a court interdict to have the people evicted and then to have the shacks demolished.

He said the council

Invasion hampers job creation

had only resorted to applying for a court interdict after the squatters repeatedly erected shacks.

Jabulani police commissioner Martin Marx said the council would find it difficult to evict the squatters if it waited for the situation to get out of hand.

Council workers 'first to face service suspensions' for debt

Bonile Ngqiyaza

00 28/11/97

(127)

SAH

JOHANNESBURG council employees whose municipal accounts are in arrears will be the first to experience service suspensions at the start of stringent credit control measures today — a process which will target every defaulter, especially seven individuals, known as the "millionaires club", who owe more than R12m in total

Kenny Fihla, the chairman of the task team set up to implement measures to stabilise the city's cash crisis, said yesterday the employees, a few businesses and — where figures had been ratified — provincial and national government officials, would also be included.

He said a task team, with sections headed by the CEOs of the local councils, would look into the various aspects of credit control including metering, billing and databases, arrear collection, the legal and cut-off aspects, communications and indigency

Fihla said government departments

— excluding hospitals and schools, which would be dealt with separately — accounted for R2,7m of the total debt. He promised that action would be taken against these as well.

Other groups targeted for action included banks, hotels and church groups. Public and private hospitals would follow after they had been given 10 days notices of impending action

The council said one hotel group owed it more than R3,3m out of a consolidated eight accounts it had and western metropolitan local council schools were 146 000 in debt.

Fihla said some of the credit control steps would be subcontracted to local community groups and workers.

"The list of debtors will be consolidated and updated on a weekly basis", he said.

Contrary to perceptions, Fihla said, 60% of council debt was from the former Johannesburg and Sandton councils and the old Roodepoort administration — not from traditionally black residential areas.

JUDGMENT IN BRIEF

GJMC to hit hard on rent dodgers

127
Soweto
28/11/97

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) is to start "cracking the whip" from today by cutting off essential services, including electricity and water, to more than 1 000 of its employees who owe more than R2 million.

The major cut-offs will be carried out mainly in formerly white areas of Johannesburg, Sandton, Randburg and then spread to Soweto, Alexandra Township and informal settlements in an attempt to recover R1,75 million owed to the council.

GJMC's deputy executive officer Mr Kenny Fihla told a press conference yesterday that the majority of the employees lived in Johannesburg's eastern and southern areas, Sandton and Randburg.

The crackdown on the employees comes after the GJMC warned that its four local councils would continue credit control measures this and next week, and intensify them during the festive season.

Fihla said the council was compiling a list of councillors, politicians, and other civil servants who might be in arrears with their accounts, adding "We will not hesitate to terminate services and expel such people if found guilty."

National, provincial and local government buildings would be targeted - already the Randburg Town Council was in arrears amounting to R1 million.

However, no councillors were found to owe, apparently because they feared drastic action would be taken. So far only Councillor Basil Douglas of the southern metropolitan council has been expelled for refusing to pay.

More than 100 branches of the major banks owed R3,3 million, one chain of hotels owed R3 million, and seven businesses were R12 million in arrears.

Sowetan 1/12/97
**Council
cuts off
(127)
services**

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council at the weekend cracked down on hundreds of consumers, including businesses in Sandton and Randburg, by cutting off electricity and water in an attempt to recover R1,8 billion owed to it for municipal services.

The total number of cut-offs, which started on Friday with the termination of services to council employees who collectively owe up to R10 million in unpaid services, will be released today.

Deputy chairman of the council's executive committee Mr Kenny Fihla said the cut-offs would be vigorously pursued over Christmas because "December is an ideal time" and because the council needed to break the culture of non-payment.

The defaulters would receive sufficient warnings before their services were terminated, with Fihla saying the process will be intensified throughout the festive season, starting today with churches, banks and corporations.

Fihla would not name the big corporations, but *Sowetan* is in possession of a document indicating that all banks, Anglo American Corporation, Syfrets, JHI Properties, Sanlam Properties and the South African Rail Commuters, were in arrears.

Fihla said provincial government departments owed about R2,7 million while a "millionaire's club" owed more than R12 million.

