

HOUSING AND HOSTELS - GAUTENG

1998

Gauteng housing boss under fire

Appointment of lawyers for disciplinary hearing questioned

ELIAS MALULEKE (127) ST 4/1/98

JOHANNESBURG's state attorneys have accused Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng of flouting tender procedures in appointing four lawyers to act in the disciplinary hearing of suspended housing department head Enos Ngutshane

Documents in the possession of the Sunday Times show that the lawyers were specifically selected by Mofokeng in a letter to outgoing Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale dated October 3.

Ironically, one of the reasons for Mofokeng's suspension of Ngutshane in September was that he allegedly failed to call for tenders when he appointed a firm of consultants.

Kalyana Pillay, head of Johannesburg's state attorneys, said Mofokeng's appointment of the lawyers was in violation of the Gauteng Government Treasury and Tender Board Revised Act of 1996

They were also made after she specifically advised Mofokeng's office not to proceed without first asking for tenders

Mofokeng could not be reached for comment, but his legal adviser, Peter Maake, confirmed that no formal tenders were submitted and that the lawyers appointed had merely furnished the department with quotations

Pillay said she had advised the housing department to adhere to the Act and not to appoint the lawyers without asking for tenders. "I informed the MEC's office two months ago and have not heard from them. The housing department must account for the appointments."

According to the Act, tender procedures must be adhered to before the appointment of private professionals — defined as people providing any professional service, advisers, counsellors and consultants — for work involving the payment



DRAWING FLAK: Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng

of more than R12 500

The Act further stipulates that contracts can be entered into only on the receipt of at least three quotations, and that it is unacceptable to identify a specific person, company or institution for any contract

One of the lawyers involved in the hearing has already submitted a claim for R36 000 for eight days of work

The lawyers, who stand to earn more than R120 000 each, include M A Makume, a senior partner at Makume and Associates, a firm that represented Mofokeng when he was charged with being in illegal possession of an AK-47 assault rifle. He was later acquitted

Makume is acting as prosecuting officer in the disciplinary hearing

Other lawyers appointed by Mofokeng are Johannes Nalane, of Maluleke, Msimang and Associates, Anton Roskam, of Cheadle, Thompson and Hayson, who formulated the charges, and Ratha Mokgoatheng

An invoice submitted by Mok-

goatheng, who is contracted at R500 an hour, shows that he claimed R36 000 for attending the hearing for eight days between November 18 and December 12

One official said the costs of the hearing could total R1-million

According to the documents in possession of the Sunday Times, Maake faxed letters to the lawyers on October 22, asking them to officiate at the hearing. The lawyers faxed their acceptance the next day and specified their fees

Maake confirmed their appointments and fees the same day

He also wrote a letter to one of the law firms, asking for claims to be staggered — limited to R12 000 per invoice — instead of being submitted as a lump sum. In the same letter, dated November 7, Maake said in view of Pillay's advice that tenders should be submitted, he had had discussions with treasury director Louis Johnson. Maake said Johnson had allegedly informed him that payment could be made only if the amounts were staggered because of problems with the tendering process.

Johnson and the lawyers appointed could not be reached for comment this week.

The disciplinary hearing against Ngutshane started on November 18 and was postponed to January 14.

Ngutshane is charged with misconduct relating to contravention of Section 27 of the Public Service Act. He is accused, inter alia, of failing to

- Call for tenders before he appointed a firm of consultants;
- Implement decisions of a strategic review bosberaad;
- Restructure the human resources department;
- Act against an administrative officer accused of stealing R3 220 from a member of the public;
- Implement decisions taken at management meetings;
- Implement a proper accounting system to regulate the management of the housing subsidy scheme, from which R8,5-million was stolen by a senior housing official; and
- Provide cellphones and cars to reporters in the communications department

Ngutshane has pleaded not guilty to all the charges, saying they were levelled to cover up his campaign against corruption in the department

SEE INSIDE MAGAZINE

IT'S TIME

Council to subsidise NGO-run inner city housing projects for homeless

Robyn Chalmers

SUBSIDIES totalling R8,5m have been approved for eight low-cost inner city housing projects to be run under a programme co-ordinated by the City Centre Shelter Forum. Johannesburg metropolitan council urbanisation policy manager Alex Bhiman said if the pilot programme was a success, it was likely to be replicated nationally.

The programme was being co-ordinated by a team of metropolitan council and local council officials. Bhiman said the City Centre Shelter Forum was the primary vehicle driving the development of the "transitional housing strategy" with the co-operation of a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with the homeless. The strategy aimed to reintegrate the homeless into society

through the provision of housing, employment as well as civic education on various issues, but particularly on responsible citizenship. "Transitional housing is a form of housing existing between current practices of shelter provision and formal housing, requiring critical input of services," said Bhiman in the National Housing Forum Trust's Inform magazine. Bhiman said the strategy had the

potential to contain high levels of urbanisation which were placing economic and social pressures on SA's urban areas. The council has developed an implementation plan dealing with the identification and purchase of buildings, assessment of the cost of refurbishment and the establishment of management structures. The implementation plan also dealt with acquiring additional re-

sources from interested parties including business, government and donors, to ensure the projects' future sustainability. The provincial housing board was finalising contracts to release funds for the eight projects in the Johannesburg city centre. The projects would be managed by NGOs. Projects presently run by local councils would be handed over to NGOs in their first year of operation.

(127) AD 7/1/98

Workers Sowetan 9/11/98 protest against (127) the axe

About 500 angry refuse collectors dump rubbish on the streets of Soweto

By Sello Seripe

DISGRUNTLED employees of two refuse removal firms turned Soweto's main roads into dumping grounds this week after learning that their jobs have been terminated.

The action follows a decision by the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) not to renew contracts between the substructure and Wykom Waste and Waste Refuse.

Instead, the SMSS will now employ its own staff to clean up Soweto.

Workers on Wednesday emptied rubbish bins in Kooma road, the main taxi route that passes through Moletsane, Mapetla and Jabulani. Taxi routes in Zondi and Tladi were also not spared.

About 500 workers, who held a meeting yesterday near the SMSS Tladi offices, are involved in the protest action. Most of the employees are members of the unaffiliated African Municipality and Allied Workers Union (Amawu).

Discriminatory procedure

The workers' spokesman, Ml Musa Maisa alleged that what worsened the situation was the discriminatory procedure in employing new staff.

Maisa claimed that temporary council workers who belonged to the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) – a Congress of South African Trade Unions' affiliate – were given first preference.

He also questioned the role played by Samwu in the process – hence workers did not indicate that they belonged to Amawu but were applying as individuals.

Samwu's greater Johannesburg branch secretary Themba Nxumalo denied that Samwu members were involved in the employment of new staff.

In fact, he said, some of their members who were employed by the council also had their contracts not renewed. Nxumalo said the union had to bargain with the council which agreed to re-employ Samwu members.

SMSS manager for security Mr Shaun Coetzee has appealed to the workers to stop their action. Coetzee said the door is open for negotiation, adding that the council will hold a meeting with workers' representatives at a scheduled for January 22.



Creating a stink Koma Road, Jabulani, in Soweto barricaded with garbage after former Southern council waste workers took to the streets in protest against losing their jobs They threaten that the protests will continue until something is done

Workless trash Soweto street

Star 9/1/98

(127)

Southern council begins rehiring sacked refuse and other workers ... but

'this is not enough', say protesters They'll demonstrate until all get jobs back

By **THEMBAKAZI SKENQA**

About 1 000 jobless residents and former Southern council workers covered one of Soweto's busiest roads with garbage yesterday when they took to the streets to demand jobs back

The former council staff, who had been hired to clean the township's streets, lost their jobs in August because of financial cutbacks

In September, the refuse removal companies Wade Refuse and Wykom Waste both lost their contracts with the council

to remove Soweto's dirt, but were contracted again last week

At the same time the council decided to rehire some of the former casual staff as well

Yesterday's protesters said they wanted all the former casual staff, as well as the refuse removal companies' former workers, to get their jobs back

Pat Nhlapo, spokesman for the Southern council mayor, Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, said "The people are demanding jobs, but we cannot just give them jobs

"We have to follow a new procedure and we will try by all means to ensure harmony and solve the problem"

Nhlapo said the council had met the workers on Tuesday and had rehired 95 of them, and they intended hiring another 35 of the workers in the next few days

However, this commitment was not enough for some of the workers who responded by covering Koma Road, Jabulani, in garbage

A spokesman for the group, who did not want to be named, said they would protest until all

of them got their jobs back.

He said the group would also like other unemployed Soweto residents to be given work

The process of cleaning up the street started yesterday with the council hard at work after the community complained about the smell

A concerned resident said "We as a community condemn the workers' actions because they increase the risk of diseases among us

"We appeal to the them to inform us when they are about to embark on such actions as it has affected us terribly"

(127)

Star 10/11/98

New body for landlords, tenants

The Government had a duty to protect tenants and landlords from exploitation and injustice, Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

He was speaking at the launch of the Landlord Tenant Dispute Resolution Board, established to promote stability in residential rental sector relationships by mediating between the warring parties.

"South Africa does not have a proper system for protecting the rights and enforcing the obligations of tenants and landlords," he said.

Mofokeng said there were buildings in the Johannesburg inner city which were run by gangsters and where owners had simply disappeared and no rent was collected.

There were also instances where services in blocks of flats no longer worked, where basements were full of sewage, or where property owners com-

plained that they were unable to enter their buildings because they feared violence from tenants.

Mofokeng said the establishment of the board ensured that insecurity of tenure was a thing of the past and that property owners would continue to manage and maintain their buildings unhindered.

The board members are Edwin Molahlehi (chairman), Trevor Bailey, Kathleen Diephu-Matolo, Neo Segapo and Yusuf Wadee. Lungile Zondi and Brian Leveson were appointed as alternate members. - Sana



STATE HAS A DUTY:
MEC Dan Mofokeng

Workers get their jobs back

(127)
Sowetan 12/11/98

Soweto refuse workers earn a six month reprieve after protest action

By Sello Seripe

THE Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) has agreed to employ refuse removal workers who last week trashed some Soweto taxi routes on hearing that their jobs had been terminated

The workers will be employed on a six-monthly contract basis, Mr Pat Nhlapo, personal assistant to Soweto mayor, Nandi Manyathula-Khoza, said on Friday

The workers, from Wade Refuse and Wykom Waste firms, embarked on the protest action after learning that the SMSS was not going to renew contracts with their companies

Nhlapo said the council signed six monthly contracts with the two firms. The companies will provide trucks,

drivers and assistant drivers only, while the workers will be directly employed by the councils

SMSS chief executive officer Chris Ngcobo said 342 people – including ex-council workers who had previously been laid off – would be employed

However, Ngcobo pointed out that individuals would first undergo medical tests before they were employed

Meanwhile, the SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) has claimed credit for the council's decision to employ the 342 people which includes 150 ex-municipal workers who had previously been laid off.

●Wade Refuse Soweto manager Ian McLean has denied that his workers were involved in protest action. But this was disputed by Nhlapo who said the company simply wanted to protect its image

Gauteng forms board to handle housing disputes

By Dan Mofokeng

ILLEGAL evictions, rent boycotts and violence between landlords and tenants should be reduced dramatically and phased out eventually with the advent of the landlord-tenant dispute resolution board, Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said on Friday.

Mofokeng said the launch of the dispute resolution board was a crucial step towards regulating landlord-tenant relations in the growing residential rental sector.

He said SA did not have a proper system to protect the rights and enforce the obligations of tenants and landlords. The department was aware of buildings in Johannesburg's inner city which were run by gangsters and where owners had disappeared and no rental was being collected.

"In an environment like this, the provincial government has said its role is to govern, and to protect citizens from exploitation and injustice on both sides — both property owners and tenants," Mofokeng said.

As a result of the housing shortage, existing stock could not be allowed to deteriorate into unmanaged or badly managed slums. The department's role was, to regulate the rental housing

environment to create stability.

He called on landlords or tenants with disputes to use the board, instead of holding marches to express their dissatisfaction.

With regard to public investment, Mofokeng said rental housing had not received enough funding. This would be rectified by emphasising housing under either rental or rent to buy options through the institutional housing programme. "Considering that rental housing stock is set to grow further under government's institutional housing programme, the importance of proper regulation will be critical to whether we succeed," he said.

Board chairman Edwin Molahlehi said the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act would empower people to deal with disputes. It aimed to promote harmony between the parties involved.

Molahlehi said the board would not seek to resolve every landlord-tenant dispute, but would rather complement the parties' efforts to find a solution.

A code of conduct would be set in place so people could lodge complaints and to ensure transparency. Local authorities had a large role to play in setting up advice centres to educate and advise people on their rights and obligations, he said.



Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng with Edwin Molahlehi, the chairman of the Landlord and Tenant Act, in Johannesburg on Friday.

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Jobless invade council

Sowetan 13/1/98 (127)
By Sello Seripe

THE employment of refuse removal workers by the Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) in Soweto yesterday was marred by confusion with jobseekers demanding more jobs than were available.

A few hundred potential employees, mostly former workers of Wykom Waste, converged on the council's cleansing department offices in Tladi but were told by an official that only

100 would be employed.

They then started chanting songs and said that in that case none of them would apply for the jobs.

Most of them lost their jobs when their company's contract with the council expired last month. In a rage of anger, the workers trashed the main taxi routes through Soweto.

Though the council had recently decided to sign a new six-month contract with the company, it said it would not hire all former employ-

ees of the company.

The council's chief executive officer, Mr Chris Ngcobo, had said the council would hire only 324 workers, including former council workers.

However, Mr Pat Nhlapo, personal assistant to Soweto mayor Ms Nandi Manyathula-Khoza, explained yesterday that the council would have to give first preference to its 230 former employees, including street sweepers, before employing former workers of Wykom Waste.

Body to help resolve tenant-landlord disputes

By BUNTY WEST

The exploitation of tenants by landlords, as well as the protection of property owners' rights, will be addressed through a new body set up to deal with the issues

Gauteng's Department of Housing and Land Affairs last week introduced the Landlord and Tenant Dispute Resolution Board (LTDRB) which will work towards the cessation of unjust practices by both own-

ers - and the lessees

The board will hear complaints from both sides and will be empowered under a proposed new Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to appoint mediators to solve problems and subpoena either or both parties to appear before the board with evidence

According to Dan Mofokeng, the Gauteng MEC for Housing and Land Affairs, the old Rent Control Act of 1976 did not provide solutions to the problems

because it was silent on many issues occurring between landlord and tenant.

Over the past six months a pilot scheme called the Inner City Mediation project attempted to resolve conflict between owners and tenants in some of Johannesburg's most problematic blocks of flats

"The pilot project was the foundation upon which the board can begin operating from the end of January," Mofokeng said

Yusuf Wadee, a board member and attorney who previously helped the Black Sash combat the Group Areas Act, was optimistic.

"The new act is an outstanding piece of legislation and the board will help parties avoid litigation which is expensive and often frustrating. We meet tomorrow for the first time to establish guidelines in which to work," he said.

The board will be funded by the provincial legislature

Star 13/1/98 (127)

Meeting over rent dispute

By Shadrack Mashalaba

A MEETING to resolve the dispute over the non-payment of rent at the Small Business Development Corporation's industrial unit in Sebokeng will be held today at the Tower Hive in Industria, Johannesburg.

The meeting follows a successful court application at Vanderbijlpark which was filed by the SBDC against the tenants last October, many of whom are members of the Gauteng Province Industrial Parks Association (Gapipa).

The meeting will be attended by representatives from the SBDC,

Gapipa and the Gauteng Provincial Small Business Council.

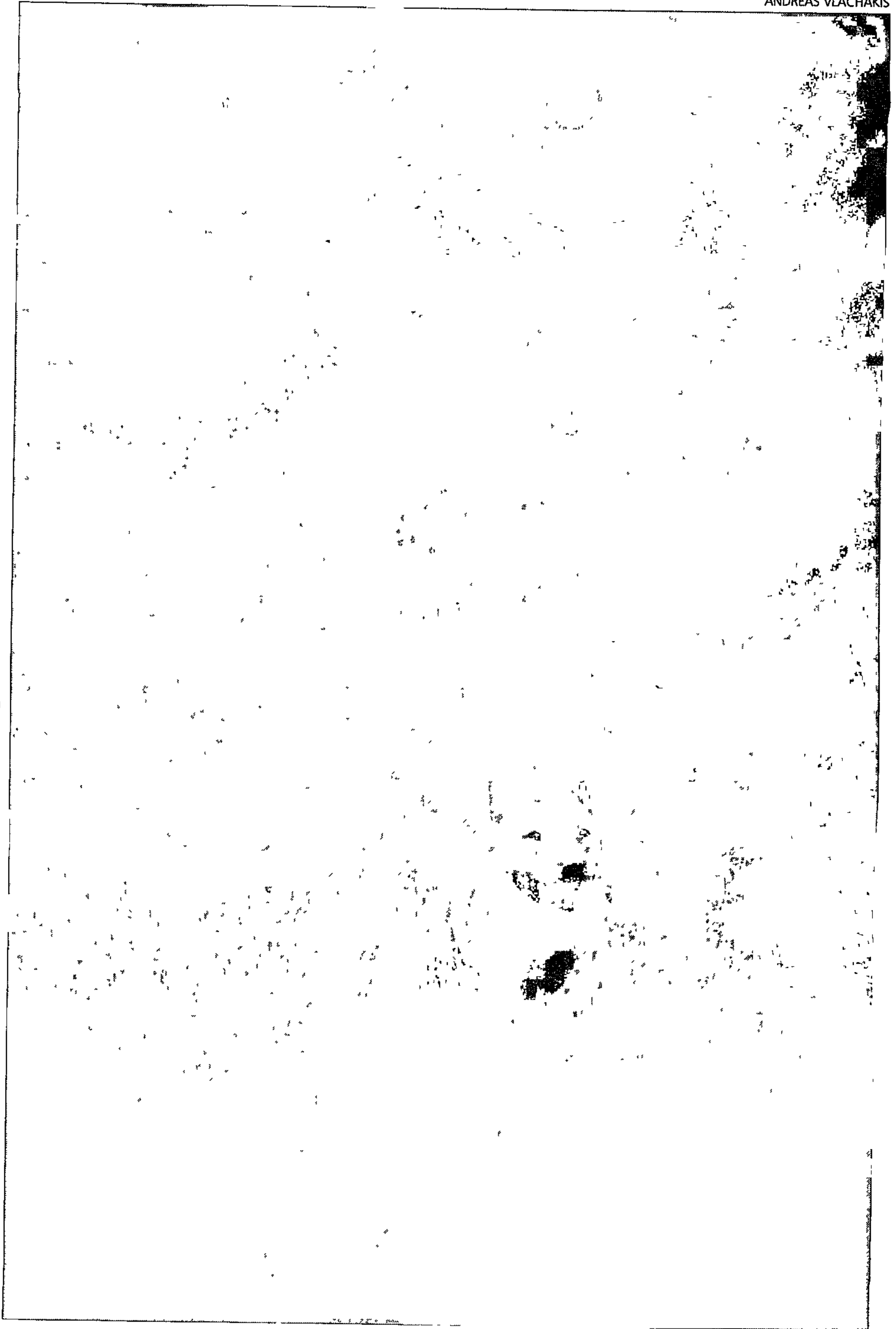
When the application was filed the Sebokeng tenants were owing SBDC about R140 000 in rental arrears.

SBDC's head of property in Gauteng Central Region Jan van der Walt said an agreement was reached last year that tenants would start paying. Van der Walt said the SBDC was disappointed that the tenants had not performed.

"In the previous two months there have been no payments forthcoming. We only received about five percent of the total payments," Van der Walt said.

(127) ~~_____~~ Sometan 14/11/98

IN BRIEF



Fetch ... this Staffie might think long grass growing along the verges is great, but most ratepayers don't share his enthusiasm.

The green, green grass of home is getting far too long

Local councils now neglect maintenance to get out of financial trouble

By ANNA COX

Residents across Greater Johannesburg are furious at the poor state of pavements, road islands and verges which are covered in long grass, saying that they not only indicate decay, but also constitute traffic and security hazards

The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and its four local councils have cut back on grasscutting, weeding and tree-trimming as part of a massive programme to get out of financial trouble, but residents say the long, unkempt grass and trees are creating a myriad of problems

Besides creating an impression of deterioration and decay, they say overhanging tree branches are playing havoc

with electricity lines. Last weekend thousands of people were left without power after a severe storm caused trees to crash on to power lines

Most of the councils can only afford to cut grass two or three times a year. The grass at public parks, council-owned properties, street verges and islands are generally only cut when necessary or when residents complain.

The Northern Council cuts the grass at parks every 21 to 40 days and at road reserves three times a year. But because of the numerous complaints to ward councillors, the United Democratic Movement is suggesting that residents who cut the grass outside their own properties should receive a rebate in their rates

Said UDM councillor James

Sullivan "By not cutting grass, we are giving residents the impression we are on a slippery slope. It is the one visible service through which we can show that residents are getting value for payments of rates," he said

Western Council head of horticultural services, Sam Matlhabegoane, said that in his area the grass was not cut often because of financial constraints and a shortage of manpower. He said residents had to make do with their own resources wherever they could

The Southern Council has a different approach. Its policy is to service areas with high levels of payment for services more regularly than other areas

Communications officer Virgil James said although

pavements were serviced more than twice during the summer months and at least once during winter, high visibility areas such as parks and vacant council land were mown more often

There have been numerous complaints from residents in the Eastern Council area about the deterioration of pavements, according to Norwood councillor Claire Quail.

"The long grass and lack of street and pavement cleaning not only impacts on residents themselves, but on tourists and other visitors to the city who will see what they believe to be urban decay. As one of the visible services, the lack of grasscutting discourages residents from paying as they believe they are not getting services for which they are paying," she said.

Star 16/11/98

Jo'burg to double (127) cut-off rate

By RODNEY VICTOR

16/11/98
The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council is to double the rate at which it is cutting electricity and water to payment defaulters so that it can meet its targets for the recovery of outstanding arrears, says Kenny Fihla, chairman of Johannesburg's Committee of Ten.

The committee was established to seek ways of restoring the city to financial health.

Speaking after the committee's first meeting of the year yesterday, Fihla said the targets for debt recovery had been high and committee members now realised the cutoff rate had to be stepped up to encourage payment.

Particular attention would be paid to areas such as Sandton and Randburg, where a high recovery rate could be expected, he said.

Owners of inner-city buildings who claimed they were unable to pay their arrears would have their buildings attached by court order and they would become council property, he said.

Some not fit for human habitation would be demolished to create open spaces.

The city had recovered some R50-million since it started its credit-control campaign last year, but only R10-million of this had come from big defaulters in the R50 000 to R250 000 range, he said.

"It's not too impressive, but in many cases the owners have paid us something upfront and made arrangements to pay the balance over six months," Fihla said.

An improved billing system was having an effect. In November, the metro council and its four substructures had billed property owners R422 560 000 and recovered R386 353 000, or 91%, Fihla said.

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Johannesburg to step up cut-off drive

Deborah Fine

BD 20/11/98

JOHANNESBURG's councils are planning about 7 000 service cut-offs a month from next month in a bid to collect an additional R300m in service payments needed to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the financial year

This was confirmed by greater Johannesburg metropolitan council deputy executive committee chairman Kenny Fihla yesterday. He said R350m a month in service payments, on top of what was presently being collected, was needed for the city to break even at the financial year-end in June.

Poor payment levels and outstanding municipal debts of R1,7bn have contributed to the city's cash crisis. Dramatic cuts to the city's capital and operating budgets have been made to bring expenditure in line with income.

The additional R350m for services forms part of a plan to boost revenue

and avert a serious budgetary deficit. Fihla said more than R50m in outstanding payments had been collected since the start of an intensive credit control campaign in November.

While this was "encouraging", he said the campaign had focused on recovering the arrears of relatively few businesses, government institutions, schools and other bulk services users. The challenge in the coming months would be the recovery of debts from "thousands" of domestic users.

The city was aiming to increase the number of electricity, water and gas cut-offs from 2 400 in December to 7 000 a month by using private contractors who would be paid per cut-off.

Cut-offs had proved an effective method of persuading defaulters to settle their debts. Of the 2 400 cut-offs in December, council teams had carried out 1 200 reconnections after residents had paid their accounts.

It was also hoped that the campaign

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would increase payment levels from an "unacceptable" average of 88% to an internationally acceptable 95%. A 1% increase in payment levels in traditionally advantaged areas alone would boost revenue by R44m a month.

Fihla said that while R350m was the minimum needed to balance the city's budget, local authorities were hoping to collect even more in order to begin generating a surplus. This would be used to relaunch the capital projects postponed because of the cash crisis.

He believed the recovery of the additional R300m was a tall order, but not impossible.

Councils were also considering attaching and placing into liquidation several buildings in the inner city which were unable to pay back arrears amounting to about R57m.

Fihla said last week that the attachment of the buildings was, in several instances, the only way for the city's municipalities to recover monies owed.

South tackles waste problem

Star 21/11/98
(127)
STAFF REPORTER

The Southern Metropolitan Local Council has taken steps to alleviate the problem of over-dumping in some southern areas of Johannesburg.

The council's chief executive officer, Chris Ngcobo, said 230 of the dismissed cleaning staff had been re-employed in Soweto to help deal with the problem.

These workers had already started cleaning up the region. A hundred more workers would be employed for cleaning purposes later this year, bringing the total number of cleaning staff to 330, he said.

In other areas, such as Mulbarton and Mayfield Park, council officials were removing material from dump sites and would continue to do so.

In addition, ward councillors of the Southern Council had taken initiatives and launched cleanup campaigns.

Earlier this month, concerned residents of Ward 14, with the encouragement and support of their councillor, Dan Moshugi, took part in a clean-up operation in Moroka and Molapo and surrounding areas.

A similar exercise, spearheaded by councillor Chris Rabaji, took place in Orange Farm.

Communities and their councillors in other parts of Soweto, such as Jabavu, will also start cleanup campaigns on Saturday.

The Southern Council plans to work together with communities in the drive to get dump sites removed and the southern areas cleaned up.

With more cleanup campaigns being implemented, together with the council's commitment, all areas in the south should be cleared of waste, giving the council an opportunity to start the year with a clean slate, according to the council.

Probe into house subsidies for Gauteng 'ghosts'

(127)

By Cecilia Russell

Nov 23 1998
Gauteng provincial auditor-general Shauket Fakie has begun an investigation into allegations that the Gauteng Housing Department has been paying out housing subsidies to "ghost clients".

The probe began on Monday, Fakie confirmed yesterday. It was launched after allegations of irregularities were brought to his attention by the NP.

Fakie said his officials were evaluating the claims. "If the evaluation has merits, we will start with a forensic investigation."

Fakie added that the auditor-general was duty bound to investigate the allegations.

NP leader in Gauteng, Johan Kilian, said he had suspected something was wrong after a performance audit report in June last year.

"Two weeks ago we were shown enough documents to approach the auditor-general and ask him to investigate," he said.

Sources in the Housing Department confirmed that Fakie's investigation was to determine the extent of corruption among companies that filed applications for housing subsidies for "ghost clients". The application forms were allegedly processed by staff who overlooked certain procedures.

Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng yesterday denied the investigation was unusual.

Mofokeng's spokesman, Ondela Mahlangu, said the audit was "a routine procedure".

Mofokeng was expected to release the findings of a disciplinary hearing into the actions of his department head, Enos Ngutshane, on Monday.

Pretoria launches cut-off campaign

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — The Pretoria city council has decided to cut water supplies in an attempt to recover more than R20m in outstanding payments.

Water supplies to consumers with arrears of 90 days or more would be cut. Debtors with the largest debt would be disconnected first.

The decision followed a city treasurer's report recommending that private contractors assist in executing cuts.

Pretoria will not be the first council to cut water supplies. A number of local authorities in Gauteng such as Johannesburg and Khyalami have already started similar action.

The treasurer's report, detailing the current financial difficulties experienced by the council and the "unacceptable increase" in the number of debtors, had been urgently tabled this week, the council's communication directorate said yesterday.

According to the treasurer, the R20,7m arrears was in respect of water consumption and services, but excluded electricity.

Water connections should be removed and plugged at the mains to prevent illegal reconnection and theft of water, the proposal said. Consumers could also be charged for the discontinuation and removal of the supply.

A city spokesman said the Water

Services Act entrenched the right to a basic water supply, but the right was subject to limitations, including the duty to pay reasonable charges.

The council said the limiting or disconnecting of water supplies for non-payment would be done fairly and those affected would be granted an opportunity to make representations.

"With the exception of water supplies to the indigent, the council is within its rights to discontinue the water supply to a consumer who fails to pay for services rendered."

Provision had been made in the council's policy for the "poorest of the poor" for supplies at a subsidised or lifetime tariff.

BD 23/1/98

(127)

No need for Mntambo to question report, says MEC

(127) Star 26/11/98

BY HOPEWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has objected to provincial director-general Vincent Mntambo's call for the correction of "factual inaccuracies" in the Khumalo Commission's report

The one-man commission led by Eskom's human resources executive director, Bongani Khumalo, was set up last year to investigate allegations of misconduct and lack of respect for members of the executive council levelled against Mntambo.

Mofokeng and Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte and some senior department officials had accused Mntambo of failing to perform his duties and interfering in other departments' affairs.

"He (Mntambo) can either accept the report or reject it on grounds that it is inaccurate," Mofokeng said.

Mntambo has asked Premier Mathole Motsheng to refer the report back to the commissioner because of two factual inaccuracies.

Mntambo said the report incorrectly concluded that he was having "dysfunctional relations with the political heads (MECs)" and had omitted his submis-

sion on how he had responded to Duarte's request to deal with suspicions of corruption in her department.

Mofokeng said he had nothing personal against Mntambo. However, he should not be choosing words he disliked in the report. The cabinet accepted the report. It did not matter if it had reservations about some of its conclusions, "we should not protest just because things did not come out the way we expected".

**Accept it
or reject
it, says
Mofokeng**

Asked if he would be burying the hatchet with Mntambo, he said the friction was never personal but administrative. Relations would be normalised depending on whether Motsheng implemented the recommendations.

The report called for the review of the legal framework and the clarification of the lines of authority between the MECs, the director-general, heads of departments and other senior civil servants.

"With reference to the relevant legislation, all confusion regarding

roles and functions of role players would be alleviated," the report recommended.

It also questioned the lack of a formalised performance contract and a formal job output model that should clearly spell out the work of the director-general including his role as the head of Corporate Services.

■ In the light of administrative problems in the Safety and Security Department which were exposed by Democratic Party Gauteng leader Peter Leon, Duarte said she had invited the Public Service Commission to help her department in "enhancing capacity for service delivery this year".

She believed her department should first evaluate its potential and ability to deliver by "critically looking at itself, overcome its weakness and consolidate the significant gains made last year".

Provincial Service Commission chairman Patrick Fitzgerald confirmed the commission was helping the department to "perform better in handling public requests and to investigate the root causes of administrative inefficiency and identify people who needed training".

He said the commission would submit its report next week.

'Home truth' commission told of councillors' power

By HOPWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

Township councillors in the 1980s had enormous discretionary powers to allocate state-owned houses, former Soweto City Council housing director Estelle Bester told the Gauteng "home truths" commission yesterday.

Testifying in Johannesburg at the commission's

first public hearing, Bester said housing waiting lists in Soweto were extremely long because home-building was almost stagnant.

Homelessness gave councillors power because they had to recommend tenants to the housing committee. The commission, chaired by Jabu Dlamini, who is a private sector attorney, was appointed by Housing MEC

Dan Mofokeng. Its brief is to investigate the circumstances leading to the illegal eviction of tenants and the granting of houses in Gauteng townships by the then government and council officials between 1974 and 1994.

Mofokeng said the commission would help to prevent the repetition of "bureaucratic bungling, discrimination and corruption that

occurred under the previous regime" in the allocation of state-owned houses.

"Getting a house was dependent on who the applicant knew in the council, and the role of councillors in this regard could not be underestimated."

"They (councillors) could effectively block the application or the allocation of a house to others even though

it was a council housing committee which was supposed to make a final decision," Bester said.

She conceded that numerous cases of corruption could not be detected because "anything was possible in Soweto".
Noma-Commissioner Noma-langa Sithole said at least 6 000 complaints had been received. She urged the public to attend the hearings.

Gauteng brings out new screening rules to beat the housing cheats

By HOPWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

The Gauteng Housing Department has introduced strict rules to screen individual housing subsidy applications in a bid to reduce fraud, Ondela Mahlangu, spokesman for Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng, said yesterday.

She said only senior de-

partment personnel would manage the applications for Gauteng's housing subsidies, budgeted at R1,3-billion.

"The department discovered that a number of developers had used the individual subsidy route to avoid the preconditions associated with the project-linked subsidy development scheme," she explained.

Mahlangu also denied that the department was undergoing a forensic audit to investigate allegations of maladministration concerning "ghost applicants" for subsidies.

She said the provincial auditor-general, Shaiket Fakie, was evaluating documents submitted by NP member Johan Kilian, and would

then decide whether an investigation should be conducted.

Mofokeng had welcomed a forensic audit to either clear the department or assist it to take further corrective steps if necessary.

Mofokeng yesterday "indefinitely" postponed announcing his decision about the fate of Housing Department

head Enos Ngutshane, who was charged with mismanagement and nepotism.

It is understood that the report he received at the weekend was incomplete and needed a detailed factual account for its conclusions so that it could not be easily challenged by either Ngutshane or the Housing Department if there is an appeal.

Housing body attracts lots of interest

Robyn Chalmers

(127) ED 27/1/88
MORE than 6 000 people have approached Gauteng's Home Truths Commission since it was launched two months ago to look into irregularities during the past allocation of council and state-owned homes

Public hearings by the commission kicked off yesterday and chairman Jabu Dlamini said there had been enormous interest in its role

"We are focusing only on the allocation of and evictions from state-owned homes since January 1 1976. We have been specifically directed to report on whether the conduct of any councillor, administrator, official or employee amounted to an offence," he said.

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said at last year's launch of the commission that his de-

partment was aware of "extraordinary allegations of corruption and intimidation" in the allocation of state-owned housing.

Much of this allegedly took place in the 20 years before the present administration took over when up to 45 000 state-owned houses were allocated.

Claims of irregularities included the sale of state-owned houses to councillors' family members, people renting houses for 11c a month in Sandton and others being forced into marriage to secure housing.

Dlamini said the commission would identify any steps that should be taken to rectify any wrongs found to have been committed by officials.

Depending on how many cases are heard, the commission will conclude its hearings by the end of March and will report on its findings by the end of April.

Home-sweet-home reality for Alexandra's displaced persons

Nov 28/1998

(127)

R13,8-million housing scheme in Lombardy East sees first families moving in

By ANNA COX

GARY BERNARD

The dreams of people displaced from their homes in Alexandra during political violence in 1992 to own their own homes again, have finally become a reality

Construction of the R13,8-million River Park housing project in Lombardy East, started in November, and within a few weeks, almost 100 houses have been built

The first families, who for the past five years have been living in a church in Alex, have already moved into their own homes

The housing scheme, designed by Greater Johannesburg's Eastern Council with the co-operation of neighbouring Lombardy East and Linbro Park residents, is attractive and blends in with the suburb

Homes vary in design to avoid monotony and range in price from R15 000 to R35 000.

Said councillor Mike Maile "This project is a success because of co-operation between the displacees, the council and the host community. At first we had massive resistance from neighbours who feared the low-cost housing would devalue their properties, but after protracted negotiations we came to an agreement on the style of houses which everyone approved and I believe everyone is happy," he said

The new housing scheme would play a major role in the integration of the two communities, he said

"We hope to see many mutual projects between the two communities such as crime prevention campaigns and environmental issues," he said

Business premises, clinics, schools, recreation and sports facilities have been included

Local Alex contractors and displacees have been used in the construction

Magdalena Nkosi who is doing manual work cleaning up building rubble, says she is delighted that she will soon be in her own home. She lives with five members of her family in Alexandra's council offices



Cementing the community . . Diana Moloi (bottom) and Magdalena Nkosi hard at work

Diana Moloi lives with seven people in the council offices

"Things are bad there. We are working hard here, doing a

man's job, but we are happy because soon these will be our houses," she said

The houses were built in terms of the Rapid Land Devel-

opment Programme - a once-off local council initiative to provide housing for some 20,000 people living in destitute and dangerous conditions

MEC 'using home truths commission as political football'

Bonile Ngqiyaza (27)

THE Democratic Party (DP) has criticised Gauteng MEC Dan Mofokeng for restricting the province's home truths commission to the period before April 27 1994, and accused him of using the commission as a political football. 80 28/1/98

The criticism in yesterday's standing committee on housing by DP spokesman Ian Davidson followed concerns expressed by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) a month ago about procedures followed in the appointment of commissioners.

Davidson said the commission "has been instructed to investigate allegations of corruption only prior to the general elections of 1994. There is obviously a political motive in imposing such a cut-off".

He said it was not only in respect of possible corruption prior to 1994 that people needed to be invited to give evidence, but also possible corruption in respect of the new processes of transfer introduced subsequent to 1994, including allegations related to the new low-cost housing subsidy schemes. "Why is the commission expressly barred from investigating claims subsequent to April 1994 when the ANC took charge of the housing process?"

While the DP welcomed the widely advertised commission which encouraged the public to come forward with complaints, the posters and pamphlets did not reveal the restrictions imposed by the cut-off date.

The provincial government appointed the commission early last month to investigate alleged irregularities in the apartheid era allocation of up to 45 000 state-owned houses with an estimated value of R3bn.

At the time Mofokeng said about 150 000 state-owned houses valued at R10bn were being transferred to their occupants in Gauteng. It was estimated there were allegations of corruption and intimidation in the allocation of up to 30% of these homes.

Last month the IFP said it was unhappy other political parties and the standing committee on housing had not been consulted when the terms of reference for the commission were drawn up. The party wanted to know whether the three commissioners — attorneys Nomalanga Sithole, Van Gend Botha and chairman Jabulani Dlamini — were well qualified. Earlier, the IFP said the commission's cut-off date excluded many IFP supporters displaced from townships like Katlehong and Tembisa.

Mofokeng was not available for comment yesterday.

Red tape delays housing delivery

(127)

Claims approved by local housing committees spend up to four months either in the offices of local authorities or the deeds office

Stevens 29/1/98

By **CECILIA RUSSELL**

Although more than 120 000 claims for council-owned houses have been processed by the Gauteng housing department, only 21 808 title deeds have been registered, the committee for housing and land affairs heard yesterday

Most of the 82 529 claims which have been approved by the local housing committees spend up to four months languishing either in the local authorities' offices or the deeds office, assistant housing director Ronnie Stevens told the committee.

"The major problem was at local authority level," Stevens said, where they are delayed because of the need to be signed by senior officials and photocopied for the local authorities' records

Often the title deeds were not transferred to the deeds office because of defective photocopy machines

Many of the claimants did not claim their deeds as they were obliged to sign an agreement of debt for municipal arrears and this was also affecting the process, he said. All this affects the speed at which

the transfers were taking place.

Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said it was essential that there was a clear separation between the transfer of houses and the settling of municipal debt for the process to be speeded up.

About 11 000 claims were being held up by the adjudication of disputes, Stevens said. Often the claimants did not attend the hearings, but the department had set up mechanisms so that the adjudicator could decide the case in the claimants' absence should they repeatedly fail to turn up. The

estimated cost of each dispute is R3 500

■ Mofokeng threw down the gauntlet to the National Party at the meeting on Tuesday and reacted to allegations of corruption in his department. Mofokeng invited the NP to "be our guest" and demand a forensic audit. He said the department had in the past fired people who were corrupt.

He added any official who knew about corruption while in the employment of the department should be "jailed as he had failed the province and the whole country"

Housing department head fired, but given chance to improve elsewhere

By HOPWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has fired his department head Enos Ngutshane with immediate effect after a disciplinary hearing found that he failed to transform the department and act against an official who accepted a bribe. However, Mofokeng left it to the provincial Public Service Commission to decide where to

redeploy Ngutshane. Ngutshane, who was facing 10 charges of misconduct, was found guilty of three of the charges, including his appointment of a firm of consultants without having followed proper tender procedures.

“According to the Public Service Act, I have options of imposing a fine, demoting the official, transferring him, or directing him to resign from the public service. I believe he

would improve if he gets another opportunity in a different department in Gauteng or elsewhere,” Mofokeng said. He could not forgive Ngutshane because the department was being accused of having corrupt officials, and when a junior official brought information claiming that a senior official was taking bribes, he turned a blind eye. Opposition parties had mixed reactions to Mofokeng’s

DP spokesman Peter Leon approved of the action Mofokeng had taken. “We hope the MEC has been appropriately advised for his actions,” he said. An IFP member of the housing portfolio committee, Gerda Bekker, said the IFP would like to evaluate Mofokeng’s action in relation to the findings and recommendations of the inquiry. NP Gauteng legislature leader Johaan Kilian said the province should be practising a

“no tolerance, no mercy attitude, especially to senior officials. We would have understood if he (Mofokeng) was giving a junior official a second chance with the transfer. It’s very strange that he only chose to transfer Ngutshane with his salary and all the privileges instead of making an example of him,” Kilian said. Ngutshane said yesterday he would appeal against the decision.

Body rejects rent regulations

THE South African Property Association (Sapoa) has rejected the regulation published in the Gauteng Residential Landlord and Tenants Act, saying it was biased towards the protection of tenants

Sapoa chief executive officer Brian Kirchmann told *Sowetan Business* yesterday that his association views the regulation as "unacceptable"

"The association is vehemently opposed to the provisions in the regulations which re-introduces rent control under disguise," said Kirchmann

The regulations stipulate that,

(127)
where landlords give notice of intention to increase rentals by more than the annual consumer price index, and a tenant deems it to be unreasonable, a landlord must engage in consultation with the tenants' committee to reach consensus

The regulations further stipulate that the landlord must disclose to the tenants all information to allow effective consultation to take place

Kirchmann said the net effect of this provision was to subtly re-introduce rent control because if consensus cannot be reached, the dispute would be taken to the board set up in

terms of the Act

He said the Rent Control Act which was largely no more used was discouraging developers from creating new rental stock and the number of new blocks built for renting in the past 30 years was negligible

"Landlords are not just the owners of apartment blocks but also small investors who have acquired dwelling units for investment and have leased them to tenants," he said

He said that Sapoa believes that these landlords are going to take another look at the Act and its regulations - *Sowetan Business*

Sowetan 30/1/98

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Motshkegga condemns (127)

Evictions

Switzerland 23/2/98

By Joshua Raboroko and Joe Mhlehla

GAUTENG Premier Mathole Motshkegga said yesterday he would not allow farmers to evict workers from their land after dismissing them, simply because they no longer wanted their services.

Addressing a rally at Erwatwa on the East Rand, Motshkegga said he was prepared to negotiate with farmers and tenants in the wake of a court ruling that 64 labourers should not be evicted from their Krugersdorp hostel farm.

His government wanted to buy land to empower farmworkers in the same way as farmers were granted huge subsidies by the previous government.

"During my reign as premier I will make sure that no farmworkers' human rights are violated. Workers should not be treated like objects by their employers, simply because they depend on them for income."

Meanwhile, opening the Gauteng Legislature in Johannesburg on Friday, Motshkegga said sending petty criminals to serve jail terms was no longer the way South African criminal justice system should operate.

"There appears to be some mutual interest between some opposition parties and sections of the media to discredit the Government without justification. This malicious propaganda against the Government is informed by narrow political agendas in preparation for the 1999 elections," Motshkegga said.

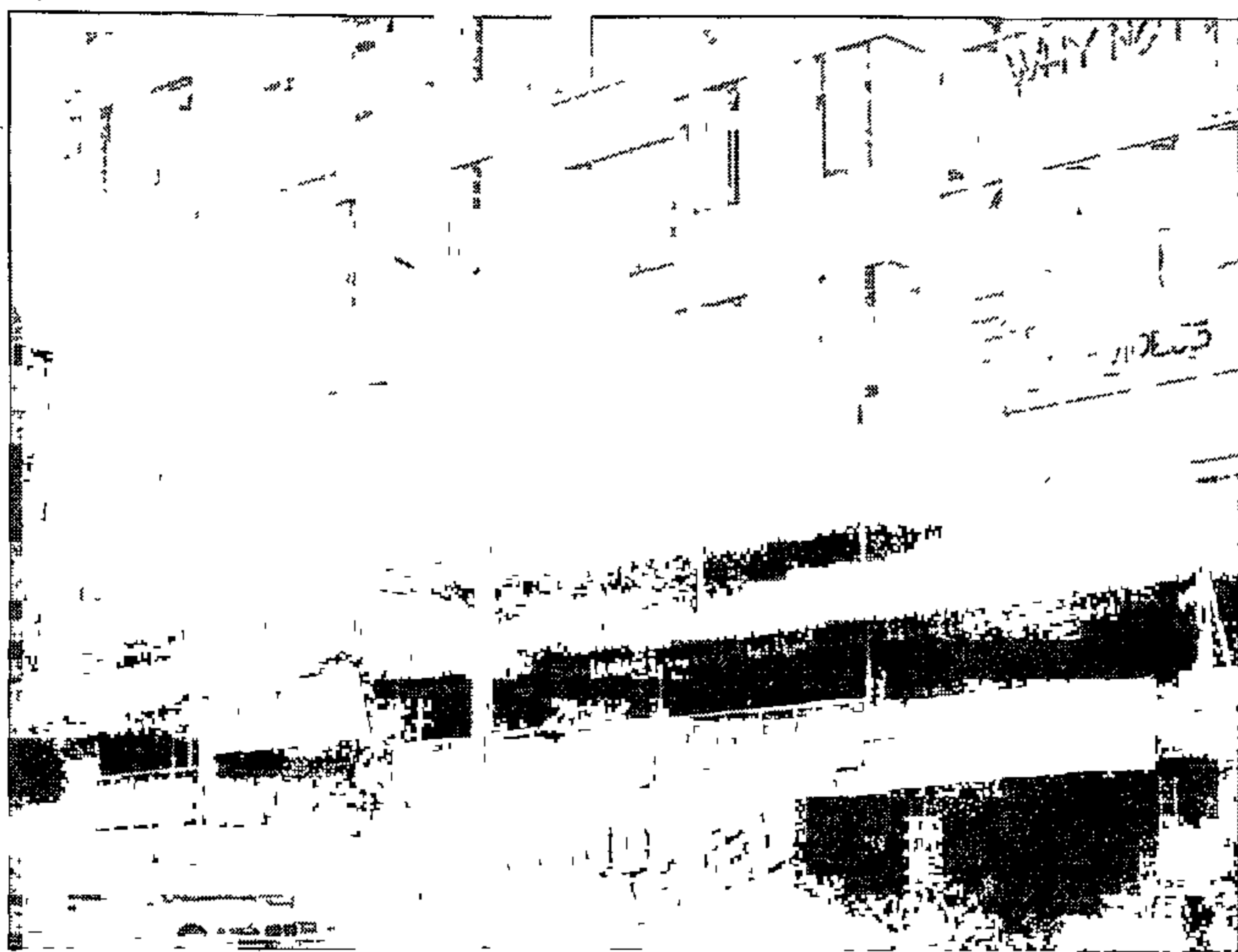
Although some delivery had taken place, his government had not been given due recognition for that.

"They claim the government does not consult but there are dozens of consultative forums throughout the province."

"The press is silent on the plight of 66 families who have been evicted from their homes on the West Rand. The eviction has taken place despite the passing of the Land Tenure Act and we await whether the court has the moral courage to implement what is law. I, as premier, will be meeting with both farmers and farmworkers to try to achieve a resolution to this problem," he said.



Officially opening the legislature, Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshkegga said on Friday his administration planned to vigorously tackle crime and the crisis in education. The health department was planning to build 26 new primary care facilities which would ensure that a total of 204 782 children were fed with nutritious snacks every day under the primary nutritious scheme covering 880 schools. PIC VELL NHLAPO



Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville offer cheap accommodation close to the Jo'burg city centre, making the inner city a desirable dwelling place for immigrants.

Cooperation can help stop crime

sowetan 23/2/98 (127)

By Paul Thulare

EFFORTS by the South African Police Service to deal with rampant crime in the inner city have failed, largely because of a lack of clear policing and management strategies, poor community relations, uncooperative businesses and organised drug syndicates.

Under pressure to show progress, police use the presence of immigrants as an excuse, focusing much of their efforts on them.

Johannesburg attracts people from across South Africa's borders because of its perceived job opportunities. But these do not immediately materialise.

This leads many immigrants to seek alternative means of sustenance: opening shebeens, vending vegetables on streets, drug peddling and prostitution.

Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville offer cheap accommodation close to the city centre, making the inner city a desirable dwelling place for immigrants.

In the absence of a clear crime prevention strategy for the inner city, Hillbrow and Yeoville police stations have established proactive crime prevention units which seem to concentrate largely on immigrants.

Problems

Twice a month they search buildings for illegal immigrants and check documentation. Arrested immigrants are included in monthly crime statistics as "criminals", including those whose presence is legal.

Inadequate crime fighting is explained by the severe problems which face inner city policing. Daily crime prevention operations are hampered by the overcrowding of buildings.

Many flats accommodate close to 20 people, staircases, lifts and fire escapes are also often broken, making it difficult for police to respond quickly to crime.

Landlords do not check that people leasing flats and houses are living in them: often they are not, having sublet them to others.

Criminal environment The business infrastructure of the area also contributes to the criminal environment. Many hotels, pubs and nightclubs are havens for prostitution and drug smuggling.

Unattended municipal houses have become "chop shops" for stolen vehicles and some flats house brothels.

Street hawkers' stands are transit

Police accept or demand bribes from illegal immigrants and criminals

points for drug peddlers. Some pharmacies and surgeries appear to be used as covers for drug and house-breaking syndicates.

A pervasive criminal environment makes community police relations difficult. Hotel and pub owners do not help prevent crime because they are indirectly involved or fear their business will be affected.

Community action against crime is sporadic, lasting as long as residents feel particularly threatened and then subsiding. One community police forum in the area is functioning poorly, two others do not function at all.

Protest in the city centre also hampers activities since police are called in to monitor it, diverting attention from crime prevention. In this context, immigrants provide an easy target.

Police justify their actions by attributing particular crimes to immigrants: housebreaking to Zimbabweans, vehicle theft to Zambians and Zimbabweans, and fraud to Zaireans, Senegalese and Ghanaians.