Gauteng to probe scam in housing

sowetan 1/12/97
(127)

Province aims to curb corruption by instituting audits in certain areas

By Joshua Raboroko

THE GAUTENG PROVINCE IS to appoint a commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities concerning the allocation of state-owned homes in the province. Details of the alleged corruption will be released today.

Addressing members of the South African Residential Developers Association (Sarda) in Sandton, Johannesburg, at the weekend, Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said his department would institute audits in a range of areas to improve performance.

The exact details of the irregularities were unclear but he said the department would avoid corruption and bad practices by role players in an effort to deliver houses to the poor.

He encouraged major construction industries to empower the emerging

black contractors to help build 249 000 houses by 1999, saying his department had created opportunities for many construction companies to get involved in housing delivery by allocating at least 5 000 subsidies.

Mofokeng said presently there were 116 housing delivery projects approved or being introduced in the province. The private sector developers were involved in 79 of these projects.

The balance of the projects were taken over by local authorities who in most cases used the private sector contractors to install infrastructure. Municipalities introduced small emerging contractors to projects.

Major companies should educate, train and equip emerging contractors with building and entrepreneurial skills.

"In order to be successful in housing delivery there must be partnerships between the private sector, local authorities and my department."

Tenants delay house transfers

(127)

Nearly 30 000 claims approved so far, but completion of scheme has been delayed by misconception that owners will be held responsible for service arrears

By **THEMBA SEPOTOKELE**
City Desk

The transfer of rented houses to tenants in the Greater Soweto area is making rapid progress, with more than 29 000 claims having been approved so far

A consultant to the Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs Department said local committees had so far approved 29 852 claims.

He said more than 4 000 transfers had been registered, and a further 6 000 were at present being processed by the deeds office.

But a complete transfer of all houses was being delayed by some of the claimants because they were under the impression that, in order to have the houses transferred into their names, they had to sign an acknowledgement of debt for unpaid service bills

About 15 000 tenants whose claims had been approved were delaying the transfers by not responding to letters asking them to come to bureaux offices to check and confirm that their particulars on their draft title were correct, the consultant said.

"This hesitation often seems

to be due to the impression that tenants will be required to sign an acknowledgement of debt for payment of service charges owed by them

"That is not so. The transfer of ownership of houses by the bureaux is entirely separate from the collection of municipal debt, which is the responsibility of the treasury departments of various councils," he said.

In nearly all the cases, the state's discount benefit of up to R7 500 would cover the full costs, so the successful claimants would not have to pay anything

The housing board had not

yet received about 1 000 claims for rented houses. Their occupants and interested parties were urged to go to the bureaux managers' offices to complete necessary forms

Occupants were also warned that the termination of the state's discount benefit scheme was expected to be announced shortly.

"When that scheme stops, people will lose the opportunity to get their properties free; instead, they will either be required to pay a full market-related rent, or they will lose their rights of occupation," the consultant said

Sowetan 1/12/97

Private sector 'must help meet target'

Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng housing department was relying heavily on the private sector to assist in meeting a target of 249 000 low-cost houses by 1999, housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said at the weekend

Speaking at an SA Residential Developers' Association briefing, Mofokeng said much of the capacity required to meet Gauteng's delivery target was located in the private sector.

To make a success of low-cost housing delivery, there had to be partnerships between the private sector, local authorities and government

"If one of these role players is not committed to the process, blockages occur which delay delivery," he said

Mofokeng said his department was aware that developers were exposed to more risk when operating in the low-cost housing delivery market Gauteng had struc-

tured its pilot housing projects in such a way that the developer had to deal only with commercial and development risk The political, social and bureaucratic risks were carried by the department or local authorities

He said there had been problems with housing delivery in areas such as social compacts In many instances the social compact came about due to a lunch or dinner with a couple of comrades

SD 11/12/97
Quality

"My view is that the legitimate representatives of the people are elected officials That is why we now insist on formal agreements with local authorities," he said

Another problem in some instances was the size and quality of the house, as the erosion of the subsidy due to inflation over the past three-and-a-half years had made it difficult to deliver proper structures

However, some developers had

adopted innovative methods in the way they structured their layouts and built houses.