But the relationship between immigrants and crime is more complex. Immigrant communities include people who are law-abiding, have steady jobs or are self-employed, and are very religious.

Some are indirectly involved in crime, acting as couriers or helping to provide logistics because of their close association with the police or the justice system.

Some do both: they have good jobs, are religious, but are involved in drug peddling or syndicates, fraud and motor vehicle theft.

Police action cannot reduce immigrant numbers in the inner city. Immigration control is hampered by the lack of data on numbers or of control centres from which the movement of immigrants can be monitored.

Immigrant networks are so sophisticated that it is difficult for police to trace them. Immigrants are always changing residence and are able to evade police by moving in and out of the country with no difficulty.

Source of corruption Immigration control thus often serves as a source of corruption. Immigrants complain that police may evict them from flats in

favour of a local subtenant, in the process, their belongings disappear.

Police also accept or demand bribes from immigrants. Illegal immigrants can thus often buy protection from the police. Those who are engaged in crime find this easiest because they have some police on their payroll.

Among those who are not criminals, payment to police of up to R300 to stay in South Africa is common; those who do not have the money are beaten and detained.

In Yeoville, some police officers allegedly provide accommodation for immigrants and protect them from deportation in exchange for "monthly allowances".

They are able to do this because the buildings were previously owned by the former Transkei and Ciskei governments: the officers used their tribal association with the former governments to gain control of them.

Corruption

Many illegal immigrants acquire South African documentation by paying R300 to Department of Home Affairs officials.

Thus, far from aiding crime prevention, police action against immigrants weakens it by providing an excuse for inaction, and a source of corruption.

It also hampers action against crime because it ensures that immigrants will not help police (even if they are victims of crime), to them, policing is always equated with anti-immigrant sentiment.

They ask researchers why they should help when police have made life uncomfortable for them - and why they should report crime when all crimes are attributed to them.

Anti-immigrant action serves, therefore, as a constraint to effective policing. A safer inner city is likely to require local government action to reduce overcrowding and to enhance both living conditions and orderly dwelling patterns without which control is impossible: crime prevention requires more than policing alone.

(The writer is a research assistant at the Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg. This article first appeared in the latest issue of Synopsis, the quarterly newsletter of the Centre's governance programme.)

Buyers flock to sign on for low-cost houses

Star 23/2/98 (127)

5 000 homes to be built in R85-m scheme on West Rand

BY BUNTY WEST

More than 1 000 people have already signed up for new homes at Tshepisoong (the promised land) - an R85-million low-cost housing scheme on the West Rand - even though housing lists only opened a week ago.

An urgent interdict was brought by Jafta Lekgheto, chairman of Omhle, an organisation representing homeless people on the West Rand, on Thursday in a bid to stop the Western Council from opening the lists for the 5 000 houses on the farm land near Leratong Hospital on the West Rand. The hearing was postponed on the same day by a High Court judge who deemed the interdict was not urgent.

The interdict attempt did not dampen the carnival atmosphere at the opening of six show houses at Tshepisoong

on Saturday. Gauteng MEC for Housing and Land Affairs Dan Mofokeng and Western Council mayor Isaac Padi welcomed more than 2 000 people to the site.

The homes, which vary from 32 to 40 square metres in size, will be available for those with monthly incomes of between R800 and R3 500.

"When the ANC government promised houses for all, it was serious. Council bought the land for development and established joint ventures with private enterprise. For the people of the Brinks-Vlakfontein squatter camp, who will get first option on the homes, there shall be houses, security and comfort," said local councillor Jerrrie Steenveldt, who is also the housing committee chairman.

He told the gathering the new township would also have a community centre, park, ur-

ban agricultural projects, economic spine (shops and businesses), two schools, high density housing (three-storey flats), bus and taxi ranks and a railway station.

Grinaker managing director Graham Browne said the first houses would be handed over in March and within a year all 5 000 homes would be completed.

"This project is just the first on the West Rand. Within a few months we plan to launch the Durban Deep housing scheme where 20 000 homes will be built," Mofokeng promised the enthusiastic crowd.

He praised Roodepoort for being the top town in South Africa for housing delivery.

"No other town or city has built more houses for its residents than Roodepoort," he said.

Registration for the new houses closes on March 5.

WHICH...
Calls for housing MEC's
suspension as scandal brews

(127) BD 24/2/98
Jonathan Davis

OPPOSITION parties in the Gauteng legislature yesterday demanded the suspension of housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng and the appointment of a judicial commission of inquiry to probe allegations of bribery and corruption in his department.

The demands were made in a letter to Gauteng premier Mathole Motshekga from Johan Kilian, leader of the opposition in the Gauteng legislature.

Kilian claimed in the letter that the National Party and other opposition parties in the legislature had information about "an alarming level of maladministration, bribery, corruption and intimidation" in Mofokeng's department. He also claimed to have evidence that suggested the charges against housing director-general Vincent Mntambo and the suspension of head of department Gilbert Ngutshane were part of a programme of intimidation aimed at covering up corruption.

"We are extremely concerned about the standard of management in provincial government," he said.

Kilian's letter called for a forensic audit of the Gauteng housing and land affairs department and the suspension of all housing subsidy payouts until the auditor-general was satisfied an effective subsidy management system had been instituted. It said a judicial inquiry was needed as previous internal investigations had been ineffective.

The inquiry should have enough scope to investigate "probable links between the prosecution of Ngutshane and Mntambo and corruption issues in the departments of Dan Mofokeng and Jessie Duarte", it said.

The letter was backed by Ian Davidson, leader of the Democratic Party in the legislature, who said the allegations "could only be described as sleaze, bribery and corruption".

Kilian said the letter's demands had the support of all opposition parties in the legislature, as rulings by Speaker Trevor Fowler preventing questions on unproven media reports had forced the opposition into a corner.

Mofokeng is expected to reply to the allegations at a meeting of the Gauteng housing portfolio committee today.

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AP

Kliptown development launched

THE first phase of a project to develop Kliptown, considered one of Johannesburg's most neglected areas, was launched yesterday by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, University of the Witwatersrand and other stakeholders

Freedom Square in Kliptown, where the Freedom Charter was launched by the African National Congress on June 26 1955, has been declared a national monument, yet greater Kliptown consists of informal settlements, has no proper road system and has limited access for trading

At a media briefing at Wits' School of Architecture yesterday, Professor Lindsay Bremner emphasised the importance of developing "one of the most depressed areas of our city" with the cooperation and involvement of the Kliptown community

Kliptown residents previously opposed a private development in the area because they did not consider it relevant to the community

(127)
Sowetan 24/2/98
Attending the inauguration of the project was Wits vice-chancellor Professor Colin Bundy, GJMC mayor Mr Isaac Mogase and Northern Metropolitan Local Council mayor Mr Danny Kekana

A minute of silence was observed for Tshepisa Mashinini, strategic executive for metropolitan planning, urbanisation and environmental management in the GJMC, who died on Friday

Mashinini was one of the driving forces behind the Kliptown development project

Kekane, who spoke of the relevance of the Freedom Charter, praised the development project but cautioned coordinators not to see Kliptown just as an historical site

"While it is nice to have historical monuments for tourists to visit, you cannot talk of freedom if people are unemployed and living in shacks"

Kekane said the real consideration of the project should be its ability to provide infrastructure and jobs - Sapa

Mofokeng rejects DP, NP allegations

Robyn Chalmers

BD 25/2/98 (127)

GAUTENG housing MEC Dan Mofokeng yesterday rejected a number of fraud and mismanagement allegations within his department as well as a call for his dismissal by opposition parties.

He said he would welcome a forensic audit of his department, although he had already asked the public protector to look into allegations of corruption.

The National Party (NP) and Democratic Party (DP) called this week for Mofokeng to be dismissed and his department's records sealed to stop evidence of corruption being destroyed.

Mofokeng said suspending the housing subsidy payment would effectively mean stopping the delivery of low-cost houses in the province — just as it was starting to gain momentum with 180 000 houses built or under construction.

On the allegations, Mofokeng said the auditor-general identified five subsidies which were overpaid out of 95 000 processed. The subsidies had an average value of R2 500 and the department would recover the money at the end of the project when the financial statements were reconciled. With regard to allegations of fraud, he said no double subsidies were paid out and there were no ghost subsidies.

The allegation that R6m in subsidy funds was missing was "totally untrue". The department had documentation tracing the money's use.

Sapa reports that Mofokeng said the NP and the DP were waging a campaign to paralyse the provincial government and prevent continued delivery in the run-up to next year's elections. "They want government to be embroiled in commissions of inquiry and do nothing but respond to allegations," he said.

Housing MEC ⁽¹²⁷⁾ calls for probe ^{Sowetan 25/2/98}

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng has invited the auditor-general to investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in his department, but rejected calls by the opposition that the department be closed down.

At a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday, Mofokeng challenged the National Party and Democratic Party opposition in the Gauteng legislature to come up with tangible information regarding the allegations of maladministration, bribery, corruption and intimidation in his department.

He was responding to calls by the opposition to Gauteng Premier

Mathole Motshekga to suspend him (Mofokeng) and to institute a judicial commission of inquiry.

The opposition contended that lists were available of double subsidies amounting to R6 million awarded to people with the same identity numbers.

Mofokeng welcomed forensic audits in his department, saying he had already requested the Public Protector to investigate some of the claims of corruption.

He said claims that R6 million earmarked for subsidies was missing and that subsidies were awarded to the same people were untrue.

The money was paid out for projects at Tshepiso and Evaton in the Vaal Triangle.



Proud owner ... Munzwaki Moleko used money from a neighbourhood collective to build her home in Protea, Soweto.

Unique housing scheme a dream come true for women

By RYAN CRESSWELL

Dressmaker and mother of six Munzwaki Moleko always wanted her own house but it seemed an impossible dream – now she owns one surrounded by a garden of her favourite flowers and vegetables

Curtain seamstress and mother of three Eugenie Ntsala still lives in a tiny makeshift home in an informal settlement nearby and has the same dream. Now it looks as though her wish is also about to come true.

The two women are members of a collective housing scheme run under the auspices of the South African Homeless

People's Federation in Protea, Soweto. The women save about R1 a day each and do the work themselves

Moleko, who looks after her children alone, said "When we

Members do work themselves

first started the collective I could not believe it would bear fruit but then I began to believe in it.

"Now I actually have my own house. I will do whatever I

can to help the rest get their houses too."

Ntsala also looks after her children on her own and is waiting for the local council to allocate another 68 sites to the project. She has never lived in a real house but after a long struggle she believes her life is about to get better

"I think they will start to build my house next month. I am so happy I will get a house," she said

The Protea scheme – one of many under way around the country – provides homes for about R10 000 each, compared to equivalent Reconstruction and Development Programme

houses which cost well over R60 000

There is some heated discussion when the next recipient of a home is chosen at the weekly treasury committee

Homes cost as little as R10 000

meetings.

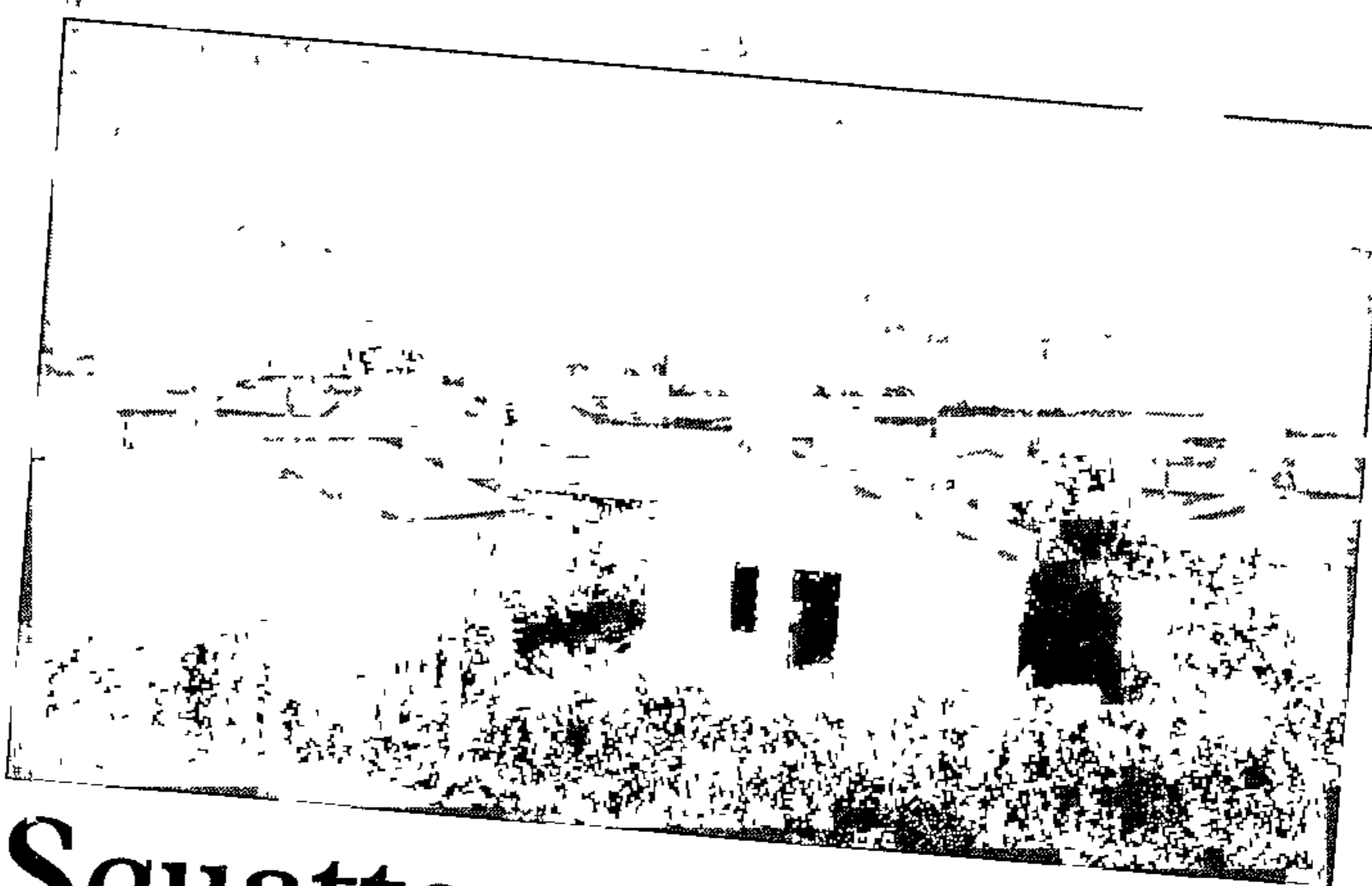
Then work starts with the cheapest materials available. Many of the members have received some training in building and a few have even visited

Asia to get a better idea of the possibilities

There are about 750 members involved in this particular project, which started in 1992, and they now have nearly R80 000 to spend

There are about 15 million people squatting in shacks around the country. In theory, all families who have an income of less than R1 500 a month qualify for a housing subsidy but legislative blockages, market limitations, land costs and constitutional constraints are causing problems. Collective housing schemes are helping to give the people the houses they have hoped for

Star 25/2/98 (127)



The conversion of a squatter settlement in Phola Park, on the East Rand, into a new-look housing area is at an advanced stage.

Squatter camp revamped

By Sowetan Business Reporter

A PROJECT to convert a squatter settlement in Phola Park on the East Rand into decent housing is in an advanced stage, Denel has said.

The project, aimed at building 4 395 houses in the area to replace the squatter settlement, is the brainchild of Vector, Denel's leading high technology division.

The project is aimed at supporting South Africa's emerging low cost housing industry in conjunction with building contractors Ecobuild.

The company is one of a number of Denel's 18 divisions that have successfully converted military technology for civilian purposes.

Its technology for building houses recently endorsed in the media by national housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, is derived from Denel's vast experience in the various fields of engineering.

Vector uses steel trusses to construct roofs that are raised on steel columns called Eco-frames or steel frame roofs called Eco-roofs. The steel building kits are manufactured by Vector and assembled either at their factory near Pretoria or on site.

The Eco-roof concept, which is to assemble the roof at ground level and hoisting it into position over a complete brick structure, is applied in Phola Park where the main contractor has employed 300 community mem-

bers to build 30-40 square metre, two bed-room houses with flush toilets and showers on serviced stands within the Reconstruction and Development Programme subsidy.

The integrity of the finished product has been successfully tested to conform to the standards demanded by the South African Bureau of Standards.

Since September last year over 500 houses have been built in Phola Park and construction continues at a rapid rate with the ramshackle tin structures being replaced with durable and cost-effective houses in a variety of shapes and colours.

Final delivery is set to be achieved at the end of the year. Vector developed the concept in 1994.

(127)

10/10/94
Sowetan

From posh to run-down suburbs, they flourish unchallenged

By ANNA COX

A visit to the city's suburbs reveals illegal businesses in almost every area

In the eastern areas of Malvern, Jeppestown and Bertrams, many people are operating businesses from their garages or verandas.

Live chickens, hot food, auto electricians, car hire and auto-mechanical businesses are advertised everywhere

(127) (127A)
and no attempt is made to conceal them

Many pose health and fire hazards, but business operators know there is virtually no law enforcement so they flagrantly continue operating.

In Hillbrow, restaurants, clubs, blue collar operations in building basements, hawkers selling food and goods are rife. All contravene town planning, fire and health by-laws placing residents at risk.

Star 26/2/98
In upmarket Sandton, the bedrooms in a luxury Parkmore home have been partitioned with cardboard and it is home to some 60 squatters.

A residential home in Dunkeld has been converted illegally into a multimillion-rand estate agent's office. A canteen has been built at a luxury home in Houghton which is operating as a business illegally.

There is overcrowding in

many areas, too, with some landlords crowding people into old houses partitioned with cardboard. There are insufficient toilets, bathrooms and cooking facilities

One home in Bertrams has about 40 people living in back rooms and a cellar. All share one toilet which has no door and is overflowing into the yard. Tenants each pay the owner R200 a month, a total of R8 000, probably tax free

Gauteng committed to housing squatters

sowetan 27/2/98 (127)

By Saint Molakeng

GAUTENG MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said yesterday that his department would strive to build more houses for squatters to restore their dignity.

Mofokeng was speaking at the official opening of one of 700 houses built at Phola Park squatter settlement near Thokoza on the East Rand.

Houses will restore people's dignity which shacks have taken away," he said.

Before the 1994 elections, Phola Park had violent battle between African Nationa-

Mofokeng says proper houses will restore people's dignity

Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters.

Mofokeng said the construction of the houses was "one of the most important" projects in South Africa. Now we are no longer counting corpses but houses."

Mrs Martha Ntilashe, a mother of five, was one of the happy new homeowners.

After previously living in a shack, Ntilashe (32) said "With a house, my family has been spared the dangers of rain and

the bad elements. My children are excited."

Three thousand houses have been completed and occupied in Phola Park over the past two years, 500 are under construction, while 4 395 sites have been serviced. The houses will be completed within the next 18 months.

A 100 houses have been completed at nearby Eden Park.

Housing Minister Mrs Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele commended Denel, an arms-manufactur-

ing company, which built the houses using materials such as steel.

"Denel has shown that it is committed to peace and stability by turning AK-47s into houses," Mthembi-Mahanyele said.

She said the Government was committed to building more houses for "the poorest of the poor", despite financial constraints and other challenges.

For instance, some community members in nearby Greenfield have apparently opposed the building of houses there.

Mthembi-Mahanyele said "If it comes to the push we will call the army and the police to enable us to build the houses."

The move from slums to suburbs

Star 21/2/98

(127)

ousing backlogs, housing crises, rapid population influx. None of these are new concepts, and in South Africa's rich phrases quickly become buzzwords and are relegated to boring ministerial speeches and bureaucratic reports.

Gauteng land affairs director Carren Engelbrecht is, however, a government official who turns this well-developed cynicism on its head - by charting a realistic way of dealing with Gauteng's housing crisis.

More than any other province in the country, Gauteng's housing shortage is further complicated by the more than 20 000 people who flood into the province every month from neighbouring countries and provinces.

Rural families, as well as families outside South Africa's borders, send their "brightest and best" to find their fortunes in the City of Gold.

While many do not find work in the province, families perceive their children or siblings to stand a better chance of getting a job here than in their hometown.

Housing officials have noted a steady stream of people from Northern Province, North West Province and the Eastern Cape, where economic strife has hit communities hard.

Migration westwards from Mpumalanga appears to be less of a problem, Engelbrecht says, as confidence in the province's economic potential gradually increases.

Reality

Engelbrecht describes the influx of people into Gauteng as an unstoppable trend for at least the next 10 years while neighbouring provinces battle to improve their economies.

Having accepted this as a reality, the Gauteng housing department is operating a medium-term programme to cope with the demand for housing.

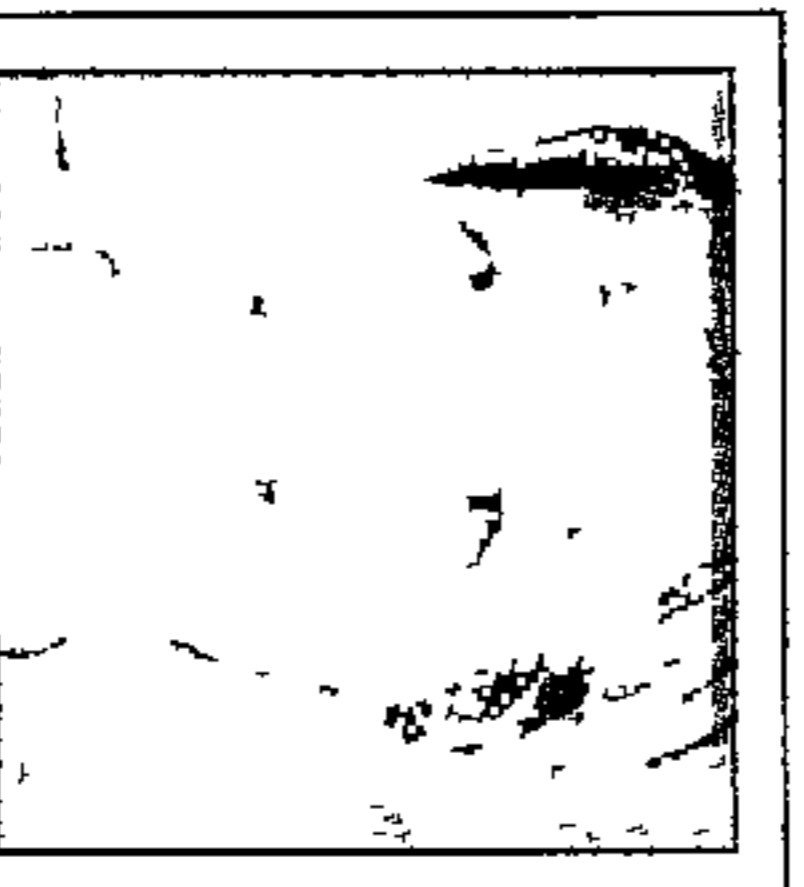
Many of South Africa's development crises have been played out in South African provinces in the 21

"These people don't just choose the land in a haphazard fashion. They are slick, they know what they are doing, and often bring in professional assistance to help determine its potential use," Engelbrecht says.

Members of this mafia complete deeds searches on the land to determine who owns it and use skilled planners to structure a settlement on paper.

"Land mafia will rarely invade privately owned land because they know that we (the government) will be softer on them than a private company would be," she says.

Large-scale land invasions planned by the mafia usually occur over a long weekend.



Gauteng's housing crisis is being exacerbated by the more than 20 000 people who flood into the province every month from neighbouring countries and provinces. **JACQUI REEVES** examines the housing issue and discovers how a mysterious organisation called the 'land mafia' is complicating matters for the authorities.

police are less inclined to confront these two groups than adult males.

"The other thing that the organisers do is build a few shacks and then leave them and watch what happens," Engelbrecht says.

The invaded land on which the settlement is constructed is often given the name of a political figure.

A community leader in the south of Johannesburg, who does not wish to be named, describes the "land mafia" as "highly organised with a lot of support".

"There are a lot of people out there who feel that if they wait for their names to finally come up on the council lists, they will be waiting for ever. These guys make things work and appear to be getting away with it - this is why they are so strong in our communities," he says.

Besides the R50 rent all the squatters pay to the "land mafia" each month, an additional R20 "protection fee" is paid to allow them to stay on the land, and another R10 for legal fees.

The legal fees are paid into a fund so that if action is taken against the squatters, a legal representative can be called in.

How the state should respond to these land invasions was one of the burning questions new officials of the various departments of housing faced when they took office.

Using force

Initially, the state's reaction was a heavy-handed one, Engelbrecht says.

"I think the government was trying to assert its authority on the people. The result was a situation where many difficult and sometimes violent evictions took place."

In the Moflat Park evictions of 1994 the police had to use force to remove squatters, which simply displaced them to another site.

Evicting a community is also an expensive affair, costing the state an average of R400 per shack.



LIVING DANGEROUSLY. Uncontrolled informal settlements pose many hazards for dwellers. Here residents of the Far East Bank squatter camp in Alexandra were forced to flee their shack after a fire.

Was the Rietbok crash the work of right-wing agents? Thirty years on the suspicion lingers

Dirty tricks and a plane tragedy

(252) Star 21/2/98

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj has been called on to reopen the investigation into the mysterious disappearance of an SAA flight 30 years ago. No bodies or wreckage were ever recovered. Now allegations have begun surfacing that government agents sabotaged the Vickers Viscount named Rietbok, killing all 25 people on board
DEON MAREE reports



Grahamstown - The official version of the Rietbok crash on March 13

The strange death of an investigator
Immediately after the Rietbok disaster on the night of March 13 1967, South African Airways dispatched its own investigating team to the scene. The team was headed by Captain Jimmy Boyd, a former pilot and well known at the time as an amateur golfing champion. By March 17 he had reportedly finished his preliminary investigation and was due to fly back to Johannesburg that morning to report to SAA. However, that morning there was no reply to knocks on his hotel room door in East London. When the door was opened, Boyd was found dead in his sleep, but that he might have died in his sleep of a heart attack, the circumstances around his death remained uncertain. The coincidence of his dying as he was about to report to SAA is striking. Was he silenced?

out that the segregation of white and coloured Afrikaans-speaking citizens could not be justified on the basis of "cultural differences". Some white Afrikaners branded him "a traitor" and even "a communist". He was not a typical Broederbond leader and, to some, not a desirable one.
Shortly before his death, certain extraordinary circumstances arose. Prime Minister John Vorster, who had been in office for about six months after the assassination of Hendrik Verwoerd, together with the foreign minister at the time, Dr Helgard Müller, approached Bruwer to take up an

with the Legal Resources Centre in Johannesburg, says that three years ago the centre was inundated with eviction cases.
"In late 1995 the situation with evictions was a nightmare. We acted in a lot of cases and were hardly able to cope with the number of cases we were being presented with."
Hawthorne says that since the start of the Mayibuye programme, the number of eviction cases has dropped to almost nil. The centre is currently dealing with only one eviction case.
"This programme has identified that the government cannot simply evict people to the side of the road because they will simply move to another site and start the whole process all over again," he says.

Not solution

"The settlements are, however, not a final solution to Gauteng's housing problem.
The South American model, called "From Slums to Suburbs", has seen the transformation of planned *favelas* into more structured residential areas.
In Gauteng, it is hoped that planned settlements will be upgraded with improved facilities such as tarred roads and brick houses, as well as schools and clinics.

The establishment of informal settlements as a government strategy will always remain a contentious issue in Gauteng, controlling the province's housing crisis has called for creative and immediate action that will hold some hope for upgrading the living conditions of the landless.
With a bit of luck, this land release programme might just deliver this dream.

What one South American model can teach South Africa

with the chalk. Areas are demarcated for shops, schools, sportsfields and spaza shops.
Engelbrecht estimates that a team of markers can lay out more than 1 000 sites in just two hours.
"These teams work quickly and efficiently and bring in their first group of inhabitants as soon as possible."
Women and children are often the first arrivals because it is believed that

releasing land to the landless before the crises of land invasions occur.
The department identifies tracts of land that appear to be in danger of being invaded. On a few occasions the suspect land has been bought from private owners, but it is usually held by either a local or provincial authority.
The authority will then apply for funding and establish a planned settlement on the land.

"If the settlement is planned, we can at least make provision for 'breas' in which to lay services and plan for schools and clinics where necessary, so that when people do settle, place will have been reserved for these top structures," Engelbrecht says.
This type of planning also helps to avoid situations where squatters settle on flood plains, rubbish dumps or dolomite land, where permanent

structures would be unsafe.
Critics of this programme have accused the government of encouraging land invasions and squatting. On this issue Engelbrecht does not pull any punches.
"Look, this is not an ideal system. In a perfect world we would immediately build houses for everyone. But we don't have the money, so we have to try something else," she says.

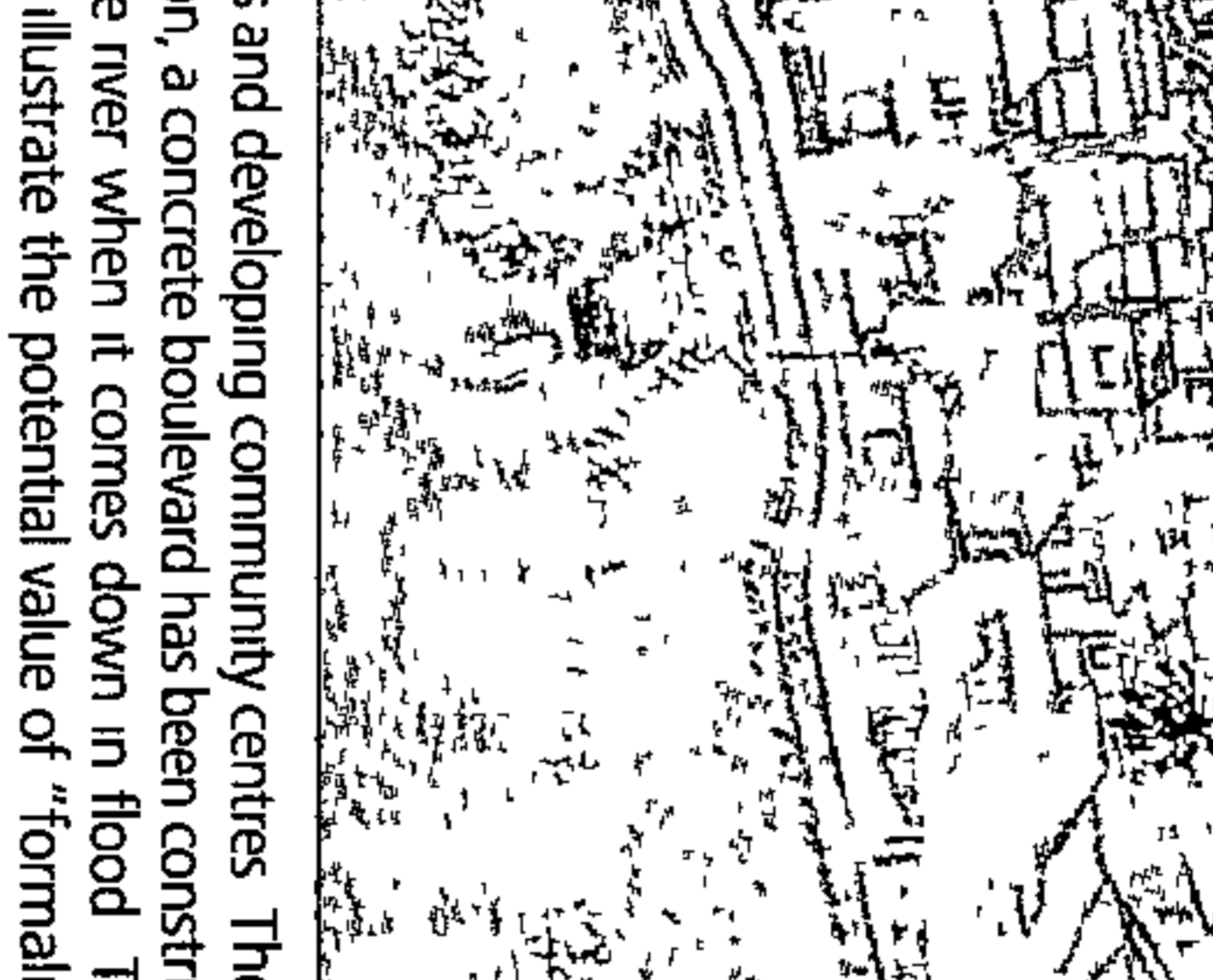
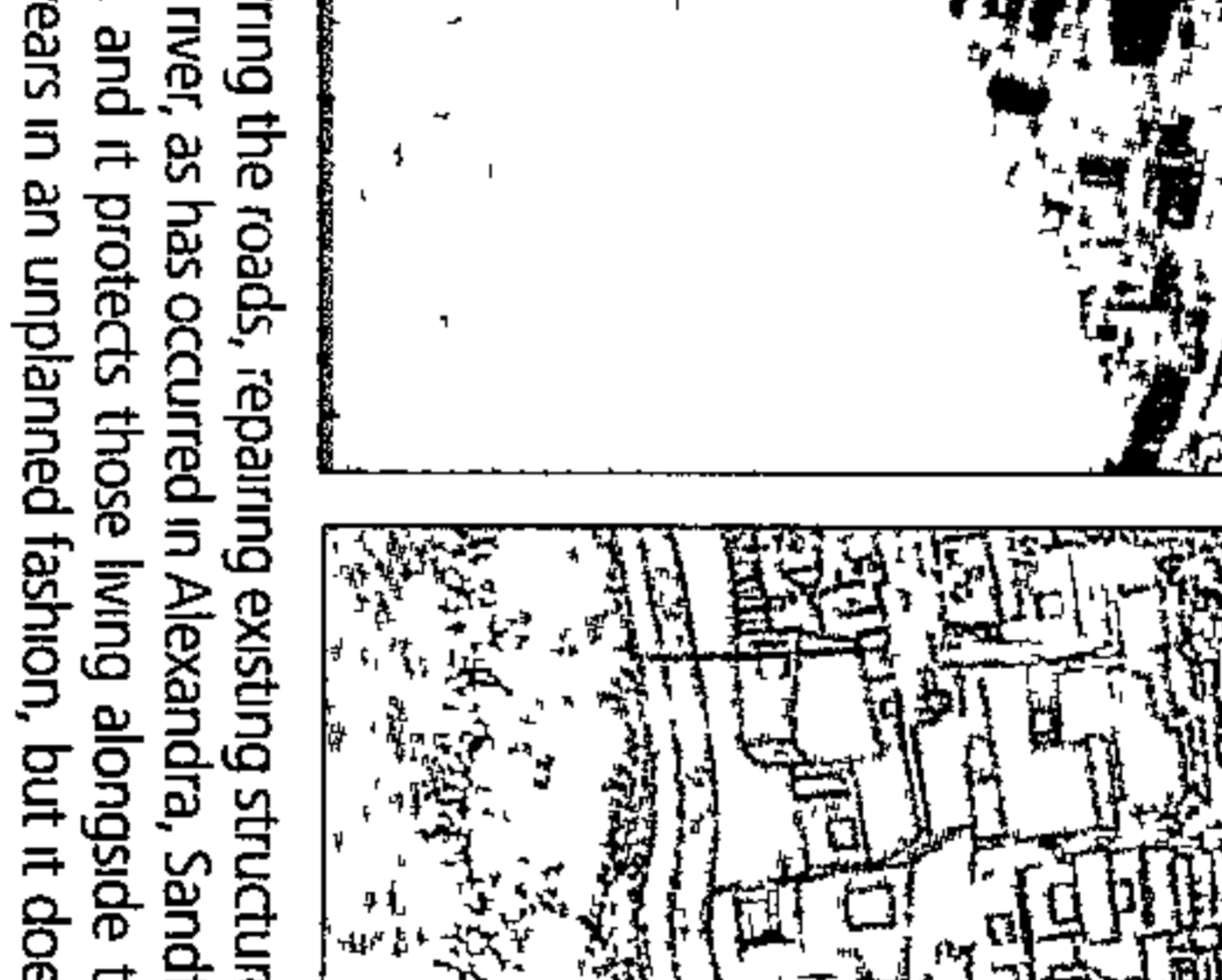
"The land will be invaded, it's just a case of when, so we try and pre-empt it by setting up a kind of 'formalised informal settlement'.
The success of this programme is already visible. Last year the department released 4 000 sites and plans to release another 33 000 this year.
The number of evictions has also greatly decreased.
Murray Hawthorne, an attorney

with the Legal Resources Centre in Johannesburg, says that three years ago the centre was inundated with eviction cases.
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Zuma increasingly opts for a health system based largely on South American examples, so too does Engelbrecht believe Gauteng can gain much from that continent's housing strategies.
Ten years ago, cities such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were experiencing a huge influx of citizens from neighbouring provinces and cities. This trend was halted, however, when those local economies improved and weakened the attraction of the large cities to job seekers.
It is estimated that in the first December/January period after SA's 1994 elections, 200 000 people entered Gauteng, signalling the opening of the floodgates into the province.
Land invasions are, according to Engelbrecht, a symptom of this influx.
"No housing programme could possibly cope with the kind of numbers we are dealing with, so what we are doing is a type of crisis management."
Most new arrivals live with a friend or family member for a short period when they first arrive in Gauteng. It is during this time that these homeless, landless South Africans become organised by local, informal community leaders around housing interests. It is usually at this stage that Gauteng's "land mafia" enters the scene.
Members of this mafia are motivated either by political disenchantment or financial gain.

A team of land mafioso identify a 'community' who are in need of land and 'charge' them R50 each to sign up on a 'housing list'. Once these 'land planners' have secured an average of 2 000 signatures, and a healthy bank balance of R100 000, the 'planners' identify a site to occupy.

TALE OF TWO SETTLEMENTS: Favelas in Rio de Janeiro have been upgraded by tarring the roads, repairing existing structures and developing community centres. The photograph on the left shows an existing favela and on the right is the plan for the area. Where shacks were built up against a river, as has occurred in Alexandra, Sandton, a concrete boulevard has been constructed. The boulevard serves two functions: people can now walk safely along the edge of the river on this attractive feature, and it protects those living alongside the river when it comes down in flood. This general concept would not work in a settlement such as Alexandra, because it is a township that developed over many years in an unplanned fashion, but it does illustrate the potential value of "formalised informal settlements".



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JOHANNESBURG INNER CITY

(127) 17M 13/12/98

Crackdown targets landlords, tenants

Thirty-five buildings could be seized by authorities

Gauteng provincial authorities, the Johannesburg metro and the property industry are combining to introduce tough measures to recoup service arrears. In the inner city these are estimated at R340m — roughly one-fifth of the R1,7bn owed to the metro.

The southern and eastern local metro councils (LMCs) — with jurisdiction over areas such as Hillbrow, Berea and central Johannesburg — are summoning owners of residential buildings. This may lead to the seizure of at least 35 buildings.

Many cases are being defended, says Southern MLC rates administrator Andy van Zyl, who is suing 15 owners.

"Some landlords," explains his Eastern MLC counterpart Keith Peacock, "have absconded with rental and service monies in an attempt to realise the value of failing assets." Peacock has found common ownership of many buildings where such tactics have been used. He estimates that the 20 owners he is dealing with owe about R50m.

Many landlords say they have lost control over buildings because of intimidation by parties purportedly acting as middlemen between landlords and tenants.

The middlemen have illegally collected rental and service payments from tenants. Some have admitted to suborning rentals or membership fees collected from tenants to run their own administrations. Civil ac-

tions brought by property owners against these individuals are continuing.

Holders of first bonds are foreclosing on technically bankrupt property owners. Several buildings are about to be auctioned.

Though civic organisations may still represent tenants in dispute mediations by the Gauteng Housing Department, their role has effectively been ended. This responsibility is now vested in the Landlord Tenant Dispute Resolution Board.

But this board has no power to determine rental increases. Government and landlords continue to debate whether the consumer price index is the best determinant of rental rises, as proposed by new regulations.

Organisations playing a largely unsuccessful mediation role up to the present are the SA National Civics Organisation, Act-stop and the Johannesburg Organised Tenants Association. It is alleged that some of these groups have organised tenants to intimidate or defy landlords.

This activity is also about to be stymied. In terms of the proposed regulations to the new Residential Landlord & Tenant Act (1997), intimidation by either landlords or tenants carries a maximum fine of R50 000 or three years' imprisonment.

It is unlikely tenants facing such heavy penalties will be bullied into this kind of behaviour in future. Many tenants evicted for acting on the advice of such organisations have complained to the press, the



Arnold Fronio

Pioneer Place in Berea going on the auction block

Democratic Party and the new board.

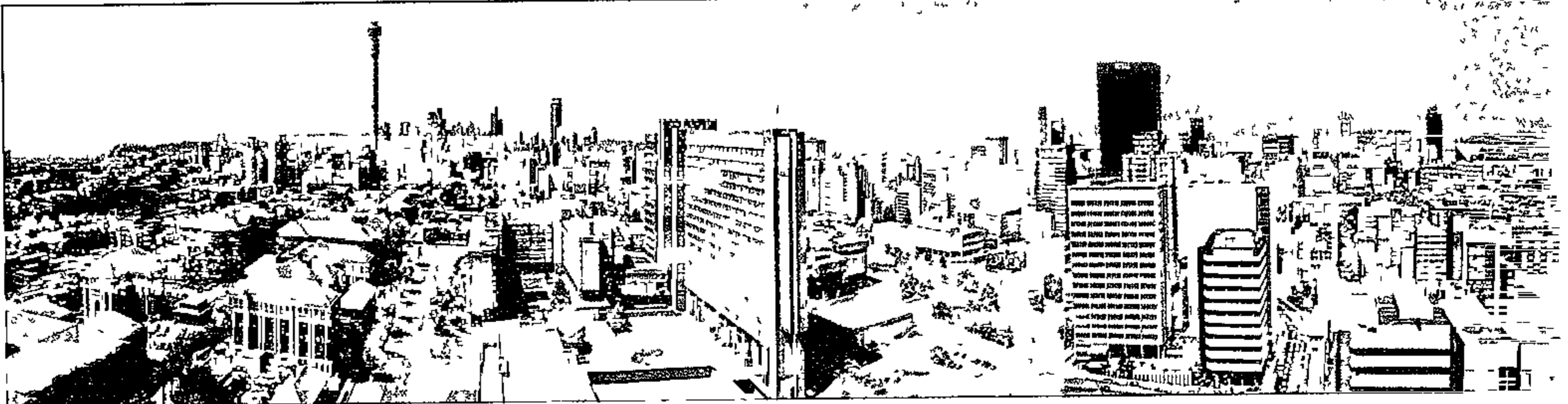
Gauteng Housing Department policy assistant director Rory Gallocher, permanent organising secretary of the board, confirms this. He says most complaints are lodged by tenants. The main themes are lack of management, cut-offs because of arrears and the presence of criminal elements.

Over the weekend he completed mediation between landlords and tenants in 20 "bad" building cases. While mediation on outstanding rentals succeeded in six cases, he says, outstanding service arrears remain "a concern".

Gallocher has asked Johannesburg metro to consider the expropriation of four abandoned buildings with a view to forming housing associations to provide affordable accommodation for city dwellers.

Metro executive officer for facilitation and implementation services Graeme Reid notes "there was a 64% rise in such associations in 1996, admittedly off a low base, and we believe they will continue to grow".

Alison Goldberg



Hillbrow and the Central Business District days are numbered for absentee landlords and tenants refusing to pay rents and service fees

Taps could run dry in suburbs, council warns

(127)

Residents urged to cut consumption as reservoir levels drop during heat wave

By ANNA COX

Star 12/12/98

Residents of the older suburbs of Johannesburg, where massive densification has taken place in the past decade, face taps running dry because reservoirs cannot cope with demand

The city's reservoirs, it appears, can no longer cope with the demand for water during heat waves such as that experienced during the past week, which left three almost empty.

The level at two reservoirs in Parktown, near central Johannesburg, are still at a critical level and water is being piped in from the reservoirs in Linksfield and Berea

But Johannesburg's Eastern council says the piping in of water is not sustainable. Even good rains will not help if residents do not curb their consumption.

The Weather Bureau has predicted small amounts of rain for today and tomorrow but says there will be another dry spell next week

Older Johannesburg suburbs have experienced huge increases in population, with office blocks, cluster houses and flats mushrooming and putting a heavy strain on existing reservoirs.

The change in people's lifestyles over the past few years with the increasing use of washing machines and dishwashers has placed an additional strain on the water supply

Reservoirs lost an average of 10% capacity per day during the heat wave of the past week.

Yesterday morning two city reservoirs, Parktown 1 and 2, had four hours of water left.

"If the dry weather continues and people do not use less water, taps will simply run dry," said Eastern council spokesman Keith Peacock.

The council would be looking at increasing capacity to ensure similar situations did not arise in future. However, these would be longer-term solutions, he said

Options the council would be looking at were the inter-relationship of water networks between suburbs; an increase in the capacity of supply into existing reservoirs, and the constructions of an additional reservoir.

The cheapest solution would be for residents to heed the Government's call to cut back on water consumption

"We urge residents not to fill pools or water lawns, and to cut back on domestic consumption, otherwise water will just dry up," Peacock added

A reservoir in the Roodepoort/Wilro Park area dried up last weekend. The Western council would monitor it this weekend and would decide on Monday whether to impose restrictions, said communications officer Marius de Villiers.

The northern suburbs areas affected are Saxonwold, Parkview, Parktown, Parktown North, Parkhurst, Craighall, Illovo, Birdhaven, Houghton, Forest Town, Melrose, Melrose Estate, Oaklands, Rosebank, Dunkeld and Dunkeld West.

Housing official to be disciplined

Star 13/2/98
BY HOPEWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

The process of weeding out ghost housing-subsidy applicants in Gauteng has identified a senior official who took bribes from construction companies to approve their applications.

Acting housing head Willem Odendaal said the department was investigating the extent of corruption allegedly committed by an official who would soon appear before a disciplinary committee.

Responding to allegations in the media that a report from the auditor-general, not yet released to the public, had identified serious irregularities in Gauteng's housing-subsidy scheme and an unaccounted amount of R6-million, Odendaal said there was no such report.

"The leaked document was a letter from the provincial auditor-general to the department in which an inquiry

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was made demanding receipts for the money spent on housing projects."

The letter also questioned why no houses were built in Atteridgeville, near Pretoria, after the approval of subsidies for squatters living there.

In the past, individual subsidies were funded by transferring funds into the trust accounts of conveyancers, who then released them on transfer of the property and on receiving a letter of satisfaction from the new home-owner.

The department has paid R207-million to conveyancers and financial institutions using this system but the work delivered was R55-million short

"This shows a weakness in this system of payment and we have recommended to the national Housing Department that we use normal bank guarantee systems. This will reduce the risk and the problem of money accumulating interest in the accounts of conveyancers," Odendaal said

Subtenants still won't pay

Sowetan 17/2/98

By Sello Seripe (127)

SUBTENANTS in Alexandra township, north of Johannesburg, are refusing to pay rent to property owners despite an order by the Small Claims Court

Owners say since 1989 the bulk of the subtenants have not paid, claiming that they are paying directly to the council

According to the Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (Alpoa) spokesperson Keke Koalepe owners charged reasonable rents of between R20 and R60 a month for one room

Owners also complain that subtenants have built illegal structures on their properties

Pensioner Elizabeth Ngadi (95) has 14 outside rooms on her property. She says subtenants are refusing to pay

"They tell me that they are paying rent to the council, whereas I am the owner of the property I pay for services which they also use but they refuse to meet their obligations," Ngadi said

Another pensioner and former political prisoner Mr Jacob

Seatholo says his yard now resembles a "village" on its own as a result of the illegal structures built by subtenants

"I have lost count of the number of shacks illegally put up on my property I don't even know some of the people who live in my yard," he says

Though Alpoa has sought legal help and eviction orders from the Randburg Small Claims Court on behalf of property owners, defaulting subtenants soon reoccupy the place, once the sheriff has left the area

Koalepe alleges that certain ward councillors then "convince" the owners, who are mostly old age pensioners, to allow defaulters to continue living on the property even though they refuse to pay

SA National Civic Organisation Alexandra branch secretary Phil Machitela says all permit holders have the right to settle where they are living at present

However, Machitela says subtenants are obliged to pay the council for services rendered

"This problem was created by the previous government and should therefore be resolved by the present Government"

Subsidy over-payments to be probed

(127) Star 17/2/98

SAPA

Public Protector Selby Baqwa has appointed advocate C J F van der Merwe to receive complaints of alleged corruption in the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs, the department said yesterday

"Documentation is available and will be submitted to the Auditor-General's office, which will prove how some R6,1-million has been utilised on various projects," depart-

Public Protector Selby Baqwa appoints advocate who will lead investigations

ment spokesman Ondela Mahlangu said in a statement.

The documentation would be made available for public inspection. He said the A-G had referred to over-payment in five subsidies out of 95 000 paid out by the department. A total of 155 000 subsidies have so far

been approved

He said the department wished to reiterate that in terms of the guidelines set out in part 5 of the housing subsidy implementation manual, money for individual subsidies was transferred into the trust accounts of conveyancers

The conveyancers released the money on transfer of the property and on receiving a letter of satisfaction from the beneficiary

These accounts were reconciled monthly and interest earned was paid back to the department, which complied with the guidelines

Any complaints should be made to Van der Merwe on (012) 322-2916, in writing to Private Bag X677, Pretoria 0001 or at 228 Visagie Street, Pretoria. The closing date is March 17

Constitutional Court overturns arrears judgment

Deborah Fine

(127)
BD 18/2/98

LOCAL authorities were constitutionally obliged to carry out credit control action against municipal payments defaulters in both historically privileged and disadvantaged areas with equal vigour. However, differentiation was not necessarily discrimination, the Constitutional Court ruled yesterday.

The court found that the Pretoria city council had indirectly discriminated against Constantia Park resident Johan Walker on the grounds of race when it selectively recovered arrears in Pretoria's former white suburbs while failing to do so in black townships in 1996.

Walker contended in an earlier Pretoria High Court case that he was discriminated against because white residents were forced — under the threat of legal action — to pay for services based on actual consumption, whereas black residents had paid only a flat, unmetered rate regardless of consumption.