Mofokeng acknowledged that the department had problems with staffing, training, systems and budgets, but said a reorganisation was taking place

Over the next 16 months the Gauteng administration would release land through the Mayibuye programme to relieve the pressure of land hunger and invasions Informal settlements would be upgraded to ensure healthy and safe conditions

A number of issues needed to be addressed, including speeding up the establishment of townships, the management of community conflict, and increasing development and end-user finance

Mofokeng said a national allocation of at least R4,6bn was necessary for 1998/99 to avoid a decline in the delivery of houses. "If these funds are not allocated, we will not be able to allocate funds to new projects," he said.

Housing (127) commission instituted

Sowetan 2/12/97

Sexwale wants inquiry into the fraudulent allocation of homes

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG Premier Tokyo Sexwale has appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the activities of government officials, including former community councillors, who fraudulently allocated state-owned houses valued at R10 billion during the apartheid era.

Most of the houses were sold to home-seekers by officials who allegedly evicted widows and other unemployed people from the houses.

Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng told a media conference in Johannesburg yesterday that the commission - to be known as the Home Truths Commission - had been charged with the responsibility of investigating allegations of corruption and intimidation in the allocation of houses in the past 20 years.

"The main aim of the commission is to prevent the recurrence of bureaucratic bungling, discrimination and corruption that prevailed under the pre-

vious regime," he said.

The commission, to be led by a team of lawyers, would focus on the allocation of and evictions from state-owned houses.

Mofokeng said the commission would start hearing evidence from victims with immediate effect. Victims of corruption and maladministration have until January 21 next year to submit their complaints.

The commission will link up directly with one of the province's "transfer of houses programme", which aims to transfer rented houses to tenants, said Mofokeng. He said there were 150 000 such houses in the province.

In greater Soweto 29 000 claims have been approved - 4 000 transfers had been registered and a further 6 000 were being processed by the deeds office.

Some of the alleged irregularities occurred when officials of the now defunct House of Delegates and of the House of Representatives allocated subsidies - amounting in some instances to R99 000 - to individuals who had allegedly paid bribes.

New commission to investigate housing

~~MPHO MANTJII~~
MPHO MANTJII

CT(BR) 2/12/97
Johannesburg — The Gauteng department of housing launched the Home Truths Commission yesterday to review the allocation of, and evictions from, state-owned houses in the 20 years before the democratic elections in 1994

Dan Mofokeng, the Gauteng housing minister, said yesterday over 150 000 government-rented houses were to be transferred to previous tenants

"In the greater Soweto area 29 000 claims have been approved, from which 4 000 claims had been registered and a further 6 000 were being processed by the deeds office," Mofokeng said

"Property to be transferred runs into billions of rands and is to be found in areas which include Sandton," he said

He said his department would be revising the province's rental formula. The commission, headed by Jabu Dlamini, an attorney, would investigate irregularities that may have occurred since 1976. It would address unfair evictions from state- or council-owned homes

Mofokeng said the hearing would be concluded in May next year and the commission would give a report in April

Probe of state-owned houses launched

(127) BO 2/12/97
Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng government has appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate alleged irregularities in the apartheid era allocation of up to 45 000 state-owned houses with an estimated value of R3bn

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday about 150 000 state-owned houses

valued at R10bn were being transferred to their occupants in Gauteng

It was estimated that with up to 30% of these homes, there were allegations of corruption and intimidation in their allocation in the 20 years before the new government took office

Mofokeng said claims of irregularities included the sale of state-owned

Continued on Page 2

Probe

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Continued from Page 1
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houses to councillors' family members, people renting houses for 11c a month in Sandton and people being forced into marriage to secure housing.

The Homes Truth Commission had been appointed to investigate the allocation of and eviction from state-owned homes between January 1 1976 and March 31 1994.

Victims of corruption and maladministration had until the third week of January to submit complaints, and the commission would conclude its hearings in March. A report should be completed by April.

The commission would be chaired by Germiston lawyer Jabu Dlamini. He said it was unclear how victims of unjust treatment would be compensated.