Black residents have since been obliged to pay full consumption rates.

Walker said the council had also issued 3 000 summonses and cut the services of white defaulters, but it did not take action against black residents who had reneged on their payments.

Refusing to make payments other than a flat rate, Walker claimed the council was not entitled to take action against him in respect of his water and electricity arrears of R4 753.

The high court upheld Walker's argument and overturned the council's action against him until it initiated equal credit control action in all areas. The council appealed to the Constitutional Court to set aside the ruling.

Delivering a majority judgment, Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa said that while the council had differentiated between white and black areas, differentiation became unfair discrimination only where it had an adverse influence on residents and invaded their dignity.

The court accepted the council's

Continued on Page 2

Judgment

Continued from Page 1

(127)
BD 18/2/98

argument that it had been forced to allow flat rates in that year because many townships were not equipped with functioning meters to measure consumption. The flat-rate system was scrapped once meters were installed.

There was no evidence that Walker had suffered materially as a result of the policy. There was no deterioration in services and he was not asked to pay more than he had consumed.

The court rejected the argument that the council was justified in

temporarily suspending legal action against township defaulters to avoid hostility and the vandalism of meters during installation. This amounted to the unfair "singling out" of white residents for credit control action.

The court was obliged, however, to overturn the high court's ruling because the council's incorrect behaviour did not vindicate Walker's refusal to pay for services rendered. He should have sought an order compelling the council to correct its unfair actions.

While this meant the council had succeeded in its appeal, Walker, as the losing party, was not liable for costs because he had been unfairly discriminated against.

Gauteng, private sector to create four housing centres

Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng housing department is setting up four "one-stop" housing centres where subsidies can be approved and credit given to buy building materials directly from the centres.

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday the province had entered into a joint venture with the private sector and local authorities to build centres at Orange Farm, Phola Park, Soshanguve and on the East Rand.

Mofokeng said the centres were different from national government's mooted housing support centres, of which 10 had been set up around the country, giving people access to building materials.

"Prospective home owners will be able to go to the centres in Gauteng and have their subsidies approved, they will be given credit to buy building materials, and can meet most of their housing needs at the centres." Small, micro-, and medium-sized businesses were also being organised around these centres, he said.

Outlining his department's progress since 1994, Mofokeng said 180 000 low-cost houses had either been built or were under construction.

"Even though national government has moved away from the 1-million houses target, we will certainly meet our provincial target of 243 000 houses by 1999," he said.

He described President Nelson Mandela's decision to announce that government would probably not meet its target as "an honest statement".

Between 1994 and this year, Gauteng had completed 64 418 houses and released 118 921 serviced stands on which housing construction had kicked off.

"The province had spent R1,08bn on the housing programme and created more than 14 000 jobs," he said.

Gauteng was the first province to have embarked on a number of mass housing projects. The first such project had been launched at Bophelong, where 10 000 houses were being built, and the second project, with 5 000 homes, would be launched in Brinks on Saturday.



Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng at a news conference called to announce the setting up of four housing centres.

Picture BRETT ELOFF

Gauteng MEC upbeat on the delivery of houses

(127) Star 18/2/98

The Gauteng housing department made remarkable progress over the past three years and was on course in reaching its targets, MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

His department built 64 418 houses, provided 118 921 stands and created 14 344 jobs, he said in Johannesburg.

Sixty-four farms were allocated to small farmers, 1 600 restitution claims processed and 6 752 people resettled.

Mofokeng said 4 416 jobs were created in the programme to upgrade migrant-worker hostels, including converting some into family units. The programme cost R318-million.

He also mentioned the Kathorus urban renewal project, which will be completed next year. He said it had brought peace to Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus on the East Rand. More than R600-million had been pumped into the high-profile project.

He said that by next year, 1,2 million people would have access to water and sanitation services.

Mofokeng said five laws aimed at transforming housing were passed, including the Gauteng Land Administration Amendment Bill, which empowers the provincial government to expropriate land.

Regarding allegations that his department had misused R6,1-million, Mofokeng said documents were available that proved the money was spent

on various projects. It would be submitted to the auditor-general's office.

Mofokeng said an advocate had been appointed to receive complaints about corruption in his department.

■ Northern Province's housing department terminated a R30-million contract with Steenkamp Hattingh Developers yesterday after it allegedly tried to claim payment for five houses it did not build.

Department spokesman Danny Msiza said the matter had been referred to the auditor-general, police and state attorneys for possible charges.

Msiza said the auditor-general's office would institute an audit on all payments made on housing projects.

Only 81 of 1 903 proposed houses had been built so far from the R28,5-million contract awarded to Steenkamp Hattingh Developers.

"The company claimed money for 86 completed houses but the department found that five didn't exist," he said.

Msiza said beneficiaries of the five non-existent houses were allegedly made to sign acceptance forms, which enabled the developers to claim their supposed costs from the department.

The department had so far approved 65 712 housing subsidies worth R1-billion, spread over 89 projects.

Steenkamp Hattingh Developers could not immediately be reached for comment. — Sapa

Potgieter. The picture won a Gold
in The Star's chief crime reporter
today. The Department of Foreign
Affairs from Nairobi today. A special
programme from 4pm today.

Resident must pay arrears, judge orders

(127)
STAFF REPORTERS
SUN 18/12/98

A Constitutional Court judgment handed down yesterday has strengthened the hand of Greater Johannesburg's municipalities in their bid to recoup millions in rates arrears.

The judgment was delivered by Mr Justice Pius Langa and followed an appeal against a High Court decision by the Pretoria City Council.

Judge Langa has found that although Pretoria resident Johan Walker had been "unfairly discriminated against" in being billed for electricity and water he used while township residents were charged a flat rate, he could not refuse to pay his arrears, or chaos would ensue.

"Local government is as important a tier of public administration as any. It has to continue functioning for the common good."

Yesterday, local government experts agreed the ruling had serious consequences for Sandton businesses, which have boycotted a 300% rates increase for two years, and other residents.

It implies that even if the Sandton businesses win an appeal next month, they could still be forced to pay their rates arrears. Sandton businesses have refused to pay their full rates since 1996.

The boycott has cost the council around R150-million.

Court's landmark decision on rates (127)

JOHANNESBURG: Pretoria resident Mr Johann Walker was discriminated against by the city council when it charged residents of the former black townships of Mamelodi and Atteridgeville a flat rate for services, the Constitutional Court ruled yesterday

Judge Pius Langa said the conduct of Pretoria council officials between July 1995 and April 1996, in relation to the selective recovery of charges for water and electricity consumed in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi, amounted to discrimination

It was in breach of the constitutional right to equality entrenched in the 1993 interim constitution, which was in force at the time of the dispute

But the court ruled Walker must pay the council for services rendered

The case arose when Walker and several other Pretoria residents refused to pay for metered consumption of electricity and water. Instead they paid the same flat rate as residents in the two townships

Walker, a member of the Concerned Ratepayers Group, was sued for arrears and the Magistrate's Court ruled in favour of the council

The High Court said the council had infringed on his right to equality — by discrim-

inating against him — and the council went to the Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court agreed that Walker had been discriminated against, but said he had to pay for council services

Langa, who wrote the judgment for the majority of the court, said the discrimination lay in differential charges for council services — and in the council suing only residents of old Pretoria — former whites-only areas

"This differentiation was held to amount to indirect discrimination on the basis of race," he said

But the court also said it was not unfair to use payments for metered services for subsidising formerly disadvantaged areas

Judge Albie Sachs agreed in general with Langa's judgment but dissented from the view that selective enforcement of debt recovery by the council amounted to unfair discrimination.

Sachs noted that the council used a negotiated step-by-step process to fulfil its obligations to those whom previous governments had at best ignored and, at worst, oppressed.

He said this appeared to have been an effort to rise above the politics of race, and to articulate the spirit of civic responsibility that animated the Constitution — Sapa

CT 18/2/98

PROPERTY VALUES

Owners raise their own taxes to pay for islands of efficiency,

Bldg 20/8/98 (127)

ADELE SHEVEL

Property owners are taking over the business of the cash-strapped local government as declining service standards and infrastructure gnaw away at the value of their private assets.

Investors have realised that to sustain their investments' value they have to take over services previously covered by their local councils.

Commercial property owners in the Johannesburg CBD have set up four Business Improvement Districts (Bids) — geographic areas in which property owners contribute to supplementary services.

Shop owners, restaurateurs, service providers, office employers, developers, property owners and property managers pool money to manage additional urban services which they believe are essential to their commercial precinct's economic vitality. In essence they have raised their own taxes.

Cape Town property owners

have not expressed much interest in setting up these strategies, perhaps because their city centre is still perceived as attractive.

About 65 percent of the property owners in a Durban region had expressed interest in setting up a Bid, but the plan was thwarted when Old Mutual Properties, which owned 25 percent of the properties in the highlighted area, said it was not in the public sector's domain to pursue such a plan.

But several overseas Bids have taken effect and proved their worth. In the early 1980s in cities across the US, businesses took on local government services because they were not satisfied the government was preventing the decay of their investment areas. Crime, congestion, litter and building quality were addressed to restore city pride and positive perceptions.

Such Bids have been set up in more than 1 000 US cities and are being introduced in the UK and Australia. In 1994 in New York City, self-imposed charges for



supplementary urban services for 24 improvement districts amounted to more than \$30 million a year.

In the Johannesburg CBD four Bids — the first in Africa — have been established over the past three years, incorporating about 30 city blocks. A fifth Bid is in the pipeline for Braamfontein, targeted to start functioning in April.

The Central Johannesburg Partnership claims credit for

upgrading the environment and reducing crime to create a more habitable area. It intends to steadily increase the size of the Bids. Interest in pursuing such strategies has been expressed by property owners in Benoni, Pretoria, Durban and Randburg.

One commentator says offices in the Bid areas have not yet achieved higher rentals, but reversing the trend could not be expected to happen straightaway. Gerald Olitzki, a property

owner and developer who owns several buildings in the Johannesburg CBD, says he has noticed a marked difference in the Bid areas: they are a lot cleaner and his properties there are almost 100 percent let.

Keith Beavon, an urban geographer who holds the chair of human geography at Wits University, says Bid areas "are little islands of efficiency in a sea of decay", but "they only stand a chance of being really

successful if they expand and link up with each other". But Beavon questions whether they are making a difference to the CBD as a whole.

"The Small Street Mall is supposedly part of a Bid and may give the impression of success because of the bustle of activity, but it is still an area most people I know would choose to avoid," he says.

Beavon says Bids have to have a rapid and noticeable impact and that one can build on that momentum. "Bids have worked well in other parts of the world," he says. "And while the decline of central city areas is not restricted to Johannesburg, it has happened more rapidly here and at a later stage than elsewhere."

Franco Andreone, the city improvements districts manager of the Central Johannesburg Partnership, says some of the retail rentals achieved in the CBD are higher than those in Sandton.

The rate at which businesses in the CBD leave for other

locations in turn affects the success of Bids in the CBD. Beavon says the demand for office space is 8.6 to 1 for decentralised nodes compared with the CBD. "If people continue to take up space at the same rate, it will take five-and-a-half years to fill the current vacant space in the CBD, compared with seven months for decentralised areas." Beavon says rentals for space in the Johannesburg CBD are lower than they should be in what is supposed to be the premier retail centre of Africa. He says CBDs are where the highest order of businesses should be located, attracting a high-income clientele looking for quality items.

"The Johannesburg CBD at present operates as a regional shopping centre for Soweto because that part of the city is still underdeveloped," he says. A new bill, promulgated in December, comes into effect within a month or two making it compulsory for property owners to pay for the upkeep of properties within their Bid areas.

Resolving nonpayment issue 'crucial to peace'

Pule Molebeledi

BD 20/2/98 (127)
THE success of next month's electricity meeting to resolve nonpayment issues in the far north East Rand in Gauteng was important to contain the volatile situation brought about by electricity cut-offs, community leaders said yesterday

"It is too ghastly to contemplate what would happen if the summit failed," said Panyaza Lesufi, an African National Congress (ANC) representative in the committee tasked with resolving the dispute. The committee includes the ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party, SA National Civic Organisation and the Pan African Congress.

Defaulters in the communities owed the Kempton Park metropolitan council "millions" as they had not been paying for rates and services since 1995

Lesufi said electricity cutoffs by the council had led to illegal reconnections by some residents. As a result, some electricity boxes which had been tampered with exploded, leaving many — including schools and businesses — without electricity. The chief electrician of the area was reportedly admitted to hospital after he tried to repair some of the boxes.

The meeting would also decide whether arrears from 1995 should be paid or be scrapped. Lesufi said the ANC believed they should not be scrapped, but other groups supported the scrapping of arrears.

The council's billing system would also come under scrutiny as some people had been paying, though this was not reflected in their statements.

The council has launched an internal investigation to probe claims that some staff members misused money paid by residents.

Minerals and Energy Minister Penuell Maduna will attend the meeting.

More than R400m pumped into RDP flagship Katorus project

Robyn Chalmers

(127)

MORE than R400m has been pumped into government's Katorus project since 1994, with the upgrading and renewal scheme expected to be completed in June next year.

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said expenditure on the R645m project, one of the flagships of government's reconstruction and development programme

(RDP), reached the 64% mark by the end of last month.

The Katorus scheme, which is the RDP's largest presidential lead project in progress, aims to upgrade and rehabilitate roads, streetlights, sewerage, clinics and houses in the east rand townships of Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus.

Mofokeng said 171 projects had been completed and 121 were being implemented. These included five new schools. It

was estimated that almost 2 000 houses had been built in Vosloorus and Tintwa Village with a further 7 000 houses under construction.

Other initiatives included the installation of 70 telephone call boxes and the establishment of 20 police contact points.

Mofokeng said the Katorus project was only one of a range of schemes being overseen by the provincial housing department. The programme to redevelop

public hostels had also been taken off.

Almost 44 000 people have benefited from the hostel scheme and the provincial government's target was to address the living conditions of 90 000 hostel dwellers.

Since 1994, Mofokeng said almost R320m had been spent on upgrading hostels throughout the province and a total of 4 416 jobs had been created through the programme.

RD 20/2/98

Two residents hurt during evictions

By Saint Molakeng and Sello Seripe

AT least two people were injured by gunshots when authorities clashed with residents when they tried to evict 20 families for rent arrears from a block of flats in Reiger Park on the East Rand yesterday morning

Police spokesman Captain Lourens Engelbrecht said soldiers shot a man in the leg after being fired upon at about 10 30am. He was unable to confirm reports that another person was also shot in the leg

Bleeding and holding the bullet that had penetrated his leg, Mr Willie Simmering (20), claimed that a policeman had "shot me for nothing"

He said he was caught up in the chaos that had erupted after more than 300 policemen, SA National Defence Force and Boksburg City Council members arrived to carry out the evictions

Mr Patrick Beardman told *Sowetan* that he was shot in the thigh. However, local police head Captain Henry Bauer said "It

(127) *Sowetan 20/12/98*
cannot be the police who shot them. There was confusion (and shooting) among the people themselves"

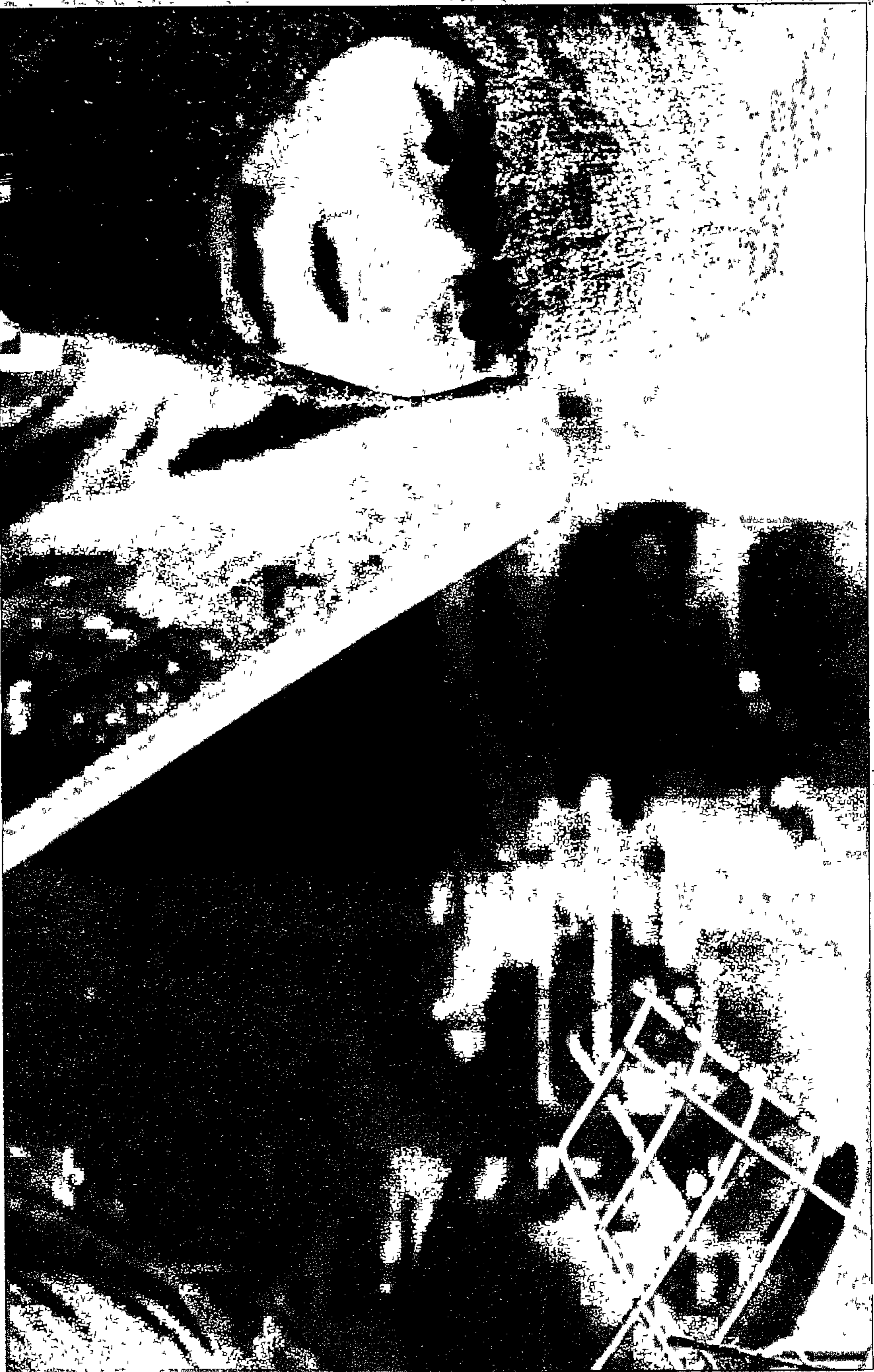
The shooting apparently occurred while security guards were carrying tenants' household goods into the rain-soaked streets

Mr Calvin Scheepers of the Reiger Park Crisis Committee condemned the eviction and shooting. "Two years ago the Gauteng housing MEC said all the arrears would be written off but now people are being evicted," he said

Meanwhile, in Johannesburg, the Northern Metropolitan Substructure (NMSS) yesterday cut off electricity supplies from several houses and flats of defaulters in Westbury

Council workmen - escorted by policemen - cut off the electricity of defaulters, ignoring abuse hurled at them by angry residents

The South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) Westbury branch chairman Mr Michael Billings accused the provincial government of "double talk" over the power cuts



Alert ... police were onstandby during yesterday's downpour after about 20 tenants of Reiger Park flats on the East Rand resisted eviction from Boksburg council properties.

Tension high after councils cut township services

By Lee-Ann Alfreeds, Gasant Abarder and Themba Sepotokelle

Tension was high in several Johannesburg townships today as council workers continued cutting off electricity and water to rates defaulters.

Yesterday, scuffles erupted between residents and police in Johannesburg and two people were hurt in violence on the East Rand.

The South Western Joint Civics Association joined the fray by calling for a meeting last night to organise protests against the local council.

Gauteng councils have been cutting off services for a year to recover billions. Several councils intensified their campaigns last year after a cash crisis.

A Reiger Park man and a security guard were slightly injured when residents of the East Rand township being evicted from their council-owned flats fired at SANDF members yesterday.

The soldiers were part of a group of 300 security personnel on hand to help the court sheriff evict 20 residents who were in arrears with their rates and electricity payments. The Boksburg council had applied for the eviction order.

A Reiger Park Crisis Committee spokesman, Calvin Scheepers, said they were shocked because they thought the arrears had been scrapped. Some residents moved back into their flats illegally yesterday. A spokesman for the residents said it was likely they would be evicted again today.

In Johannesburg, angry Westbury residents scuffled with 50 heavily armed police officers when council employees arrived to cut off electricity to several council houses in Kretzschmar Road.

Nobody was injured, but by late yesterday, power had been illegally reconnected to the houses.

Gauteng braced for land invasion spree

Star 21/2/98
By JACQUI REEVES

Gauteng can expect a wave of land invasions later this year and in early 1999 as the country approaches the next general election.

International examples have shown that land invasions increase in the year before an election and that state-owned land is seen as a "soft" target.

Carien Engelbrecht, land affairs director in Gauteng, said this week her department was aware of this problem and planned to release more than 34 000 sites for settlement projects before March next year.

"No government wants to be heavy-handed with evictions in the year prior to an election, because the publicity that evictions generate causes people to question whether the government has delivered on election promises," Engelbrecht said.

She said South American

examples had repeatedly shown this to be true and that her department would be working hard to keep land invasions in check.

In addition to the large number of landless already in Gauteng, and the additional 20 000 people who enter the province each month in search of work, the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs also has to deal with a "land mafia" that is operating in many informal settlements.

The "land mafia" helps the homeless to jump the housing queue by organising them into groups and securing pieces of land for them to invade.

The organisers charge the homeless R50 to sign a housing list and usually collect about 2 000 signatures.

Land near Johannesburg or close to any major urban area is the most favoured by the "land mafia".

■ See Page 9

Non-payers take on council over suspended water supply

(127)
ET 2/2/98

OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG: The government's right to cut off water to defaulters is shrouded in such confusion that residents are preparing to take the state to court over the issue

A community in Hermanus will go to court next month in an attempt to force its municipality to turn its water back on

The case, which could settle the issue once and for all, will be fought by the Legal Resources Centre (LRC).

It follows a case in Durban last year where the LRC successfully challenged a local authority's decision to cut off water to a household

LRC lawyer Mr Ranjit Purshotam,

who believes local councils cannot cut off water to residents, said "Not only did we get an interdict for the water of the non-payer to be turned on again, as a trickle, until the case came to court, but the council eventually agreed that a special tariff would be implemented for the poor"

Lawyers for Human Rights national director, Dr Vinodh Jaichand, however, took the opposite view

"Different towns have different by-laws, but paying for services is a contractual obligation with the local authority and would take precedence over any right to water," he said.

Greater Johannesburg metro council spokesperson Mr Kenny Fihla said councils did have the right to cut

water supplies, but did so only if residents persistently refused to pay

"We give defaulters notice first and then put in a plug to reduce water flow. It is only when people remove the plug that we take steps to remove the meter. We do not remove a meter if there is no alternative source of water within reasonable walking distance," Fihla said

The Rand Water Board is behind the council

"Although people have a right to water, this could be got from neighbours or other sources. The minimum level of service which has to be provided is water within 200m of a home, but you must pay for it," said spokesperson Mr Archer Davis

Johannesburg councils recoup R117-m arrears

Officials hope to recover a lot more as additional staff step up water, electricity and gas cutoffs this month

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
City Desk

Star 2/2/98

Greater Johannesburg's municipalities have recovered R117-million, seized scores of buildings and instituted legal action against several businesses as a credit-control campaign to recover R1,8-billion in arrears gathers momentum

The campaign, which is in its third month, entails the cutting off of water, electricity and gas, the institution of legal action, and the seizure of property.

The campaign began in mid-November and is part of an attempt by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and its four local authorities to stave off bankruptcy.

In addition, the council has cut back its operating budget by R500-million by freezing vacancies and its capital budget by more than R1-billion by postponing scores of construction developments.

The campaign got off to a slow start, with more money being recovered from remind-

ers by officials than by cutoffs, according to technical task team member in charge of the campaign, Willie Ramoshaba.

The technical task team, composed of three independent chartered accountants, is helping the councils to turn around their financial situation

Ramoshaba said only R25-million of the R143,8-million owed by defaulters had been

Reminders of more use than tough action

recovered in cutoffs undertaken since November.

By comparison, about R92-million was recovered as a result of phone calls and reminders from officials. The reminders included personal visits by senior council officials

But Ramoshaba said income was expected to increase with the appointment of additional

staff to carry out cutoffs. This was expected to double the number of cutoffs in February

The council had also streamlined the legal process, he added, with summonses being issued more quickly and appointed law firms in each of Greater Johannesburg's 10 magisterial districts pursuing defaulters.

Summonses against several businesses had already been issued

Many properties - especially buildings in downtown Johannesburg where neither the landlord nor the tenants could settle their debts - had been seized.

While the exact number was not known, more than 10 buildings had been seized by the Eastern Council alone, Ramoshaba said, and the council was looking at ways of "maximising its profits" from the buildings

There were also problems with the number of disputed accounts being handled by the councils because the disputes had ended in protracted legal fights, he said

Reconnection fees will jump, council warns debtors

Deborah Fine

RECONNECTION fees for municipal debtors, whose electricity, water and gas services had been cut-off because of nonpayment for services, would increase significantly this month, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council official Dave Fox said yesterday.

Council deputy executive chairman Kenny Fihla said the city's legal team was negotiating with magistrates' courts in greater Johannesburg to speed-up the processing of civil actions involving people in arrears.

The city has been involved in a major blitz on payments defaulters since November last year after Johannesburg's five local authorities experienced a liquidity crisis caused, in part, by poor payment levels. The city is owed more than R1,7bn in outstanding payments. It has already carried out 7 176 cut-offs and recovered R117m in outstanding arrears.

Fox, co-ordinator of the city's cut-off teams, said cut-offs were expected to increase by about 2 000 a week since the hiring of private sector contractors to supplement the work carried out by city officials.

The city had contracted for eight extra teams to carry out wa-

ter and electricity cuts, and one additional team to cut-off gas.

To recover the increased costs of hiring private contractors, reconnection fees would have to increase. Reconnection fees for electricity and water were now about R125 and R140, respectively.

From mid-February, however, it would cost between R200 to more than R1 000 to reconnect water supplies, depending on the complexity of the reconnection, and between R200 and more than R2 000 to reconnect electricity.

Fihla said the legal team was gearing up to oversee the issuing of summonses to the "tens of thousands" of residents across Johannesburg who were in arrears with their rates payments.

Legal recourse was the only way of recovering this outstanding money because the council was not entitled to cut the services of people who were fully up to date with their services payments and in default only with rates.

He said he could not comment on the magistrates' response because the negotiations were still under way.

Meanwhile the Port Elizabeth City Council has announced that it plans to "get tough" to recover the R200m owed to it in outstanding municipal payments.



Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council deputy executive chairman Kenny Fihla, left, and consultant Willy Ramoshaba discussing credit control measures yesterday. Picture TYRONE ARTHUR

'Govt to introduce 16 new taxes'

Disgraced Gauteng housing head says report was rigged

Star 3/2/98

(127)

By HOPEWELL RADEBE
Political Reporter

Former Gauteng housing head Enos Ngutshane, who was kicked out of the department for failing to implement policy, has accused MEC Dan Mofokeng of rigging the final report of his disciplinary hearing.

"The department has either erased some paragraphs or pulled out some pages of the

copies of the report distributed to the media," Ngutshane said.

He was appealing against his expulsion from the department after the disciplinary hearing found him guilty of failing to restructure the department, failing to act against an administration officer who swindled money belonging to a member of the public, and for appointing a consulting firm without proper tender procedures.

However, Mofokeng transferred him to the provincial Public Service Commission with his salary and benefits intact. Ngutshane said he was appealing against his transfer and also charged that some of the minutes and dates of meetings of the department were changed to favour the MEC's case.

Mofokeng said Ngutshane had the legal right to appeal.

Soweto businesses agree to arrears payment

Deadlock that existed for many years ends after agreement is reached on long-standing shortfall

(127)
Star 9/2/98

By **LEE-ANN ALFRENDS**
City Desk

Soweto businessmen will pay off millions of rands in municipal service arrears this month, giving Johannesburg's credit-control campaign a major boost. The move will end a deadlock which has existed for years between hundreds of businessmen and the Southern council over whether businesses were obliged to pay for arrears that accrued before 1994.

The businesses - believed to number about 500 - refused to pay for arrears, arguing that they were entitled to a write-off as agreed between Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk during pre-election negotiations. In terms of the agreement, arrears incurred by residents before 1994 were to be written off.

But months of negotiation with the businessmen, under the auspices of the SA Shopkeepers' Association (Sasa), has resulted in their agreeing to honour an April 1997 agreement, credit-control campaign head Willie Ramoshaba said. Ramoshaba said that according to the April 1997 agreement, the businesses could pay off their arrears over five years. They would not be charged interest.

He said the businessmen had initially not adhered to the April agreement because they believed they could still get their pre-1994 arrears written off. Ramoshaba said the arrears ran into millions of rands.

Greater Johannesburg embarked on a credit-control campaign in November to recover R1.8-billion owed to it in arrears. The campaign is an integral part of a financial review of the city aimed at reversing a financial crisis which forced the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council and its four local authorities to drastically slash their budgets. It involves the cutting off of water and electricity to defaulters.

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obtained clearance from Nkabinde

expelled from the ANC in April last

Councillors are *Sowetan 11/2/98* 'just scapegoats' *(127)*

By Gershwin Chuenyane

COUNCILLORS are being used as scapegoats in a power struggle between the Atteridgeville-Saulsville Concerned Residents Association (Ascora) and the Pretoria City Council, councillor Mr Peter Makhaya said yesterday

Makhaya was reacting to a threat by Ascora to dump rubbish at the homes of councillors if the city council does not meet its demands by tomorrow.

"Ascora's threat is uncalled for and barbaric," Makhaya said "Ascora has no business interfering in the council's business while at the same time chasing councillors out of their meetings

"I was chased out of Ascora's meeting at Flavius Mareka High School in Saulsville recently This very meeting was supposed to serve as a basis for solving problems"

He said Ascora had run out of ideas

because dumping rubbish at councillors' homes was be futile. The city council would send people to clean up.

Makhaya claimed that Ascora was unable to get what they wanted from the Pretoria City Council officials, whom they preferred to hold meetings with. They are now using the threat as a bargaining chip.

On Ascora's demand to take over account deliveries, Makhaya said "The whole thing would be a nightmare and sounds like a self-enrichment scheme, because any person who wanted to render services to the council had to go through the tender procedures."

Makhaya claimed that the issue of non-delivery of accounts was first raised at a council meeting by a Mamelodi councillor last month. The councillor appealed to senior officials, especially those in the treasury department, to look into the matter and give a full report

□ PRIVATISATION

(127)

(22)

Nelspruit closes its water-privatisation tap

The privatisation of Nelspruit's water and waste services is on hold for at least another month after the Mpumalanga ANC alliance decided at a recent water summit to investigate alternative options. Solly Zwan, the provincial ANC secretary, said yesterday.

He said the alliance -- comprising top provincial executive structures of the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party -- was opposed to giving a 30-year contract to Metsi a Sechaba/Biwater, a multinational consortium.

Ruelf Kotze, Nelspruit's town clerk, said the council could not afford the R300 million necessary to provide acceptable water and waste services to its 250 000 residents. "Currently, more than half of the residents do not receive basic water or sanitation services," he explained. — *African Eye News Service, Nelspruit*

CF (BR) 12/12/98

'Corrupt' councillors uncovered

Sowetan 12/2/98 (127)

Home Truths Commission hears of misconduct during apartheid era

By Joshua Raboroko

AN ORLANDO EAST, Soweto woman, told the Home Truths Commission in Johannesburg yesterday — three years after she had inherited the rights to her council home from her late mother — that she discovered that her lodger had become the legal owner.

Ms Nomsa Radebe said after her mother's death a councillor arrived at her home, bringing with him a man whom he said would forthwith be lodging with her.

She was told this would happen whether she liked it or not.

She discovered after three years that the lodger had become the registered owner of the house and appealed to the councillor for help.

Her appeal was in vain. Today the man owns the house.

Radebe is one of the 5 000 disgruntled families who have testified before the commission about alleged miscon-

duct and corruption carried out by councillors during the apartheid era.

The commission, chaired by Germiston lawyer Mr Jabu Dlamini, was appointed by the Gauteng provincial government to hear evidence from families about corruption, bribes and other misconduct by former councillors regarding the allocation of homes.

Several other hearings are scheduled for the East Rand from March 2-6, West Rand, March 9-13, Greater Johannesburg, March 16-20 and Greater Pretoria from March 23-27.

Some of the complaints heard by the commission so far were about people who were evicted because they refused to pay bribes, officials not adhering to council policies and people being prevented from obtaining title deeds.

Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said yesterday he would not allow a repetition of the bureaucratic bungling, discrimination and corruption that occurred under the previous regime to happen.

Water squeeze in northern suburbs

By Staff Reporters

Taps will run dry in some northern suburbs in Johannesburg tonight unless residents cut their water consumption, warned Eastern Council spokesman Keith Peacock this morning.

He said the current heat wave has led to high levels of water being used in the areas supplied by the Parktown I and II reservoirs, resulting in their having only four hours of water left last night. Although it filled overnight, the situation this morning was critical, with the levels at Parktown I dropping from 1,8 metres to 0,83 metres. Parktown II showed a better water level at 2,7 metres.

As an emergency measure, water was being drawn from Linksfield to Parktown I, but

this would leave another area vulnerable. "We will run out of water unless residents co-operate and cut their consumption," he said.

This is the second time in the last three months that the reservoirs have become dangerously low, and Peacock issued an urgent appeal to water consumers in Saxonwold, Parkview, Parktown, Parktown North, Parkhurst, Craighall, Illovo, Birdhaven, Houghton, Forest Town, Melrose and Melrose Estate, Oaklands, Rosebank, Dunkeld and Dunkeld West to cut back on their water consumption.

In the last six weeks water consumption in the area had increased by 10% per day and at peak hours yesterday, while the reservoir was filling at a rate of 245 litres per second, consu-

mers were drawing 325 litres per second.

"If residents do not restrict their usage until further notice, there may well be no water to supply," he said.

The appeal comes at a time when there is little chance of respite from the heat. The temperatures in Johannesburg will remain in the upper twenties, with a 27 degree high and only a slight chance of thunder-showers in the evening.

"Although ideally we would encourage residents to cut their consumption in line with the national government's initiative, we may have to look at building another reservoir in the area," Peacock said.

He estimated that the cost of building the new reservoir would be in the region of R14-million.

12/2/98

Big cut-off - children suffering

(127)
Spuller 4/3/98
Eskom, however, is unrepentant saying it is owed millions in arrears

By Justice Mohale

SIXTY mentally handicapped and epileptic children from the Korekile Home in Bekkersdal on the West Rand have spent the past three days in darkness and without hot water after Eskom cut off the home's electricity supply

The home is a victim of Eskom's big switch-off of power to the Bekkersdal and Kagiso areas because of non-payment of electricity bills

Director of the home Ms Masechaba Modimoeng said yesterday that Eskom was inflicting punishment on innocent people

"Eskom officials are cruel and insensitive. Why didn't they switch off electricity to defaulters only?" she asked. Modimoeng said Korekile Home was not in arrears

Careworkers are washing children's clothes by hand as electric washing

machines have become white elephants. There is no hot water for bathing or making tea

Food is rotting in fridges. "We normally buy food in bulk and now we have wasted a lot of money due to food rotting," she complained

It was worse at night because children suffering from epilepsy needed careworkers to always be near them. "Epileptic children can't cope with living in darkness. They keep on crying," Modimoeng said

The home has appealed to neighbours to assist with coal stoves to heat water

Eskom's sales and customer area manager, Mr Shadrack Motsoane, said the company would not reconnect the power supply even though loyal customers were also suffering. He said residents owed Eskom R15,9 million for more than four years. "We had no alternative but to cut off the electricity supply," he said

Johannesburg's water completely safe, says board

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

(127)

Greater Johannesburg's water is "completely safe to drink, cook with and wash in", and undergoes daily and weekly tests under stricter guidelines than those applied in many First World countries.

The assurance was given by Rand Water yesterday following radio reports that tests done on water from Pimville, in southern Johannesburg, and Azaadville, to the west of Johannesburg, showed bacteria counts that were well above normal. Radio 702 reported that the bacteria found were harmless and did not carry disease.

Rand Water purifies and supplies bulk water to Johannesburg's four local authorities and other municipalities around Gauteng.

According to Rand Water chief microbiologist Chrissie de Wet, water at the distribution points (where water is supplied to the councils) is tested

once a week to ensure it is safe

Water leaving the purification plant was tested several times daily, and water in the pipes was tested every second day, she said

This meant water was generally safe when it reached the distribution points, from where it became the responsibility of the local councils.

De Wet said two tests were administered to monitor the quality of water.

The Star watched yesterday as a 500ml sample of water was collected in a sterile bottle at a Pimville home

The bottle was taken to the board's laboratory in Vereeniging, where the water was tested. The results will be available tomorrow

During the standard plate-count test, different samples - consisting of different amounts of water, a solidifying solution and a growth medium - were mixed in Petri dishes. The mixture was then allowed to solidify

De Wet said the solution would incubate for 48 hours at 57C before

scientists counted the number of coliforms (bacteria) in the mixture. If the ratio was higher than 100 coliforms per millilitre, it would be above normal.

De Wet said the board was considering increasing the limit to 1 000 coliforms per millilitre because its standards were much higher than international ones.

The second test involved the filtering of the water over a sterile membrane which would then be studied under a microscope. The results of this test will be available today.

But Rand Water was confident that the results would be positive, saying the bacteria found in the water from Pimville and Azaadville had been harmless

"A problem arises only when the presence of harmful bacteria is detected," water quality marketing manager Karl Lubout said. He added there was no need to boil water.

■ The Star will conduct a test on water around Johannesburg this week.

STAR 3/3/98

Reassuring results from bacteria-count test on water

(127) Star 5/2/98

The bacteria count in water from a Soweto house that was tested by Rand Water on Monday was well within acceptable levels, the board said yesterday

Water quality marketing manager Karl Lubout said the standard plate-count test had

come up with seven harmless bacterial colonies, while the membrane filtration technique had yielded no coliforms or e-coli. The bacterial limit for a standard plate test is 100.

The test by Rand Water followed reports by Radio 702 that

water drawn from houses near Johannesburg had high bacteria counts. These were, however, not harmful

Lubout said Johannesburg's water was "completely safe" and was tested regularly - City Reporter

Illegal reconnections result in blanket power cuts (107)

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

SAW 6/2/98

Hundreds of Kagiso residents, many of whom have been diligently paying their electricity bills, have been in the dark for days after Eskom indiscriminately cut their power supply to prevent illegal reconnections by defaulters.

The blanket switchoffs, which began on Monday, involve 1 140 households in several Kagiso sections.

Many shops, as well as surgeries and a funeral parlour, have been affected.

The cuts have angered residents and businesses who use pre-paid electricity.

Eskom spokesman Peter Adams yesterday said the parastatal had opted for such a harsh measure after residents damaged cables while illegally reconnecting their electricity.

The cables now posed a danger because they had been exposed.

"Because of the dangerous situation, we went to those who had paid and informed them about the cuts.

"We told them to find alternative means and said we would help to buy gas and

He added that defaulters were "quick to say they were not in arrears".

Dipuo Mogapi of Riverside said yesterday that residents had received letters informing them of the planned cutoffs.

"Residents were informed about the power supply, but it was not clear when it would take place

"They cut electricity irrespective of whether you have paid or not, because they switched it off at the substation," Mogapi said.

Another resident, George Samuel, said Eskom should have maintained the power supply to people who had paid or had made arrangements to pay.

TD Funeral Undertakers chairman Dan Sekoe said he had made arrangements to freeze corpses at his mortuary after he received a tipoff from an Eskom employee that electricity would be cut.

He claimed he owed less than R2 000 for electricity consumption and was not among those who illegally reconnected power, but Eskom said he was in arrears.



Lights out ... Kagiso resident George Samuel in the surgery of Dr M N Mabasa, whose electricity supply has been cut off along with that of hundreds of residents. Households, shops and a funeral parlour are among those affected.



Reverends A Khathide, left, RM Lengoete and F Basina chaired electricity summit organised by East Rand churches at the weekend to discuss nonpayment of services

Picture TREVOR SAMSON

Meeting on electricity payments degenerates into chaos

Dustin Chick

(127)

09/13/98

A WEEKEND electricity meeting organised by churches on the East Rand to discuss the lack of payment for services degenerated into chaos when the Democratic Party (DP) was expelled for refusing to sign a declaration of intent and the Kempton Park Ratepayers' Association was forbidden to take part, apparently because it had registered late

The meeting got off to a bumpy start on Friday when the

National Party (NP), DP and the Freedom Front refused to sign a declaration designed to commit stakeholders to promoting a culture of payment.

On Saturday, NP and Freedom Front representatives decided they would sign the declaration. Meanwhile SA National Civics Organisation (Sanco) leaders refused to sign, but changed their minds yesterday.

The meeting was intended to devise a programme to promote a culture of payment and to discuss the proposed introduction

of a flat rate and the writing off of R54m owed to Eskom

Last year, Eskom threatened to attach assets belonging to the Kempton Park Tembisa local council if it did not start paying its arrears. In terms of an agreement with Eskom, the council has to keep up payments or settle its arrears.

Kempton Park DP councillor Mike Waters said a proposed R80 flat rate was "irresponsible". If a person paid R80 but used R300 worth, other ratepayers must carry the shortfall.

Sandton boycotters seek way forward

By ANNA COX
Star 9/3/98

Sandton residents who have been involved in an 18-month rates boycott are to hold crisis meetings this month to map a way forward.

This follows allegations that Greater Johannesburg's Eastern Council is refusing to put forward solutions to the boycott, which has cost the council an estimated R150-million.

It also follows the adjournment by the Appeal Court this week of a case brought by a group of Sandton businesses to overturn the 1996/97 budgets of the Greater Johannesburg and Eastern councils. The businesses are trying, in particular, to have the rates increases of up to 385% overturned. The council's R438-million surplus to the metro council to subsidise other councils.

Last year the application was dismissed by Mr Justice E. Goldstone in the Johannesburg High Court.

The case was adjourned after the councils claimed the Appeal Court did not have jurisdiction to hear the matter or whether it was a matter for the Constitutional Court.

Mr Chief Justice I. Maimon said the court would consider argument on whether it could consider the appeal or whether it was a matter for the Ratepayers' groups had given the council until last Friday to present its solutions.

Group spokesman Bruce McGregor said residents' associations would get a mandate from members on how to proceed and an intensification of the boycott would be proposed.

"We will also be demanding a meeting with the council to find out why there has been no written response to our request for their solutions," he said.

Chairman of the Eastern Council's executive committee, Sizakele Nkosi, said the council was ready to enter negotiations. She said the organisations agreed to meet the council individually because they all had different demands, but when a meeting with one was set up, all demanded to be present.

"The council is still prepared to make a presentation to put its position regarding the meeting forward. However, it is up to them to arrange a meeting with us, but in the meantime we will not stop credit control measures," Nkosi said.

12 1998

Council makes offer ⁽¹²⁷⁾ to inner-city defaulters

By LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Johannesburg is to tackle one of the primary causes of its R1,8-billion debt over the next four weeks, when it meets inner-city flat dwellers and landlords to work out "unique" ways they can pay off their service arrears.

Inner-city residents who have had their electricity cut off are also to be offered a special deal to have their services reconnected.

If they pay a deposit of one-and-a-half months' service charges and give a statement of intent to "normalise" the account, their water and lights will be reconnected, Committee of Ten chairman Kenny Fihla said yesterday.

The council's usual policy for paying off arrears is a 50% down-payment and the balance over six months.

The deal and meetings are part of a policy for highrise flats approved by the Committee of Ten last week.

The body was established in October last year in terms of a provincial government directive to try to turn around Greater Johannesburg's financial situation.

As part of their efforts, they embarked on an intensive credit-control campaign in November, which has so far led to the recovery of R159-million from debtors who owe R50 000 or

more, the council said yesterday.

In terms of the campaign, electricity, water and gas supplies are cut off if consumers are defaulting on payment.

Technical task team member Wilhe Ramoshaba said the council was collating the amounts recovered from smaller defaulters.

The new policy follows the cutting off of services to 22 highrise buildings, which resulted in a storm of protests.

Fihla said there was a need to acknowledge that the position of inner-city dwellings was unique as many had paid landlords who had failed to pay the council.

He said while the deal was open only to highrise flats, the action was not aimed at "treating people differently".

"All we are saying is 'you have a month, those of you who live in inner-city flats, to come forward and settle your outstanding accounts. We're giving you this month to supply us with proof that you have paid'," Fihla said.

Ramoshaba said summonses had already been served against 1 996 defaulters in the inner city, with 26 writs awarded.

Judgment had been obtained against 199 defaulters. But it was proving difficult to recover money owed to the council by seizing buildings, as no one wanted to buy them.

SYM 11/3/98

'Housing needs support'

125 (127)

Sowetan 16/3/98

By Justice Mohale

HOMELESSNESS could be a thing of the past if the private sector financially supported the Government so that it could effectively address the housing problem

This was said by Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng when he launched a housing

project in Ivory Park, near Tembisa, on Friday.

Mofokeng also signed an agreement with Building Material Suppliers of South Africa (BMSSA) at the ceremony to supply building material to new home owners

"The agreement will enhance the progress in our consolidation subsidy programme, which is aimed at provid-

ing subsidies for top structures in Gauteng," he said

Mofokeng said there were 180 000 serviced sites in the area but added that the slow pace of delivery of houses was caused by a lack of systematic and efficient arrangements

He said the first phase of the project will see 2 000 houses completed by the end of April

Gauteng kicks off housing provision for '98

(127)
0017/12/98

Robyn Chalmers

GAUTENG is one of the few provinces which has started providing housing this year, having delivered more than 1 500 of the 4 130 units it aims to deliver by the end of the year.

The social housing programme was designed at national level and implemented in June 1995, but has been slow to take off. It aims to deliver low-cost housing by releasing housing grants to institutions which develop and manage the housing on behalf of beneficiaries. The programme can be used by local authorities and private organisations to pro-

vide low-cost housing under a rental or instalment sale agreement.

The Gauteng housing and land affairs department's 1997/98 annual report said the programme in the province delivered housing through three different vehicles: inner city institutional projects, high-density schemes and temporary housing for destitute people.

The report estimated that 2,5-million people in the province were landless. More than 378 000 households had therefore been targeted for secure tenure through the transfer of land and housing valued at R7,9bn.

The provincial housing backlog was esti-

mated at 760 000 households which was escalating at a rate of 40 000 households a year as a result of natural growth and migration.

The department had set itself a delivery target of 243 000 units by April next year. It had delivered 122 308 stands between the 1994/95 and 1997/98 fiscal years. Under the provincial hostels upgrading programme, 44 000 hostel residents had benefited out of a targeted 90 000.

High levels of migration into Gauteng were exacerbating landlessness and contributing to land invasions. The Maybuye programme released land for residential development to

cope with this problem. A total of 32 869 sites were under development with 8 478 sites already released.

The report showed the department's capital budget had risen to about R900m in 1997/98 from R400m in 1994/95. In addition, the department managed a budget of R645m for the Katorus urban renewal project on the East Rand.

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Motokeng said there were a number of obstacles that had been dealt with. These included legal setbacks and corruption among officials and beneficiaries.

Zambian ban on imported wheat flour draws mixed reaction

(127) 0017/12/98

David Simpson

LUSAKA — Imported SA wheat flour is still in evidence on the shelves of supermarkets throughout the Zambian capital, Lusaka, two weeks after a government-imposed deadline of end-February.

In September last year the Zambian government imposed a ban on the importation of wheat flour. The aim was to support local millers by restricting imports to whole wheat which can be milled in Zambia.

However, the ban appears to have had only a limited effect and

bread and there is no way of checking the origin of the flour. The ban increases the incentive to smuggle and raises the price to the shopkeeper and to the consumer, he says.

Oven Fresh Bakery owner Kanti Ranchhod says the ban has helped local millers, but not bakers. "Flour needs to mature for a few months before it is used. The ban creates a shortage, and millers release immature flour onto the market. This results in bread which is too crumbly, and customers complain," he says.

SA flour, says Simba Milling Company executive Chris Con-

stantinou, is mature because it contains the improver potassium bromate. This is banned as a food additive in SA and Zambia, but SA allows it for export. It finds its way into Zambia, and is difficult to spot unless tests are done, he says.

Constantinou welcomes the ban, because, he claims, Zambia has been used as a dumping ground by SA for too long.

Sas Kasselman, marketing manager of the National Milling Company (NMC), agrees that the ban has cut down smuggling and helped millers. His company buys locally

grown wheat, which he says is of excellent quality. It is blended with imported wheat for milling. NMC tests for quality, and these do sometimes reveal the presence of potassium bromate in the imported flour.

SA, he says, has an excess milling capacity and that is why they can export at a low price.

The ban is due to end in July, when a special tariff on certain imported goods, including wheat flour, will be introduced. Kasselman would like a rate of at least 50%, and preferably 60%, to enable local millers to compete.

Gauteng has 2,5-m landless

(127) (210)

Sowetan 18/3/98
MEC spells out pivotal role of local authorities in providing housing

By Joshua Raboroko

LOCAL authorities has to play a pivotal role in the delivery of low-cost housing by providing essential services, land, safety and security, says Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng

In his 1997-98 annual report, Mofokeng says through formalising residential areas, the size of the rate base of local authorities is increased

"This also assists in ensuring that the Masakhane campaign is a success because local authorities are better able to render proper services and residents are able to acquire secure title," he says

He says the upgrading of informal settlements extends good local governance to these areas, adding that the opening of township registers and the

release of land allows the authorities to formalise road reserves and servitudes and to prevent their illegal occupation

It was estimated that 2,5 million people were presently landless in the province, saying about 378 000 households were targeted for the delivery of secure tenure through the transfer of land valued at R7,9 million.

The provincial housing backlog was estimated at 761 000 households. The figure escalated at a rate of some 40 000 households a year as a result of natural growth and inward immigration

As part of the national target to deliver one million units by April 1999, the department has set itself a delivery target of 243 000 units in that period

The provincial hostels upgrading programme aims to improve the living conditions of some 90 000 inmates

Stayaway over power cuts

By McKeed Kotlolo

THOUSANDS of Atteridgeville Pretoria, residents are expected to take part in a protest march against "abnormal rent accounts" and alleged illegal power cuts in the township.

One resident apparently received a bill of R48 000 for electricity and services.

Today's stayaway and march have been organised by the Atteridgeville Saulsville Concerned Residents Association (Ascoia).

The protesters will deliver a memorandum to the offices of the Pretoria City Council.

Thousands of pamphlets distributed at the weekend in the township, west of Pretoria, called on residents to support the stayaway and fight against "abnormal monthly rent accounts and illegal power cuts".

The majority of householders in the township claimed the arrears reflected in their monthly statements were not accurate.

Ascoia general secretary Mr Themba Ncalo said the highest monthly account in arrears received at their weekly meetings was R48 000.

In another case a resident's account reflected an amount of R9 152 owed to the council for November. He paid R500 as an instalment that month. He had not yet received his December and January accounts.

This was at the time when thousands of accounts were found at a dumping site in the township.

When he received his February account, which reflected a new balance of R40 167, the council cut his electricity supply but restored it after he lodged a complaint.

New balance

His latest account reflects a balance of R41 264.

Mamelodi residents are experiencing the same problem.

Residents said they received statements showing arrears of R20 000 for service charges.

Some said they feared that their properties might be attached if they failed to pay the amounts demanded by the council.

Ncalo said buses would transport residents from various points in the township to Brown Street in town from where the march was expected to start at 10am.

R26-m 'revive towns' fund for Gauteng cities

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG has set aside R26 million for the regeneration of city and townships centres.

The Vusani Amadolobha Fund (revive towns) project aimed at reviving the economic nodes of cities, was announced by MEC for local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka at a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday.

Shiceka said the fund would create 3 500 direct and indirect jobs in 15 centres across the province.

The impact of these projects would be better managed, cleaner and safer areas that could lead to increased private sector investment, he added.

Urban integration was high on the

province's agenda, he said. A number of government efforts were under way, including new legislation and catalysts like the fund. The project was expected to draw additional resources from local government, business and community.

Gauteng has paid R6 million for projects which covered a wide range of services and facilities.

Selected areas include Albert Street Social Housing, Alexandra Development Forum, Gauteng Precinct, Sebokeng Zone 14, Daveyton Central Business District, Provision for Informal Trade in Springs and Physical Upgrading of Marabastad.

Shiceka said he believed the fund would boost and complement the Masakhane campaign in Gauteng.

Trustees paid R60 000 for 'a job well done'

Bongani Siquoko

Members of the Krugersdorp Development Trust — a site-and-service project of the now defunct Kagiso Town Council — have been ordered to repay more than R60 000 they paid themselves for a "job well done".

A commission of inquiry demanded late last year that the money paid to 12 trustees by the trust's chair, Ben Ntsumane, be paid back before March 2. To date, not a cent has been repaid.

Ntsumane says this is because he has not received the report. "One of the unfortunate things is that the affected party has not received it, while other parties have."

The chair of the commission of inquiry, Zola Malvern Majavu, found there was no basis for the payments. Ntsumane had told the hearing that the trustees "deserved to be thanked" and he decided to give them R5 000 each. He said the trust was accountable only to the trustees.

The Krugersdorp Development Trust was launched to identify sites for potential home-

owners in Kagiso. But it soon attracted accusations of mismanagement and incompetence.

The trust ignored these complaints, and the community marched to the town council and the office of the MEC for Development Planning, Sicele Shiceka, who instituted the inquiry.

Alan Velcich, who audited the trust's records, told the inquiry its operations were satisfactory but its financial administration was "sloppy". He refused to sign off the 1997 financial statements because he believed there was no basis for the payments to the trustees.

Kagiso residents told the inquiry there were irregularities in the allocation of sites. The trust had 2 300 applicants but only 2 146 sites available. Those applicants who earned less than R1 500 a month qualified for sites.

Michael Phillip Morkel, an independent adviser to the Independent Development Trust, made it clear there was no misappropriation of funds by the Krugersdorp trust.

Morkel told the inquiry his organisation was so impressed with the level of professionalism at the trust that it made a further R250 000 available for community development projects.

Majavu did not find that any of the trustees had enriched themselves. "I am not in a position to nail anyone or grouping of individuals to a particular gross misconduct," he said.

SAT 15/2/98

Daveyton residents get homes ... finally

Sowetan 30/3/98 (127)

By Dan Fuphe

TWO hundred Daveyton residents became proud owners yesterday of houses formerly owned by the local town council, when the houses were officially transferred to the families who had rented them for the last 43 years

Greater Benoni mayor Mr Ronnie Kuta congratulated the families

Kuta said the 200 were "just a part of the well-deserving 12 000 people in Daveyton, who over the years qualified to become new homeowners under the new system"

He said under the new dispensation families who had rented their houses since 1955 had the option of owning them. But

this could only happen if the house was not tied in a family dispute over who was the rightful owner

"The move to transfer these houses to the people who rented them is the real change our people have been waiting for since the 1994 general elections," he said

Councillor Mr Naweed Hassan, who chairs the council's executive committee, also revealed that there was a housing backlog of 60 000 units in Greater Benoni

He said the move to transfer these houses would go a long way to alleviating this problem

"The Gauteng government envisages that 150 000 houses will have been transferred to their rightful owners by the end of the year," Hassan said

Council warns defaulters

(127) Sowetan 31/3/98

By Gershwin Chuenyane

ELECTRICITY defaulters and residents who illegally reconnect the power supply after it has been cut off "will soon find themselves in the dark" as the Pretoria City Council embarks on "a cut-off and credit control campaign" which starts this week.

The council issued a final warning yesterday after an audit report conducted two weeks ago revealed that as soon as the council discontinued the electricity service to defaulters, it was immediately reconnected illegally, council spokeswoman Ms Alet van Tonder said.

She said "The city council intends to clamp-down on residents whose electricity supply is found to be illegally reconnected after the service has been discontinued by the council due to non-payment or residents' failure to make, and stick to, arrangements to pay off arrears."

Dr Willem van der Waals, the council's acting chief executive-town clerk said "The council cannot allow a situation to persist where some consumers are stealing from the council.

"Electricity consumers who are resorting to the practice of having their electricity supply illegally reconnected are not simply stealing from the council, but from the entire community, and such actions should be condemned in the strongest terms."

He added that the council bought the electricity from Eskom to supply households and had paid for "the extremely expensive infrastructure and maintenance".

Van Tonder said residents who wished to make enquiries about electricity cut-offs could contact the council at (012) 308-8577/8 between 7am and 8pm and for normal electricity accounts at (012) 308-8551/2/3/4/5/6/7/8 between 7am and 3.45pm.

Council to remove electricity connections from repeat defaulters

(127)
Stephané Bothma

DD 31/3/98

PRETORIA — Thousands of residents who illegally reconnected electricity supplies to their homes after they had been discontinued by the city council for nonpayment would have their electricity supply connections completely removed, a council spokesman said yesterday.

Pretoria residents owe almost R500m in arrears for electricity.

In the past two weeks, the council had found that 2 391 residents had illegally reconnected their electricity. More than 1 000 of these had failed to react to a notice issued to them by the council.

As part of the council's continuing credit control measures, electricity supply to thousands of account defaulters had been cut over the past months, she said. "An audit conducted over the past two weeks indicates that about half of the cases where the electricity supply was discontinued by the council, it had again been illegally reconnected."

She said residents who failed to respond to a final notice issued by the council would from this week have the electricity supply connection permanently removed.

"In such cases the electricity service will only be reinstated after all arrears and the new connection fee has been paid in full. The council will only accept bank-guaranteed cheques or cash payment methods in these cases," she said.

The council had also put in place an audit process to monitor electricity consumption in those cases where the supply had been officially discontinued.

At the end of December, Pretoria residents owed the council R466,8m, which increased to R478,9m at the end of January.

In December, the payment level was only 74% but went up to 120% the following month.

According to the acting council CE and executive director of the council's community safety department, Willem van der Waals, the council could not allow a situation to persist where some consumers were stealing from the council.

"Electricity consumers who are resorting to the practice of having their electricity supply illegally reconnected are not simply stealing from the council, but in fact from the entire community," he said.

Residents whose sole monthly income was R500 or less and perceived themselves as being poor, were urged by the council to apply to be registered as such in terms of the council's approved policy for the poor.

"In practice, this will mean that these consumers' arrears will not accumulate any further interest, and that other metering options may be made available to them, pending the outcome of a pilot project aimed at testing various options," the spokesman said.

"In cases where a person qualifies to be registered in terms of this policy and cannot afford to pay the current account and the arrears, social workers will recommend that the electricity supply to the specific household is voluntarily terminated.

"When the consumer's financial situation has improved, the supply can be reinstated without additional installation," she said.

Millions without land in Gauteng

Bonile Ngqiyaza

(127)

THE Gauteng housing department has estimated that about 2,5-million people are landless within the province and says it has targeted 378 000 households in Gauteng for the transfer of land and housing valued at R7,9bn.

At a budget presentation to the economic and finance standing committee, it said the provincial housing backlog — estimated at 761 000 households — escalated at a rate of about 40 000 households each year.

As part of the national target to deliver 1-million housing units by April 1999, the department had set itself a delivery target of 243 000 units in this period.

It disclosed that "substantial" progress had been made in achieving the target through the delivery of 122 308 stands and 64 508 houses which had either been completed or were being built.

The department said 43 569 hostel residents had benefited from the provincial hostels upgrading programme which aimed to improve the living conditions of about 90 000 hostel residents.

Monty Narsoo, housing and land affairs director-general, said Gauteng's capital allocation accounted for 31% of the national housing budget.

80/14/98

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THE NATION
of

Business Edition

Jo'burg cleans up its act to impress ratepayers

Star 1/4/98

(127)

By ANNA COX

Greater Johannesburg is to spend R39-million on cutting grass, fixing street and traffic lights, improving refuse collection and fixing potholes as part of a "visible servicing campaign" to restore confidence in the city.

The project, which has already begun and will continue

until the end of the council's financial year in June, is in response to complaints from residents over the decline of services

Services deteriorated after Greater Johannesburg's five municipalities decided in November to cut back on non-core services (like grass cutting) to rein in over-expenditure

Project convener Mavela

Dlamini said the Committee of Ten - which is supervising the restructuring of Greater Johannesburg's finances - had decided a "visible servicing campaign" was vital.

Dlamini said posters, many of which were illegally displayed, would also be removed

He attributed the decline in services to skilled staff leaving and not being replaced, re-

duced funding, and an increased workload without a parallel increase in resources

Dlamini said the campaign was expected to continue after June with money being provided in the new budgets

It involves staff from across the metro working together, with each council developing individual and specific programmes.

REVIEWING a CYRILS CITY Centre

(127) *Sowetan 11/4/98*

By Claire Keeton
Feature Writer

THE success of Gauteng's plan for urban regeneration depends to a great extent on the success of partnerships forged between local government, the private sector and community organisations

Partnerships are critical at provincial and national level, particularly in development planning and in housing. If they are strong, partnerships will be more likely to mobilise the resources needed to implement the policies for regeneration and integration that are planned around conference tables

The Vusani Amadlobha (Urban Regeneration) conference in Johannesburg tomorrow and on Friday will provide a forum for consolidating partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society, and in shaping the draft white paper on urban regeneration

Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga and MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicele Shiceka are the key speakers at the conference and will focus on turning the tide of urban degradation in the inner city of Johannesburg

The achievements in urban regeneration and the revitalisation of the economy will give direction to the delegates from non-government and community-based organisations, business, property owners and local authorities

The R26-million Vusani Amadlobha Fund, launched by the provincial government last week, is a project that underlines the importance of partnerships

The Gauteng government released R6 million for investments for city, town and township centre development, which catalysed a total investment of R26 million

designed to stimulate job creation," Shiceka said. The fund will create direct and related jobs located in 15 centres across Gauteng

The project hopes to make these urban centres cleaner and safer, leading to increased private sector investment in the areas

Various projects for urban renewal will be exhibited at the conference

Executive director of the Interfaith Community Development Association (ICDA) and chairman of the National Housing Board Ishmael Mkhabela said the acknowledgement of partnerships by the Government was important to the community

"We need that confirmation that we can work together and make a contribution together," he said

The ICDA organised a conference on Community Building and Organising in South Africa towards the end of March, looking at the empowerment of communities in development and housing

Mkhabela told *Sowetan* "We have sufficient energy in communities that needs to be harnessed and focused on ways of improving the environment (like) renovating housing"

The draft white paper has identified a four-point plan or vision for urban centres, the first of which is to "promote clean and safe centres" which are also livable

Building partnerships that will work towards regenerating urban centres, fostering compact development and encouraging lively commercial centres are the other three elements of the plan

Mkhabela said the "greatest challenge" for Government was to be supportive without becoming controlling

"They say they want to support us, but sometimes it can become the opposite if they coordinate and direct initiatives"

Gauteng's proposed framework for the involvement of community structures in urban regeneration came under scrutiny at the ICDA conference by a range of players in the field of community development and housing

Housing expert and speaker Dr Paul Hender said the idea of setting up structures to support community organisations and the private sector was use-

formation at an ideological level but it is not practically worked out," he cautioned. "I have doubts about how far this strategic programme will work on the ground when it is starting top down"

The framework diagram has funders at the top, with stakeholders and the beneficiary community flanking community structures and the facilitation process

Director of the Master Builders Association Mr Dominic Tweedie was more blunt. "There are only two approaches one may take. One is supportive and the other is to be a provider. The provider mode is a failure"

Hender thinks the Government is divided between "providing and people doing it themselves"

The Peoples Housing Process (PHP) - which allows communities to take the initiative with partners to support them - is now official legislation

"The PHP has support at all levels but there are also major blockages," said Hender

A new partner for many communities could be their own local authorities

Housing department technical adviser Ms Metsi Makhele said she would like to see local authorities being actively involved in supporting community development

"We are saying local authorities must develop a new role. Instead of being prescriptive they can provide technical assistance," Makhele said

The building of such relationships will be central to tomorrow's conference. Following the initial presentations to report back on consultative workshops in the province, local authorities and financing institutions will present perspectives on urban regeneration

"The conference is identified as an

A tenant in a block of flats in the city centre ponders his future in view of the encroaching decay and the possibility of regenerating their living conditions.

(with communities) and to get people talking about delivery," said Gauteng assistant director of development planning and local government Mr Ebrahim Hassen

Delivery and the need for integrated development will be major issues at the conference

National coordinator of the National Housing Forum (NHF) Trust Khadija Richards said "I hope it is practically



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Townships get R6m for regeneration

By ZOLILE NQAYI

SEVERAL historically under-developed townships in Gauteng have received the lion's share of the Department of Development Planning and Local Government's Vusani Amadolobha (urban regeneration) grants

On Friday, at the end of a two-day conference held in Johannesburg

on the regeneration of Gauteng cities and towns, Sicele Shiceka, MEC for the Department of Development Planning and Local Government, handed out cheques totalling R6 million from the department to local authorities that had successfully tendered for grants to fund regeneration projects

"These projects will benefit 2,5 million citizens in Gauteng and will generate 3 000 direct and

SAF (127) 2/11/98

indirect jobs. The accomplishment is however not the provincial government's, but rather one for partnerships at a local level," Shiceka said

"They came to us, not cap in hand, but with solutions that they demanded the provincial government effect"

The Vusani Amadolobha conference discussed, among others things, ways to promote clean, safe and vibrant urban centres

It entails the creation of partnerships between government, business, property owners and community organisations

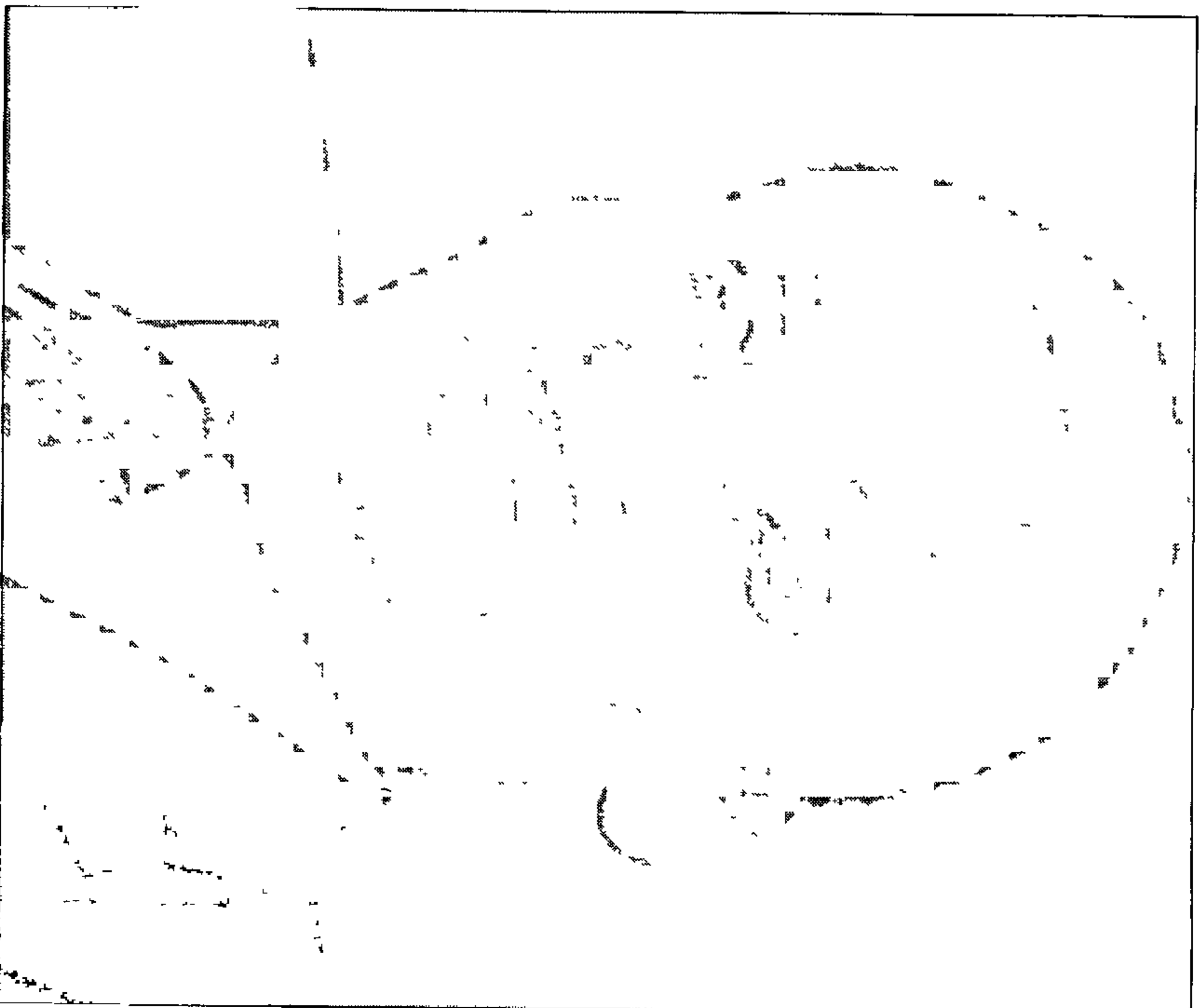
The conference is the sequel to the original conference, which was held in October 1996 in response to the stagnation and decline of inner cities around major centres in Gauteng

"I am today reminded of the words of Chinua Achebe - 'Things Fall Apart' These words ring true every time I see our centres littered. The central message of this conference is that things will not fall apart," said Shiceka

Opening the conference, Premier Mathole Motshelga said his government is fully committed to the regeneration He said the decline of cities was a legacy of apartheid policies and priority should be given to cure the malice

"As the apartheid crisis deepened and the dawn of freedom became inevitable, the previous government neglected our cities and allowed their physical and social infrastructure to collapse

"We as government have inherited this problem which we are determined to resolve," said Motshelga



THINGS WILL NOT FALL APART... Says the MEC for the Department of Development Planning and Local Government, Sicele Shiceka

Jonesboro begins quest for answers

John Schwartz in Jonesboro

When 12-year-old Michael Barnes saw his classmates being gunned down in an ambush outside his school, he stopped to the ground and crawled into the manasium, reciting the 23rd Psalm as com-
part to get him through Why, he wondered, could anyone murder a bunch of kids?

That question was on most everyone's mind in this rural town began trying to make sense of a bloody shooting spree that left five dead and 15 wounded

Last week, two boys, Mitchell Johnson (13) and his friend Andrew Golden (11), were charged with capital murder after allegedly firing their classmates outside their school with a fire alarm and then gunning them down as they emerged into the schoolyard

Authorities continued to hunt for answers at would explain how the boys got their weapons and what motivated them to attack the school, a large wreath, two bouquets and a candle had been placed on the sidewalk leading up to the door
Classes were cancelled and a steam ma-

chine had washed the pavement of the blood from the ambush Ten pockmarks in the clean, sandstone-painted cinder-block walls were the only remaining evidence of the violence

Over and over, people asked what had got into the two boys charged with the murders, school principal Karen Curtner said she had never received reports of discipline problems about either one

But the students at the school knew a different Mitchell Johnson, one who was quick to fight, whether in sports or on the school bus Several said that Johnson was angry over the break-up with a girl, who was among the wounded

Although Barnes himself was not hurt in the gunfire, he was struggling with the horror that Johnson had warned him that he was angry and going to make people pay

"He told me he hated everybody, and was going to do it," said Barnes "I didn't believe him Nobody believed him Why should they? He's a little 13-year-old boy"

In an interview with ABC News, Golden's grandfather said the two boys were desperate to get their hands on weapons The grandfather said the boys stole three rifles, ammunition and

four pistols from his private collection

Golden was trained in target shooting at an early age and was taken on hunting trips with his father ABC aired video footage of Golden as a young child shooting at targets and receiving what appeared to be a rifle as a gift

Golden, the son of two postal workers, stood expressionless at his arraignment last week But his friend, Johnson, stood red-faced and teary in his orange jail jumpsuit as the charges were read before juvenile court Judge Ralph Wilson Jr

The two boys are being held at the county jail and a trial date has been set for April 29

Arkansas law prohibits trying anyone under 14 as an adult, but prosecutor Brent Davis said "there are options that we're looking at", perhaps including removal to federal court where other rules may apply

The tragedy comes as a visceral shock for tight-knit Jonesboro, usually a placid town about 200km north-east of Little Rock, the state capital, that would seem to epitomise the kind of environment where people want to raise kids murders are rare and the economy has been flourishing *Jonesboro Sun* assistant publisher

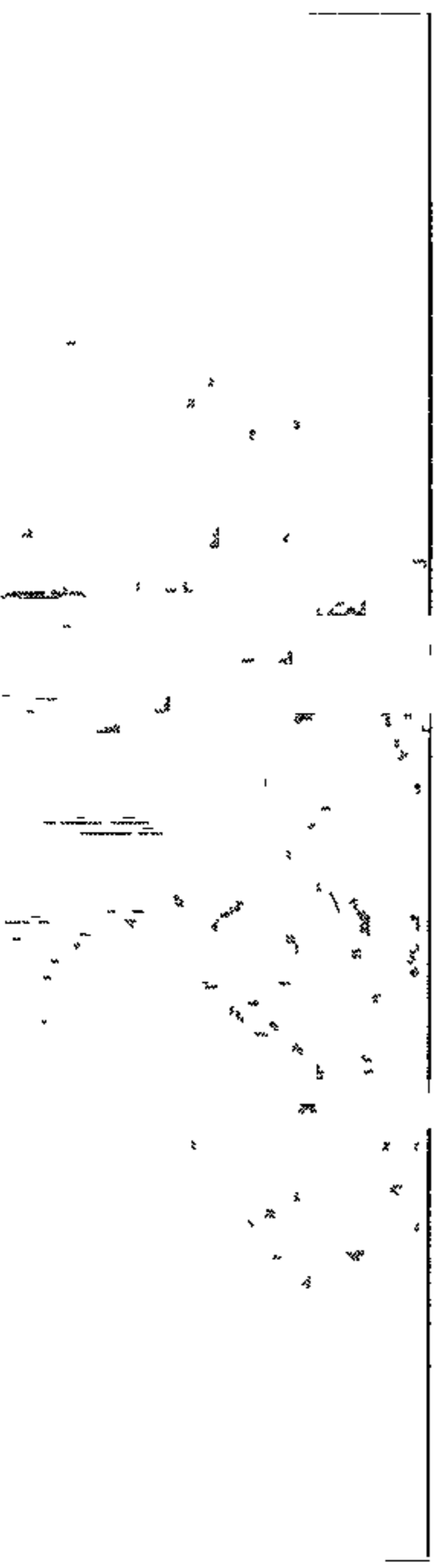
Bob Trout calls it "the oasis of the delta"

"You wouldn't think nothing like this would ever happen here, you'd think things like this would happen in big cities," said Deborah Gibson, a Salvation Army volunteer helping last week at the middle school, where parents and children streamed in and out all day for counselling Gibson said that a friend was talking to her grandson, who had been in the group of attacked children, and he said "Like flies, Nana They were dropping like flies" The boy had dropped quickly to the ground and was unhurt

Psychiatry offers some general insights, though practitioners generally refuse to comment on cases they have not reviewed in depth "We have to become aware that technology has created opportunities for children to come face to face with very graphic, realistic violence," said Peter Favaro, whose practice includes evaluation of juvenile criminal suspects in New York courts

Over time, young people become desensitised to violence "You have to ask yourself what's crazy," Favaro said, "the kids, or the culture?" John Hazlewood whose son attends the school, said that the answers are easier than they might seem "This is not the kids' problem, it's the way we're raising them today They only know what you teach 'em," he said "If they hadn't taken prayer out of school, this never would have happened" — *The Washington Post*

Clinton gets last launch on A or I



Fool's Day

*winisky might have blushed unseen had it not been for the
mes allegations. Ed William reports from Washington*

It was hard to believe she had really gone away, at least for the moment. In Africa the president was reported to have received news that Paula Jones's suit against him had been thrown out as an April Fool's joke. Jones (dubbed "trailer trash" by President Clinton's aides) was the sharpest thorn in the side of his presidency. It was her suit, filed in 1994, that prised open his private life and marriage to spawn the Monica Lewinsky scandal and ensuing boudoir farce. Jones will appeal, but for the time being the president has won a formidable legal victory, date at the Little Rock courthouse on May 11. The case has been cancelled.

Jones claimed that in 1991 the then governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas asked a state trooper to summon her, a state employee, to a room at the Excelsior hotel.

According to Jones's affidavit, Clinton told her "I love your curves," and exposed himself to her. "Kiss it," he allegedly said. "No sureeee," claims to have replied, "I'm not that kind of girl."

"But you're smart," he continued. "Let's keep this between us." Three years later Jones consulted a lawyer.

But Judge Susan Webber Wright in Little Rock upheld a motion from Clinton's lawyers that Jones had not presented enough evidence to justify the full court hearing.

Judge Wright ruled this week that the evidence fell short of the "outrage" required to bring a case, that the president's behaviour, even if "boorish", did not set out to cause intentional damage or "emotional distress".

It was a brief, enigmatic, and isolated event. There was no physical harm done. There were no "genuine issues" for trial by jury.

Judge Wright said that Clinton's alleged statements did "not in any way constitute a clear threat that clearly conditions concrete job benefits or detriments on compliance with sexual demands."

But it is not over yet. The decision has no legal bearing on the — admittedly weakened — perjury investigation by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr. Legally, the alleged trysts with Kathleen Willey and others are all branches of the now felled Jones tree. But the Jones case was driven by politics.

The girl from a poor, religious Southern family became the catalyst for all-out war against the draft-dodging, saxophone-playing president. It was waged by what Hillary Clinton calls a "right-wing conspiracy" — a ragbag of born-again Christians, economic libertarians and gun-lobbyists, variously connected to or distant from the Republican Party.

"It's obvious who they were," Jim Carville, spinmeister of Clinton's 1992 victory, said. "Paula Jones is caught up in a big political game."

The campaign was steered from Arkansas by Cliff Jackson, a lawyer with whom the president grew up. He used an overtly political forum to launch Jones nationally: the Conservative Political Action Conference of 1994. Within a year, her cause had incorporated the evangelicals, Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, right-wing publicists including Floyd Brown, and the *American Spectator* magazine. It was funded by the Christian Defence Coalition and the Legal Affairs Council, established in 1986 to fundraise for Goldwater, Oliver North, and Clinton's side seemed to play badly by trying to have the case dismissed. The supreme court



Sing hallelujah: Clinton addresses a gathering in Senegal, the country where he heard the good news that the Jones lawsuit had been thrown out of court. PHOTO: AP

turned down his submission unanimously. But Jones's cause was not helped by the publication of photographs in *Penthouse* magazine showing the 20-year-old Jones in a G-string.

Her sister, Charlotte Corbin-Jones, further muddled the waters by saying Jones had indeed indulged in malarkey with the governor, and was "thrilled".

Then Jones moved to California and found her perfect partner, Susan Carpenter McMillan, a right-wing activist who became her "publicist", or campaign manager. The pair became icons for a right-wing, face-lifted feminism, taking head-on the old left-wing women's movement — which had put ideology before

gender and dumped Jones at the outset. "I do not respect a man who dodges the draft, cheats on his wife and exposes his wee-wee to a stranger," said McMillan.

Last year the president's lawyers offered Jones a settlement of \$700,000. Instead, Jones hired new lawyers to devise the strategy that would lead to the Lewinsky, and other, scandals the "pattern of conduct", searching for other women's testimony.

What the judge has done is to catch up with the United States. Between the lines of her judgment she implies that she believes Jones. But, she seems to say "Get over it." As the US has said for four years: "Of course he did it, but who cares?"

Revive our cities - Premier

Sowetan
3/4/98 (127)

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG Premier Mathole Motshekga has appealed to the private sector, labour and the community to join hands with his administration to revive towns and cities in the province in a bid to give a much-needed facelift to black townships

Addressing the *Vusani Amadolobha* (revive cities) conference in Johannesburg yesterday, Motshekga said the campaign to revive Gauteng must be seen as part of the African renaissance

He said the renewal and integration of cities must be part of the reawakening of the continent. It was a vision which said "I am an African, therefore I will commit myself to the upliftment of my continent"

Gauteng had set aside R26 million and a pool of human resources to upgrade the infrastructure, to build clinics, schools, houses, roads and other projects that would give towns a facelift

"Apartheid policies, the influx control measures in particular, prevented the majority of our people from settling in the cities" He added that the previous government had allowed towns to collapse

The new Government faced the challenge of a social and economic regeneration and development as part of the African renaissance

Local authorities should take the initiative in implementing projects, and needed to consult communities to find out their needs

Gauteng was divided into six regions, in which delivery of services would be provided

Tough measures push up Pretoria arrears payments

Stephané Bothma

PD 3/4/98 (127)
PRETORIA — Residents are flocking to pay off their arrears on electricity accounts after almost 17 000 households had their supply cut in the three-month period ending March.

In the last week of March, defaulters made arrangements with the city council to pay off debt totalling R7,8m, while full and partial arrears payments amounted to R730 439, a council spokesman said yesterday. Services arrears totalled R478,9m at the end of January.

She said that after many warnings the council was taking drastic steps to curb illegal electricity consumption. A recent council audit showed that in more than half the cases where electricity supply was cut off, residents had illegally reconnected it.

The council started removing electricity cables when it found that electricity supply had been illegally reconnected, she said.

A number of households had been listed for the first round of cable removals, she said. The council's capacity to do this would increase as the process developed.

Man sues council for 'devaluing' property

Claims R8-m, saying that Eastern council failed to prosecute people using property illegally for industry

char 6/4/98 (127) (127)

By ANNA COX

A Sandton man is suing Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council for R8-million, accusing it of negligence for failing to prosecute people running industrial and semi-industrial operations in the rural area of Linbro Park.

Nic Nel, who has been engaged in a battle with neighbours and with the council for years, claims his property has been devalued by this amount because the council failed, in terms of the town planning scheme, to prosecute people who are using their properties illegally.

He finally took the matter to the Public Protector, advocate Selby Baqwa, who, in a damning report, stated that the council had failed to properly implement and enforce provisions of the Sandton Town Planning Scheme.

"Furthermore, it has so failed without adequate or sufficient reason or justification. On the contrary, it appeared to actively seek to avoid its responsibilities in this regard and has apparently sought to create a *fait accompli* by making every effort to advance the interests of the operators of illegal businesses at the expense of those residents who abide by the law," said Baqwa in his report.

Nel's own property, on which he spent R1,6-million and which should be worth R4-million, is now only worth R800 000 because the illegal businesses were bringing down the value of the area.

Nel said the council has



lost R9-million itself in revenue from unissued fines since 1995.

The Eastern council last week noted Baqwa's report and took a decision to address this matter urgently and to prepare interdicts for those operating illegally.

Said head of urban planning Pekane Ramarumo: "In terms of the latest draft of the Gauteng Planning Bill, a new land-use management mechanism is proposed which will ultimately supersede town planning schemes of the past. Until the bill becomes an act, the old township schemes will still be enforced where applicable," she said.

Many of the current town planning schemes were drawn up years ago when there had been no consultation with residents or neighbouring communities. Some were divisive and perpetuated conflict unnecessarily, but by law, the council had to enforce them, she said.

"In the old days there were reasons to develop certain areas for certain population groups and town plan-

ning schemes were drawn up along these lines. We have now gone through a full consultation process and came up with land development objectives which will bring communities together. Linbro Park is identified as a potential area for development which means there is a potential of high density and mixed-use development which will strengthen the economic base and provide job opportunities," she said.

Ramarumo said Baqwa did not have all the information on land uses available when he put out his report.

Power cuts to 3 081 homes in Pretoria

(127)
By Gershwin Chuenyane

THE Pretoria City Council has cut electricity supplies to more than 3 000 rent defaulters in a clamp-down on defaulters and those who had reconnected illegally

The council's latest programme of cable removal, aimed at eradicating illegal power consumption, has left 3 081 households without electricity since January this year

The number of households affected by the cut-offs in various areas of Pretoria since the beginning of the year are Pretoria city and suburbs (1 392), Mamelodi (790) Atteridgeville (428), Eersterus (298) and Lotus Gardens (173)

According to council spokesman Mr Vincent Moaga, the council decided to step up electricity cuts in an effort to recover R478,9 million owed to it in arrears

Moaga said the council had employed a firm of engineers to remove the entire electricity supply connections in cases where consumers' electricity supply was found to be illegally reconnected after it had been cut off for non-payment

Regarding *seweran 7/4/98* the effectiveness of the Atteridgeville/Saulsville Concerned Residents Association's call for a rent boycott, Moaga said "The council will only be able to assess the effect of the rent boycott after the monthly audit has been compiled"

Atteridgeville residents have complained about the high electricity bills and accused the council of having no sympathy for pensioners who also pay high rents. Residents have staged several marches to the Union Buildings since January to highlight their grievances

Taxes revolt hurt Jo'burg's cash flow

Deborah Fine

(127) BO 8/4/98
THE resolution of the municipal taxes revolt by residents in Johannesburg's northern and eastern suburbs would significantly contribute to the city's financial recovery, according to sources within the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council

Although the city's local authorities have played down the effects of the 19-month-old property rates boycott, the sources confirmed that the withholding of revenues estimated at between R150m to R200m had, indeed, hurt the city's cash flow

Residents started the boycott in protest against rates increases of up to 300% when rates were standardised across the city in June 1996. Continuing to pay for services but refusing to pay in full for rates, residents claimed the increases in the east and north were distorted because the method of determining site values for rating purposes was not standardised along with the rate in the rand

A negotiated solution seems

distant at this stage with both the city's local councils and ratepayers' associations confirming yesterday that talks to resolve the dispute had broken down

Northern Federation of Ratepayers chairman David Ras said the impasse had occurred because councils considered the ratepayers' views "irrelevant"

Stressing the boycott was an economic protest rather than an expression of "political distaste", he believed councils would not acknowledge the unfairness of the increases because of "political considerations". By adjusting ratepayers' accounts to reflect more equitable increases, local authorities could easily end the boycott. Councils were instead preparing to embark on lengthy litigation to recover payments

Metropolitan council deputy executive committee chairman Kenny Fihla said talks failed because ratepayers continued to push for "unrealistic demands" that could not be met within the city's financial constraints.

Meanwhile, the SA National

Civics Organisation (Sanco) yesterday dissociated itself from pamphlets being circulated in some parts of Soweto calling on residents to boycott rates

Sanco greater Johannesburg general-secretary Siphwe Thusi said "These opportunists have been distributing the pamphlets in Mofolo and Meadowlands claiming that they are taking this measure because Eskom has discontinued its contract with community block representatives"

Thusi called on people who were picketing at Eskom offices, resulting in the closure of most payment outlets in the area since Monday last week, to stop their demonstrations as this would only disadvantage residents who were not part to the dispute

He said the contract between block representatives and Eskom expired in December last year, after the more than 100 representatives failed to come up with a proposal to renew the contract

It is believed Eskom is losing more than R600 000 a day in uncollected payments — Sapa

Jo'burg repays millions over valuations (127)

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Greater Johannesburg's cash-strapped municipalities have been forced to pay back at least R20-million to residents following a record number of objections to property valuations last year.

Millions more still have to be paid

Southern council spokesman Andy van Zyl said the substructure had to pay back R20-million in rate adjustment refunds after they received more objections than usual, particularly from owners of large buildings in Johannesburg's CBD.

Property valuations - based on the purchase price of properties in an area - determine the assessment rate paid by res-

idents Assessment rates are used to fund mainly non-essential services such as the building of libraries.

Van Zyl said residents in line for refunds have had their accounts credited

Eastern council valuations manager Dirk Coetzee said he could not say how much money would have to be refunded as they were still finalising the provisional valuation roll

But he expected it would be more than the South as they had received a record number of objections, with about 10 000 of the 93 000 property owners in the substructure contesting the valuation of their property

Coetzee attributed the number of objections to a decline in services and the standardisation of uniform assessment rates across the metropole,

which led to the Sandton rates boycott in 1996 (The boycott, which is still in force, has cost the city hundreds of millions)

But he said the valuation board "was not entitled" to consider the arguments as valuations were based on the market value of properties and had nothing to do with the levying of standardised tariffs.

Northern council spokesman Rudi Bosman could also not say how much money had been refunded, but said huge changes were not expected despite more than 7 000 objections. About 120 000 properties fall under the Northern council

"The changes were relatively few, there were surprisingly few reductions," he said.

The Western council was not available for comment

star 13/4/98

Jo'burg loses millions as water leaks away

April 14/4/98 (127)

Authorities will have to spend money they haven't got to get money they're not getting

By **LEE-ANN ALFREDS**
City Desk

Almost half the water bought by Greater Johannesburg's Southern council was "lost" in the past financial year and attempts to halt the leakage this year have been frustrated by the city's cash squeeze.

In a letter to the Southern council in December, the auditor-general noted that the matter of unaccounted-for water required further attention.

According to the auditor-general 132 870 kilolitres were bought compared to 72 626 kilolitres sold, indicating water losses of 45%

The letter said that because a significant portion of the figures were based on estimates, it was impossible to verify the accuracy of the quantities

The council had spent about R203-million on water in the past financial year, according to Southern council water executive officer Simon Selepe

Western council spokesman Hendrik Nel said there was an estimated 8% loss in the northern part of the substructure.



The council did not know how much water was lost in the southern part, which includes the former disadvantaged areas, he said.

Attempts to reach the Northern and Eastern councils were unsuccessful

Gauteng loses an estimated R250-million a year in "unmetered" water, according to a survey by Rand Water which supplies water to the province

This referred to water which was supplied to local authori-

ties, but were not billed out by the municipalities to the end-users

Water loss is often factored into the price of water charged to residents

The auditor-general said he was unable to reach a conclusion on the completeness of the revenue derived from water sales because of the lack of accurate data

In its response to the auditor-general, the Southern council said the volume of water purchased was a "guesstimate as the council boundaries did not necessarily coincide with that of the water supply districts"

It said consumption was also a guess as most consumers in the far south were billed on an estimated consumption and not of water consumed.

Selepe confirmed it was impossible to determine the water loss, but said it was closer to 25%

He said measuring the water loss was impossible as the council either did not have meters installed or the equipment was broken

"If we could get money to start making the equipment run, we could definitely reduce the water loss," Selepe said

AFRICA

Soweto still awaits the fruits of change

SA ENTERS its fifth year of majority rule next month but life has not changed much for most residents of Soweto

They still grapple with poverty, disease and unemployment.

"It's good to celebrate, it's good to be patient," muses 45-year-old Themba Dhlwayo, who has lived in Soweto for 10 years. "But it is also important to begin to ask when will government deliver?"

Dhlwayo looks more comfortable than many of his neighbours. In his four-roomed house he has electricity, a radio and a television set, even though he cooks on a coal-fired stove.

Many other people live in squalid, overcrowded, informal settlements that have no utilities.

An estimated 4-million people live in Soweto, which still has only 186 high schools, 136 primary schools, four tennis courts and one fire station and represents one of SA's major development chal-

SA's biggest township continues to be a development nightmare for government, writes Gumisai Mtume

00 21/4/98

(127)

lenges. At the beginning of 1993 the unemployment rate in greater Soweto was 40%

Ronald Mears, professor of economics at Vista University, Soweto, says in a paper on the role of local government in the township: "The high dependency ratio and unemployment rate, and their effects on the income and morale of the unemployed persons significantly affect the quality of life in many households and the community in general."

In a 1993 survey, Vista's employment research unit found that up to 11 families were living on a single site — as many as 35 people.

Nearly a third of the sampled population had no sewerage systems in their homes. In another survey carried out

in 1995, the majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their accommodation 66% quality, and 62% felt services available on site were inadequate.

The situation was exacerbated by separate local authorities during the apartheid years. In Soweto, uncollected garbage on the streets, nonpayment for services by the community and the deteriorating roads point to the inability of the local authorities to cope.

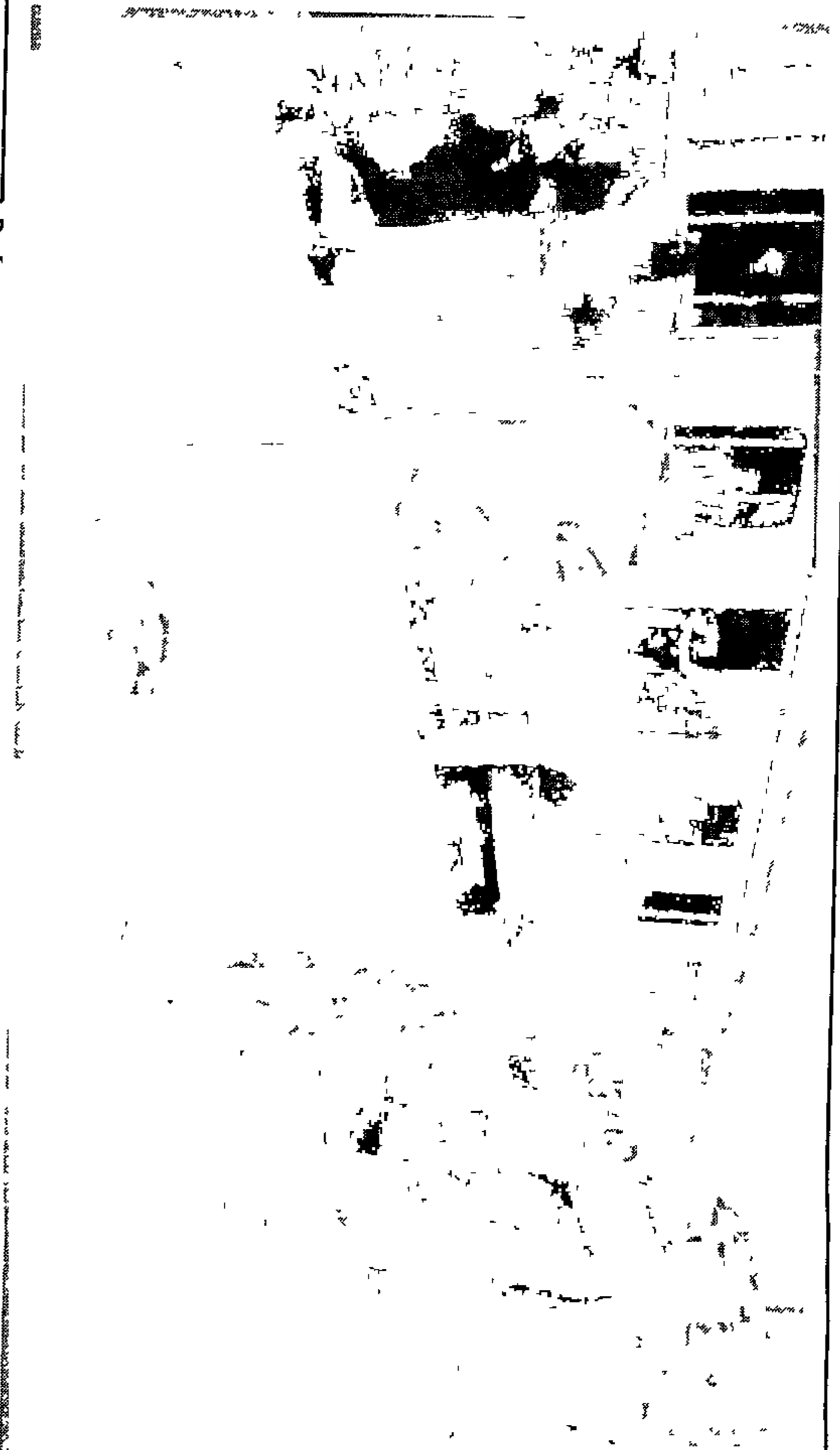
Soweto's 4-million residents are squeezed into 95km² while the remaining 4-million inhabitants of greater Johannesburg live on 405km².

"Our problem is a huge one. It does not have easy solutions," says Jabulani Sithole, an environmental health officer and researcher in Soweto.

"There has been no comprehensive head count in Soweto. Council does not know the demographics of Soweto; how many houses there are, how many people are living where. In a yard with 21 shacks council is only collecting garbage for one household." Many Sowetans are now banking on the new local government system.

"The pooling of resources by the former high- and low-income municipalities could significantly affect the improvement of services in greater Soweto," says Mears.

"Eliminating discrepancies between districts of Soweto, and between Soweto and other suburbs, is one of the challenges facing the council" — Sapa-IPS



Perhaps erroneously called the Dakar-to-Bamako Express, the rail journey between these two west African capitals offers the traveller more atmosphere than speed

R3-bn to be spent on Alex upgrade

(127)

'Job centres' of Marlboro and Wynberg will benefit from transformation of slum

Star 21/4/98

BY ANNA COX

Alexandra, the most densely populated area in South Africa and an area blighted by a long history of crime and political violence, is to undergo a 10-year reconstruction programme at an estimated cost of R3-billion

The township has one of the country's highest unemployment levels (about 70%), abject poverty, chaotic public transport and little in the way of sewerage facilities

A team of consultants, appointed by Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council, has come up with long-term plans and time-frames, which are expected to be approved by the council next week

Greater Johannesburg's urban planning department head, Pekhane Ramarumo, said the Greater Alexandra Development Framework was the first long-term co-ordinated plan ever drawn up for the area.

The plan includes the provision of open spaces and parks, the upgrading of the public transport system, a waterborne sewerage system, and an electrification programme.

The revitalisation of neighbouring industrial areas such as Wynberg and Marlboro, for business and employment opportunities, is also on the cards.

Policing will be boosted. The number of primary and secondary schools will be increased from 17 to 28, and pre-schools from 16 to 47.

The programme, which will cost an annual R300-million over the next decade, will be financed by the national and provincial governments, the Johannesburg council and private sector donors

It follows several studies conducted by the World Bank, the Government and non-governmental organisations

The redevelopment of Alexandra will bring with it the reduction of the population by half - from an estimated 350 000 to between 150 000 and 160 000

This will be done by moving people into various housing schemes, by the construction of highrise buildings and the relocation of illegal immigrants with the assistance of the Department of Home Affairs

The plan will begin in July with the establishment of several committees to oversee the acceleration of land restitution, the identification of housing for residents who will be temporarily housed after being moved out of the development areas in Old Alexandra, and plans for the relocation process

Thereafter, work will start in Old Alexandra and the Reconstruction Area - formerly known as the Beirut area - where thousands of people fled their homes during political violence in the early 1990s

Phase one of the programme has started with the construction of housing in Riverpark, next to Lombardy East. Already 163 units have been completed and the first families have moved in.

Ramarumo said the Gauteng government had already allocated R500 000 from the Vusani Amadlobha programme for the reconstruction and R200 000 for technical services

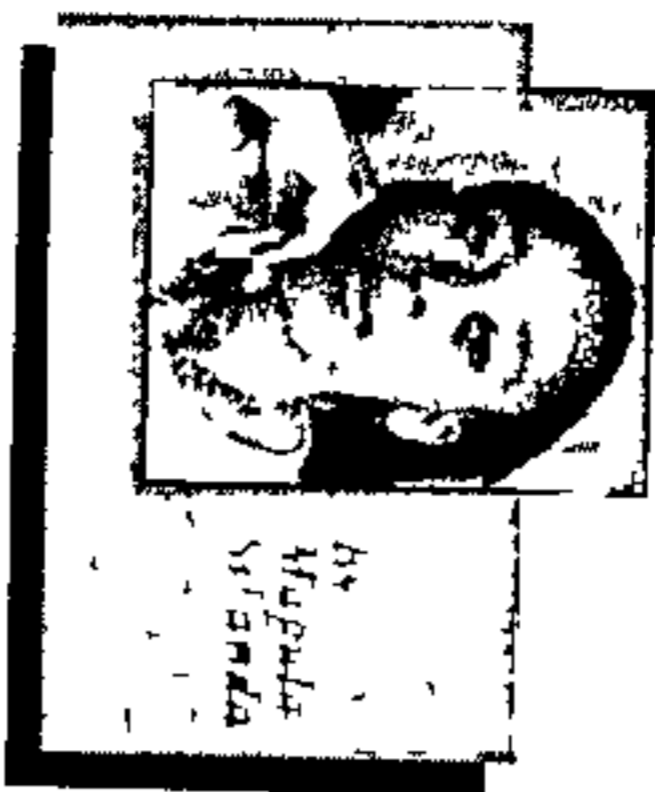
"We are confident that this plan will work, simply because of the vast consultation we have had with all stakeholders. This is not a government plan, it is a community plan."