The commission would be linked to a housing transfer programme, in terms of which government had agreed to give occupants of state-owned homes a discount of R7 500 on the historic price of each property. Housing transfer bureaus were being set up to oversee this programme.

Mofokeng said in the greater Soweto area, 29 000 claims had been approved, of which 4 000 transfers had been registered and 6 000 were being processed. Since the government had assumed office, Gauteng had facilitated the delivery of 120 000 houses and developed 85 000 stands.

Jo'burg pulls in R17-million with electric shock-treatment

Star 3/12/97 (127)

Big companies find themselves in the dark as their municipal bills go unpaid

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Johannesburg recovered more than R17-million in the last week of November as a result of the tough credit-control campaign aimed at recouping billions owed to the city in municipal services arrears.

And almost half the money - R8-million - was paid by businesses owing more than R250 000 each following phone calls to them from Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's chief executive officer Nicky Padayachee, accord-

ing to metropolitan councillor Kenny Fihla

The remaining R9,1-million was recovered by the four local councils between November 22 and 28.

While it is not known exactly how much money has been recovered and how many cutoffs carried out since November 28, at least two banks and several big companies are known to have had their services terminated

According to council records, electricity to one branch of FNB, two branches of Nedcor, Murray & Roberts Housing, Adcock Ingram and Bellevue's

Hunter Service Station has been cut

The council has also been concentrating on cutting services to council employees found to be in arrears.

Johannesburg introduced its new credit-control policy last month to recover R1,8-billion owed to it in arrears.

The new policy is part of a budget review, ordered by the provincial government, to try to break a cash-flow crisis which forced the city to default on three payments to Eskom and to abandon certain services in favour of others

The new policy includes the

"outsourcing" of cutoffs and billings to private firms, and personal visits by council employees to defaulters.

Fihla said 1 355 cutoffs were effected between November 22 and 28, with 86 customers in the Northern Council area, 530 in the South, 578 in the West and 161 in the East being left without electricity.

About R4,5-million was recovered in the North as a result of the cutoffs, R4,6-million in the South, and R436 000 in the East

Fihla said the total owed by the defaulters who were cut off was R24,6-million

Housing crisis mounts in north-western suburbs

By ANNA COX

Tension is mounting in the north-western suburbs of Johannesburg where about 800 tenants, illegally occupying premises in public housing schemes, are facing eviction by the Northern council

Although the council has agreed to place a moratorium on the evictions until January,

the South Western Johannesburg Civic Organisation (Sowejoca) says there is great tension in the community

Violence broke out last week when a council official tried to evict a family in Claremont and tried to move in a family who had been on the waiting list for a council house

Sovejoca spokesman Manuel Sandows said his organi-

sation was negotiating with the council, but there had been ongoing problems since the riots in the area in February and since a task team, formed by local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka, had been formed to deal with illegal occupations

"The council has reneged on some task team decisions and has acted in bad faith. Because of the crisis of the past, the

housing problem is beyond the control of many residents who have been squatting in backyards and garages," he said.

The affected areas are Jan Hofmeyer, Vrede Park, Claremont, Westbury and Noordgesig

Northern council communications officer Khanyi Mkonza said unlawful occupations were escalating

Star 5/12/97

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R1,1-m recovered in latest cutoffs

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CITY REPORTER

Star 9/12/97
Electricity and water to 810 Greater Johannesburg businesses and households were cut off between November 29 and December 4, resulting in R1,1-million in arrears being recovered.

The cutoffs are part of an attempt by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and its four local authorities to recover R1,8-billion in arrears and to break a cash crisis which has resulted in the councils defaulting on three payments to Eskom.

Metro deputy executive chairman Kenny Fihla said that in the Southern Council, water to 58, electricity to 129 and gas to 19 households was cut. However, only R112 000 of the R1,67-million owed was recovered. The council was investigating why the amount was so low.

The Northern Council had the lowest number of cutoffs, with electricity to only 37 businesses being suspended. About R1 million of the R1,25-million owed was recovered.

Fihla said the low rate of Northern Council cutoffs was because of the chaotic state of the council's information systems.