"We are appealing to the private sector to become involved with the reconstruction. A normalised society in Alexandra would have many spinoff benefits for them as well," she said

► End to uncertainty

Helping people to feel at home

Humble housing project a success story (ia7)



In 1992, Patricia Matolengwe

spearheaded a project that has enabled 2 000 people to own houses.

But the former domestic worker is still waiting for her own home.

When US president Bill Clinton was on his state visit here, he made a stop at the Victoria Mxenge Housing Scheme to lay bricks at one of the houses. Hosting one of the most influential leaders in world politics was a special honour for Patricia Matolengwe, the woman who spearheaded the project in 1992

"The bodyguards were everywhere. They slept here to really ensure his safety, and we did not have to worry about our own security during the visit," Matolengwe said, showing us newspaper clippings and pictures.

Clinton's visit was not the only time the project has started in the international media. Last year, the saving and housing scheme was awarded the United Nations Development Project of the Year award which Matolengwe received in New York.

Local parliamentarians visit so often that the minister of housing is considered one of the residents.

The scheme is so simple, one wonders why other communities are not following the example.

Communities are encouraged to form saving groups where people can save as little as R5 a day or borrow from the scheme to save more.

The money is collected by group leaders who pass it on to a larger community or regional group to buy building materials in bulk.

Members of the scheme also use the money to hire experts such as builders and architects to train them so that they can build their own homes.

Initiated by 12 women from the ANC Women's League, the project now boasts a membership of 286 - only six are male - from various political parties.

Similar projects have been established at seven other provinces under the auspices of the South African Homeless Federation with a membership of up to 3 000 nationwide.

What is making this independent saving and housing scheme, which

does not boast any government interference, so successfully? Matolengwe puts it down to commitment and the determination to deliver honestly to those to whom you have made promises.

Although she spearheaded the project that has seen more than 2 000 families nationwide owning their homes, commitment for Matolengwe means waiting her turn while others benefit. Matolengwe still wakes up in the same "amatyonyombe" - the term she uses for the shack village in Khayelitsha - that she has lived in for the past 10 years with her teenage daughter.

"We have a system here that we all have to follow before one can receive a house," she says.

"The saving group that I belong to have to nominate me for the house, and they have always felt that I should be patient enough to ensure that the others get their homes first."

Once the houses are built, explains Matolengwe, each group has a rotating scheme of putting forward the names of those who can be eligible for houses.

"We follow certain guidelines to choose the names, and prefer people who have a good savings and loan repayment record who should also impress us with their involvement, because that is what matters most."

The first house was built in May 1996, and Matolengwe introduces us to the owner Nohhangani Roji, whom she says was voted because of all the work she contributed to the project.

Matolengwe's patience will soon bear fruit though. The office struc-



WELCOME - US President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary visit the Victoria Mxenge Housing Scheme in the Western Cape a success story from humble beginnings that is capturing international headlines (Inset) Patricia Matolengwe of the housing scheme

ture we are conducting the interview in, she smiles proudly, will soon be demolished to make way for her own house, once building technicalities are taken care of.

It has taken over a year for her name to be approved by her group, and like all first-time homeowners in this project, she cannot wait for that moment.

"The former domestic worker says getting her own home will not stop her from making the self-help project bigger and better countrywide. Although at the moment it is smooth sailing with the scheme, Matolengwe remembers some rough seas.

"When we started, nobody took us seriously, especially the men. There was talk from some men that even if we succeeded, they would refuse to

live in houses built by women, but now most of them are happy to help us out."

Fearing corruption, some people were very hesitant to entrust their last rands and cents to the saving scheme.

Teething problems however, are not all Matolengwe recalls about the beginning of the scheme. January 24, 1992 will be etched in her mind as the day it all started.

It started like a typical run-up to elections day, with countless meetings and rallies to attend.

While picketing near Parliament, a colleague approached Matolengwe to attend a conference in Kempton Park on his behalf.

"The conference was on the issue of homeless people, and my friend thought I could give input on the

Western Cape situation, as I had been campaigning for the rights of the homeless in Khayelitsha, Gugulethu and other areas."

At the conference, attended by local and international stakeholders, Matolengwe noted the success of a saving and self-help scheme from an Indian delegate, and vowed to implement it here as well.

Back in the Western Cape and many meetings later, Matolengwe had convinced the women in the area of the idea, but the problem was getting funds.

This is where the Minister of Housing, the late Joe Slovo, comes in, she says, pointing to a picture of her and Slovo taken during negotiations about the project.

Matolengwe says when they approached the minister after the elec-

tions for R10 million to begin the project, he promised them the money on condition that they first build a proposed low-cost structure to ensure that it was feasible.

Although the grant was given in 1996, unfortunately, says Matolengwe, the minister never got the chance to visit the project as he had promised.

The Victoria Mxenge housing scheme however, is now hailed as an exemplary model for people who are not willing to sit back and wait for the government to deliver them from their problems.

"Being in this project has taught me how much people can do for themselves if they are taught the skills and are encouraged to solve their own problems," said Matolengwe

■ Pic: FANNIE JASON

Housing *Sowetan 27/4/98* issue (127) angers residents

By Dan Fuphe

GREATER Brakpan ward one councillor Mr Morris Chauke called on local private developers yesterday to attend a meeting to discuss the housing issue in Tsakane on the East Rand.

Speaking to *Sowetan* after addressing more than 300 residents, Chauke said local residents who qualified for the R15 000 Government housing subsidy had recently found themselves in a quandary and faced with an additional account of R8 000.

This was after a local developer had told them that the extra amount was necessary if they wanted to take ownership of their homes.

"The problem has already caused anger and frustration in the community. We need to collectively address the issue speedily if we are to have peaceful communities," Chauke said. The problem appeared to have affected residents of Extensions 5 and 11.

Recently elected

Chauke was recently elected councillor after the resignation last month of mayor Mr Lesiba Phiri. During the local by-elections, Chauke, the father of four boys, was unanimously elected on an ANC ticket.

Yesterday was his first public appearance. Another speaker, Mr Lunga Nxiba, urged the community to support Chauke as he was their democratically elected leader.

"The Greater Brakpan Town Council welcomes Chauke to its ranks. It is only with your undivided loyalty that he will prove himself to be a valued asset to this community," Nxiba said.

He also spoke of good governance which he said must filter down from national to provincial and finally to local government.

Health authorities look ahead to public/private partnership

Jan 29/4/98 (127)

By Anso Thom

A public/private partnership appears to be on the cards to boost Greater Johannesburg's emergency services following a meeting yesterday between the council and the Gauteng health department.

The city's emergency services face severe staff shortages, especially among para-

medic and ambulance staff.

A private consortium proposed last month that the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council combine resources with the private sector and set up a not-for-profit company to boost paramedic and ambulance services.

Since then, the province has suggested several steps. These included deciding what kind of

public partnership would be feasible, drawing up the principles that would govern it, and calling for proposals through advertisements in newspapers.

Deputy director in the Gauteng health department Dr Eric Buch said emergency services strategic executive Hilow Maeko would take the proposal to a committee, which would make a decision.

If there was agreement, a proposal regarding public/private partnerships would be tabled.

Maeko said the meeting had been convened so that the province could approve a change to the agreement under which Greater Johannesburg's municipalities administered the emergency services on behalf of the health department.

Housing fraud to be probed

By Joshua Raboroko

THREE provinces are probing claims of massive housing subsidy fraud amounting to millions of rands allocated to struggling homeseekers who unwittingly signed papers that made it easy for officials to enrich themselves.

More than 300 such cases involving government officials have been reported in Mpumalanga, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The affected housing boards have already started investigations.

The homeseekers who were used by allegedly unscrupulous officials, are now calling on the Government to address the situation as a matter of urgency.

Mr Craig Padayachee, Mpumalanga MEC for housing and local government said his department, together with the South African Police Service had started investigations into allegations of housing subsidy fraud.

The areas included the former self governing territories of KaNgwane, KwaNdebele and Lebowa, whose jurisdiction now falls under Mpumalanga.

He said 240 housing subsidies were supposed to provide poor communities with up to R15 000 for homes which were meant to be constructed, but these houses were either incomplete, did not exist or were in the planning stages.

In some instances, he said, officials paid out the subsidies to unknown people while in others money was abused. His department was interviewing several officials regarding the cases.

"We will not hesitate to press criminal charges against anybody who has abused the government's help" said Padayachee.

In Gauteng, MEC for housing and local government Mr Dan Mofokeng has referred several cases of housing subsidy fraud to the Public Protector Selby Baqwa to investigate. A source estimated the amount at R6-million.

The Kwazulu-Natal housing board has referred cases relating to about 10 law firms in the province to the Natal Law Society for investigation after they failed to submit monthly reconciliations on housing subsidies that they handled.

1/5/98
Doreen



Brakpan gets tough over arrear service payments

8 Nov 6/5/98

(127)

Council moves to attach household contents of about 3 000 residents who haven't paid

BY THEMBA SEPOTKELE

The Greater Brakpan Town Council is attaching the household contents of about 3 000 residents who are in arrears with their service payments.

The tough credit-control measures, which began on Monday, are aimed at forcing residents to make good the arrears they owe the council.

Brakpan mayor Colcott Dlepu said yesterday that residents of Brakpan and the townships of Tsakane and Geluksdal owe the council about R119-million, which had accumulated since February 1994.

Dlepu said the campaign would be intensified despite resistance from residents.

Council spokesman Jerry Tseki said the council decided at a special council meeting in March to seize the property of residents who were in arrears and who had not made arrangements to pay or were registered as indigent.

Tseki said the council had distributed pamphlets in different languages urging people to make arrangements to pay their debts, but these had largely been ignored.

He said the council had cut the water supply to consumers in November to force defaulters to pay, but stopped the move because it could have led to health problems.

This week two deputy sheriffs of the Brakpan Magistrates' Court removed fridges, washing machines,

dining room suites, TV sets and video recorders from the homes of defaulters.

Nomonde Jacobs, a resident whose furniture, valued at R10 000, was attached, said she had not received any notice that her property would be seized. Jacobs, who owes R3 900 including legal costs, said she stopped paying for services because the local civic body had said residents should pay only a flat rate of R30.

Martha Skhosana, a pensioner who owes the council R560, pleaded with the deputy sheriffs not to seize her daughter's TV set.

"Please leave the TV alone, it's not mine, it is my daughter's. Rather take the washing machine," she said.

The council's move has angered community leaders who said they had not been informed about the decision.

Willens Maseko of the Vietnam Community Development Forum described the council's action as ruthless.

"Most of us have worked for these goods for more than 20 years, and the council confiscates them. We are prepared to pay for the services and will not do that through their attorneys," he said.

Failure to settle the debts will lead to the confiscated property being auctioned after two months.

Last year irate residents burnt the house of councillor Ace Nhlapo after the council cut the water and electricity supply to defaulters.

We'll get our millions, say

(127) 7/5/98

Move in Tsakane to attach possessions in lieu of massive service arrears founders as rioting residents

By Themba Sepotokele
and Mbangwa Xaba

Militant Tsakane residents have temporarily halted the Brakpan council's attempt to attach their household goods in lieu of the millions owed for rates and services

Mayor Colcott Dlepu said this morning that, after members of the Simunye Civic Organisation and pupils rioted yesterday, the council had decided to take a break today because there were not enough police to protect officials conducting the campaign

He emphasised, however, that the council would continue its campaign to recover money owed to it

The full council would decide at a meeting today how this could be achieved, using the present or other methods

Since Monday, the sheriff of the court and council officials, escorted by police, have been entering payment defaulters' homes and attaching their household goods

The civic organisation, in turn, said it would only halt its consumer boycott, which it launched yesterday, if the council returned goods which have been confiscated

This morning police reported that the township was tense but quiet, but said they would patrol all day to ensure that residents, particularly pupils, did not rampage again

Yesterday the local post office was burnt, council offices attacked and cars stoned

Entrances to the township were barricaded with burning tyres and large rocks as many residents heeded the call by Simunye to stay away from work

Thousands of residents at-



Township turmoil ... rioting youths flee from police after stoning a police contingent

tended a rally at the local stadium addressed by PAC Gauteng chairman Johnson Mlambo, Gauteng IFP leaders Themba Khoza and Humphrey

Ndlovu, and representatives of other parties

They also torched the house of Brakpan deputy sheriff Vincent Radebe, who has been part

of the police and council contingent which has been confiscating defaulters' property

Residents of Brakpan, Tsakane and Geluksdal owe the

council R119-million arrears, according to

1994

East Rand SAPS Superintendent

'They lied to me and stripped my home of furniture'

By Mbangwa Xaba and
Themba Sepotokele

Jeremiah Mnisi and his wife Esther of Tsakane Extension One this week had their household contents confiscated by the Brakpan Town Council

Yesterday Mnisi heeded a call by the Simunye Civic Organisation to stay away from work to protest against the attachment of their possessions, valued at between R10 000 and R15 000, as part of the council's credit control measures

Esther says at 7am on Tuesday two deputy sheriffs, accompanied by a police contingent, entered her home with a master-key

"My husband had already left and I was preparing to go to work when people claiming to be from the furniture shop entered. They said they were going to repossess my furniture because I was in arrears

"And when I resisted because all my furniture debts had been settled in 1992, they then changed their story, say-

ing I was in arrears with my water consumption and they were instructed to remove my furniture," she said

The Mnisis said they were not warned beforehand that failure to pay for their services would result in their possessions being attached, but had heard of neighbours to whom that had happened

When Jeremiah returned from work he was shocked to find only the stove and two beds. They were not told how they could recover their goods

The couple, who claim they live on a monthly combined income of R320, are R2 600 in arrears. "We are prepared to pay for the service rendered but when we paid R50 the services were increased to R60 and later R70 because we are staying next to the police station, a hospital and a school.

"We then stopped paying altogether because of the confusion that arose when it was announced by Simunye we would have to pay a R30 flat rate," Jeremiah Mnisi said.

N

Millions, says Brakpan

(127) Star 7/5/98

Service arrears founders as rioting residents take to streets

LINDSAY YOUNG



...a police contingent

of the police and council contingent which has been confiscating defaulters' property. Residents of Brakpan, Tsakane and Geluksdal owe the

council R119-million in service arrears, accumulated since 1994. East Rand SAPS spokesman Superintendent Wickus Weber

said police officers had been sent to Tsakane. The trouble started when policemen at the local stadium arrested a man with a gun. A

few minutes later, a group of youths emerged from the stadium and stoned police and traffic officers who had been monitoring the situation.

of furniture'

The couple, who claim they live on a monthly combined income of R320, are R2 600 in arrears. "We are prepared to pay for the service rendered but when we paid R50 the services were increased to R60 and later R70 because we are staying next to the police station, a hospital and a school.

"We then stopped paying altogether because of the confusion that arose when it was announced by Simunye we would have to pay a R30 flat rate," Jeremiah Mnisi said.

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Budget cut hits housing projects

Bonile Ngqiyaza

(127)
BD 8/5/98
THE Gauteng housing and land affairs department would not be able to match the pace of delivery achieved in the past financial year because of a decrease in its allocation to R725,7m instead of the R1,2bn required, the provincial legislature heard yesterday.

The chairman of the legislature's standing committee on housing and land affairs, Mohamed Dangor, said this meant the department would not initiate any new projects this financial year as the amount would cover only existing commitments.

In his budget speech yesterday,

Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng criticised the management of four investigations into his department by the auditor-general and suggested there had been secret meetings between the auditor-general and opposition parties.

Opposition parties at the legislature indicated they would oppose the budget. Gauteng National Party leader Julian Kilian attacked Mofokeng for either trying to mislead the legislature or avoiding the truth in not disclosing the total amount that had been paid out to lawyers acting against ousted housing and land affairs head of department, Enos Ngutshane.

SOUTH AFRICA *focus*

Pretoria introduces 'poor people' category

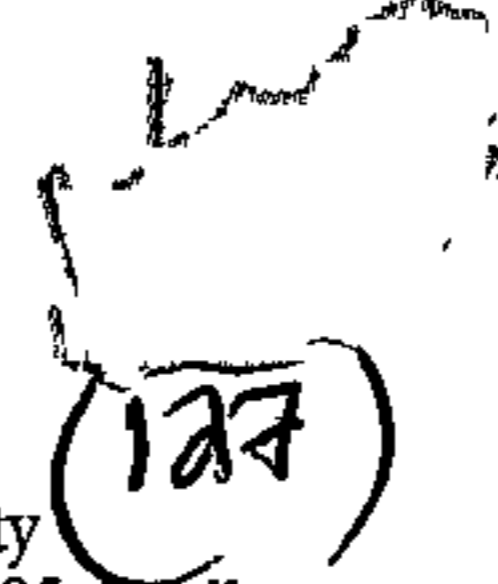
PRETORIA is to introduce a new municipal category for poor people who live below the breadline and who are unable to pay for water and electricity

The city council, which is owed R495,4 million in service arrears, said yesterday that a poverty programme — the "Poorest of the Poor" — has been started in an attempt to solve the spiralling problem of non-payment.

The new Pretoria policy means that if a household's income is R500 or less per month, residents will be eligible to be evaluated and registered

If they cannot pay even after evaluation, it would be recommended to them that their water and electricity be cut off "until such time they are able to pay their accounts, (as) it is far easier to reconnect the service after having it voluntarily switched off than having to pay reconnection fees due to non-payment", the council said

Leader in the field: *Leadership* magazine set a new record when it scooped five Mondi Paper Magazine Awards at a ceremony at Helderfontein Convention Centre, Sandton, for the 1997 competition. *Leadership*, the only publication in the history of the competition — which started nine years ago — to win five Premier Awards, took honours in Business, Health and Beauty, Design and Illustration, Photography and Essays and Fiction. The magazine also won the Merit award in the Photography category



CT8/5/98

Threat of force if goods aren't returned

(127) Show 8/5/98

BY THEMBA SEPOTKELE

As calm returned to the trouble-torn streets of Tsakane yesterday, the Simunye Civic Organisation threatened to take back defaulters' property which the sheriff of the Brakpan Magistrates' Court attached this week.

Nick Mogudi, president of Simunye, is spearheading the consumer boycott in Brakpan. He said yesterday that residents would forcefully remove defaulters' household contents from the sheriff's offices next week if the council failed to return them today.

He said the proposed consumer boycott would go ahead as planned until the council

met their demands, which included the return of the attached property, withdrawal of summonses and a negotiated settlement over service payments.

"The boycott is intended to put pressure on the council to review its decision to attach people's property.

"It will end only when the council withdraws its summonses and returns all the property which it has attached," Mogudi said.

PAC spokesman Jabulani Khumalo accused Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga of ignoring a call for an urgent meeting to resolve unrest in the township.

On Wednesday, the local post

office was set alight and cars were stoned in protest against the council's decision to attach the property of residents who were in arrears on service payments.

They also set alight the home of Brakpan deputy sheriff Vincent Radebe, who has been part of the police and council contingent confiscating defaulters' property.

The situation was quiet yesterday, with a handful of pupils taking to the streets after reports that the sheriff had been seen in the area.

The council postponed its meeting to today to review its stance on the credit-control measures which have led to the unrest.

New moves in Yeoville to rid the suburb of trash - human

By CLAUDIA MPETA

Yeoville residents are determined to claim back their area from drug dealers, prostitutes and general neglect - and they are using a method devised by anti-apartheid forces during the 1980s.

Once a model for racial integration in South Africa, Yeoville has over the past few years also become a symbol of inner-city neglect. But the wind of change is blowing.

"I'm tired of having to defend why I live in Yeoville I want to be proud of where I stay," says Maurice Smithers, chairman of the Yeoville Community Forum

"Change is not going to come from the council; if we aren't proactive, the situation will just get worse."

Smithers explains that, in the past, initiatives like the Community

Forum came from the white residents didn't feel a sense of ownership

In a bid to involve the Greater Yeoville community in implementing change, the Yeoville Community Forum, with its slogan "Yeoville, creating a sense of belonging" is relaunching itself tomorrow.

"We want people to tell us what they would like to see happen and help us implement it. As a forum we want to inspire the community to make Yeoville safe, clean and pleasant - a suburb that serves our needs," says Smithers. "The problems here are huge: unemployment, homelessness, slumlords, crime, rubbish in the streets



DIRT AND DRUGS: Shopkeepers and residents in Yeoville are fed up with the state of the area

I'm under no illusion that these problems can be solved overnight, but I feel that at least we have to try."

Street committees are reminiscent of the 80s, when residents in townships such as Thokoza and Soweto started rallying together for self-protection. Now three such committees have sprouted in Yeoville.

TJ de Klerk is leading a neighbourhood watch in Dunbar Street.

"You can walk down Dunbar between Cavendish and Fortesque roads anytime and you'll see that all the lights are working, we don't have rubbish lying all over the street, we also don't have any crime," says De Klerk.

He does admit that getting people to co-operate even for basic things is not always easy. The Greater Johannesburg Metro-

One woman showed a letter she had written to President Mandela at 4am after being woken up by the noise coming from a nearby club. "For the past year it has been unbearable. I have lived here for 23 years and have never experienced anything like this. My neighbour, who is an elderly woman, goes to bed at 7pm so that when the music does start blaring she at least has had some sleep.

"We're not saying don't have a club, we just want consideration." Residents at other buildings told of how they suffer in summer when they can't open a window because of the music that blares in until 5am. Others told of owners swearing or threatening them when they asked for the noise to be toned down. Most of the residents were reluctant to be quoted for this article, say-

ing they feared retaliation. Smithers is liaising with a company in London called the Brixton Challenge Company. In the early 90s this company was employed to manage change in the borough of Brixton, who at that time was in a state similar to Yeoville's.

"It worked very well," says Smithers. "I go through times when I feel really despondent and times when I'm really enthusiastic about change in Greater Yeoville. I've lived in this area for about 20 years. In my poverty-stricken youth I use to beg outside the old Yeoville post office for coins. I wouldn't know where to move to if I had to leave."

■ The Yeoville Community Forum's meeting will be held at St Aidan's church hall, corner Regent Street and Bedford Road, at 2.30pm tomorrow.

and otherwise

(1275) STAR 9/16/98

Evictions: 'huge backlash' expected

(127) Star 11/5/98
By ANNA COX

Evictions of people unlawfully occupying council houses in Claremont, Bosmont, Waterval, Newclare, Vredeburg and Coronationville in Greater Johannesburg's Northern council are to start within two weeks

Northern council spokesman Ruby Mathang said the council was preparing to remove the illegal squatters after protracted negotiations and despite the fact that no alternative housing had been found

"We are looking at all aspects of the evictions including security, logistics, costs and legislation and places to relocate the residents. We have not found alternative housing yet, but we are firm that we will take action

"People are living there illegally and we have 3 000 people

on waiting lists who have been waiting for years for housing. We have taken action against illegal squatters in other parts of the council area, so we must do the same here," she said.

Mathang acknowledged the municipality was "expecting a massive backlash"

The looming evictions follow widespread protest action from residents, especially South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) members, last year after legal action was instituted against 37 of the estimated 300 people who illegally occupied properties after July 1996. The council then agreed to hold further meetings with residents

Sowejoca has denied subsequent meetings have taken place

Last week, Vredeburg Residents' Association chairman

Zane Williams scoffed at the evictions, saying the council had no money for court orders.

"They are broke. How will they finance court orders?"

"These are just scare tactics. They promised us in November they would meet to discuss the evictions and we haven't heard from them since," he said

Williams said they would wait to see what the council did before they reacted

He added that arrears for rent from the illegal occupations would probably have to be written off.

Independent councillor for the area, Shaheem Ismail, said he was opposed to evictions

Many of those the council claimed had occupied houses illegally did qualify for housing, but proper entry categories had not been finalised by the council.

Pretoria steps up electricity cut-offs

Sowetan 14/5/98

(127)

By Gershwin Chuenyane

THE Pretoria City Council announced yesterday it had stepped up its action to cut off electricity supplies to defaulters by cutting off an average of 800 households a day in an effort to recover R500 million in arrears.

Those targeted are households and businesses in the formerly white areas, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Saulsville. All the defaulters either owe R500 or more or their arrears exceed 90 days.

More than 260 residents have already been registered in terms of the council's policy of identifying the "poorest". Services to these people are offered at lower tariffs.

In terms of the policy people whose household income is R500 or less qualify to register. They will be

charged zero interest on arrears, and 21 cents a unit as opposed to the normal 24 cents.

The council has also urged residents to use electricity sparingly in the winter months because accounts tended to be higher at this time. Residents have also been advised to be aware of consumption peak hours - between 7.30am and 9.30am and in the evenings between 6pm and 8pm.

Overloading the grid can cause power failures.

The director of the treasury department, Mr Neels Eicker, said yesterday that total cut-offs to date, including normal household accounts, returned cheques, and business or high voltage accounts, had topped 29 000.

In money terms this was R175 million.

He said the council had recovered

R16,5 million in hard cash and R48 million in arrangements.

On the installation of pre-paid meters the council's utility manager Mr Leon Vermaak said the prepaid meters were installed for new consumers in newly developed areas in Eeusterus and Mamelodi under the "Electricity for All" project.

However, consumers with existing or conventional meters could apply to have prepaid meters installed.

Vermaak said the council was looking at future installation of prepaid meters for water and electricity, but warned that this would not solve the non-payment problems as there would be charges for other services such as sewerage, garbage collection and rates.

The council also had a substantial demand for prepaid meters from the formerly white areas, he added.

Housing project builds Phola Park's economy

MLG 15-21/5/98
Sechaba ka'Nkosi

A housing project that started as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme in the one-time battlefield of Phola Park on the East Rand is paying dividends to the community.

The project — a joint venture between low-cost housing contractors Ecodex, the Gauteng Department of Housing and Land Affairs and the community — has turned an otherwise small and very limited entrepreneurial base into a vibrant local economy.

The houses are available to locals for less than the R15 000 government subsidy, which means most of the new owners move in without paying a cent. For the biggest — a 44m² house — the owners only have to pay an additional R4 000.

Some people employed on the project have opened businesses like spaza shops, while others have purchased knitting machines to supplement the family income.

But most importantly, residents say, the Ecodex project has not only resulted in the employment of a few locals but has increased the buying power of the community.

Spaza-shop owners say since the project kicked off about three years ago, their profits have been climbing — albeit slowly.

Local councillor Simo Ngwangwa

says the most crucial part of the venture is the preferential employment status it offers residents. At the same time it has opened up opportunities in Kaditshong, Thokoza and Vosloorus — communities equally ravaged by violence in the early 1990s.

Says Ngwangwa: "The project involves 4 395 sites constructed under state subsidies for low-income earners and the unemployed. This means a lot of money for Ecodex. But we also benefit because we have agreed that even when it comes to sub-contracting elements of the project, the first preference rests with Phola Park and Kaitshoris."

The project has turned an otherwise small and very limited entrepreneurial base into a vibrant local economy

Since the project began, it has employed at least 300 of the estimated 30 000-strong population of the settlement, mostly women.

In the words of Ecodex employee Nomatho Mathola, the R475 she receives a fortnight for plastering up to three houses every day is better than nothing.

Mathola, a single mother of five, says it helps her support her school-going children and her mother back home in Transkei.

"If things get really bad, I use some of the money to buy vegetables from the farm produce and sell them during my spare time and weekends," she says.

Most of this close-knit community's business leaders are retrained employees who once worked in the



More for all: The housing project has increased the buying power of the community

private sector. Now they provide jobs, with some employing up to 10 people.

Whitely Gabede is the proud owner of a makeshift "butchery" in the area. He sells mainly offal and tripe. In the early hours of every morning Gabede travels nearly 60km to Vereeniging to buy his R1 000 stock. The father of nine children makes up to R500 profit a day, while his wife knits and sells jerseys.

Says Gabede: "Survival is the

name of the game here. Even though most people don't earn much, they survive on the little we all make out of the butchery."

Community leaders and business people say Phola Park has become a self-sufficient community which uses every available opportunity to make ends meet.

The only problem is that the emerging entrepreneurs have few skills and little assistance from small business development organisations.



Building a future: The salary isn't high but it's better than nothing. PHOTOGRAPHS: MADINE HUTTON

Gauteng to get biggest housing slice

Vuyo Mvoko

(127) BO 22/5/98

CAPE TOWN — Housing minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele yesterday announced provincial allocations for the R2,88bn given to her department for housing projects.

Gauteng tops the list with a R725,76m share, followed by KwaZulu-Natal at R570,24m, Eastern Cape with R388,80m, Western Cape at R345,60m, Northern Province at R224,64m, Free State R207,36m, North West R204,48m, Mpumalanga R158,40m, and the Northern Cape at R54,72m.

"This amount has been allocated on the basis of a formula taking into account the backlog in each province, the number of households in the various income categories of the subsidy scheme, the ratio between urban and rural and the performance of the relevant provincial government with housing delivery since 1994," Mthembu-Mahanyele told the national council of provinces

She said a total of 499 318 housing units had now been built or were under construction in SA. All the provinces complained, though, that their respective allocations were inadequate

Go-ahead for rates rises despite blocking vote

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS,
ANNA COX AND BUNTY WEST

Charges for services and rates will be increased by 6% on July 1 across the metropole, despite three of Greater Johannesburg's five budgets being blocked last week.

The increases in assessment rates, water, electricity, sewerage and refuse removal were approved by Greater Johannesburg's Metropolitan, Western and Southern councils at the weekend. The Eastern council is to vote on the issue tomorrow.

The Northern council postponed its special budget meeting to tomorrow.

Gas will be increased by 25%.

The increases mean that residents will pay 20,30c per kW of electricity consumed, up from 19,10c.

Assessment rates will increase from 6,43c in the rand to 6,837c. For an average-sized property, sewerage charges will rise from R53 to R56, and refuse removal from R25 to R26,50.

The increases will come into effect despite the failure by the ANC to secure a two-thirds

majority in most of its councils for the first time in years.

The ANC only narrowly scraped by with a two-thirds majority in the metro council, after legal advisers ruled that the full council numbered 49 - not the traditional 50 seats - because of the transfer of an NP councillor to the provincial legislature.

The DP, which last year managed to block the Eastern council's budget, is to take the ruling to court.

The NP and the DP, which denied the ANC its majority, had voted against the

budget because it meant diminishing services, DP Eastern council leader Claire Quail said.

"As ward councillors we experience a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the visible appearance of the city and the lack of enforcement of by-laws, resulting in a totally *laissez faire* attitude which erodes the moral fabric of our society," she said.

Quail said there were insufficient funds allocated in the budget to unblock sewers, resurface roads or have an efficient refuse removal service.

"It is not alarmist to suggest that very soon our city, which is the economic heart and hub of our country, will be a wasteland of sewage spillage, deteriorat-

ing roads and a state of Third World decay in which investor confidence will be nil. Job opportunities, economic growth and stability will fade before our eyes," she said.

NP spokesman Yakoob

Makda said the fact that a surplus generated by the Eastern council would be gobbled up by bad debts and insufficient provision, the lack of an adequate working-capital reserve to cover bad debt; a freeze on critical vacancies; and the slashing of the repairs and maintenance budget by almost half meant his party could not vote for the budget.

“Our city will soon be in a state of Third World decay”

Scan 1/6/98 (127)

But ANC spokesman Kenny Fihla said political parties were merely electioneering, because more money had been made available for services and infrastructure this year.

He said a change in the councils' accounting system meant that the allocation for maintenance and repairs was R26-million less than last year, but general expenses (which would cover maintenance, repairs and service delivery) had been increased by R358-million.

Fihla said opposition parties' criticism that there was no capital budget was also premature as negotiations for a long-term loan were being discussed with a financial institution.

He added that the delay in approving the budget would not directly affect residents because the tariff increases needed to be approved only by simple majority, which had been attained.

Fihla said the ANC would hold talks with opposition parties this week. If no agreement was reached, Gauteng Local Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka was likely to pass the budgets to ensure good governance.

Witbank uncowed by arson attack

WITBANK — The gutting of Witbank municipal council's satellite office in KwaGuqa would not stop it from cutting off services to non-paying residents, Witbank mayor Grace van Castle said at the weekend, after an emergency council meeting.

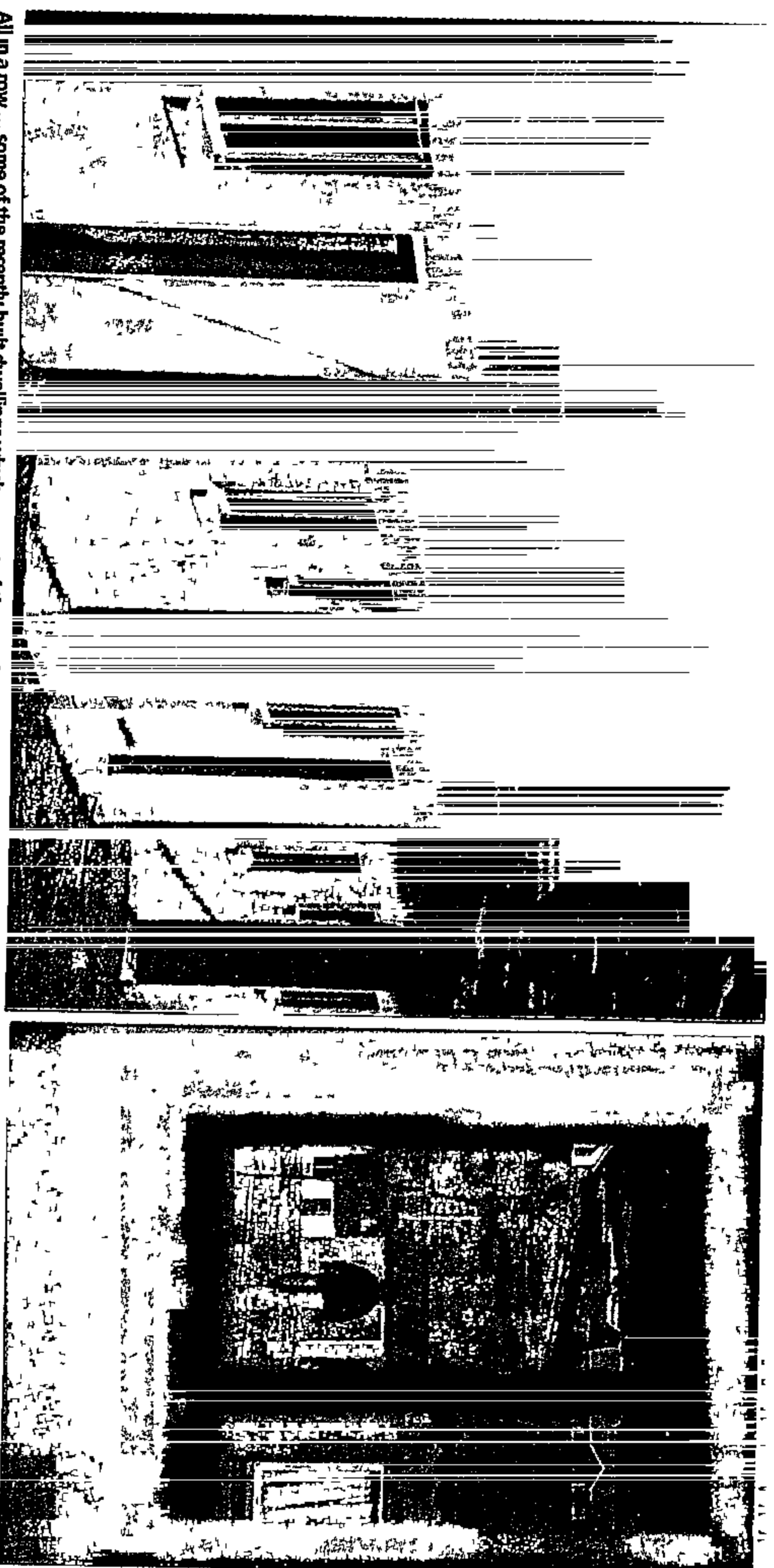
Rioting residents set alight the KwaGuqa municipal offices on Friday afternoon, damaging property worth more than R3m after the council cut the electricity supply to six townships.

When police were unable to disperse the protesters, provincial police commissioner Denn Alberts summoned additional police back-up from Gauteng

to help quell the unrest, African Eye News Service reported.

"We tried our best to encourage residents to pay for their municipal services and gave them the opportunity to pay off their arrears, but it was all in vain," Castle said.

Mpumalanga local government MEC Craig Padayachee said yesterday he supported the council's decision to cut services to non-paying residents. "Violence and rates payment boycotts will not remove the grim reality that municipalities can only provide a good service to their communities if they are willing to pay," he said — Sapa



All in a row ... some of the recently built dwellings which are part of the new housing project near Lombardy East.

Framed ... River Park with Lombardy East in background.

'Promised Land' at last for Alex's displaced people

The STAR 15/6/98 (127)

River Park housing project ends a nightmare which many thought would never end

By AWA COX

Hundreds of people displaced from their homes in Alexandra by political violence in 1992 have finally found a permanent home with the establishment of a low-cost housing project in River Park near Lombardy East.

Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council has built 168 homes as the first phase of a housing project, of which the displaceses are the beneficiaries.

The displaceses have been living under overcrowded and unhygienic conditions for the past eight years in halls, churches and municipal buildings waiting for housing.

"The displaceses have suffered degradation and humiliation. We can't begin to understand their suffering yet they showed incredible resilience and acted in a non-confrontational and constructive manner. They have finally reached the promised land," Eastern councillor Alex Sepeng said.

Construction of the R13.8-million River Park housing project in Lombardy East, started in November last year.

The first families, people who lived in a church for six years and were facing eviction, are the first recipients.

Displacee Dorothy Pfitso said she was happy to be in her own

home at last, but still wanted to go back to her family home in the Belwit area - now known as the Reconstrution Area.

She and her family fled from their home, which belonged to her grandmother, in the middle of the night on March 19 1992 with none of their belongings.

"We left everything behind. We lived for six horrible years in a church. There were five

For six horrible years we lived in a church

families living with only sheets as partitions. We had to cook, bath and sleep with no privacy," she said.

Sepeng said his department had invested R700 000 of the Vusani Funds for the Alexandra Development Forum, a plan for the upgrading of the area.

The houses were built in terms of the Rapid Land Development Programme (RLDP) - a once-off local council initiative to provide housing for some 20 000 people living in destitute and dangerous conditions.

Homes vary in design to avoid monotony and range in price from

R15 000 to R35 000 with four-bedroom homes going for R18 500.

Homes have been built in such a way that they can be expanded when funds become available.

Business premises, clinics, schools, recreation and sports facilities have been included in the plans.

Local Alex contractors and displaceses have been used in the construction.

The RLDP which involves five sites in Johannesburg, was due to have been completed almost two years ago but it ran into problems when some 20 000 objections were lodged by neighbouring Lombardy East residents, who feared property devaluation.

The other sites are Bloubastrand and Witkoppen near Randburg and Laefde-en Vrede near Alberton and Mispund North near Nautrena.

Beneficiaries of the 1 130 Bloubastrand and 970 Witkoppen sites are squatters living on privately owned land in the area such as Zewenfontein.

The applications were withdrawn by the Northern council last year because they were defective. There were almost 10 000 objections.

The council is now undertaking further technical investigation of sites pending possible re-submission of town-ship applications.



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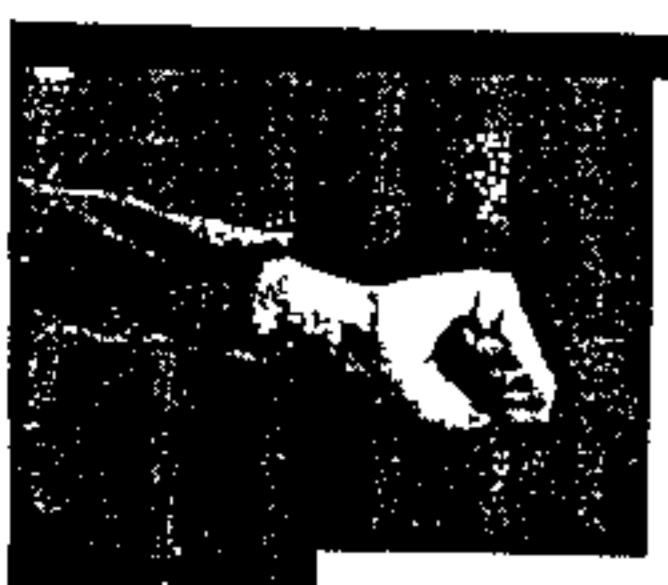
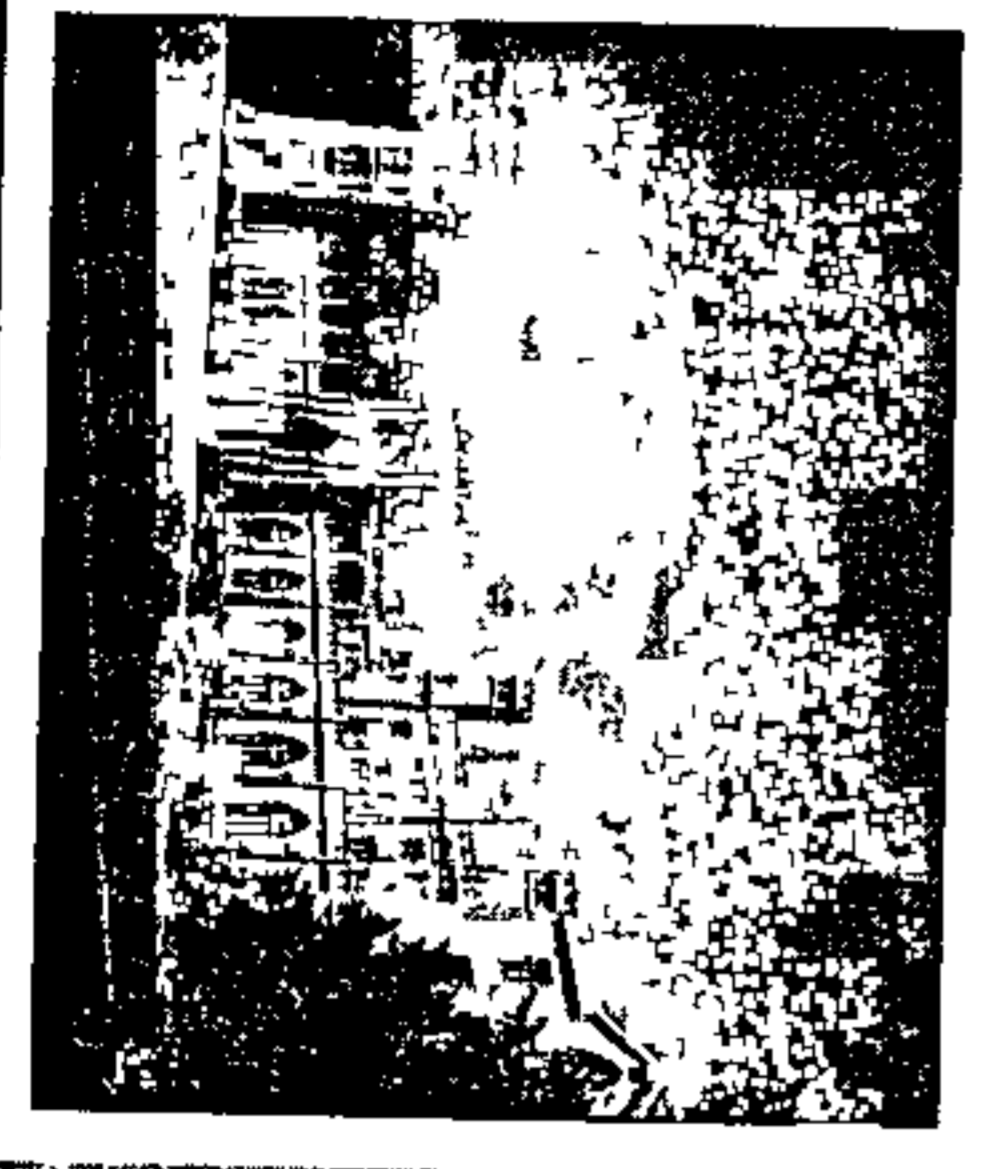
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Tension rises as property seized

TENSION is rising in Tsakane on the East Rand where the Brakpan messenger of the court, backed by a 250-strong army and police contingent, yesterday began seizing the property of rates defaulters

Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) spokesman Jabulani Khumalo said violence could break out when the police and army left the township later in the day as people were already gathering together in large groups

"People are very angry, it is very tense here some residents are starting to throw stones and people are grouping together," he said

Between 400 and 500 defaulters would be targeted in this action to recover about R3,7m owed to the local council in rates and services debts accrued over the past year, said Brakpan sheriff Gideon Slabbert.

Responding to the move, the PAC and the Inkatha Freedom Party called for the suspension of the credit control system — which the property attach-

ment strategy is part of — and for Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to intervene in the crisis.

Khumalo said the PAC would call on Mbeki to set up a forum consisting of community organisations, council and government officials to find an alternative solution to the rates debt repayment problem through a consultative process

"Councillors have turned a blind eye to the matter. they don't want to talk to people. The premier is closing doors, he is not prepared to listen," he said

Brakpan town clerk Thys Human said that only people who had not made an arrangement with the council to pay off their debts would have their properties seized

The matter had been handed over to the council's attorneys and was out of the council's hands, he said.

A month ago the council postponed its planned seizure of defaulters' property in Tsakane after violence broke out — Sapa (127)

BD 18/6/98

Call for inquiry after mistaken

property seizures in Tsakane

Dustin Chick

RD 19/6/98 (127)

GAUTENG premier Mathole Motshekga said yesterday he would institute a commission of inquiry into credit control measures in Brakpan on the East Rand after mistakes were made in attaching property in lieu of money owed to the council.

This would be in addition to a two-week suspension of attachments announced by the Brakpan council, one of four local councils in the province which was on the verge of bankruptcy. Tensions in Tsakane township outside Brakpan rose on Wednesday after police and army officers began seizing rates defaulters' property.

Gauteng development planning and local government MEC, Sicele Shiceka, said the probe would also investigate senior officials' incitement of violence and encouragement of a culture of disobedience.

He had no doubt political parties were using credit control as an "emotional football" as "electioneering before the

1999 general election" began

The Masakhane campaign in the province continued to be a success and was a "beacon of hope for other provinces".

Siphwe Saul, the chairman of the Brakpan council executive committee, said the council acknowledged that it had made mistakes in attaching property and would rectify the mistakes.

He said that during the two-week freeze of attachments the council would review its credit control procedures and investigate the source of the problem.

In a meeting of the Brakpan council on May 8 it was agreed that the sheriff of the court would not use forced entry in order to gain access to premises, that it would not attach items such as fridges, beds and stoves, and that residents registered with the council as being unable to pay would not be handed to the council's attorneys.

All these resolutions had been broken, Saul said. Better communication was needed between the council, its lawyers and sheriff.



Tension in Tsakane township outside Brakpan on the East Rand rose on Wednesday after about 250 security officers seized rates defaulters' property. Brakpan is one of four local councils in the province on the verge of bankruptcy. The town council suspended the seizure of rates defaulters' properties in Tsakane yesterday after admitting it had made mistakes.

Picture TYRONE ARTHUR

Task team to probe action against rates defaulters

80 22/6/98

(127)

Pule Molebeledi

A FIVE-member task team has been appointed by the Brakpan town council to investigate the conduct of officials who were tasked with enforcing credit control measures and attaching property belonging to rates defaulters in the East Rand township of Tsakane last week.

The team will consist of Brakpan mayor Calcot Dlephu, chairman of the management committee Siphwe Saun, his deputy, J de Klerk, and one delegate appointed by the Democratic Party (DP) and the National Party each.

Dlephu said the decision to appoint the team was taken at special council meeting on Friday. At the meeting it was resolved to suspend town clerk Tuys Human pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Dlephu said the task team, which was expected to report within the next two weeks, would look into three prob-

lems cited by a council meeting last Thursday following tension in the area after police and soldiers seized defaulters' property.

These included probing the computer billing system, which was allegedly seriously flawed, and verifying the names of consumers whose assets were illegally removed and attached by the sheriff.

The task team would rectify and investigate all cases that were in conflict with a council resolution that property belonging to defaulters who had made arrangements to pay and those who had been registered as indigents should not be attached.

Dlephu said the attachments would start again as soon as the task team had completed its investigation.

Sapa reports the sheriff, backed by 250 policemen and troops, moved into Tsakane on Wednesday and attached property from residents, who owe the council about R3,7m

in rates and services debts — run up over the past year.

Dlephu said the sheriff had been explicitly told not to remove stoves and fridges.

He had also been told not to conduct business for stores and repossess property on their behalf, but had done so.

The announcement of the task team came a few days after Gauteng premier Mathole Motshekga announced that he would institute a commission of inquiry to look into the application of credit control measures in the area.

Motshekga is expected to establish the commission in the next few weeks, in conjunction with provincial MEC Sicelo Shiceka.

The Brakpan town council is one of four Gauteng councils on the verge of collapse as a result of bankruptcy.

Sapa reports that the DP criticised Human's suspension, saying he was being made the scapegoat for the council's mistakes.

Premier's bid to boost service delivery

Motsekgga proposes public service delivery centres

(127)
 CP 28/6/98



ON DELIVERY . . . Gauteng Premier Dr Mathole Motsekgga has proposed a concept to improve the delivery of services to the community

A NEW revolutionary concept that could ultimately result in the provision of a coordinated and integrated delivery of services and provide participatory democracy for citizens has been proposed by Gauteng premier Dr Mathole Motsekgga.

The concept, which is still in its initial stages of discussion with role players in government, business, churches and others, proposes the establishment of multi-purpose service delivery centres in the province to provide citizens with information about every aspect of government – locally, provincially and nationally – under one roof.

Motsekgga, who has put his thoughts in a document which he has already shared with his political counterparts in the province and at the national level, argues that the establishment of multi-purpose service centres in the country, especially Gauteng, could provide easy access to government information around the clock.

Motsekgga told City Press the service centres would be a facility through which co-ordination and integration of information and services provided by different government departments could be easily accessed.

Motsekgga said the service delivery centres would provide communities with a complete perspective of government ser-



vices. He proposes the establishment of regional services delivery centres in provinces within the already demarcated six structures in the Gauteng province. For instance, with Gauteng divided into six regions, six services centres that provide people with both national, provincial and local government activities could be established.

The concept, once in place, could help the government overcome one of the major criticisms levelled against it – being unable to communicate its activities and projects to the public within their localities.

Four years after millions of South Africans first cast their votes in 1994, the government has been unable to allow ordinary citizens to independently access government information affecting their

areas. For the most part, access to such information has meant that citizens have to travel from their localities to centrally located provincial or national government buildings.

In Gauteng for instance, people living in the West Rand or the Vaal are usually forced to travel from their areas to Johannesburg if they want information concerning a specific government department.

The situation may be far worse in other provinces such as the Northern Province where citizens living in the far northern areas such as Louis Trichart or Venda would be forced to travel to Pietersburg if they are interested in information regarding the activities of provincial government.

Motsekgga believes the hassle people face in outlying areas, far from centrally located department, could be easily eliminated by the service delivery centres.

He said establishing multi-purpose service delivery centres appears to be the best mechanism to make cooperative governance a reality.

He said the service centres will remove the need for communities to understand government organisation in order to access government information and services and would also reduce time and effort to conduct research on government services. Once the service centres have been established on a regional basis within provinces, smaller multi-purpose community centres could be established with localities not only to communicate government information but also to help people access resources that would normally be difficult to get in the cities.

He said skills and knowledge empowerment within the service centres would also enable people to acquire information on the processes involved in starting their own businesses.

Motsekgga said the establishment of the service centres would benefit both communities and the provincial government. The centres would increase the transparency and increase the accuracy of information exchanged between them.

They would also increase staff morale, reduce manual routine work and could provide opportunity for staff to spend more time on tasks benefitting communities. The centres could also strengthen the image of the Gauteng provincial government as both efficient, productive and delivery-service focused.

Motsekgga said he does not envisage any separate budget to establish the service delivery centres.

But he warned that to achieve all the above objectives, the Gauteng provincial government should establish and communicate its vision to staff at all levels to ensure that they felt ownership of the changes and the department's new vision.

Project started to improve city flats

By ANNA COX

Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council, Wits University and Wits Technikon have launched a project aimed at improving conditions for flatdwellers in some of the uninhabitable buildings in the inner city and Yeoville.

The project, called the Hillbrow Community Project for Health Personnel Education,

will identify eight "good" buildings and eight "bad" buildings before completing scientific research as to what makes the buildings function properly.

Students will study 10 buildings in the inner city and six in Yeoville. Tenants of up to 90 buildings will be interviewed and asked their impressions on living conditions and needs, said environmental management

head Angela Mathee.

"When the results have been co-ordinated they will be used to advise owners and caretakers on how to manage their buildings. Courses for caretakers will be introduced at a later stage.

"Many buildings are in an atrocious state in these areas and we hope the study will find the causes for this and provide ways to address them," she said.

(127) Star 30/6/98

Home of their own is a dream come true

THYS DULLAART



Sitting pretty ... a happy Ndlela family enjoy the security of their own home

Family can put down roots
at last after years of hopeless

wandering from farm to farm

BY NAPULE TABANE

Home sweet home at last. The Reconstruction and Development Programme may have been scrapped, but the reality of its vision lives on for pensioner Elizabeth Ndlela

After spending years moving from one farm to another, the 69-year-old grandmother became the proud owner of her first house yesterday when Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng presented title deeds to her and about 500 other new homeowners in Impumelelo, Devon, a small rural town in the south-east of the province.

The title deeds give the residents permanent ownership of the small houses built with funds from the now defunct RDP's coffers. "I am very grateful to the councillors and the Govern-

ment who built this house for me. I never thought I would own my own house, especially at this time of my life," said Ndlela, who shares the house with her husband Robert and three grandchildren.

Mofokeng said his department had spent R10-million developing the town. "When the ANC took over in 1994, the NP government had allocated only R300-million for national housing, but we increased the amount to R2-billion and made a huge difference."

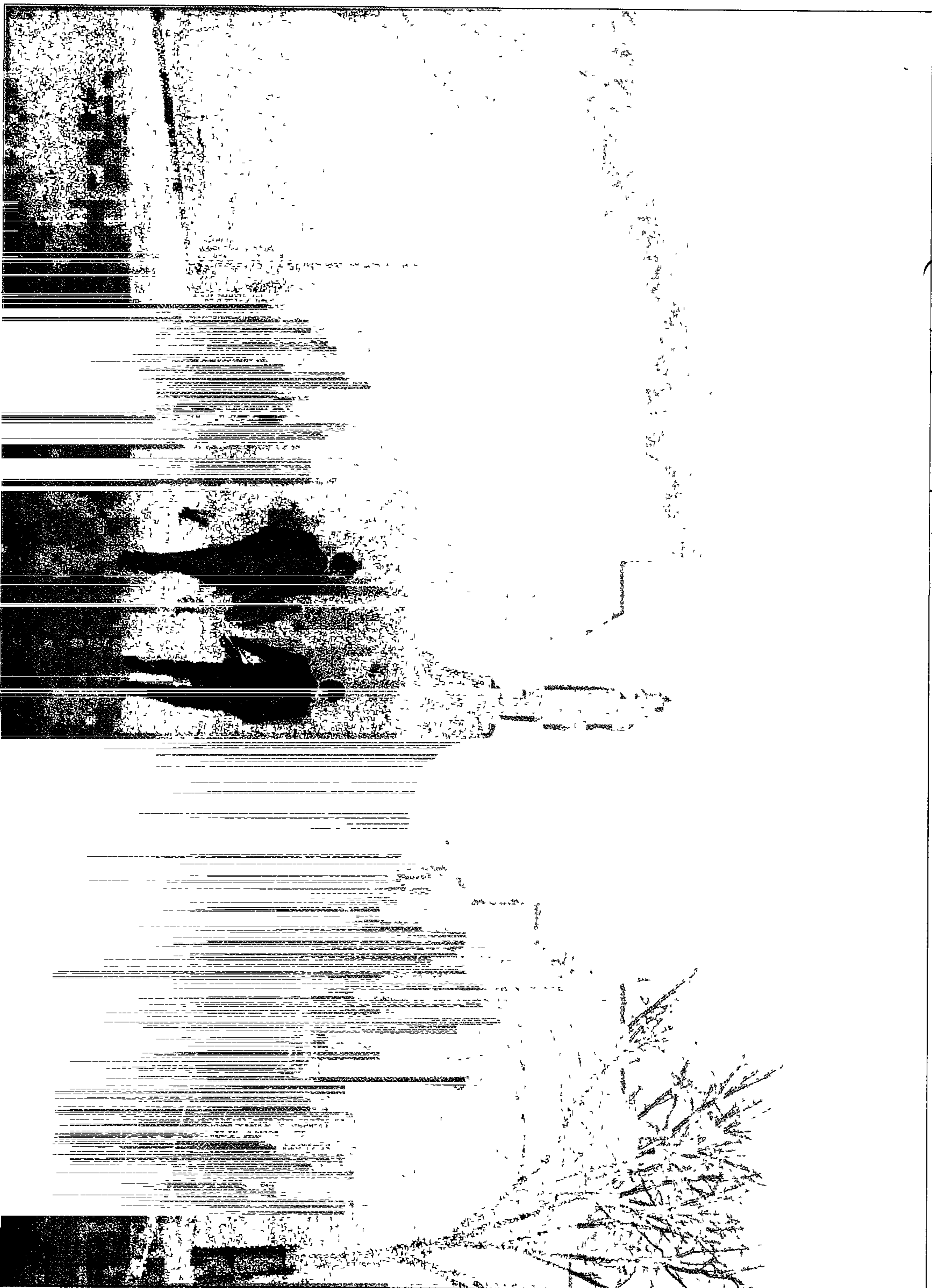
Impumelelo mayor Peter Rakgoadi said, "Most people who live here come from surrounding farms with no toilets and clean water, let alone housing. As most of them are unemployed, we are building a business centre to the tune of R3-million to create jobs for these people."

(12/7) Star 6/7/98

Pretoria in search of new identity

(127) *Straw* 9/7/98

The tide has turned
 and the ingredients
 are there to make
 the South African
 capital, developed
 over the past 50
 years on a
 combination of
 'ethnic exclusion
 and ethnic
 patronage', into
 a winning
 African city



Misty future ... Paul Kruger looms over Church Square in the once citadel of Afrikanerdom. Pretoria is now facing the legacy of policies put in place by the previous government

The history of Pretoria since 1950 is that of a city built around "ethnic exclusion and ethnic patronage". The tide has turned Pretoria at the end of the 20th century is now a city in search of a new identity. The ingredients are there for Pretoria to make it as a winning African city.

As yet the leadership and "social glue" necessary to weld these ingredients into a convincing formula have not emerged.

Pretoria developed as "apartheid's model city" with all the privileges, symbols, controls and racial exclusion for which South Africa was infamous.

But it was not only apartheid that was exaggerated in Pretoria. So was the public sector component of the economy and parastatal industry.

The average size of an industrial enterprise (86,5 workers) is almost twice that of Johannesburg/Randburg (44,1). The percentage of white employees in industry (36,3%) is nearly twice the national average (20%).

Pretoria industries are more capital-intensive than the national norm, less profitable and more often been established with government support.

With a downsizing, restructuring

public sector and several parastatals (Scor Denel) scaling back, the city's established economic pattern is unlikely to endure.

Pretoria has to find a new economic base. Pretoria is suffering from an identity crisis which relates in part to the historic and continued exclusion of blacks from the city, its sustained public sector focus and a failure to come to grips, honestly, with the past.

A bold move to deal with all three of these inhibiting factors towards a truly nonracial and regionally oriented public private partnership is a more realistic and sustainable way forward.

What is needed is an agreed and inspiring vision of the city's future - a growth-oriented vision of focused excellence. Developing such a vision will need a thorough understanding of the Pretoria economy and trends affecting it, take cognisance of competitors and define the obstacles to success.

Thus of all cities could position itself cheekily as the capital of the African "renaissance" but CDE failed to find anyone thinking so boldly about Pretoria's future.

"Parliament for Pretoria" is an insufficient focus for the city's development. If this campaign is allowed to dominate public concep-

tions of the city's future, it could divert attention away from more fundamental issues.

It has been calculated that there are only 960 jobs directly and 3 655 jobs indirectly linked to parliament - although some 8 700 other jobs could be affected.

66

Parliament for Pretoria insufficient focus for development

Some other possibilities:

■ Pretoria has probably the most advanced and concentrated research, development and training capacity of any city on the African continent - pool these resources into an inter-nationally competitive consortium focused on the needs of the continent.

■ Pretoria (unsurprisingly) has some of the country's best highways, hospitals, sports stadiums, zoos, libraries, museums (35) and

public parks - some 66 nature reserves, game farms, holiday resorts and spas in and around the city, the internationally renowned National Zoological Gardens and the Botanical Gardens.

Market the city as a domestic tourist attraction through public-private partnerships aimed at improving and attracting visitors to the diverse physical, cultural, historic and symbolic assets - old and new.

■ Build on Pretoria's advantage as one of SA's most livable cities to attract further investment. Its crime rates are significantly lower than the rest of urban Gauteng, its schools are good.

■ Build on Pretoria's manufacturing strengths for example in the motor industry, which could increasingly be focused on exports (particularly in Africa). The metropolitan authority must work with the motor industry to reach an understanding of its needs and ensure that the city does not lose out to the coastal metropolises.

Probably more than any other South African city Pretoria faces critical decisions concerning its future. Making those decisions will not be easy, because much is at stake - economically, culturally, politically and symbolically.

Bold and courageous leadership

Sorry tale of two cities needs attention

By ANN BERNSTEIN AND JEFF MCCARTHY

Pretoria is one of the least African of South Africa's metropolitan areas. It is a city surrounded to the north by a series of very poorly serviced dormitory suburbs in which conditions are even worse than those in the former black areas within the boundaries of the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.

Functionally Pretoria is a three-lobed metro-complex of some 2,5 million people of whom about half are located in the former homelands.

These three lobes - a southern core (official Pretoria), a north-western satellite (Winterveld) and a north-eastern satellite (former KwaNdebele) - are highly interdependent yet each is separated from the other by considerable distances, agricultural land and political boundaries.

Nowhere else has intra-metropolitan apartheid and segregation been so pronounced. This is no accident.

will be needed to move beyond the current cautious mode of "adaptive modernisation" which could gradually lead to the city's decline.

It is significant that the transition in apartheid's model city is almost invisible. It leads observers to ask what kind of vision the new

66

No city can dare assume the future will be like the past

The central message of CDE's research is that in the context of the twin processes of political democratisation and economic globalisation Pretoria has the potential to become an "African rising star". This will require a radically new approach to the city and its future.

■ Build a new foundation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the greater Pretoria region.

■ Resolve its current identity crisis by adopting a bold and unifying new growth and development vision in which the city emerges as a place with something for everyone.

■ Look northwards for cues on what form this new identity might assume, and focus as much on its potential linkages with the north as its actual linkages to the south.

■ Pursue a new developmental agenda centred on the city's potential to become the entrepreneurial, training, research and development hub of central and southern Africa, drawing upon its established strengths in these areas, but making Africa as a whole its new frontier.

■ Face the facts of its interdependence with poor, commuter communities currently located in North-West Province and Mpumalanga - Develop a wider vision built around this reality.

■ Lobby for the relocation of parliament to Pretoria but use this as a broader development potential.

■ Offer the country a quid pro quo for parliament's relocation to Pretoria by making a significant and long-lasting commitment to the development of the neighbouring marginal settlements of Winterveld and KwaNdebele.

■ Actively cultivate a new multicultural, multi-class "growth coalition" with the common purpose of fostering the expanded city's future growth, development and national prestige.

Pretoria already has much going for it in terms of physical and cultural infrastructure, local/metro-titanian finances and capacity, at least physical closeness to the new state, and closeness to the emerging commercial and industrial hub of South Africa (Midrand/Sandton/Johannesburg). It is better placed than most South African cities to mount a strong economic development strategy.

The challenge is to find the "champions" who can build a leadership class for Pretoria, that will reflect a new inclusive vision and a more diverse set of interests.

Subtle national intervention might be required to encourage leaders - across the city - to emerge

By 1936 there were roughly equal numbers of whites and blacks living in and around Pretoria. Like many other South African cities, while there was a fairly high level of segregation in pre-apartheid years, blacks often lived adjacent to whites and quite close to the city centre. During the 1950s tens of thousands of residents were forcibly removed under the Illegal Squatting and Group Areas Acts to the more peripheral townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi.

To accommodate growth the Pretoria City Council motivated the establishment of GaRankuwa behind the "black reserve" (later the Bophuthatswana "homeland") boundary 30km north-west of Pretoria.

There are in fact two Pretorias - a legal one encompassed by the official metropolitan boundaries and a larger functional Pretoria which includes settlements at Winterveld and others in the former Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele.

These places now face the danger of being regarded as the peripheral

"problem belts" of North West Province and Mpumalanga provinces, rather than being treated as the suburbs of Pretoria.

Winterveld is one of the most glaring legacies of apartheid: a settlement of some 200 000 people created when millions were forced to live in places and in circumstances that were not of their choosing. Most live in shacks with poor servicing levels.

In many respects legal Pretoria consists of a blend of privilege and relative disadvantage. On average, socio-economic conditions in legal Pretoria are better than those in other metropolitan areas, but this is because Pretoria has effectively excluded a large part of its population.

This apartheid-style disintegration of Pretoria and its population, was entrenched in 1994 with new provincial boundaries which perpetuated a racially divided Pretoria metropolitan area. This functional metropolitan region is bizarrely located in three different provinces.

The Centre for Development and

Enterprize (CDE) believes Pretoria should extend its boundaries to include at least Winterveld and possibly southern KwaNdebele. Northern KwaNdebele is more complicated.

New boundaries will require a new definition of Pretoria and its responsibilities. National government needs to help persuade the city to expand its borders to a new inclusive self-image. It is critically important that if national government decides to move parliament to Pretoria it demands a quid pro quo from the city.

This should be a commitment by Pretoria to incorporate and develop Winterveld and at least southern KwaNdebele as "suburbs" of an expanded metropolitan area.

Ann Bernstein is executive director of the Centre for Development and Enterprise. Professor Jeff McCarthy, a CDE consultant, is at the University of Durban-Westville Graduate School of Business. This article is based on the CDE publication, "Pretoria: from apartheid's model city to a rising African star".

The Honda Division of Mercedes-Benz of South Africa, and its Honda Dealers, have launched the Honda "Pick-of-the-Best" charity fund-raising drive to raise urgently needed funds for local charities and community projects. The promotion carries a first prize choice of either a Honda Prelude (valued at R199 900), Honda Odyssey (valued at R188 000) or Honda CR-V (valued at R168 200), as well as cash prizes totalling R15 000.

In each participating shopping centre, the three-car prize option exhibit, comprising the Prelude, Odyssey and CR-V, will be displayed for a 7-day period from Monday to Sunday, together with the eye-catching and very exciting Honda Integra Type-R. The Integra has been imported into South Africa specifically for this exhibit and demonstrates the latest milestone in Honda technology - the Integra Type-R develops 140Kw from an 1800cc engine, a specific rating of 105BHP/litre, making it the car with the best aspirated 1800cc engine in the world.

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During the exhibit period at each shopping centre, the nominated local charity will be selling competition entry tickets for a donation of R5 per ticket. At the conclusion of each event, the total proceeds raised will be presented to the nominated charity for that competition. At the same time, the first correct entry drawn will go to the National Finals in Johannesburg in October, where the national winner will have a choice of prize - the Prelude, Odyssey or the CR-V. The runner-up finalists will each win cash prizes of R1000.

Former factories now house homeless

Crime closes down many Marlboro businesses, and owners are letting space in unhygienic conditions

By ANNA COX

Forty-two of Marlboro's 125 factories are now occupied by homeless people

Marlboro, once a thriving industrial zone next to Alexandria, is now a neglected area, with most of the factories lying abandoned and vandalised because of the high crime rate

The remaining Marlboro businessmen and the Sandton Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and businessmen who are still based in the area have lashed out at the Greater Johannesburg Eastern council for failing to prosecute owners who are letting their factories out to people because they are unable to sell them. The homeless people live in unhygienic conditions, they say, on premises which are also fire hazards

Despite numerous efforts by the remaining industrialists to maintain the area as a business zone, little is being done by the council to assist them, they claim.

There have been lengthy negotiations over the past 18 months between owners, the chamber, the council and the SA National Civics Organisation (Sanco), which manages most of the buildings for the owners. These have resulted in a decision being taken that the area should remain industrial. Sanco was the only dissenting party.

SCCI executive officer Carol Sofianos says the chamber is concerned at the alarming flight of valuable businesses from the area, leaving thousands more unemployed.

Contributing factors were the council's failure to uphold the law in the area, she says



Turnabout . . . Gift Nkosi at the gate of his new accommodation in a former factory in Marlboro. As businesses collapse the premises are let out, something Sanco believes should be done to relieve the backlog in housing in nearby Alexandria. Businessmen disagree.

"Two years of meetings between the Marlboro Business Industrial Forum and the council have to date resulted in nothing more than empty promises and excuses. We were given assurances that a moratorium would be placed on the illegal invasions. At the time only 21 buildings were illegally inhabited. If the council enforces the law," she says, "6,000 jobs could be created."

Eastern council communications officer Keith Peacock says there is an argument that the council should not be involved in the transformation of business precincts such as Marlboro and Kew, and that the market should take its course.

"The owners must take ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of the buildings and compliance with the by-laws and, while the council

would prefer that these owners actively co-operate, it will not hesitate in taking legal action against them," he says.

Sanco spokesman Philemon Machetela says his organisation is acting as a facilitator between tenants and owners to ensure buildings are being kept clean and that services are paid for.

Sanco believes Marlboro should be rezoned for mixed

land use so that empty buildings can be used to alleviate the backlog of housing in Alexandria, he says.

"The area was used as a buffer between Alex and the suburbs and we want this buffer removed. If the area is partially residential, it will prevent crime because of the movement of people - and it will bring business back," says Machetela.

Shaw 14/7/98

(127) NEIL SPENCE

BY **THEMBA SEPOTOKELE**
City Desk

Councils to conduct survey to help families who can't pay for services

Gauteng's local authorities will begin registering families with an income of less than R800 a month in August in a bid to recoup R3,6-billion owed to them in rates and service arrears.

The indigent survey is targeted at poor families, pensioners, the disabled and the unemployed.

This will help the authorities to distinguish between the poorest of the poor and those who simply refuse to pay for services rendered.

The survey forms are expected to be distributed with this month's council bills. Local authorities will introduce a community system to screen and double-check whether the information provided to them is correct. This task will be done by each

council's welfare division. The results will be passed on to central Government to include in its national indigent survey.

A Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council official said the council would conduct an indigent pilot project for six months in four areas. "The council will conduct the project in Bertrams, Orlando East, Orange Farm and Dobsonville. We believe that

there are a lot of poor people in those areas. The project will be reviewed after six months and then spread to other areas when there is a need," the official said.

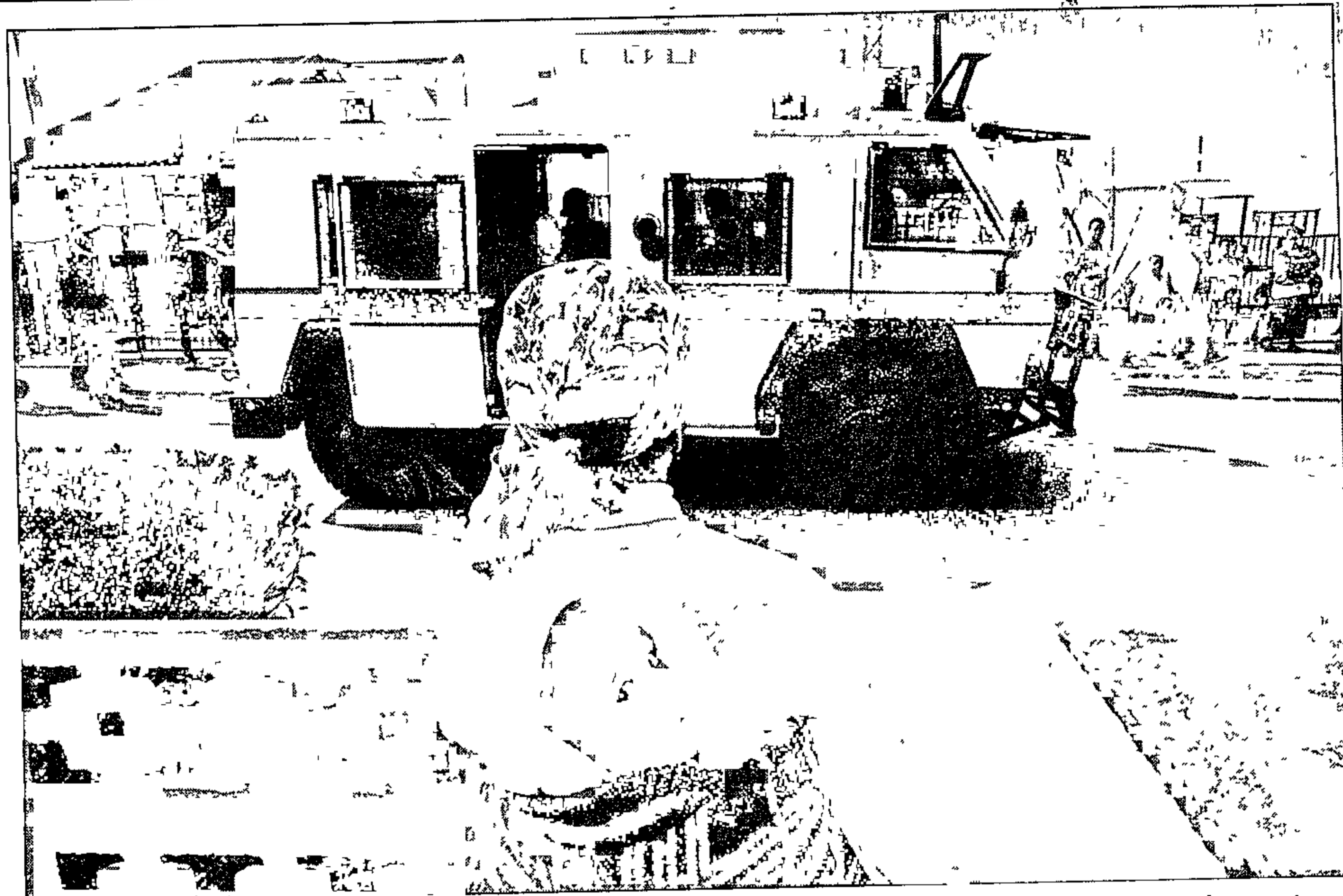
Naweed Hassan, chairperson of the Greater Benoni Town Council, said the council was investigating a "rescue package" for the poor that would include suspending all arrears on interest rates and petitioning the Government

for monthly subsidies.

However, stringent credit control measures such as the attachment of property and the termination of water and electricity supplies will be taken against those residents described by the councils as "pockets of resistance".

Final details on the policy will be announced on Friday, after which municipalities will map the way forward.

(127) Star 15/2/98



Homeless ... a Vosloorus woman watches police guarding a sheriff of the court evicting 40 families for failing to pay their mortgage bonds in Extension 14.

Families evicted over bonds

Star 22/7/98 (127)

40 Vosloorus householders thrown out of homes they claim are poorly built

BY HOPEWELL RADEBE

Teenager Khanyisile Hadebe of Extension 14 in Vosloorus was in her school uniform waiting to go to school after the winter holidays yesterday, when the sheriff of the court arrived to evict her and her family.

Hadebe's family was one of 40 who were evicted yesterday for not paying their mortgage bonds for more than three years in protest against the poor workmanship in and construction of their houses.

Instead of going to school, Hadebe (14) and about 50 children, including crèche toddlers, stayed home to guard furniture that was thrown out.

"I urged the men (sheriff's assistants) to let me call my

parents at work. They broke down the door in my parents' bedroom, which was locked, and took out the furniture," a tearful Hadebe explained.

The residents said about 1 000 families who are participating in the boycott would be affected. The boycott started in 1994 - five years after residents moved into their houses - because Khayaletu Home Loans, which financed the housing project, did not heed a call to recall the contractors to repair "the cracking walls and leaking roofs".

A block away from Hadebe's home, sheriff's men lifted critically ill Zanele Dube (14) from her bed and laid her on the lawn outside.

She was being looked after by a relative, Sakie Satho, who

stood helplessly near a tree as the four-roomed house was cleared out.

Neighbours looked on and shouted in protest. About three hours later, an ambulance arrived to take the epileptic girl, also believed to be suffering from chronic flu, to Natalspruit Hospital.

Her mother Regina Dube then arrived and, with the help of her neighbours, began pulling her furniture back into the house.

"Try visiting us in summer - you would swear we live in a shack because of water that rushes through the roof like a river," she said.

As the sheriff left for another street, people broke into their locked houses and moved furniture back into

their homes. They did not consult with local leaders of the South African National Civic Organisation before doing this.

Sanco president Bheki Sibiyi accused Khayaletu of negotiating in bad faith by evicting people while a solution was being sought.

Khayaletu Home Loans spokesperson William Maponya said the Government had given the institution only three years to balance its books and shut down.

"Time to engage in endless negotiations with civic organisations and residents who prolonged boycotts has come to an end," he said.

However, in a bid to resolve the matter, Khayaletu has now set aside R35-million to repair the houses.

Greater Germiston launches rented houses scheme

Robyn Chalmers

THE long-awaited provision of subsidised rental housing stock in SA took a step forward yesterday with the launch of a R30m rental scheme by the greater Germiston council, the first such project in the country.

Subsidised rental housing has been slow to take off in SA due, in part, to delays in policy formulation along with resistance from some local governments.

They believed rental stock would be a costly and long-term

administrative burden which they would be hard pressed to meet in the light of continuing skills and funding constraints.

The Germiston rental housing project, driven by the council's Greater Germiston Inner City Housing Corporation, will have 436 units of one, two and three bedrooms.

The units are the first of at least 3 000 subsidised housing units the corporation plans to complete in the next five years.

The initial stage will increase Germiston's inner city housing

stock by 37%. The first show units, under construction on the old Payne Park site, should be completed in September and the whole project finished by April.

The scheme makes provision for small retail businesses.

While the Payne Park project will be purely rental, the corporation plans to offer a range of tenure options to beneficiaries over time. These will include rental, rental with the option to purchase, and instalment sales.

Present and future projects are aimed at households earning

between R1 500 and R3 500 a month, who are eligible for state subsidies and who are residents of, and preferably employed within, Germiston's municipal area.

Rents at the Payne Park project will range from R500 to R900 a month and will include all costs except electricity, which will be metered individually.

Germiston mayor Kaifas Sambo said "We aim to involve tenants in the whole process of community building and break away from the stereotyped landlord-tenant relationships."

NEWS

PROPERTY Payne Park, a 30m subsidised institutional development, is first of a kind in South Africa

Germiston leads way in housing project

ADELE SHEVEL

Johannesburg — The Greater Germiston Council yesterday officially launched Payne Park, a R30 million subsidised rental housing project in the town's CBD, said to be the first institutional project of its kind.

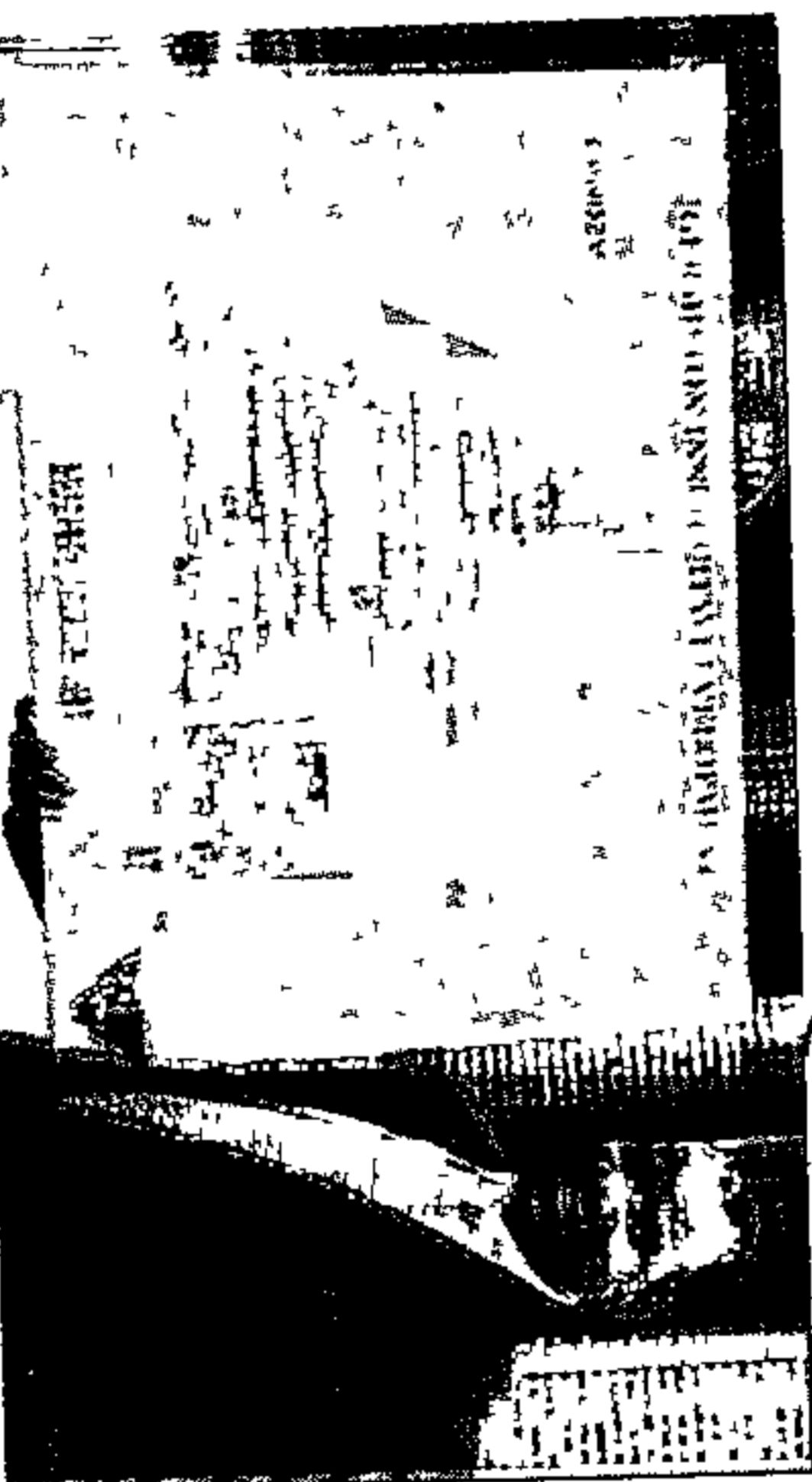
The Greater Germiston Inner-City Housing Project is a partnership between local government, provincial government and the National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC), a parastatal financing institution.

Payne Park is the first project that makes use of subsidies available to institutions, in this case the Housing Association (a company owned by the Germiston council), in conjunction with loans made available through the NHFC.

Condev is the developer of the project for the Housing Association. Chris Cudmore, the managing director, said the Payne Park concept had the potential to play a major role in clearing the country's serious housing backlog.

"Individuals find it difficult to access housing finance even though the subsidies are available. Through this mechanism, the institution accesses the subsidy and makes available a product on a rental basis that is larger than they would be able to afford through purchasing individually," said Stephen O'Brien, project manager for Condev.

Kaifas Sambo, Germiston's mayor, said it was hoped that the Housing Association would lead the way for future projects around the country.



FINAL BLUEPRINT Kaifas Sambo, the mayor of Germiston, with the plan of the R30 million Payne Park subsidised housing project, thought to be the first of its kind.

The project, driven by the council's Greater Germiston Inner-City Housing Corporation (GGIHC), will comprise 436 units of one, two or three bed-

rooms. Rentals will range from R500 to R900 a month, and these will include all costs, except electricity. Construction is already

under way on the old Payne Park site off Jack and Queen streets. The GGIHC plans to have the first show units completed in September, with the entire project due for completion by April next year.

The project includes a number of opportunities for small retail businesses and a recreation area.

The 436 units are the first of at least 3 000 subsidised housing units the GGIHC has set itself to complete in the next five years.

The Payne Park project will be purely for rental, but the corporation plans to offer a range of tenure options to beneficiaries over time. These will include rental, rental with the option to purchase and instalment sale. Present and future projects are intended to make accommo-

dation affordable to households fulfilling certain criteria: they must earn between R1 500 and R3 500 a month, be eligible for state subsidies and be residents of and preferably employed within the municipal area of Germiston.

Sambo said he was delighted with the partnership between the government and the private sector which had resulted in the project.

Of the stock provided in the Payne Park development, 53 per cent will be affordable to households earning between R1 700 and R2 600 a month.

A further 32 per cent will be affordable to those earning between R2 800 and R3 000 a month, and 15 per cent to those earning between R3 000 and R3 500 a month.

Irish march on Orange Farm — to build houses

(127)

MtG 24 - 30/7/98

Evidence wa ka Ngobeni

A four-roomed house was once an impossible dream for an unemployed single mother living in an Orange Farm shack

But this week Sinala Shabani and her four children moved into their dream house — built by 22 volunteer Irish students and residents of the sprawling settlement near Johannesburg

Shabani, a Tanzanian by birth, met her South African husband while he was in exile. They returned to South Africa in 1995, but he left her soon after for another woman

Since then she has been living in a one-roomed shack with their children, Zainabo (14), Selboni (11), Lehlonolo (7) and Abdul (5) — all of them sharing one mattress.

A Christian housing ministry, Habitat for Humanity, arrived in Orange Farm in May and, in conjunction with the Arekopaneng (seSotho for "let us join hands") community project, is building and improving homes in Orange Farm

Since it arrived in South Africa, Habitat for Humanity has built 35 houses in Alexandra, 40 in Valley Trust, 35 in Orange Farm and 40 in Plesang River. It expects to build another 100



Spadework: Irish members of Habitat for Humanity hard at work building houses in Orange Farm
PHOTOGRAPH:
NADINE HUTTON

by the end of the year. Worldwide, Habitat has built more than 70 000 houses.

The simple brick houses are sold to participants in the project for between R15 000 and R18 000 each. Residents say it is better than the "RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] houses" built with government subsidies because they have bigger rooms, dividing walls all the way to the roof, a separate bathroom and toilet, and ceilings

Every morning Shabani (30) goes to work

at the Habitat housing project, where she is employed as a brickmaker. She gets paid up to R200 a month, depending on how many bricks she makes. Habitat's long-term goal in South Africa — "no more shacks" — could mean she will keep this job for many years. Last Friday, Shabani was among 20 Orange Farm Habitat families who received the keys to their houses.

The home-owners use the salary they receive for working on Habitat projects to pay a

deposit of 5% and monthly instalments over a maximum of 10 years.

Habitat project co-ordinator Debra Bhokela says the families are selected according to their level of need, their voluntary participation in the project and their ability to repay the no-interest bond. "Humanity also assists home-owners with fundraising for their houses," she says. The monthly payments are deposited in the project's revolving "fund for humanity" to buy materials to build more houses.



East Rand council evicts 16 families of rent defaulting

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

Sowetan 24/7/98 (127)

At least 16 families were left homeless and destitute after their furniture was expropriated by the sheriff of the court backed by a large contingent of police at Edenpark on the East Rand yesterday.

Heavily-armed police took charge of the evictions and removal of household furniture by Alberton Town Council workers. The situation was emotion-charged as township residents converged in large numbers on the scene to protest against the council's action.

The court had ordered the evictions of residents who owed the council for the electricity supply.

The *Sowetan* team witnessed the sheriff and council workers with crowbars breaking door locks and removing furniture, clothes and even groceries.

The residents demanded that the council scrap the electricity and rates arrears, since most of those facing eviction were widowed, unemployed and pensioners. They said councillor Mr Phillip de Lange had been approached to influence the Alberton Town Council to reverse its

A paraplegic and anguished father of four, Mr Isaac Rutgers, watched helplessly as council workers removed his diningroom suite, beds, TV set and radios and other valuable goods from his house.

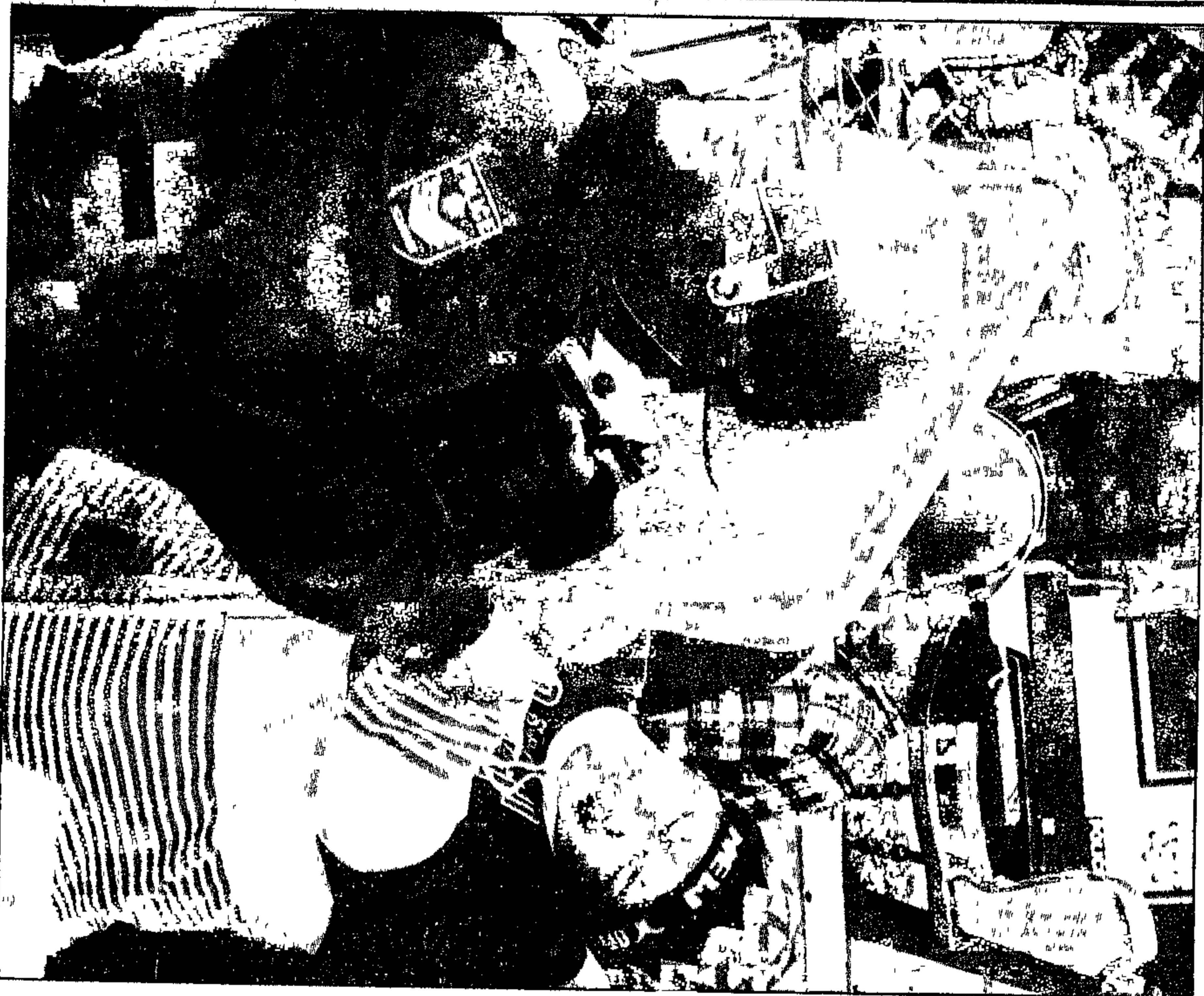
He said he earned a pension of R470 a month, but the council expected him to pay R300 a month towards settlement of the outstanding R11 000 in rent arrears.

Mr Henry Boners, who has been unemployed for four years, owed the council more than R10 000. He had arranged to pay R200 a month, but council officials last week demanded that he pay the outstanding R10 000 arrears or face immediate eviction.

He said he had been away and arrived only after the security door of his house had been forcibly opened with crowbars.

The sheriff declined to comment to *Sowetan*, but said the furniture of the evicted families would be sold on auction to repay the debts to the council.

Sowetan repeatedly tried to reach officials of the Alberton Town Council yesterday for comment but the relevant people were not available.



Armed police stand guard as distressed residents protest against evictions and removal of their furniture by the council in Edenpark on the East Rand yesterday.

PIC LEN KUMALO

Uproar over R412m housing contract

Robyn Chalmers

SA's construction industry is in an uproar over a decision by the Gauteng Housing Board to award the country's biggest subsidised housing project to a developer with links to the board's chairman

The go-ahead for the R412,5m scheme, involving 27 500 low-cost homes, comes at a time when subsidy funds are running low due to budget cuts. In Gauteng alone commitments for 1998/99 total R1,3bn against a budget of R700m.

Subsidised deals contracted to a single private developer normally cover no more than 4 000 units.

The controversy centres on a deal in which private developer Keith Lawrence, director of Felorday Investments and Antelom Investments, and head of the SA Land Development Organisation (Saldo), is to build the houses in two areas — in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, and Vlakfontein, near Vereeniging — over eight years.

Lawrence's companies have moved rapidly into low-cost housing in recent years. He secured the services of Gauteng Housing Board chairman Martin van Zyl to facilitate the Vlakfontein and Hammanskraal deal.

Van Zyl said at the weekend he was paid a "facilitation fee" by Saldo, but he recused himself from board meetings where the project was discussed.

Lawrence said he obtained an eight-year loan of R900m from a group of foreign bankers last Monday. He declined to name the lenders for fear that they would be "inundated with requests".

The allocation of 27 500 subsidies was used as a government guarantee and the bankers agreed to waive the normal \$10m deposit, Lawrence said.

According to documents, the contract was awarded to Felorday and Antelom — which have subsequently changed their names to the Tshepong



Gauteng Housing Board chairman Martin van Zyl facilitated the deals

Housing Association and Kudube Housing Association respectively. It was subject to a foreign loan of R1,37bn being obtained from a lender described as the "US Federal Reserve Bank" for end-user financing.

The Pretoria deeds office indicates that a Vlakfontein farm totalling 432ha was bought in March 12 by Felorday Investments for R2,5m. Under the subsidy agreement, dated June 18, the housing board paid Saldo R14,4m for the same piece of land.

The subsidy agreement acknowledged that the land was significantly overpriced. It stated that this was "not acceptable from an affordability as well as from a moral point of view". The agreement required the developer to provide a R12m bank guarantee "to cover any fruitless expenditure in case

he fails to obtain an overseas loan". Lawrence said this was done in "an attempt to move things along".

The Gauteng board has paid out R27m for the two tracts of unserviced land. Both Van Zyl and Lawrence agreed such a move was unusual but said this procedure had been agreed to by the parties involved.

Payments are normally made in five tranches starting with civil design work and followed by town planning, civil infrastructure, the transfer of properties and the top structure. None of these stages has yet been completed for either project.

Van Zyl said the deal had the backing of the Gauteng government and the national housing department. He cited

Continued on Page 2

Uproar

Continued from Page 1

a signed memorandum of understanding between the Gauteng housing department, the Eastern Services Council and the Vereeniging-Kopanong local council

He said the province was protected against defaults as it had committed only R53m, covering the present financial year, out of the total project cost of R412,5m. Future finance depended on

the developer's performance, he said

"The project could revolutionise housing in SA. It is a black economic empowerment project which will be built largely by small contractors. There may be some unhappiness about one developer getting so many subsidies, but this is to be expected."

Other sources in the construction industry said the project raised a host of questions, such as why Lawrence was awarded such a large contract on unserviced land when local authorities with serviced land occupied by squatters were struggling to get subsidies

BD 27/7/98

(127)

(127)

BD 27/7/98

Residents call off protests after council intervenes (127)

By HOPEWELL RADEBE

86/7/98
S.A. 24/7/98

Residents of Alrapark in Nigel suspended their planned consumer boycott and stayaway yesterday after the local council pledged to speed up delivery of houses and services

Greater Nigel executive committee chairman Sakie Kekana said the decision was taken at report-back meetings held on Wednesday and yesterday

He said that although the council had amicably addressed the 11 concerns of the residents, it was still bitter about the burning of mayor Germaine Visser's house on Wednesday

In an agreement document sent to The Star, the council requested the Alrapark Civic Association to speedily raise any objections it may have to the appointment of Group 5, a company that won the tender to develop houses in the area

Kekana said "If there are no objections, we will instruct the company to submit a formal application for funds to province in respect of the proposed housing development

"However, people should know that development would only commence once the province approved the project and forwarded the funds to the developer," he said

The council has instructed the town clerk to organise workshops for residents to explain the billing system; and to fix the taxi route through the squatter camp, as agreed with civic leaders and the taxi industry

It undertook to discuss issues with Visser, and to hold regular feedback meetings with the residents about future developments

Civic association chairman Eric Dlamini could not be reached for comment

Business Day

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28 1998

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Calls for inquiry into award of R412,5m housing subsidy scheme

Robyn Chalmers

CALLS mounted yesterday for a commission of inquiry into the awarding of SA's biggest subsidised housing scheme after an independent engineer's report raised doubts about the viability of the R412,5m project.

The controversy centres on the awarding of 27 500 institutional subsidies to two companies, Antelom Investments and Felorday Investments, both of which are owned by developer Keith Lawrence. The projects, to be

completed over eight years on two tracts of land, were facilitated by Gauteng Housing Board chairman Martin van Zyl, who recused himself during board discussions of the schemes.

The deal was defended yesterday by Gauteng housing department head Mogopodi Mokoena, who said that the proper procedures were followed in awarding the project.

However, an independent engineer's report indicated that there could be problems with the viability of the schemes. Referring to the proposed de-

velopment of 12 300 housing units at Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, the report said no bulk services were available and providing them would take two years and cost R84m.

The development was too far away from Pretoria to be viable, it said. The North West Housing Board had already allocated 9 000 subsidies to eliminate the housing shortage in the area.

On the proposed development of 15 200 houses at Vlakfontein, near Vereeniging, the report said existing water reservoir and purification works

could not accommodate a project of this magnitude. A new R14m reservoir would have to be constructed, along with a R2m link service. These had not been budgeted for.

The report said a total of 24 000 subsidised houses were already being developed in the Vaal triangle area.

It also emerged yesterday that Hammanskraal farm no 112JR — for which the Gauteng Housing Board paid Lawrence's company, Antelom Investments, R11,7m upfront — remained registered at the Pretoria

deeds office in the name Stephen Douglas Rens as at July 10.

The president of the SA Residential Developers' Association, Chris Cudmore, said there was concern that so many subsidies had been allocated to a single developer when applications totalling R27m were awaiting approval.

Ian Davidson of the Democratic Party and Johan Kilian of the National Party both called for an inquiry into the awarding of the contract.

00 28/7/98 . Comment: Page 13



High commissioners' wives and African Diplomatic Women's Group (ADWG) members Goedtswe Tebape of Botswana and Folbe Rugumayo of Uganda during a visit to one of the Care Homes in Lyttelton Manor, Pretoria, at the weekend. The ADWG donated R5 500 to the Care Home project which looks after HIV-positive and abandoned babies.

PIC MOTLAPELE
SEGALE

Row over E Rand low-cost houses

By Joshua Raboroko

A ROW is brewing over plans by the Gauteng government to build 862 low-cost houses in an area opposite the Western Platinum Refinery near Springs on the East Rand

The refinery uses toxic chemical substances that pose a serious health hazard to people

According to documents in possession of *Sowetan*, the vapour and/or fumes from the substances may result in deadly diseases and health disorders when absorbed into the body through inhalation

Concerned industrialists, trade unions and business people who spoke to *Sowetan* have expressed dismay that the Gauteng government planned to build houses in Reedville, near KwaThema, the East Rand's largest residential area.

identical area.