Water to 12 Eastern Council defaulters and electricity to 249 was cut. No water supplies were cut in the Western Council area, but electricity to 306 customers was suspended. The amounts recovered by these two councils has not yet been totalled.

Cape living among best

ARG 9/12/97
London - In spite of their crime statistics, Cape Town and Johannesburg are the best African cities in which to live, reports the Corporate Resources Group - which advises corporate managers setting allowances for expatriate staff.

They are followed by Tunis and Harare, while Luanda, Conakry and Brazzaville are at the bottom - with Brazzaville listed as the least livable city in the world.

Vancouver and Toronto in Canada, and Auckland in New Zealand, had the highest quality of life in major world cities, the group reported yesterday.

Cities to avoid at almost any price were Brazzaville in the Congo, Baghdad in Iraq and the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

The group reported on 192 cities worldwide, based on 42 factors,

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including political stability, economic outlook, culture, health and education resources, as well as public transport.

Canadian cities generally came top of the list of North American cities, and Mexican cities near the bottom of South American.

Vancouver was voted No 1 in North America and the world, and Toronto No 3.

Atlanta had the highest quality of city life in the United States, followed by San Francisco and Honolulu.

In Latin America, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Panama City topped the list, while San Pedro Sula in Honduras, Port-Au-Prince in Haiti, and Havana in Cuba were at the bottom.

Baghdad, bottom of its regional list, was the second worst city in the world in which to live. - Sapa-AP

Still no water in the south

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS

City Desk

Star 12/12/97
Thousands of residents in the south of Johannesburg are still without water despite promises from the Southern council that their water supply would be restored two days ago.

Residents of Ennerdale, Lawley and Orange Farm have been without water since Sunday

On Tuesday, Southern council spokesman Connie Ras told The Star that technicians were working on the problem and that water was expected to be restored on Tuesday night.

But many aggrieved callers to The Star complained that by yesterday water had still not been restored.

Fiona Sallie of Ennerdale Extension 9 said she had not seen a "drop of water" since Monday, when water was last transported to the area.

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Everybody's complaining It's been five days now and we don't have a drop of water ... I don't know what my neighbour, who has a baby of only a few weeks old, is doing," Sallie said.

Council spokesman Simon Selepe said water was expected to be restored to the area by this afternoon.

"At the moment we have two pipes running, and we're hoping that, by tomorrow afternoon, water should be restored," he said.

Selepe denied that water was not being trucked into the area: "There are 20 water tankers out there at the moment."

He said a hotline was available for people with small children and babies who needed water. Water could be requested and would be delivered anytime, Selepe said.

The hotline number is (011) 403-2626

Hillbrow hotels a 'no-go' zone, with no water

Star 15/12/97

(127)

NAASHON ZALK

Water cutoffs prompt health department to investigate

By Cecilia Russell

Gauteng's health department is investigating the condition of three Hillbrow/Berea hotels after Johannesburg's Eastern council cut off their water more than 10 days ago

The once upmarket Chelsea Hotel in Berea and the Little Roseneath and Rondebosch Hotels in Hillbrow had water services suspended when the owner failed to pay a R200 000 water and electricity bill

The health department's deputy director, Johann van den Heever, said water cuts in high density areas like Hillbrow could be potentially "disastrous", while cutting it off from hotels could increase the incidence of diarrhoea among guests and live-in staff

Guests and employees of the three hotels, which are owned by the same person, fear that unless the situation is rectified, their health will be at risk

A 1-year-old daughter of hotel manager Reginald Mompoti has been in the Johannesburg

Hospital for two days after being diagnosed with chronic diarrhoea and contact dermatitis

A doctor, who examined the child last week, said the illness was "probably aggravated by poor sanitary conditions at home, especially the lack of clean tap water"

Cleaners and long-term residents have complained of similar symptoms

"Some of the staff have been so ill with diarrhoea that we suspect cholera," Naven Naidoo, the hotels' administrator, said.