The refinery and other interested parties have objected to the proposed township, claiming that the authorities had not taken into account, among other things, provisions of "major hazard installation regulations"

They have raised their objections mainly because the substances — hydrochloric and nitric acids, ammonia water, hydrazine and carbonite chloride are harmful to the eyes, the skin and the respiratory tract.

Mr Isaac Sindwa of the Chemical Workers Union said the union was concerned about the safety of the people living in the area. The union and civic groups were planning meetings to discuss the issue.

Industrialist and manager of a nearby firm Mr Tom Doman said two companies had left the area, apparently as a result of the pungent smell

The refinery's general manager, Mr Rob Palmer, said they had taken reasonable steps to minimise the health and safety risks associated with the refining process

However, management and limitation of such risks were becoming increasingly difficult within a densely populated environment.

The company was concerned that the establishment of a high density residential township next to the refinery might render such risks unmanageable. Possible spillage of the toxic chemicals in the area could be calamitous

Palmer said the company would continue vigorously to oppose the government's plans

Spokesman for the Gauteng department of housing and local government Mr Manase Sefatlhe said people in the area would be assured of a clean atmosphere free from chemical dangers

DP accused of distorting facts

 (127)
Deborah Fine

BD 29/7/98

THE African National Congress (ANC) in the Johannesburg metropolitan council has accused the Democratic Party (DP) of "deliberately distorting the facts" about the city's electricity services.

Council deputy chairman Kenny Fihla was responding yesterday to claims by the DP that R50m could have been saved for ratepayers if the city's local authorities had opted to buy electricity from Eskom for redistribution to residents rather than generating it themselves via

old and less efficient municipal power stations.

DP councillor Mike Moriarty said that it cost the municipality 15,9c per kilowatt-hour to generate electricity, while electricity could have been purchased from Eskom for 14,9c per kilowatt-hour or even lower at 12,75c per kilowatt-hour if the council had entered into an electricity supply agreement for all the city's power requirements.

Fihla said yesterday that Eskom had a surplus power generation capacity.

In order to prevent this electricity surplus

from being wasted, local authorities with their own power stations were offered electricity by Eskom at lower rates in order to secure municipal purchases.

If municipalities did not have their own power stations with which to compete against Eskom, the parastatal would probably charge far more expensive rates, he said.

He also pointed out that Johannesburg residents who received electricity from the council paid less for the service than residents in Sandton and Soweto who purchased electricity directly from Eskom.

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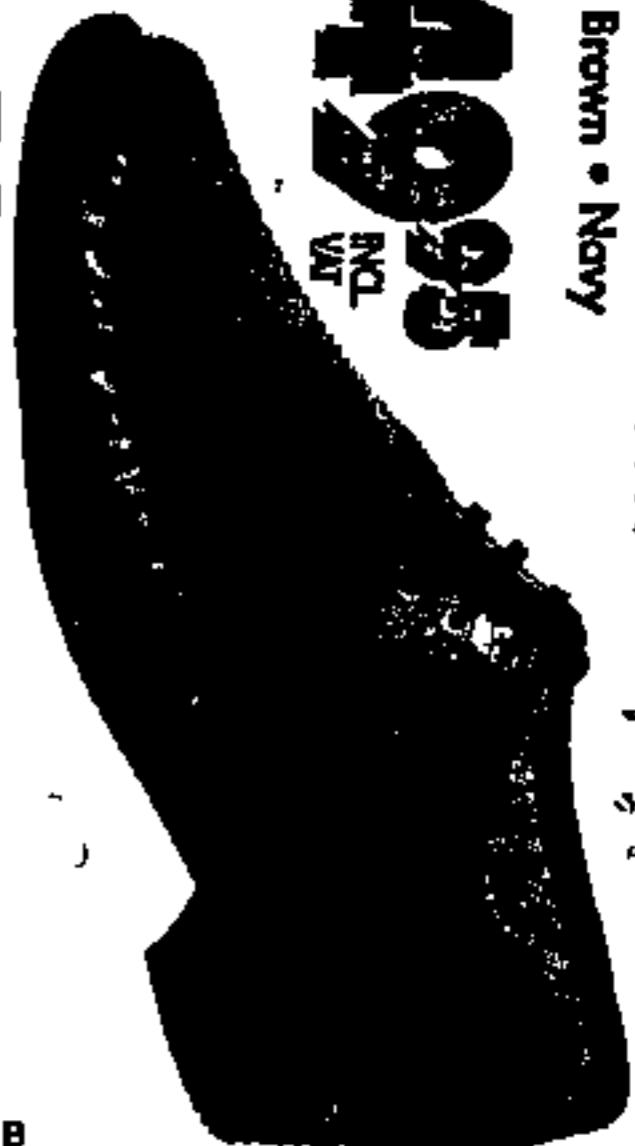
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SHOE CITY
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8 2/98

Mofokeng rejects calls for investigation of housing development

Robyn Chalmers

GAUTENG housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has refused to bow to calls for the cancellation of the controversial R412,5m subsidised housing scheme and launch an inquiry, saying the project had been thoroughly evaluated.

He queried the motives of political parties demanding that a commission of inquiry be appointed to look into the project, putting their calls down to electioneering. "Elections are coming and people are trying to score points"

He also expressed doubts about Business Day's motives in publishing reports on the project.

He said the project proposal provided an innovative financing mechanism which secured affordable end-user financing. The project agreement says it was awarded subject to a loan of R14bn being secured from the "US Federal Reserve Bank".

Mofokeng said the loan was obtained from a finance provider called Jeffers & Company but could provide no further details. Keith Lawrence, the

developer who was awarded the contract, said a grouping of US and European bankers had agreed to provide R900m over eight years.

Mofokeng said the project would deliver 50m² housing units at a fixed repayment of R290 a month over 10 years, and had the advantage of mass delivery. These characteristics had interested the provincial housing board.

The controversy surrounding the project arose from the awarding of 27 500 subsidies — SA's largest subsidised housing project — to two com-

panies controlled by Lawrence, Anfelom Investments and Felorday Investments. The board paid Lawrence R27m for two tracts of land at Hammanakraal, north of Pretoria and Vakfontein, near Vereeniging.

The services of Gauteng housing board chairman Marthin van Zyl were secured to facilitate the deal for a monthly payment of R10 000. Mofokeng said he was satisfied that Van Zyl acted in accordance with the Housing Act in recusing himself from meetings where the project was discussed.

Johan Kiban of the National Party said Mofokeng did not understand the principle of conflict of interest "when an administrative office bearer trades with assets and money he is supposed to administer on behalf of the public".

Mofokeng confirmed that only R53m had been committed for 4 000 units of the first phase of the project, with further commitments depending on the developer's performance. He pointed to several housing developments totalling 5 000 units, or more which had been approved by the board.

Cloud of suspicion over housing scheme

A NUMBER of low-cost housing controversies over the past year involving up to R750m in taxpayers' funds indicates the provincial housing board system is complex and open to abuse.

The Health special investigating unit is looking at 53 000 cases of alleged corruption totalling R150m and arising out of the housing subsidy scheme in KwaZulu-Natal. The R200m Mtho rural housing debacle in Mpumalanga, largely the result of bureaucratic bungling, led to a costly probe earlier this year and the scaling down of the scheme.

Questions are now being raised about the awarding of 27 500 subsidies at a cost of R412,5m to a relatively small developer, Keith Lawrence, who has links with the Gauteng housing board chairman Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has vigorously defended the project. Mofokeng, a skilled politician who has put housing on the map in Gauteng, is also a master at deflection. Rather than questioning the motives of this newspaper in publishing details of the project, Mofokeng — and his colleagues at the housing board — may wish to deal with the issues at hand.

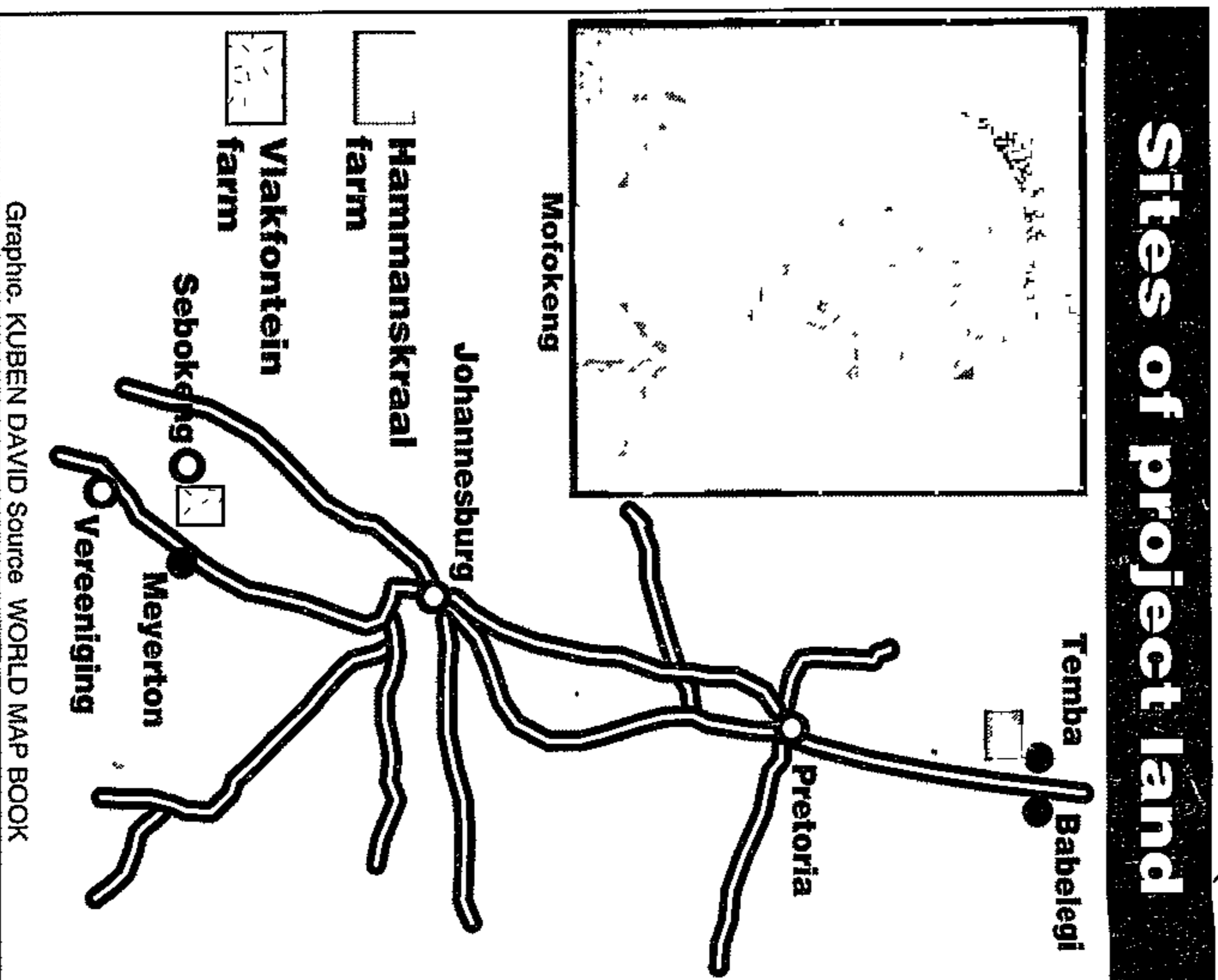
Perhaps the most controversial of these is that board chairman Martin van Zyl is being paid a R10 000 monthly fee by Lawrence to facilitate the housing deal. The provisions of the Housing Act of 1997 say that if a board member has an interest in a project, that member must recuse himself from decision-making meetings. The member must also disclose the interest to the MEC. Both of these were complied with.

There is a world of difference between a board member having a long-standing interest in a project and excusing himself once it comes up for discussion, and a board member toutng for business. There is a fundamental conflict of interest in Van Zyl, as the influential chairman of the board,

The controversy over a conflict of interest in the Gauteng Housing Board has shown up the system's loopholes. Specialist writer Robyn Chalmers looks at the issue

(127) 2/14/98

Sites of project land



Graphic: KUBEN DAVID Source: WORLD MAP BOOK

agreement stipulates that only 4 000 subsidies have been allocated formally.

Comments on the financial arrangements by those in the know range from "pie in the sky" to "much clarification is required".

One housing observer said Lawrence might have come up with a financial method of solving SA's housing problems which has to date eluded all SA's top banks and financiers.

"If so, we need to examine it closely to see if it can be applied to other parts of the country," said the observer.

There is a lack of clarity about the board's rationale in paying out R27m for two tracts of land at Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, and Viakfontein, near Vereeniging. Lawrence's company Felorday paid R2,4m for the Viakfontein land in March. Under the subsidy agreement dated June, the board agreed to pay R14,4m for the land with no added value. The board was aware the land was overpriced and made Lawrence put up a bank guarantee of R12m to cover the difference.

This begs the question why Lawrence was paid the R14,4m, which presumably is sitting in his bank account collecting interest. Why not simply pay him R2,4m for the cost of the land and forget about the bank guarantee which is easy to give against a subsidy payment of R14,4m? Clarification is also needed on the Hammanskraal land which until July 10 was registered in the name of Stephen Rens, although Lawrence was paid R11,7m for it.

Lawrence's track record as a developer must be scrutinised. This is a key gripe among large contractors and local authorities

waiting for subsidies who claim that Lawrence is relatively unknown. He was awarded 1 600 subsidies for a development at Protea South and has a project at Tsakane Extension 11. The Brakpan council says there have been lengthy delays in the construction and transfer of houses at the Tsakane Extension 11 project. No roads have been built although the developer was paid the full subsidy two years ago.

There are similar performance issues at Protea South, although Lawrence maintains that services have been installed at the project and 200 houses completed with transfers taking place.

Government will have to deal swiftly with loopholes which potentially allow the board system to be abused, like appointing active contractors to the board. One route would be for boards to appoint independent professional bodies to evaluate and assess subsidy applications. The boards would then review these assessments and make recommendations to provincial MECs.

The Housing Act makes provision for housing boards to be converted into largely advisory entities. As with many housing matters, Gauteng has taken the initiative and a restructured board, directly accountable to the MEC, will become operational in September.

Gauteng should not allow its enviable record on housing delivery to be overshadowed by the questionable approval of an innovative housing project. The scheme may well be the answer to SA's housing problems. This cannot be established until full details, and notably the financing arrangements, are revealed.

These must be made public immediately to quell rising industry and public concerns about the scheme. Once all the facts are on the table, Gauteng premier Mathole Motshekga can make an informed decision on whether or not to launch a commission of inquiry

agreeing to facilitate a project which requires board approval. Developers have every right to express doubts about the awarding of the contract. Many small and large developers, as well as local authorities, with serviced land occupied by squatters and close to urban areas have been waiting up to two years for subsidies. Lawrence, with two tracts of unserviced land far from urban areas and with a financing scheme which appears innovative at best, was smartly awarded the biggest subsidised housing project in SA.

A key issue is that of the project's financing arrangements. The scheme was awarded subject to Lawrence obtaining a R1,4bn overseas loan from the "UIS Federal Reserve Bank". In return, the provincial government agreed to make R412,5m available to fund 27 500 institutional subsidies over eight years.

To safeguard these funds the province formally committed only 4 000 subsidies at R53m for the initial phase of the project. The allocation of further funds depends on the developer's performance. Houses of around 50m² will be provided to qualifying beneficiaries at a monthly instalment of R290 over 10 years.

Housing experts say that, taking economies of scale into account, a quality 50m² house will cost in the region of R45 000 to R50 000. Simple arithmetic shows that a monthly repayment of R290 over 10 years will bring in R35 000 a house. Taking the R15 000 subsidy into account, the total amount a unit is R50 000. It is unclear how the financiers plan to make any money on their substantial loans or how additional costs for the unbuilt bulk infrastructure



IT'S A FILTHY CITY. That's Pallo Jordan's verdict, but over the next few months all that is set to change in the once Golden city

Photograph: CATHY PINNOCK

Cleaning and greening initiatives in the pipeline for Johannesburg

By CHARLENE SMITH

Johannesburg is so filthy, it is looking like a London sewer, Environmental Affairs' and Tourism Minister Pallo Jordan says.

"We are trying to push municipal governments into taking a firmer hand in terms of keeping cities clean. It is not that they are not cleaning, but they have not come to terms with the changed demography of cities."

To boost awareness and seek methods to improve environmental management and combat litter and pollution, Jordan's ministry will be launching a range of campaigns in September. The campaigns will focus on cleaning and greening, with a strong anti-litter campaign and exhortations to people to clean the areas they live in. The Government will also encourage communities and business to look at environmental management campaigns as ways to create jobs - as some paper and plastics recycling companies are already doing.

Yesterday, Jordan's ministry published its White Paper on Environmental Management and Integrated Pollution, which will be developed as a bill before being tabled in Parliament during the current parliamentary session.

The portfolio committee on environmental affairs and tourism will hold joint public hearings at the end of August, and will take into account more than 80 written submissions

from non-governmental organisations, business and academic institutions, among others. Jordan says the "depth of debate on environmental management, its impact on and by humans, its scope of activities, and the extent to which environmental law affects social and economic matters is essential to the challenges of sustainable development".

Jordan himself has come in for flak recently for not acting fast enough on key issues. This week, the parliamentary committee on environmental affairs lambasted the department for not acting on a damning report, handed to the minister 15 months ago, concerning Thor Chemicals, a mercury recycling plant. The plant has regularly featured in news headlines about pollution and poor management.

Key issues

The committee has called on that department as well as those of Health, Labour, and Water Affairs to meet on August 17 to hear suggestions from chemical waste experts on a way to solve the problem.

On a positive note, Jordan's department is paying more attention to the destruction of marine resources. The ministry is creating a new body, Marine Fisheries, which will replace the Sea Fisheries Department in September. This comes in the wake of new initiatives worldwide to protect and develop marine resources.

Charlene 1/8/98

Subsidy for low earners

The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and its local councils yesterday approved an indigency policy to assist people with an income of less than R1 500 a month, councillor Loretta King, chairperson of the council's credit control task team, said.

"The assistance envisaged includes a municipal service subsidy sufficient to cover the cost of 10kl of water - enough for a household of six - sewerage and refuse removal.

"It does not cover the cost of electricity," King said.

She said a pilot project

would begin on August 3 and would cover four suburbs, one from each of the local councils - Orlando East, Orange Farm, Bertrams and Dobsonville.

People who wanted to apply for assistance needed to fill out application forms, which would be screened by a trained field worker.

A panel consisting of councillors and officials would assess the application.

Application forms would be available from councillors, council paypoints, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations. - Sapa

Har 11/8/98

(127) ()

Council wants defaulters tried ⁽¹²⁷⁾

Sowetan 6/8/98

By Sapa and Sowetan Reporter

A SPECIAL municipal court should be set up to prosecute Pretoria rates defaulters, the Pretoria City Council said yesterday

City treasurer Mare-Lise Fourie said the matter was raised with Gauteng local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka earlier this week and was still under discussion

"Cases being tried in criminal courts seem to drag on forever," she said. "We need a special court where these criminals can be tried quickly and effectively so that we can get our money back faster."

Fourie said the council was owed R534 million by the end of June, compared to R385 million over the same period last year.

A total of 66 852 defaulters have had their water and electricity supplies cut since January

In June the council received an average R6 million a day in water and electricity payments, about R5 million a day less than usual.

"We lost approximately R20 million a week, and had to pay between R60 and R70 million in interest as a result," Fourie said.

"If we don't step up our campaign against non-payers, the city will come to a halt. We need the money urgently"

Fourie said some of the council's creditors were threatening legal action because they were not receiving their money.

The council was unable to start new projects because of its cash flow problem.

Civic associations in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi have in the past months challenged the council over what they termed "high rental accounts" and accused the authorities of being insensitive towards pensioners who could not afford payments.

Residents accused the authorities of charging them huge amounts for electricity and water consumption.

Atteridgeville residents recently staged a march on the Union Buildings where they submitted a memorandum detailing their grievances

ANALYSIS

Court's ruling may not pacify ratepayers

(107) PHD 7/8/98
 The damage caused by the incompetent handling of the Sandton rates issue is not going to be undone no matter what the Constitutional Court finds in the court action before it later this month, writes Jonny Steinberg

THE court case closely associated with the Sandton ratepayers boycott, in which thousands of middle class residents have refused to pay rates to the council for the past two years, will be heard in the Constitutional Court on August 18.

In 1996, the Johannesburg metropolitan council passed a budget which legislated a standard property rate of 6,45c in the rand across Johannesburg's four municipal structures. Based on calculated rates income, the eastern substructure, which includes the affluent northern suburbs and draws on 49,7% of Johannesburg's rates base, would be levied for R438 330 000, and the northern substructure for R4 223 000.

Money raised from the levy would be distributed between the Johannesburg metropolitan council and the western and southern substructures. The latter two share the burden of service provision in Soweto and their combined rates base is smaller than the east's.

The eastern and northern substructures both endorsed the 6,45c rate and the levy when they passed their respective budgets by a two-thirds majority.

After an initial silence on the issue, the Sandton and northern ratepayers' associations responded to a popular outcry among residents by calling on ratepayers to boycott the increase, and pay the old rate plus 20%.

The Democratic Party (DP), which voted in favour of the standard rate, claimed that in favour of the standard rate, councilors had betrayed an informal agreement to plough some of the levy back into the east and the north. Some of its councilors also came out in favour of the boycott.

At present, the eastern substructure claims that 12 600 of its residents are not paying rates. Council spokesman Keith Pascook says that R296m of the substructure's standing arrears are attributable to the boycott.

As the boycott gained momentum, several prominent corporations which own property in Sandton, among them Federe, Liberty Life and Momentum Property Investments, launched a legal challenge against the levy.

They lost in the high court and appealed to the supreme court, which passed the appeal on to the Constitutional Court.

The grounds of the business's legal challenge has been whittled down as the case has climbed SA's judicial hierarchy. In next week's hearing, their case will rest, among other grounds, on one clause in the interim constitution. "A local government shall be competent to levy and recover such property rates, levies, fees, taxes and tariffs as may be necessary to exercise its powers and perform its functions provided that within each local government such rates, levies shall be based on a uniform structure for its area of jurisdiction."

The applicants argue that the constitutional clause above bars the eastern and northern substructures from raising a levy to subsidise the work of other local authorities. They also argue that by levying some substructures and not others, the Johannesburg metropolitan council violated the stipulation that rates be based on a uniform structure.

The respondents, the Johannesburg metropolitan council and its four substructures, argue that the applicants' interpretation of "uniform structure" is "unduly formalistic" and "flies in the face of the spirit and purpose of the bill of rights."

The spirit of the bill of rights, they argue, "requires well-endowed local authorities in areas previously reserved for whites to share their resources with the underserved local authorities to which blacks were previously relegated."

Legal pundits may well applaud the fact that one of the mayor's philosophical fault-lines dividing the new SA, the question of redistribution from rich to poor, has shifted its battle to the Constitutional Court's Breitenstein premises.

However, the court's decision will do little to shape the future of local government finance. Nor will it do much to settle the battle between the council and the affluent.

The transitional local government legislation which divides Johannesburg into four substructures is seen to be eclipsed by a new model of local government, one which will in all probability place taxation powers at the metropolitan level.

There is little chance that the ambiguities which pervade the transitional legislation will find their way into the new local government dispensation.

"One city, one tax base has been the guiding principle of local government legislation since the beginning of the transition," a source at the Johannesburg council said.

"It was endorsed by all major players in SA politics. There is no question that a hastily drafted and ambiguous piece of transitional legislation will leave Soweto poverty-stricken for eternity. If the court decides that current legislation allows Sandton to monopolise its rates income, the legislation will simply be changed."

If the court's decision will do little to shape the future of local government finance, neither will it settle the dispute at stake.

That dispute should have been mediated by the political process, and it is an indictment of local government politicians that the protagonists turned to the court at all.

That while middle class suburbs share their rates base with the poverty-stricken was always going to be an inevitability of the new order. The alternative would have been a perverse and unthinkable echo of apartheid. That it was going to be a sensitive issue, one loaded with the symbolism of racial fear and political reaction, was equally inevitable.

Yet Sandton residents, many among them middle class families who walk the course of their lives out a precarious tightrope of long-term credit, were told three weeks in advance that their rates would increase from 2,65c to 6,45c in the rand. The council effectively invited an outburst of hostile reaction to the new order.

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INTERIM HEADLINE EARNINGS UP 62% GROUP INCOME STATEMENT

Unaudited 6 months to June 1998	Audited Year to December 1997
R000	R000
1998	1997
Increase	%
R000	R000

INTERIM HEADLINE EARNINGS UP 62%
 GROUP BALANCE SHEET

Unaudited June 1998	Audited December 1997
R000	R000
1998	1997
June	December

NET ASSETS 444 714
 NET LIABILITIES 247 869
 NET ASSETS LESS NET LIABILITIES 196 845

Sandton ratepayers protest outside the council chambers



When ratepayers responded with outrage everyone was taken by surprise. The I and the ratepayers' association did so knee-jerk damage limitation by expressing outrage on behalf of a constituency they thought they might lose. The ANC feign indignation. The result was a council divided along primitive and dangerous lines.

In essence, the Constitutional Court being asked to heal the wounds inflicted by an incompetent political process. This is an impossible task. The problem is a political one - it is about relationships between local politicians and their constituents. Whatever the court may decide, the damage has been done.

It is not always a good thing when the social issues of the day reach the Constitutional Court. It is often simply a symptom of the art of politics being left in craft and unskilled hands. When politicians find the courts are not necessarily in a position to clean up the mess.

Why did this happen? ANC councilors insist that the blame lies at the doors of an inept opposition.

"We went through long and meticulous negotiations with both the DP and the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers," says the ANC's Mike Male. "They both agreed to the levy in good time. We presumed they were in touch with their constituents. But they had no report-back meetings, no flyers No wonder the levy came as a shock to Sandton residents."

The DP's Mike Mornary responded with outrage. "Yes, we did vote for the budget, but we were told in no uncertain terms that part of the levy would be ploughed back into the eastern substructure. We were naive enough not to get that commitment in writing," he said.

In truth, no one in the council did their sums, a source close to the eastern substructure during the 1996 budget vote said. "No one thought through the implications

Pretoria faces cash crisis as residents refuse to pay

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — Municipal account defaulters have plunged Pretoria into a cash crisis of more than R534m, with the council warning that it will soon be unable to pay creditors.

Total unpaid accounts amounted to R84m for contractors and R28m for supplies, city treasurer Mare-Lise Fourie said yesterday.

"It is one of the worst cash crises to face the city since the Muntoria blaze in March last year," Fourie said.

She said some of the council's creditors were now threatening legal action because they were not receiving any payments.

She warned that the council would step up its cut-off programme which has affected 66 852 defaulters since the beginning of the year.

Arrears owed to the council for services hit R534m at the end of last month, up more than R149m on this time last year, she said.

Fourie said municipal service payments had hit a low during June, with the council's incoming revenue dropping by R20m a week to daily payments of R6m. This was about R5m less than usual.

"We had to pay between R60m and

R70m in interest as a result," Fourie said, adding that the city would come to a standstill if the campaign against nonpayment was not stepped up.

She said it was possible that Pretoria would soon not be able to meet its obligations to Eskom and the Rand Water Board.

Of the 66 852 defaulters, only 31 140 had responded by paying off their arrears or by making special arrangements with the council for payment, Fourie said.

A survey conducted among the 34 000-odd residents who had ignored the council showed that about 80% of the respondents had reconnected their electricity supply illegally. Of the residents who had had their electricity cables completely removed, about 30% of the respondents had illegally reconnected them.

She called for the creation of a special court where criminals involved in the reconnection of electricity could be tried and said the idea of a special municipal court to prosecute rates defaulters had been discussed at a meeting with Gauteng local government MEC Sicelo Shiceka this week.

"The seriousness of the survival of local government will prompt this to be pushed as soon as possible," she said.

Exporters urged to forge new links

Nicola Jenvey

DURBAN — Local exporters should consider developing relationships with nontraditional trading partners in Europe as European Monetary Union approaches, says Nedcor chief economist Dennis Dykes.

Several European stock markets had achieved spectacular growth in the year to July as certain countries became possible candidates for union from January 1999.

In dollar terms Finland and Spain each grew 64%, Italy 67%, Portugal 52,3%, Belgium 48% and Greece 59%. Although not traditional SA trading

partners, Dykes believed their economies warranted local exports.

He said the short-term effect of union would be significant investor and trade interest, particularly from the US and Japan. The Deutschmark would strengthen as investment opportunities were pursued in Europe rather than Asia.

He warned that currency speculators who had traded in European currencies would seek profits elsewhere and SA could come under pressure.

Considering the effects for SA, union offered local exporters a region of 320-million people with a gross domestic product of about 80% of the US's.

Graduate detectives get to work

Stephen Laufer

CAPE TOWN — More than 500 SA Police Service members completed training at the newly created detective academy, along with 50 of their counterparts from other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi said yesterday.

Speaking at a parliamentary briefing, Mufamadi said the increased skills of SA detectives were already playing a role in closing the "sophistication gap" between criminals and police. Trained in part by US Federal Bureau of Investigation experts, the detectives had started contributing positively to key investigations.

Asked about crime's impact on SA's international image, Mufamadi said he did not want "to soft peddle on the problems, nor sanitise the image". However some reporting made it seem as though SA was the only country in the world with a crime problem.

Organised crime made an annual global profit of R9,3-trillion, equal to 4% of the volume of the global economy. Drug profits worldwide alone were greater than the gross domestic product of the entire African continent.

Mufamadi said a coordinating committee of SADC police chiefs was ensuring that law enforcement agencies were able to have an impact on cross-border crime.

Pretoria faces cash crisis as residents refuse to pay

Stephané Bothma

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"The seriousness of the survival of local government will prompt this to be pushed as soon as possible," she said.

7/8/98 (127)

Mofokeng rejects call for inquiry

Robyn Chalmers

A MOTION for an immediate inquiry into the awarding of the controversial R412,8m housing project in Vlakkfontein and Hammanskraal was rejected in the Gauteng provincial legislature yesterday (127).

In a heated debate, Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng challenged opposition parties to provide evidence of wrongdoing. Until such time no inquiry would be launched and the project would not be suspended, he said.

The debate centred on the awarding of 27 500 subsidies — SA's largest subsidised housing project — to two companies controlled by developer Keith Lawrence, Antelom Investments and Felorday Investments. The project was facilitated by Gauteng housing board chairman Martin van Zyl for a fee of R10 000 a month. The board paid Lawrence R27m for two tracts of land at Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria and Vlakkfontein, near Vereeniging.

Ian Davidson of the Democratic Party said answers to specific queries on the project were required. These in-

cluded why R27m was paid upfront for undeveloped farm land and the ethics of Van Zyl promoting a project to his own board.

NP legislature member Vincent Thusi called on Mofokeng to explain whether there was a special relationship between Lawrence and Van Zyl. He also asked for clarity on the future viability of the project. "Housing is crucial aspect of SA's development. This sort of scheme cannot be sanctioned without a full investigation," he said.

Mofokeng said it was clear the rules were followed and that calls for a commission of inquiry were not backed up by prima facie evidence. The state attorney was instructed to ensure the subsidies were protected and he did so when finalising the contract.

Mofokeng said the provincial housing development board had considered the project application within the guidelines of the subsidy implementation manual. Van Zyl had told the MEC, as required by the Housing Act of 1997, that he had an interest in the project and had recused himself from meetings where it was discussed.

BD 14/8/98

E Rand resettlements mount

Further 1 800 families at the Mayibuye site in Lethabong brings the total to 14 000 families who have been found formal and informal housing this year

(127) Star 18/8/98

By ANNA COX

Another 1 800 families will be settled at the Mayibuye project site in Lethabong on the East Rand this week - bringing to 14 000 the number of families resettled by the Khayalami Metropolitan Council this year

The families have been settled in formal and informal housing as part of the council's R500-million housing project which during the past year has already seen the settlement of 70 000 people in the area

Gauteng MEC for local government Sicelo Shiceka described Khayalami Metro council as one of the most progressive and active in the province

During a visit to the major projects in the area this month, Shiceka said the three local councils which fell under

the Khayalami metro - Lethabong, Kempton Park/Thembisa and Midrand - had embarked on numerous, successful projects

Another housing project opened recently was the Winnie Mandela Park in the Kempton Park/Thembisa area where 11 500 families were settled

This project was constructed around an existing informal settlement area

A further 600 families will be settled at Klipfontein in the near future in a joint venture between AECI and the Lethabong council

Ebony Park, in Midrand, which houses some 1 500 fami-

lies, is also currently being expanded to 3 000 units. This area has dolomite problems and is exposed to high and medium risk for subsidence

A dolomite risk management system has been implemented which involves the community being made aware of the risks such as the damming of run-off water, leaking pipes, any other surface water accumulations and sinkholes

During his visit, Shiceka officially opened the Rabi Ridge Skills Training and Development Centre

This was constructed by local labourers who were taught building skills

The centre will offer skills training as well as facilities for

the disabled to enter the labour market

Shiceka also visited the Thiteng taxi rank in Thembisa which is currently being extended at a cost of R1,6-million

The rank, which is in the centre of Thembisa, is surrounded by many informal activities. It serves 18 destinations

At present the long distance and internal routes are operated from the sidewalks and open spaces around the ranks

There are about 1 000 taxi trips each way from the rank during the morning and afternoon peak period

A washing facility will also be available

The last phase of work will be to upgrade hawkers' facilities and to introduce close circuit television as part of the community safety project

The centre will offer skills training and more

Gauteng paid firm R14m for land

Robyn Chalmers

DESPITE a formal valuation on June 10 this year that found a property at Vlakfontein to be worth R2,4m, developer Keith Lawrence's company, Felorday Investments, was paid R14,4m for the land on June 8

This follows the recent awarding of 27 500 low-cost housing subsidies totalling R412,5m — SA's largest subsidised housing project — to two companies owned by Lawrence Antelom Investments and Felorday Investments. The project was facilitated by Gauteng housing board chairman Martin van Zyl for a fee of R10 000 a month.

A report by Robert Schilz, chairman of the

valuation board for the southern metropolitan substructure, indicated that the SA Land Development Organisation (Saldo) — another company owned by Lawrence — bought the land for R1,5m in June.

The valuation report was tabled in the Gauteng legislature last week by Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng. It indicated that the property had not been improved since it was bought by Saldo.

"The subject property is not even properly fenced in," the report stated.

"A willing seller should be prepared to sell the property on the 10th day of June for an amount of R2,4m."

However, a copy of a

cheque from the Gauteng provincial government paymaster indicates that Felorday Investments was paid R14,4m for the 432ha piece of land at Vlakfontein. This was dated June 8, two days before the official valuation was done.

The report also indicated that only 300ha of the land was suitable for township development.

Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said recently that, to protect the state's subsidies, a guarantee of R12m was provided by the developer on the Vlakfontein payment.

Mofokeng has vigor-

ously defended the project, saying the terms and conditions of the contract were finalised and approved by the state attorney to ensure compliance with the housing subsidy scheme's implementation manual.

The Democratic Party's Ian Davidson called yesterday for Mofokeng to resign, saying the irregularities were tantamount to fraud inflicted on the taxpayer.

Johan Kilian of the National Party said he had met Jan Swanepoel of the Office for Serious Economic Offences to discuss the awarding of the projects.

PD 18/8/98 (127)

First phase of housing scheme complete

Business Day Reporter

(127)
BD 19/8/98

THE low-cost housing programme has taken a big step forward on the East Rand with the handing over of 268 homes to the community of Masetjhaba View Extension Two in Nigel

The developers, Group Five, completed phase one of the project in the record time of six weeks.

The R40,7m project, which began in mid-May, was expected to be completed by the end of the year with the provision of 2 353 units

This means that about 7 000 people, many of whom are homeless, will have their own homes by Christmas

At the recent handing-over ceremony, Piet Martins, the MD of Group Five Building Goldstem Housing, said the development was well ahead of schedule. "Initially, as developers, we planned to build close on 200 units a month. However as a result of the co-operation and excellent working relationship we have with the greater Nigel transitional local council and the community, we have pushed up our delivery

to 450 units a month. This puts us in a position to complete the project by the end of the year"

Group Five, which claims to be the largest provider of homes in SA, employed 800 local people to help build the Masetjhaba houses

"Fast track delivery without compromising on quality is the only route to go to meet the needs of the homeless," said Martins

"We have been fortunate in having the support of the local builders' forum, the community and the council who have allowed us to achieve this objective

"The development is an indication that when all the parties work together for the good of the community, there is no reason why the targets for housing delivery cannot be met"

Sandton rates levy of 1996 'was illegal'

(127)
Jonny Steinberg

BD 19/8/98
THE local government levy which sparked the ratepayers boycott in Sandton in 1996 was illegal and should be declared invalid, counsel for Fedsure and others argued yesterday in their Constitutional Court case against the Johannesburg metropolitan council.

The case concerns the legality of a R438m levy which was imposed by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council on its eastern substructure in 1996.

The purpose of the levy was to subsidise the work of the southern and western substructures, which shared the burden of service delivery in Soweto.

About 12 600 Sandton residents began boycotting rates after their rate charges were increased from 2,65c in the rand to 6,45c in the rand, an increase of 250%.

Counsel argued that the metropolitan council did not have a legislative mandate to subsidise or to levy its substructures.

The applicants also claimed that the raising of the levy violated a constitutional clause stipulating that local government could only raise levies based on a uniform structure and on the basis of gross income.

Responding argument will be given today.

'Refund ratepayers for unlawful hike'

(127) Star 21/8/98

By ANNA COX

Greater Johannesburg Eastern council ratepayers who had suffered hardship through the "unlawful" imposition of a huge rates hike in 1996 should be refunded, Pieter van Blerk SC, counsel for a group of Sandton businesses, has told the Constitutional Court.

Van Blerk said yesterday the R438,3-million levy imposed on the Eastern council by the metro council, and the uniform rate of 6,45c in the rand to fund the levy, were both unlawful.

Van Blerk, who was summing up, is acting for a group of Sandton businesses, including Liberty Life, Fedsure and Momentum Property, that are attempting to overturn aspects of the 1996/97 budgets of the metro and Eastern councils following increases in business rates of up to 400%.

"The levy was imposed unlawfully and therefore, in the interest of good governance and justice, has to be repaid by the metro and the Eastern council.

"By paying it over, the Eastern council co-operated with the metro and did not look after

the interests of ratepayers," said Van Blerk. "Although what will be done with the money once it is returned will be determined politically, ratepayers should be refunded."

He said the council would have to impose a new rate under the Local Authorities Rating Ordinance, which it was competent to do, even at this stage.

Robert Wise SC said the councils claim the imposition of the levy and the application of a uniform rate for the entire city was a recognition of the stark inequalities between different enclaves within the greater metropolitan area. There was also the dire need for urban upgrading in Soweto and other surrounding townships.

This approach sought to begin to address the imbalances created by apartheid.

The decision of the Constitutional Court will affect thousands of Sandton ratepayers who embarked on a partial rates boycott because of increases. It is estimated the boycott has already cost the council about R200-million.

The hearing ended yesterday. Judgment was reserved.

Moral high ground

not above the law
ST 23/8/98
(127)

The way the Sandton rates case has been handled is as important as the outcome,
writes CAPTAIN RICKARD

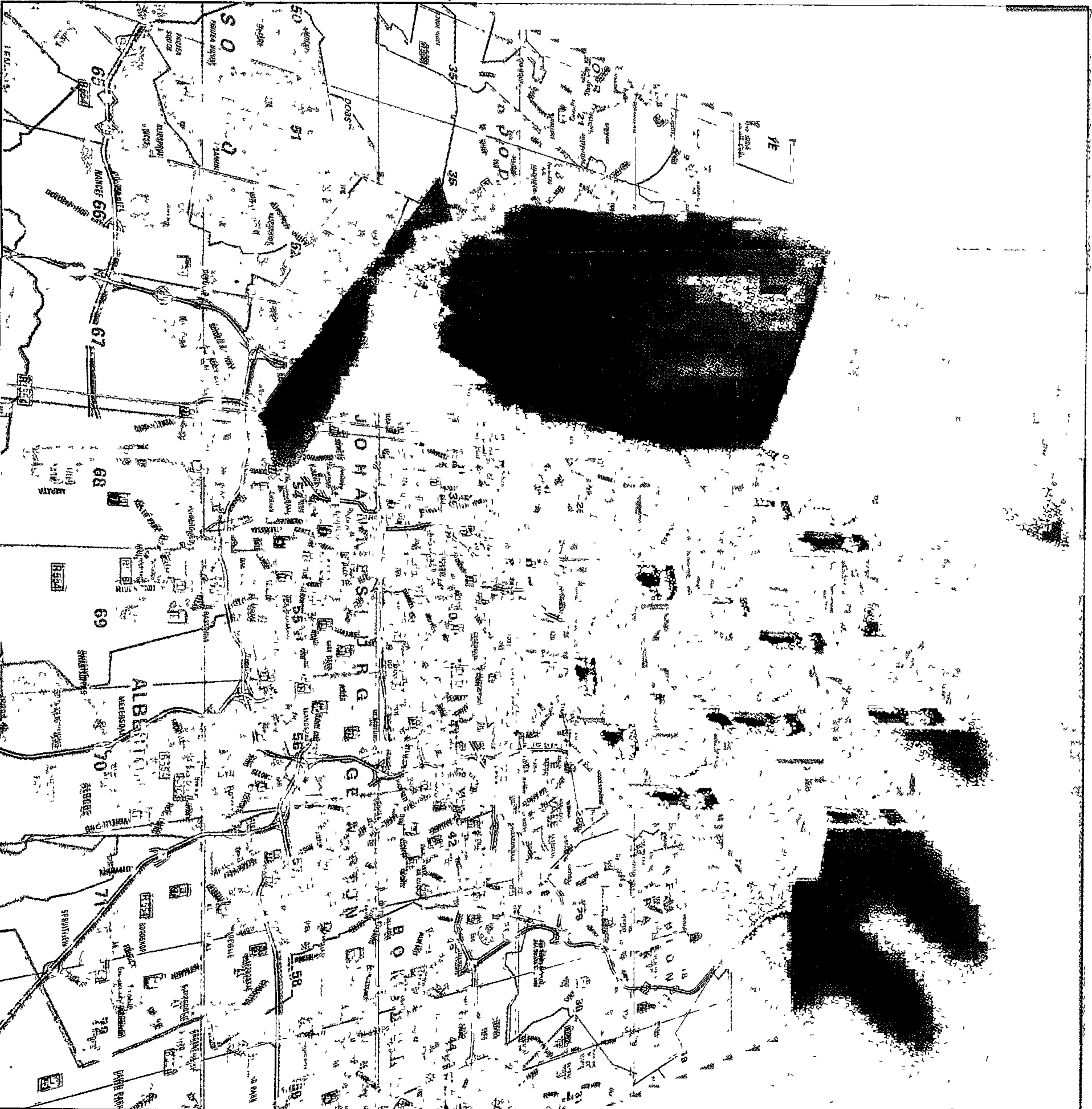
Johannesburg seems set to become a united megacity, without the geographic and structural divisions that operated at the time the rates were increased. Since funds would then be easily transferred from one part of the city for use in another, the second issue might appear to be merely academic. Far from it. If the protesting Sandton ratepayers are correct, there will be the question of return-

for, the council had decided to impose a uniform rate throughout the four substructures, and to use surpluses in the operating budgets of the wealthier councils to subsidise the deficits in the budgets of the poorer councils. But during the three days of oral argument, this emotive sociopolitical dimension of the argument — what consideration should be given to righting the aftermath of apartheid — rarely surfaced.

There it was parcelled out between the metropolitan council and its substructures in the south and the west. None of it was spent in Sandton or in the rest of the eastern substructure into which Sandton — and neighbouring Alexandra — falls.

Businesses in the area predicted the unexpected hike would have devastating consequences for them and their clients. The insurance giants among them said their clients included "people from all walks of life", shorthand for saying that even some poor black people have life insurance.

The ratepayers first asked the High Court for help, but Judge Ezra Goldstein found in favour of the metropolitan council and the matter went to the Appeal Court in Johannesburg. There the court identified some confusion about the law in terms of the interim Constitution, still in operation at the time of the increase, the appeal over the rates imposition appeared to be a matter that the Constitutional Court should decide. The case was sent back to Bramfontein.



Graphic: SHAHIN IRWIN

23/8/82
12

consideration
The Constitutional Court prizes brevity and pithy argument. Lawyers are encouraged to make their point, engage in debate with judges who ask questions, then sit down. Few cases heard so far have been scheduled for more than a day, the exceptions probably being the certification of the Constitution (which lasted a fortnight) and the death penalty case (which lasted a week).

Yet the Sandton matter was set down for a remarkable three days. In that time, two major legal issues had to be resolved, each with a number of related problems which court, under the interim Constitution, has jurisdiction over questions, such as those in this case, that appear to involve matters of administrative justice, and did the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and the eastern metropolitan substructure act legally when they raised the rates in the eastern region and then used the surplus to subsidise the shortfall in other metropolitan areas?

No-one can say the judges sanctioned the view that the wealthy are milch cows for redistribution, regardless of the law

ing almost R500-million to those from whom it was improperly raised.
How to achieve this without plunging local government finances into utter chaos will be an extraordinarily challenging task for the court.

Commercial confidence is sure to be influenced by the judgment in addition to the actual outcome, business will be looking at the reasoning in the decision to seek confirmation that the court demands of all parties that they act within the law.

In their written argument, lawyers for the local authorities claimed that the municipalities had acted within their powers when they raised the rates and paid the money over as subsidies to be used in other parts of greater Johannesburg.

But there was a strong subtext: apartheid had left its legacy on the urban geography of the city and the stark differences between services in black and white areas could be seen in the comparable quality of services.

As a matter of policy, there-

Instead the judges and lawyers focused on whether the almost unbelievably complex tangle of constitutional requirements, national legislation, schedules, annexures, proclamations and amended proclamations by the provincial premier had all been properly observed.

At one stage in the argument, David Osborn SC, appearing for the ratepayers, disputed whether the eastern substructure, of which Sandton was a part, had been legally entitled to agree to pay over the R438-million to the greater Johannesburg council.

In obvious frustration, Judge Albie Sachs asked whether it would have been beyond the powers of the substructure to make the decision on the basis of "good neighbourliness" — the idea of loving your neighbour.

There, in a sense, lies one kernel of the Sandton dispute. Everyone knows that formerly black areas must be developed using subsidies from the wealthy, formerly white areas if the court rubber-stamps the

rates bill, that's one thing. But with a price tag of almost R500-million, voluntary good neighbourliness seems to be just too expensive in the view of Sandton business.

The case holds an important lesson for the rest of the country. Just as the Constitutional Court has examined proclamations made by President Nelson Mandela and — in at least one case — has overturned his decision on the grounds that he had acted beyond his powers, so too the court has shown through its rigorous hearing of the Sandton case that even municipalities acting from the best of motives — creating equity and undermining the bad effects of apartheid — will be closely scrutinised to ensure they have acted within the law.

It's a crucially important message at a time when too many people believe that they are beyond accountability and above the law.

With a price tag of R500-million, voluntary neighbourliness seems just too expensive to Sandton business

Dispute over more land for Alex heats up again

(127) (S) Star 24/8/98
By Anna Cox

A long-running row over the fate of Frankenwald, a 270ha vacant piece of land on the Alexandra border which belongs to the University of the Witwatersrand, has hotted-up again.

It was originally destined for housing to alleviate the overcrowding in Alexandra but has instead been the subject of a bitter battle for the past two years.

The land was sold by Wits to the Eastern council last year, but residents in the neighbouring suburbs of Kelvin and Buccleuch took the matter to court saying the sale was illegal because of several technical irregularities.

The Johannesburg High Court upheld this, set aside the sale and ordered the R25-million plus interest paid by council to Wits, be returned.

Earlier this month Alexandra residents staged a march at Wits and handed vice-chancellor Professor Colin Bundy a memorandum urging the university to release Frankenwald for development.

Some Alexandra organisations want it developed for low cost housing while others believe the number of housing units would be limited and a trade and technology school offering skills and employment would be of more use.

A memorandum was also

handed to council urging it to find ways of acquiring the land for residential development.

Mike Beea, speaking for five associations – the Alex Land and Property Owners' Association, the Alex Civic Association, the Alex Unemployed Residents' Association, the Alex Returnees' Support Committee and the Kelvin and Buccleuch Residents' Association – said because of granite on the land and a 550 cubic-metre dump which would have to be removed, at least R230-million would have to be spent before infrastructure could be put in.

"Then to put up 4 500 units at R15 000 each would be a waste. That money could be spent on improving conditions in Alex. We want it used for quality education for blacks who were specifically excluded by virtue of the 'Bantu education' legacy," he said.

Alexandra ANC deputy secretary Mike Mogomane said there was a desperate need for additional land in Alex.

"The political philosophy of Wits recognises the imbalances in communities and the land should therefore be made available," he said.

Wits vice-chancellor Professor Colin Bundy said the university council had decided last week not to rush into anything with regard to the Frankenwald land, and that all options would be studied carefully before a decision was reached.

Gauteng to appoint new housing advisory board

Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng government is set to appoint a new housing advisory board this month, which should help avoid potential conflicts of interest arising from the awarding of contracts.

Concerns have been raised within government about potential conflicts of interest arising out of the appointment of active developers to housing boards.

These developers, who are appointed for their skills and knowledge of the industry, make decisions on the awarding of projects in conjunction with other board members.

The recent awarding of SA's largest low-cost housing project to contractor Keith Lawrence, who had links to Gauteng housing board chairman Martin van Zyl, appeared to fuel these concerns. However, Gauteng housing de-

partment head Mogopodi Mokoena said the move to appoint a new board was not motivated by the awarding of the project.

Mokoena said the tenure of the old board came to an end last month, and the formation of the new body was in line with the Gauteng housing bill, which was based on the new Housing Act.

The bill made provision for the housing MEC to be responsible for the functions, powers and duties

of the provincial housing board, and be advised by a new body.

Mokoena said the names of potential board appointments were presented to the Gauteng housing and land affairs standing committee last week.