Van den Heever said the risk of cholera in Hillbrow and Berea was minimal. The only confirmed case of cholera in Gauteng was from a patient from Hillbrow hospital, he said

"The women who had been staying at the Summit Club had recently returned from Mozambique. Although she absconded from hospital no other cases have been reported," he added

But the unsanitary conditions were likely to increase the incidence of diarrhoea



Heavy burden ... residents of Chelsea Hotel in Hillbrow carry water containers to and from their rooms. The hotels' water supply has been cut off.

The acrid smell of Jeyes Fluid permeates the reception of the Chelsea Hotel, masking the stench of unflushed toilets

The few hotel guests who have not fled have to collect water from generous businesses in the vicinity of the building. The restaurants have closed,

but a few patrons still enjoy a cool beer on the balcony

The hotel managers agree that the Chelsea has survived the drought the best "You can not walk into the Little Roseneath because of the stench," Chelsea Hotel manager Joyce Moleya said

Naidoo claims the hotels' R200 000 service arrears were the result of a dispute with the council. In 1994 the council promised to adjust the account after they were overcharged.

"When it was not sorted out at the beginning of the year, we stopped paying in protest."

Naidoo said Eastern council spokesman, Keith Peacock, said that while the constitution gave the right to access to water, this was not an unlimited right and consumers who could afford to pay but were in arrears, forfeited the right to water.

Jo'burg council threatened with shutdown over arrears

BD 19/12/97 (127)
THE Johannesburg metropolitan council said yesterday an administrative oversight was responsible for R800 000 not being paid to a company which maintains computers for emergencies in the greater-Johannesburg area

The Sysman group, which had not received payment from the council since June, this week threatened to shut off the facility if the outstanding amount was not paid before Friday

The strategic executive for public safety and emergency services, Hilow Maeko, said he became aware only two days ago that the Sysman group had not been paid.

"We renewed our contract with the company in June, but payments were delayed because of financial problems within the council," he said "I was under the impression that we had now paid all our creditors."

Maeko said he had taken it upon himself to ensure a cheque was sent to the group.

He said the company would continue to maintain the emergency services' computer system for the council

In a system shut off, the reaction to emergency calls and the dispatch of vehicles would be severely affected — Sapa

Courts won't see the light when non-payers whinge

(127)

The truly poor can get off the hook, but

the rest have to cough up or stay in the dark

Star 22/12/97

By CATHY POWERS
High Court Reporter

The courts are showing little mercy to defaulters on electricity and water payments.

In hearing the urgent applications by businesses to have their water and lights turned back on, the courts have consistently decided that the council is entitled to cut off services on non-payment and that this does not conflict with the constitution, according to an attorney who represents the council.

An issue that will be decided next year is the health risks that arise from terminated services.

"People must understand that the courts are behind local government," said the attorney, who did not want to be

named. "The council is not a profit-making organisation. They are not trying to make a quick buck."

Since the beginning of the month, seven cases involving the termination of services have been heard in the Johannesburg High Court. But this is a drop in the ocean compared with the 1 440 households and companies which have had their lights, gas and water cut off so far. Very few of these cases come to court because most people don't have the financial clout to take legal action.

Many of these cases have been deferred to next year and an interim deal is arranged whereby the defaulter pays a portion of the arrears to have services reconnected.

But in no circumstances does the council write off

amounts owing or the interest, according to Keith Peacock, spokesman for Greater Johannesburg Metro Council's Eastern council.

Jeff O'Connell, chief executive officer of the Western council, said a plan had been started for people who genuinely could not afford to pay for services.

The register of such people, pensioners, and those with no or minimal income would be reviewed continually.

Said the attorney: "There is a culture of non-payment. We have to break the chain, it has to be rectified from grass-roots up."

Businesses and individuals be warned: pay up or take your case to court, where you will end up paying costs as well as your electricity bill.

MEC unveils big housing scheme

Mofokeng says 70 000 sites in 60 areas will be developed for poor people

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG MEC for local government and housing Mr Dan Mofokeng has announced a multi-million rand housing and infrastructural project to provide shelter for the poor communities in the province.

In a statement in Johannesburg at the weekend, Mofokeng said his department's Mayibuyē Programme – a local government driven development – had developed 30 000 sites which would benefit 180 000 people.

Mofokeng said that 70 000 sites in 60 areas would be developed for housing and infrastructural projects aimed at improving "the lives of our poor people".

"In Phola Park we have committed more than R74 million for the completion of 4 320 services sites which were allocated to people."

He said that so far, through the upgrading of the informal settlements programme at a cost of R30 million, his department targeted upgrading 24 773 sites in 11 areas in the province.

He said the department would continue consulting people, including the private sector, with the aim to deliver different housing programmes that embraced subsidy schemes.

A consolidation subsidy, which targeted people who already have been allocated sites and services, would be accelerated in the new year.

"We have enhanced this programme with the building and construction industry," Mofokeng said.

Pilot projects were due to start next month at Soshanguve in Pretoria, Ivory Park in Midrand and Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, the MEC said.

People would be given financial support to build houses.

An institutional subsidy scheme would help develop housing under a range of tenure options, including rental, to thousands of people living in squalid conditions in the inner city of Johannesburg.

"The inner city housing programme is one of our important programmes which demonstrate the different needs of our communities," Mofokeng said.

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Sowetan
29/12/97

Berea flats' services

cut in crackdown

BY BUNTY WEST
Nov 31 12 1977

Dozens of tenants at a block of flats in Berea, Johannesburg, were left without electricity and water yesterday after municipality officials cut their supplies during a crackdown on non-paying ratepayers.

Some residents at Farbian Heights in Soper Road, Berea, were busy preparing their mid-day meals when council officials arrived to cut off the electricity because the owner of the building, Joseph Farber, had failed to pay an outstanding account of R613 940.

Council officials switched off electricity to the 24 flats, which house about 100 people, while unhappy residents, many of whom are illegal immigrants, watched in despair.

The owner of a restaurant on the ground floor, Ghanaman Ben Owusu, said he paid Farber's agent, Lydia Ngema of the Hillbrow Estate Agency, R1 100 a month, which was collected regularly.

"If this sort of thing is going to happen we must pay lights and water bills directly to the council, then we will know the bills are up to date. My business is going to suffer, and all the food in the freezer and fridge will be ruined," he said.

Farber who leaves the running of the flats to his son, was

not aware of the problem "I cannot make any decisions until my son arrives back from Cape Town at the weekend," he said.

The owner of an upmarket private residence at 19 Wandel Avenue in Woodmead, who would only identify himself as Rob, said the council had erred in cutting off his water. The Eastern Council says Rob owes R32 847, and yesterday removed the water meter from his home.

"I am not prepared to discuss this, it's a mistake on the part of the Eastern Council," he said when approached for comment. His home was one of several private and business properties which will be without water until outstanding accounts are settled.

One company, EVU Invest Ltd of Wynberg, allegedly owes R196 378 for water.

Willie Ramoshaba, the Eastern Council's head of credit control, said the company was warned early last week to pay its bill. When no money was received, council officials turned off the water.

"The water was reconnected by persons unknown and now we have to remove the meter so it cannot be reconnected.

"Defaulters who do not pay their bills will find councils taking extreme measures to ensure the accounts are settled in full," Ramoshaba said.



Electricity shock .. metropolitan council employees Louis de Jager and Vusi Shiba pull the plug on residents of a block of flats in Berea, Johannesburg. Large outstanding electricity and water bills are allegedly owed by the owner of the building.

Claims of housing corruption

(127)

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

Nearly 800 submissions detailing alleged irregularities in the allocation of about 45 000 state-owned houses during the apartheid era have been received by the Gauteng government's Home Truths Commission since it began operating at the beginning of the month

The commission, which was instituted by outgoing Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale, is probing allegations of corruption in the allocation of houses and eviction of people from state-owned houses between January 1 1976 and March 31 1994

Thousands of families were

allegedly thrown out of houses by corrupt councillors and municipal officials to make way for others who had paid bribes. Others were overlooked during housing allocations because they had not paid bribes.

The commission is headed by Germiston lawyer Jabulani Dlamini, and it will conduct public hearings until March

Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs assistant director Ronnie Stevens said yesterday the commission had received 780 genuine claims where people had submitted written forms. He said more were expected before the January 20 deadline

The commission's toll-free number is 0 800 600 245

Star 31/12/97