A subcommittee was expected to recommend a shortlist of names to Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng later this month, who would then take a list to the Gauteng executive

of the provincial housing board, and be advised by a new body.

Mokoena said it was unclear whether old board members would be recommended to join the new advisory board. This depended on the shortlist put forward by the committee.

However, industry officials doubted Van Zyl and other board members would be able to survive the controversy surrounding the awarding of Vlakfontein and Hammanskraal projects.

A total of 27 500 institutional subsidies were awarded to two companies, Antelom Investments and Felorday Investments, both of which are owned by Lawrence.

The projects, to be completed over eight years on two tracts of land at Vlakfontein near Vereeniging and Hammanskraal near Pretoria, were facilitated by Van Zyl, who recused himself during board discussions of the schemes.

board

Workers to march over companies' non-payment for services

(127) SAU 7/9/98

Thousands of municipal workers are expected to march tomorrow to protest against the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's reluctance to take action against big companies that are not paying for municipal services.

The march will be jointly organised by the SA Municipal Workers' Union and the Independent Allied Trade Union.

Participating workers are to

demand that the council implement credit control measures against defaulting companies, which owe the council millions

Union representatives said giant corporations were taking advantage of the council's policy of subsidising people who were unable to pay for services, by also not paying

The unions said the council was also unable to implement the 4% annual wage increase

agreement because of non-payment of services

Other matters include vacant posts which had not been filled, which, according to the unions, was hampering the delivery of municipal services

Bus, refuse removal and library services will be affected.

Workers will converge at the Library Gardens before marching to the Civic Centre in Braamfontein - Staff Reporter



Thousands of municipal workers, black and white, marched on the Metropolitan Council offices in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, yesterday to present a memorandum of their grievances and a demand for salary increases and improved working conditions

PIC LEN KUMALO

Council workers march in Jo'burg

(127) Sowetan 9/9/98

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THOUSANDS of municipal workers marched through the Johannesburg city centre yesterday to protest against the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's failure to collect service charges amounting to millions of rands from big business.

However, the council said disruption to services was minimal because the estimated 20 000 workers had stayed away from work only briefly.

The joint march by members of the SA Municipal Workers Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union proceeded from Library Gardens to the council chambers in Braamfontein to pre-

sent a memorandum to Johannesburg mayor Mr Isaac Mogase.

A council spokesman said skeleton staff had been put in place to ensure minimum disruption in transport, traffic, electricity supply and operation services after an agreement between management and officials of both trade unions.

Mogase accepted the memorandum on behalf of the council and said he was fully informed of the workers' grievances and promised to address them after consultation with the council.

"I told them that I had to consult with the council and they know there is nothing that could be done without consultation. I felt honoured by their respect for understanding that I cannot address these within

days without proper consultation," he said.

The unions are demanding the settlement of huge service debts owed by businesses to the council and that the role of consultants and independent contractors be made clear as they are costing the council exorbitant fees not commensurate with their value.

Bearing placards reading "Cost cutting costs lives" and "No work, no pay and no votes", the workers marched peacefully as police monitored the protest.

Samwu chairman Mr Mbongeni Mabaso said the unions opposed the privatisation of municipal services, the hiring of contractors and the expensive overseas trips councillors often undertook.

Jo'burg houses among world's cheapest

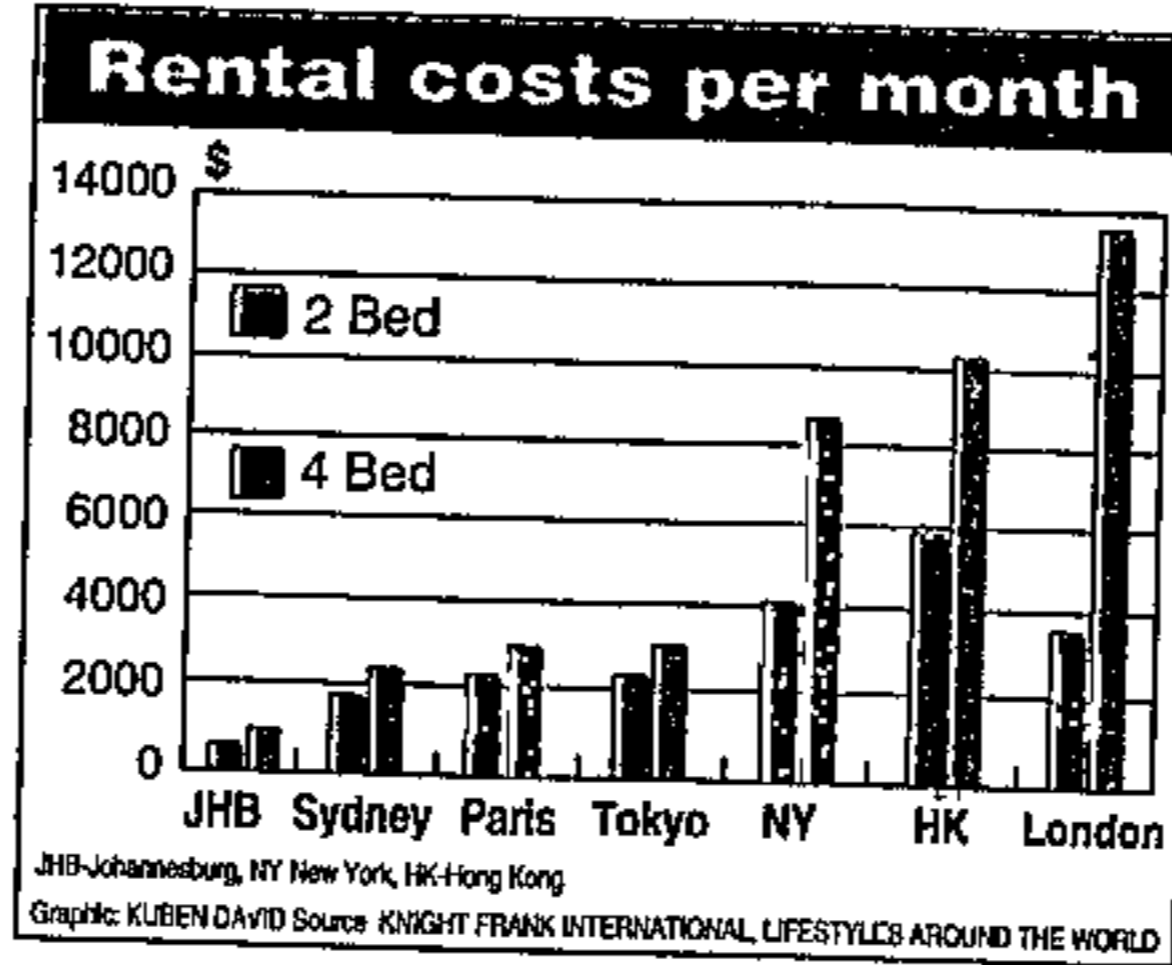
Dustin Chick

PREMIUM residential property in Johannesburg is ranked among the cheapest in the world, according to a "Lifestyles Around the World" survey by international property consultants Knight Frank International

It said prices of upmarket property had fallen about 10% mainly because of the prospect of post-Mandela political uncertainty and residents' quest for security in "good" locations

The fall in property prices in Johannesburg was linked mainly to political uncertainty and residents' quest for security in "good" locations

In contrast, prices in London had continued to rise by between 10% and



15% over the past year, although this had slowed down over the past six months

The survey found that while city

~~£24~~ (127)
residents worldwide preferred diverse international holiday destinations, South Africans chose to head for internal destinations such as Cape Town and game reserves

London, Hong Kong and New York were the most expensive cities in which to live, with a spacious apartment in New York's Upper West Side costing about \$2,5m — up 30% on a year ago

Freehold houses in London, ranging between \$800 000 and \$2,5m, were in short supply

Despite prices falling by about 35% over the past year, Hong Kong remained one of the world's most expensive cities, with an apartment on the south side of the city costing upwards of \$2,2m

BD 22/9/98

Yeoville

tackles crime (127) and grime

MFG 25/9 - 1987
Wonder Hlongwa

The Yeoville Community Development Forum has a dream. It wants to see the streets of greater Yeoville cleared of crime and grime. It wants to create an environment that encourages economic, social and cultural development in the cosmopolitan community in eastern Johannesburg.

The forum unveiled its dream at a brainstorming workshop this week, aimed at identifying and providing solutions for problems such as littering, street urinating, "inappropriate" street traders and crime.

"Noise pollution from music that blares from all directions adds frustration, tension and anger to the people of Yeoville," says Morris Smithers, the forum's chair.

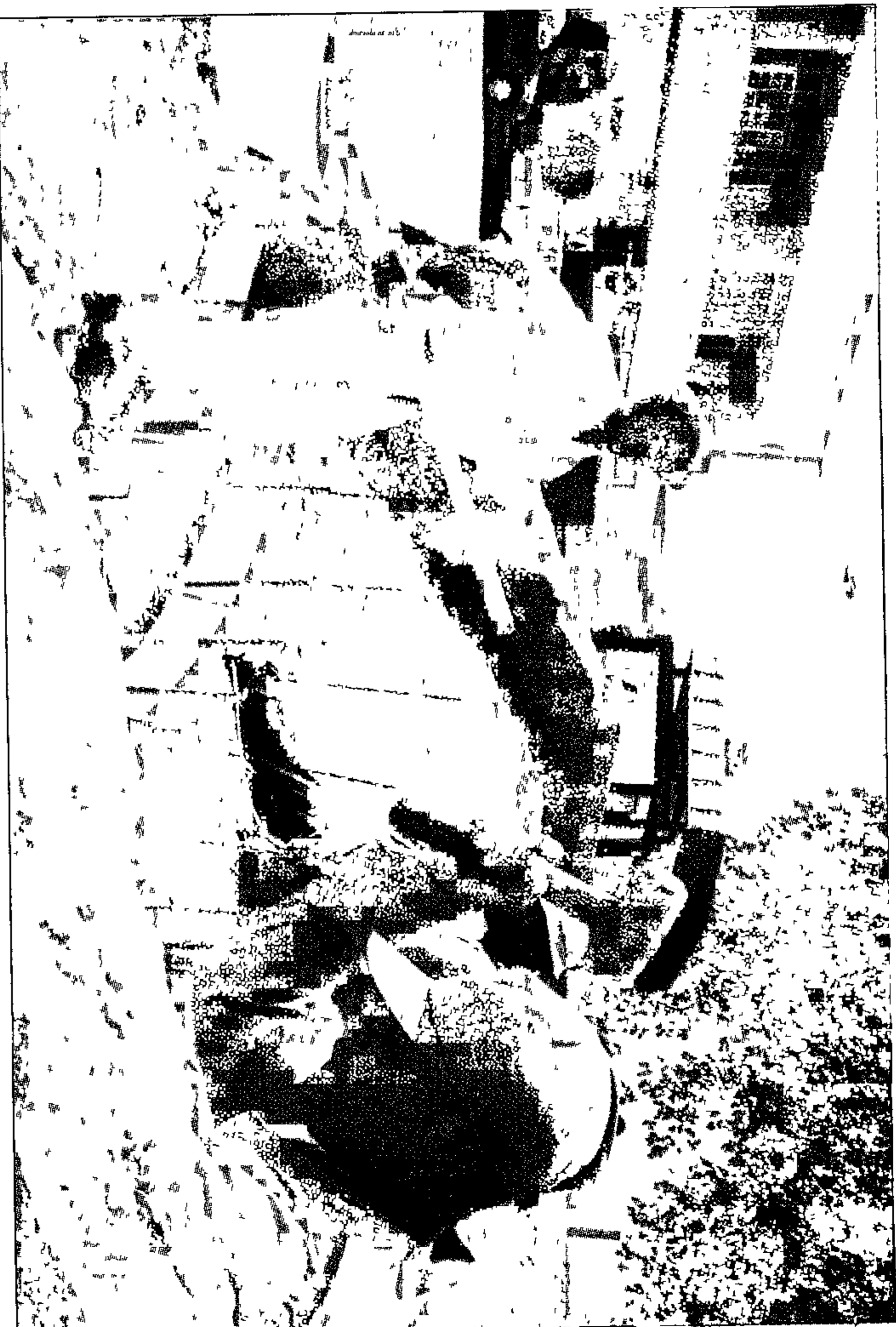
Some shops and restaurants — including the popular Iyavaya, Tel-Aviv and Mama's — have closed their doors, and more are threatening to do so.

The forum is a revival of the former Yeoville Community Forum, set up in the 1970s to address issues such as crime, drugs and untidy streets. It collapsed last year after some members left the area and others became disillusioned with it.

After Smithers resigned from the Department of Land Affairs and Agriculture in Pretoria earlier this year, he set himself the goal of reviving the cultural and creative spirit of Yeoville.

His first step was to launch the Yeoville Community Development Forum in June. His next step is to clean up the streets of the suburb.

"Yeoville is not a hell-hole," he says. "Some people create the impression that if you go to Yeoville, you carry your life in your hands. I have lived here for 14 years, but I have had



Cleaning up: One of the community development projects taking place in the suburb is the building of steps to Yeoville park.

PHOTOGRAPH: MAGRIET THERON

only one burglary."

The forum is working in conjunction with the Johannesburg Inner City Community Forum.

The Johannesburg forum claims that because of its effectiveness, the vacancy rate of buildings in greater Johannesburg has dropped by 12% while property rates have gone up 6%.

In Yeoville, the Eastern Metropolitan Council has already begun resettling street traders and providing them with stands.

"The council has begun implementing its by-laws, which include putting restrictions on

street traders," says Sisa Njikelana, African National Congress councillor in Yeoville.

Janelle Farris from New York's Time Square Business District Forum in the United States, which has faced similar problems to those in Yeoville, attended the workshop.

She suggested the business sector should sponsor the provision of garbage cans in greater Yeoville.

"Greater Yeoville has 90% more pedestrians now than it had 10 years ago. That's why there is this littering," she said. "There should be more garbage cans — at least three in every block — and they must be emptied regularly."

Another concern is that Yeoville has become a "gangster's paradise."

"Last month three girls were abducted in Rocky Street and taken to Soweto, where they were raped. That is not acceptable," says Smithers.

Members of the Community Policing Forum present at the workshop suggested that the gangs' escape routes, especially Cavendish and Raleigh streets, should be the barricaded.

Residents called for more visible policing, including the reinstatement of "surprise road-blocks" and of public safety officers.

Outrage as showcase housing venture is made a squatter camp

(127) (127) (127)

Undertaking was that proper services be installed first

By ANNA COX

Squatters, Midrand residents and industrialists are outraged by a decision by the Khayalami metro council to start moving homeless people onto vacant land at Commercia 34 in Midrand

This was done despite a written undertaking from the council that squatters would not be moved onto the land, known as the Mayibuye Project, until top structures had been built and proper services installed

The council now plans to move 40 families a day onto the site until 1 800 have been relocated.

About 40 squatter families were moved from a privately owned property in Broadwalk, Midrand, over the weekend, just prior to a vicious storm. Women and children were forced to sleep in toilets while their belongings were damaged by the rain.

There are only two fire hydrants on site and only a few taps and toilets that work.

Squatter Aubrey Sekutenyane said he was not happy about the situation

"But there is nothing we can do - they demolished the other site. People have been sleeping in the toilets for

shelter from the rain, but yesterday we built our shacks again, but all our things got wet. We have been promised houses soon," he said.

But the council only has enough money for 400 of the 1 800 units until the end of 1999.

The move had been planned several weeks ago and officials could not have predicted the weather, said metro development execu-

Plans to move 40 families a day to site

tive manager Keith Naicker. He said people had been moved onto the land without houses because there was no money.

He denied that the council promised to build top structures and said the agreement had only been made in principle. "There will be houses on that land as soon as money is available," he said.

This has infuriated many Midrand ratepayers and local industrialists who claim they worked for years on a plan which cost hundreds of thousands of rand, to establish a proper, model housing

settlement from which all parties would benefit.

Local resident Bobby Lake said what had happened at Mayibuye was "a municipal shame". "It is inhumane to expect people to live like this. Instead of moving families, as promised, into completed houses, these settlers have had to rebuild their shacks next to toilets and will still have to wait for up to two years for the promised houses to be built.

"Many residents are appalled by this pitiful delivery of what promised to be a showcase development. There was intense pride in the plan worked out between the settlers, the neighbouring residents, the Gauteng housing department, Eskom, and the housing board. We even obtained additional subsidies for them because of the ground conditions on the site," she said.

The local authority watchdog has now written to the public protector, to the president and to the minister of provincial affairs for urgent intervention.

Spokesperson Janet Schofield claims that by moving people onto the site without proper services, numerous contraventions of the National Environmental Management Act and of the constitution took place.

8/01/98 20/9/98

Arrests link to mayor's killings

(127) *Star* 5/10/98

Special task force to probe the death of Brakpan's Calcott Diephu whose tough stance on enforcing service payments earned him enemies

By RAPULE TSAKANE

Gauteng police have appointed a special high-level task force to investigate the weekend assassination of Brakpan mayor Calcott Diephu, the first such killing since the 1995 local government elections.

The killing has caused outrage across the political spectrum amid speculation that Diephu was killed because of his tough stance against service-charge defaulters.

A community leader who decided to put his foot down

By RAPULE TSAKANE

Brakpan mayor Calcott Mahlasela Diephu was a family man, a faithful, reliable and compassionate man, close relatives said yesterday.

His sister Charlotte Diephu said, "He was my mother's only hope. He was the one his two brothers and I looked up to. We want to know why he was killed, because he did not have any enemies."

As a community leader, Diephu (32), who was shot dead on Friday, was a steadfast and strong leader who stuck to his principles.

Diephu's council has repeatedly cracked down on defaulters, periodically cutting off services and attaching the properties of people who owed the council money. The Brakpan council is owed more than R19-million in service arrears accumulated since 1994.

While councillors around the country have come under attack for implementing unpopular policies, this is the first time a mayor has been assassinated.

Yesterday, acting Gauteng premier Dan Mofokeng met with provincial commissioner Sharma Maharaj to discuss the establishment of the special investigating team.

"It must be pointed out that this is the first time a mayor has been killed since the 1995 elections. We would like to urge the police to bring the culprits to book and to ensure that similar killings do not occur again," Mofokeng said.

Diephu was shot dead while waiting for his friends in a car on a road between Tsakane and

Duduza on the East Rand. Fourteen bullets were fired at his car and four hit him. His friend, who was sitting in the passenger seat, was not hit.

The killer later shot and wounded fellow Brakpan councillor Desmond Breytenbach, who arrived with a friend, Sipho Dhluthi, at the place where Diephu had been waiting.

The attacker then fled in a Breytenbach was taken to hospital where he was in a stable but serious condition.

Diephu was a student leader with the Congress for South African Students when he was at Mmametlong High School. He earned his struggle credentials as a shop steward, and was Tsakane ANC chairperson for the past four years.

He was elected mayor in August after the previous mayor resigned to take up another post in the council.

Diephu brought to the council a new resilience that sought to deal firmly with residents who were not paying for services.

In May this year, when some residents attacked and burnt

the local council's offices and stoned cars in protest at the council's attachment of defaulters' property, Diephu was unwavering, saying, "Unless the people register as indigents or make arrangements for payment, we will attach their property."

Yesterday his home in Geluksdal, Brakpan, was a hive of activity as politicians, residents and churchgoers came to express their condolences.

Since 1996, Diephu lived in the previously coloured township of Duduza and children Thandeka (14) and Thuthi (12)



Assassinated ... Calcott Diephu was a family man

Tsakane residents were yesterday debating whether the killing was linked to Diephu's running battles with civic associations who have been behind the anti-council protests.

Diephu's clampdown on defaulters earlier this year led to a consumer boycott and two days of violent protests by angry youths in Tsakane.

Council offices were burnt, entrances to the township bar-traded with burning tyres, cars stoned and the houses of council employees attacked.

Tsakane ANC chairperson and Brakpan council executive chairman Shiphwe Saul said Diephu's assassination was part of a pattern - an outbreak of violence occurred every time residents and the council were brought to reach an agreement.

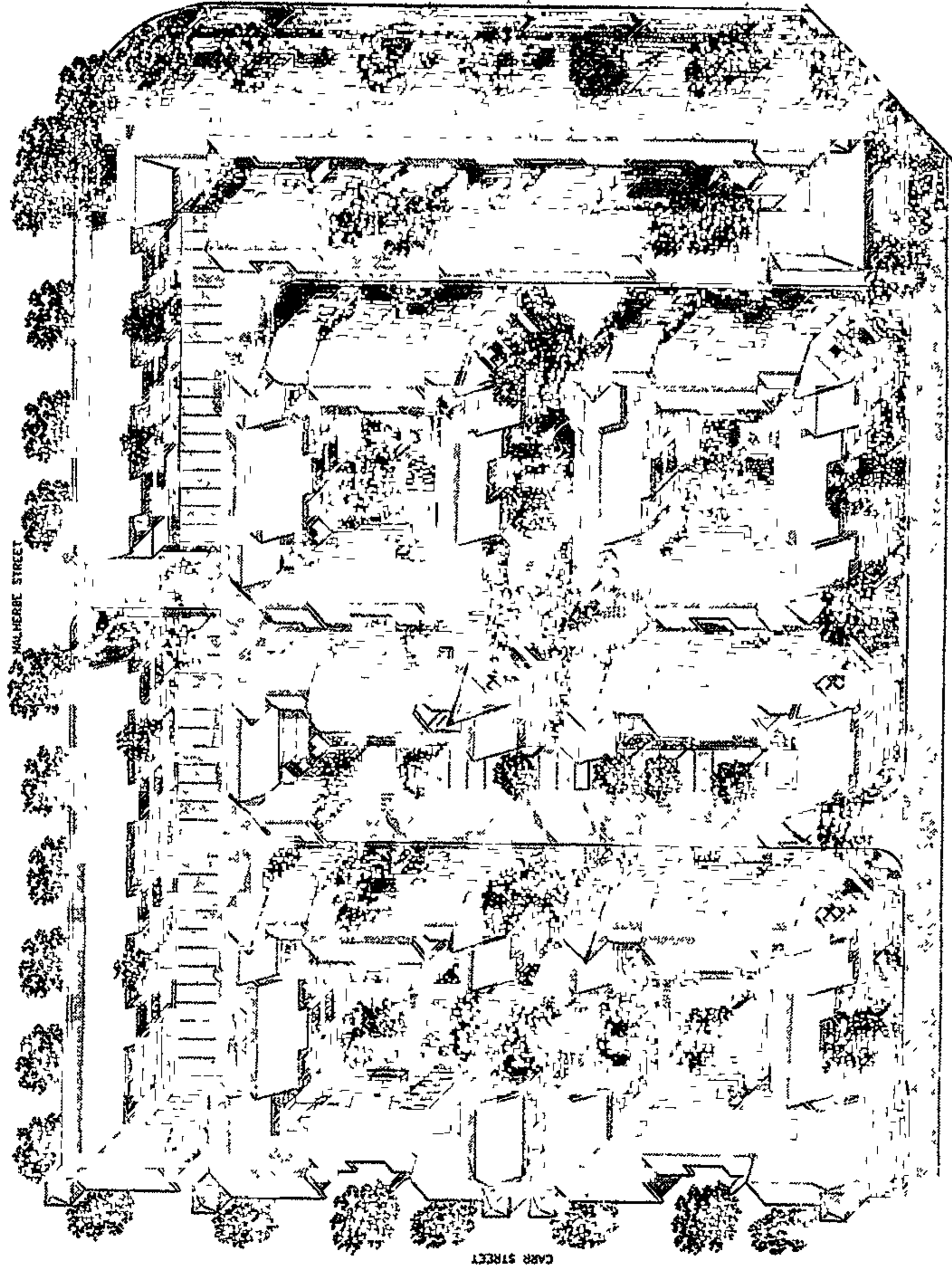
In May, any house was burnt down just after the had agreed with the residents to suspend instituting legal proceedings against unemployed people who could not pay for their services.

He said Diephu and other councillors had on Thursday and Friday met residents of several wards to discuss tariffs and new tariffs for pensioners.

"We agreed on new revised tariffs. I don't know if it is a coincidence that, before every breakthrough, something drastic like this happens," he said. The local ANC branch said it did not want to speculate on the cause of Diephu's death. The Democratic Party said the murder was further proof that criminals were in charge in South Africa.

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Affordable homes ... a graphic of the planned Newtown housing scheme, which will offer low income families comfort and security.

Rental home projects for low wage earners

BY HOPEWELL RADEBE
#127

Residents will pay charges each month to cover costs for all operational expenses, bond repayments, rates and sewerage

"Should a resident decide to leave the scheme after four years, he/she will get back some of the money paid and will make a profit by getting an exit repayment," she said.

Fish said rather than just renting a studio unit, a one-bedroomed or two-bedroomed flat, residents of these "collective housing" schemes will have the advantage of participating in the formulation of house rules and in voting for the board of directors to run the complexes.

Residents also get long term security of tenure

The association will train the board in arranging audits, financial reports and investments and assist in property management services

Fish said: "Social housing creates close communities which co-operate in different ways such as fighting crime in the areas"

Johannesburg's first rental housing projects for low-income groups are to be developed in Bertrams, Belgavia and Newtown.

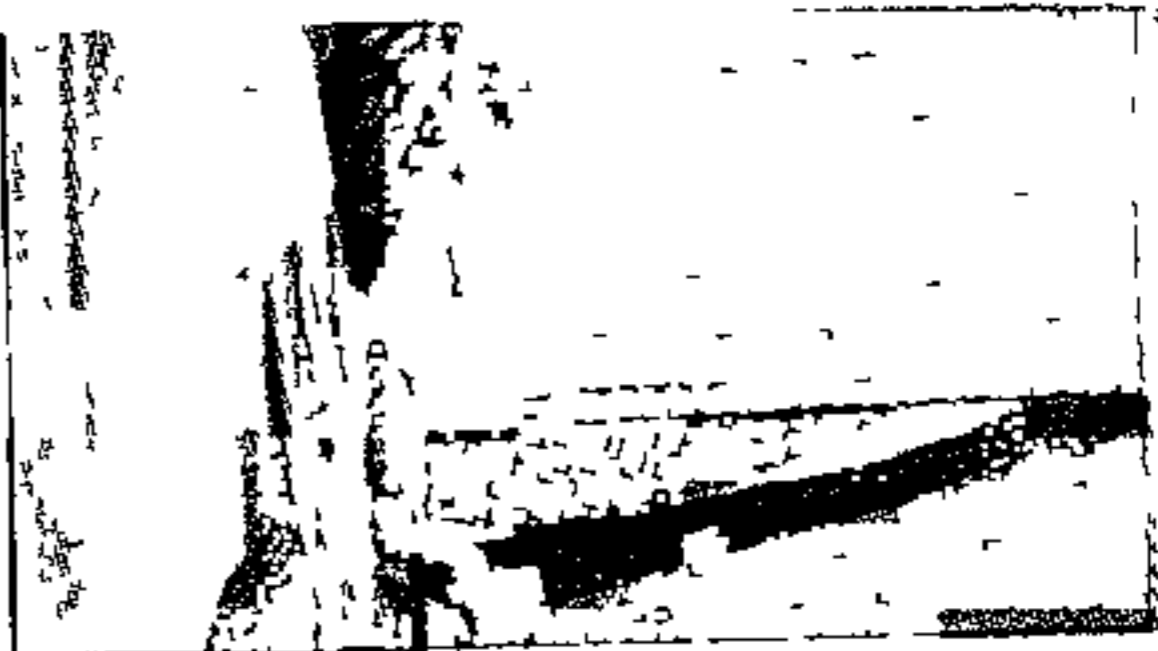
The housing scheme is targeting city dwellers earning a monthly income of between R2 000 and R3 500 who will become members of the Cope Housing Association and have partnership status in the running of the flats complexes.

The association will build two and three-storey walk-ups that have a total of 522 units in the city to enable city dwellers to live closer to their places of work and save transport costs.

Margaret Fish, spokesperson for the association, said since residents qualify for subsidies, the association will help them apply for the institutional housing subsidy and a housing loan from the National Housing body

"This money, together with the deposits from the residents, will cover all the costs of the project," she said.

STAV 5/10/98



al Housing Minister
yela says 80 000

Delivery of houses in Gauteng on target

THE delivery of housing and land to homeless people in Gauteng is on target, according to National Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahenyela and Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng.

Speaking at a function to honour financial institutions, land developers and contractors at the 2nd Gauteng Housing Awards in Parktown on Monday last week, Mthembu-Mahenyela and Mofokeng said although more work still needed to be done, the delivery of houses was on track and more than 80 000 houses and 148 000 stands had been delivered since 1994.

In addition, the Gauteng Housing Depart-

ment had approved the release of 240 000 housing subsidies. The housing backlog was estimated at 761 000 in 1994.

Mthembu-Mahenyela likened the low-income housing project in Gauteng to a "Cinderella" characterised by marginal profits.

She acknowledged the participants' contribution to job creation, shelter provision for the homeless and for providing services where they did not exist.

Mofokeng said the delivery of housing was the government's major priority. It promised to release land to the landless, prevent land invasion, and provide secure tenure, planned towns, services and houses.

"This will contribute to safer health conditions, improved policing and conditions conducive to learning," Mofokeng said.

Meanwhile, the housing department intends moving more than 850 families living in five informal settlements in the Vaal Triangle.

Gauteng Housing Department spokesman, Tommy Makoe, said the move would ensure the land they were occupying was serviced before the construction of houses began next year.

The uprooted families would be provided with other land but would return once construction on the site was complete.

New housing project launched

Bowetan 12/10/98
By McKeed Kotlolo

GAUTENG MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng has urged residents to pay for services to make the Masakhane campaign a success

Mofokeng was speaking at the launch of the Hatherley Housing Project, a low-cost housing project in Pretoria, on Friday

The function was also attended by Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga, Pretoria mayor Mrs Mirriam Doms and property developers

Hatherley is situated between the the suburb of Nellmapius and Mamelodi East Building of

the subsidised houses started in April this year and a total 5 000 families will be housed on completion of the project

Four hundred families have already occupied houses, while about 300 units are still under construction

The suburb, which is expected to be self-sufficient, will also have 14 clinics and other community facilities, four primary schools, two secondary schools and about 8,5 hectares of formal businesses to be built on land that was owned by the late entrepreneur and peace seeker Sammy Marks

The housing project is a joint venture by the

(127)
Pretoria City Council, Gauteng department of housing and land affairs and LTA Housing Development

Mofokeng told the gathering that the housing project represented a milestone in the government's resolve to provide shelter and land to the homeless in Gauteng

"This is a vivid demonstration that, despite the lack of resources and land in Gauteng, we are prepared to challenge homelessness head on," he said

"This is also despite the fact that our region faces an ever-increasing population from other provinces and neighbouring countries"

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Constitutional Court declares Sandton property rates hike to be legal

Jonny Steinberg

THE property rates increase that sparked the Sandton rates boycott is legal, the Constitutional Court ruled yesterday.

The court was split down the middle over whether the Johannesburg metropolitan council was entitled to appropriate the surplus generated by the rates increase in the city's eastern suburb. This means a ruling by a lower court — that the transfer of the eastern suburb's surplus to the

Johannesburg metropolitan council is legal — stands.

Sapa reports that council spokesman Keith Peacock said businesses owed about R160m in municipal arrears and ratepayers owed R60m.

Local government legislation stipulates that a levy raised by a metropolitan council on its suburbs has to be based on the gross or rates income of the suburbs.

Judges Arthur Chaskalson, Richard Goldstone and Kate O'Regan, supported by Judges Lawrie Ackerman and

Trole Madala, held that the levy was not based on gross income and was thus illegal. Judge Johan Kruger, supported by Judges Pius Langa, Yvonne Mokgoro, Albie Sachs and Zakaria Yacoob, argued that the levy was directly related to the eastern suburb's gross income and was thus legal.

Yesterday's judgment is the first time the Constitutional Court has failed to produce a majority judgment.

Democratic Party (DP) spokesman Mike Moriarty said his party was alarmed by the court's decision.

"Municipalities will now get a signal that they can hike rates as high as they like and get away with it," he said.

Moriarty said the DP took solace in the fact that the court was split over the legality of the transfer of funds from the east to the Johannesburg council. "The law requires a proportional contribution from its suburbs. In that case the east's contribution would have been between R150m and R200m, instead of more than R400m. We would have been happy to pay a proportional contribution."

The African National Congress said the court's judgment vindicated the party's commitment to an equitable distribution of resources throughout greater Johannesburg. "It is unfortunate that the DP misled ratepayers that they are fighting for a just cause, when in fact their attempts were aimed at frustrating social transformation."

Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development Minister Valli Moosa said the ruling strengthened the ability of municipalities to subsidise between rich and poor areas.

(127)
20/15/10/98

Sandton ratepayers lose court battle

(127) ET 15/10/98

JOHANNESBURG. Sandton ratepayers and businesses were expected to start paying R220 million in municipal arrears after losing a long legal battle over rates and taxes against Johannesburg's eastern council in the Constitutional Court yesterday, the council said.

The Constitutional Court dismissed an application by 10 corporate ratepayers to object to a substantial increase in their property rates in the 1996/97 municipal budgets.

The Sandton Federation of Ratepayers and several businesses launched an action in 1996 against the council to contest a decision that richer structures should help subsidise the poorer structures.

Ratepayers lodged an application with the High Court to have these rates, levies and subsidies set aside. Justice J Goldstein found in the Johannesburg High Court that the council acted lawfully, and the application was dismissed.

His decision was upheld by the Constitutional Court yesterday.

Council spokesperson Keith Peacock said yesterday the council's decision in 1996/1997 resulted from the fact that many areas of Greater Johannesburg were unable under apartheid to build their own tax base.

It was necessary that surpluses generated in the city's eastern and northern councils be used to support the other poorer councils.

The decision meant some ratepayers faced increases in their property rates,

while others enjoyed a decrease.

Many ratepayers were also for the first time asked to pay property rates, particularly those in the historically disadvantaged areas, Peacock said.

He said about R160 million was owed to the council by businesses, and ratepayers owed the other R60m.

About 10% of council ratepayers were involved in the court action, which started after the introduction of an equal tax base and the equalisation of rates by the council, he said.

According to Tony Canny, who represented some of the corporate clients, the judgment meant ratepayers who did not pay their full accounts would be immediately liable to do so.

He said the council had so far given no indication on its approach to the payment of arrears.

Johannesburg council executive committee chairperson Colin Matjila said normal credit control measures would be followed to retrieve the money.

This would include notices and summonses, and might include attachment of property.

Matjila said there were normal credit control measures, which were followed in all cases where money was owed to the council.

He said the council enforced credit

control measures since the decision by the group of Sandton ratepayers not to pay increased tariffs.

Matjila said the Constitutional Court decision would enable the city's eastern council to continue the process of transformation.

"We'll solidify our existing relationship with the community, and the decision will not influence our ongoing discussions with the ratepayers to bring us closer to a solution."

"We will not be vindictive," he said.

"We respect the right of businesses to approach the court, but we also have to abide by the court's decision."

"We want to use this opportunity to call on residents to come on board now and to meet their obligations," Matjila said.

The Constitutional Court yesterday found the resolutions implemented by the eastern council were consistent with the Constitution, and that the balancing of the budget was also lawful.

Judge Kate O'Regan, handing down the judgment, said while the court's justices unanimously agreed that the Johannesburg council fulfilled procedural requirements relating to the approval of its budget, they were evenly divided on the lawfulness of the city council levy imposed on the eastern council.

"We have a right and we wanted to get an exact answer of what the rights of ratepayers are."

The appellants contended that the city's levy on the eastern and northern councils was unlawful because it was not equitable.

Five of the judges, including Constitutional Court chairperson Judge Arthur Chaskalson, concluded that the levy was unlawful.

But, since there was no clear majority in favour of reversing the Goldstein finding, the appeal had to fail.

The appeal was dismissed with costs.

One of the 10 companies involved in the action, Fedsure Life Assurance, said yesterday that while the company was dissatisfied with the decision, it would abide by it.

Executive director for Fedsure property services Jan Oelofse said as law-abiding citizens, the company would have to abide by the court's decision.

Oelofse said the action by businesses was never a boycott of rates, but it was a question of tackling a matter that went to the heart of free enterprise.

"We have a right and we wanted to get an exact answer of what the rights of ratepayers are."

"Now the issue has been to the top law-making institution in the country and it has found against us."

"As law-abiding citizens we must abide, and from Fedsure's side we will pay our rates."

Oelofse said Fedsure was not one of the companies in arrears with the council — Sapa

Gauteng delivers a house 'every 3 minutes'

GAUTENG'S housing and land affairs department delivered 18 626 houses in the province during the past six months, housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

This amounted to 19 houses per working hour, or one every three minutes and 10 seconds, a Sapa report quoted Mofokeng as saying.

Mofokeng said recent research estimated that more than 20 000 people were migrating to Gauteng each month, which explained why the province had more than 200 informal settlements with no proper sanitation or basic services.

Speaking at the launch of the Mohlakeng pilot housing project at Randfontein, Mofokeng said it was his department's responsibility to house each and every Gauteng family.

He appealed to Mohlakeng's residents to pay for services since the funds would be ploughed back to communities and used to improve services.

The housing project had initially been stalled by the presence of informal settlers, but about 900 families had been peacefully moved to Zenzele Village.

About 1 500 houses would be built in extension 4 of Mohlakeng. Moreover, R40,5m had been set aside for housing developments in extensions 4 and 7, he said.

Gauteng was leading the country in the delivery of low-cost housing. Of the national target for low-cost houses, the province had delivered a third.

In total, Gauteng had delivered 80 300 houses and developed 158 000 sites.

"Our share of national delivery is 24,3% and out of a R989,9m budget, R725m has been spent."

A total of 1 500 houses were to be built in Mohlakeng extension 4. Already, 335 houses had been completed and occupied, and 110 houses had been built in the neighbouring township of Toekomstrus.

The sum of R10m had been allocated to the Randfontein Local Authority's high density project through the Gauteng housing department's revolving fund.

Nomavenda Mathiane reports that Mofokeng announced the make-up of the new provincial housing advisory board yesterday

during the Mohlakeng housing project launch.

Controversial former provincial housing board chairman Marhn van Zyl remains as a member. In addition to Van Zyl, the members are Themba Maluleka (chairman), Rhebane Ramarumo (vice-chairman), Mandla Zwane, Lesego Montsho-Molokane and Chris Woodcock.

Van Zyl came under the spotlight recently when it emerged that as housing board chairman, he had facilitated the award of SA's largest housing project to developer Keith Lawrence, while receiving a R10 000 monthly facilitation from the latter.

Van Zyl recused himself from board meetings on the project.

90/16/10/198

(127)

Ratepayers case sparks

arks court's first 50/50 split

ion over several key legal issues, writes CARMEL RICKARD

(127) ST 18/10/98

our newly built mezzanine floor of Terminal 2

FOR the first time in its history, the Constitutional Court deadlocked over an issue this week, with five judges on either side.

Normally, the court sits with an uneven number of judges, but when the Sandton ratepayers' case was heard in August, the court was short of one of its members as Judge John Didcott was ill.

However, the issue on which the court was tied was one of several which had to be resolved, and the judges were in agreement on all the others.

The case concerned the complaints by a number of Sandton ratepayers about the rise in the amount of rates they were charged. The subtext of their complaint may have been that the increase was too great, but this was not raised in the court case.

Instead, they concentrated on whether the local authority had acted legally in levying the new charges, and whether the transfer of the surplus funds to the central city authority had been valid.

The 10 judges were unanimous that the rates levied on ratepayers by the eastern substructure (into which the Sandton ratepayers fell) were lawful. Where the judges were divided was over the issue of whether it was valid for the central transitional metropolitan council to have levied contributions on the eastern substructure — half felt the levy by the central council was lawful, the other half said it was not.

The judgment contains several references to the great disparities created by apartheid between areas which had been for whites only and those for other race groups.

For example, according to those judges who felt that the transfer of funds between the substructures and the central council was lawful, "the apartheid city systematically favoured white urban areas at the cost of black urban and peri-urban areas. The results are tragic and absurd: sprawling black townships with hardly a tree in sight, flanked by vanguards of informal settlements and guarded by towering floodlights, out of stonethrow reach.

"Even if only a short distance away, nestled amid trees and water and birds and tarred roads and paved sidewalks and street-lit suburbs and parks, and running water and convenient electrical amenities we find white suburbia."

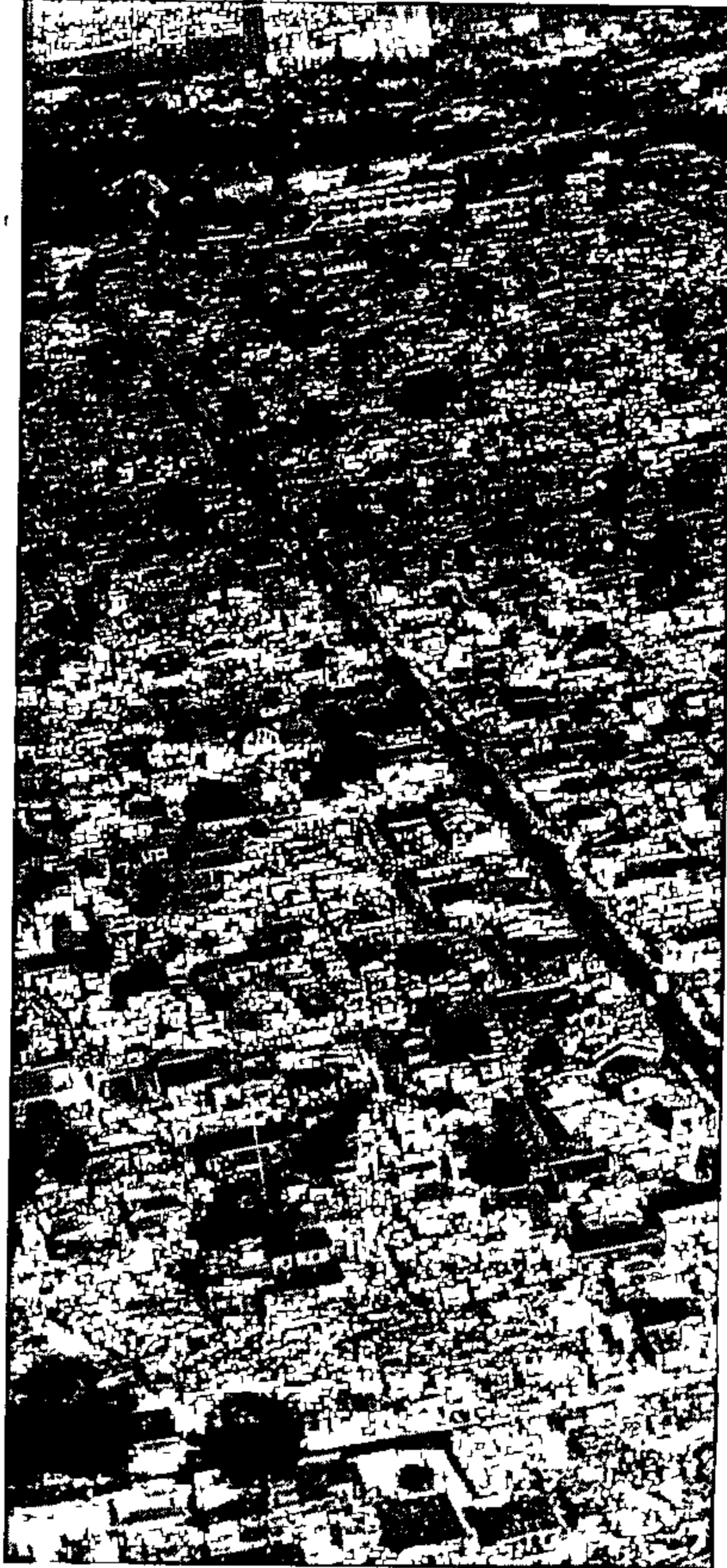
But according to legal experts, even if there had been one more judge on the side which felt that the transfer of funds had been unlawful, it would not necessarily have meant that the money would have been given back to the eastern substructure — or its ratepayers — by the order of the court.

If the Sandton ratepayers were to have won the appeal, they would have had to have a clear majority in the Constitutional Court on both questions.

They failed to achieve this, and therefore lost the appeal.

But for lawyers and the public, the judgment contains several important decisions apart from the final order dismissing the appeal.

Until now, there has been confusion about when cases arising under the interim Constitution may be heard by the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein and when that court cannot hear such cases. In its Sandton decision, the Constitutional



A TALE OF TWO CITIES: An aerial view of Sandton and Alexandra, which lie cheek by jowl but could not be more different.

Court ruled that the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein may hear cases which arise under the interim Constitution, whether the issue involved is a constitutional question or not. This is important for the public, as it means that litigants will no longer run the risk that they could waste money going to one of these two courts only to be told they have made the wrong choice of court and that the case should be heard in the other.

Another important clarification by the Constitutional Court concerns the status of local government. The court ruled its status was different under the new Constitution from what it was in the past.

Under the new Constitution, local government had the same sta-

tus as provincial and national government. The court held that the source of power of local government was the Constitution itself. This means that neither provincial nor national government can remove the constitutionally ordained powers of local government.

The third important issue is that the court confirmed all branches of government exercise their powers under the Constitution.

This means that the Constitutional Court will treat a claim that the national government or any other level of government is doing something illegal or beyond its powers as a constitutional issue and therefore a question within the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court to consider.

Split by a hair's breadth of difference

THE court case sparked by the Sandton ratepayers' boycott has ended in as much drama and controversy as the furor which marked its birth.

Last week, for the first time in its brief history, the Constitutional Court was unable to produce a majority judgment on all the matters before it. What was it that split the court down the middle? What does the judgment reveal about the internal politics of SA's highest court?

At the outset, it should be said that the court did agree on one of the crucial issues before it. It was unanimous in finding that the eastern substructure acted within the law when it raised the property rate to 6,45c in the rand in 1996. As has been widely publicised, it meant a 280% increase for Sandton residents.

The court argued that the substructure reasonably believed, when it drew up its 1996/97 budget, that it was obliged to pay the Johannesburg metropolitan council a R438m levy to subsidise the work of the two substructures which carry the burden of delivering services to Soweto.

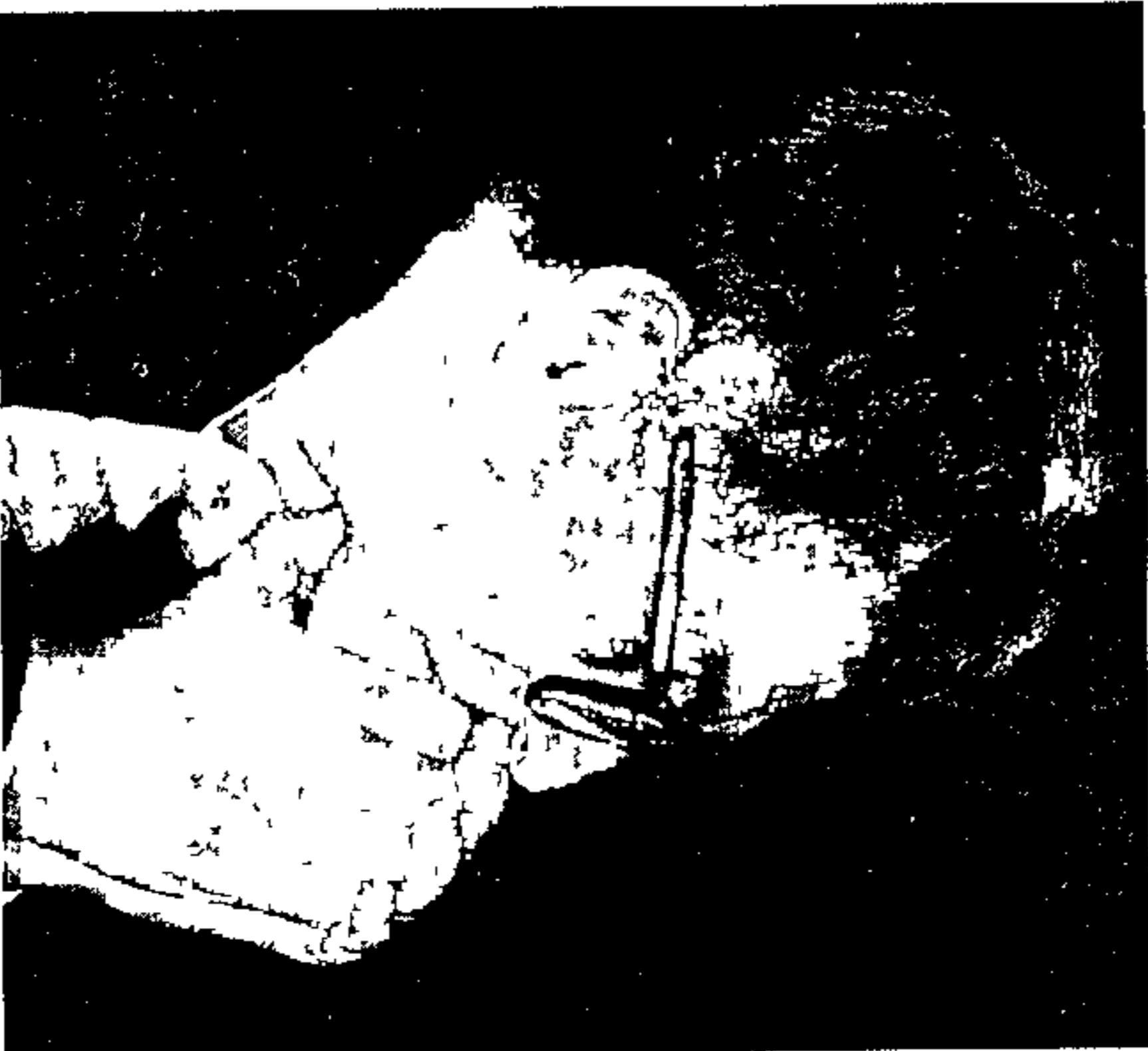
In the circumstances, the court argued, "the eastern substructure had no option but to provide for the expenditure and levy a rate sufficient to enable it to make the payment. Where an amount has been incorrectly but reasonably included as an item of expenditure, the fact that it turns out not to be payable at all would in no way invalidate the budget."

The rates hike was legal about that there was no disagreement. What divided the court was whether the council was justified in raising the levy from its eastern substructure in the first place.

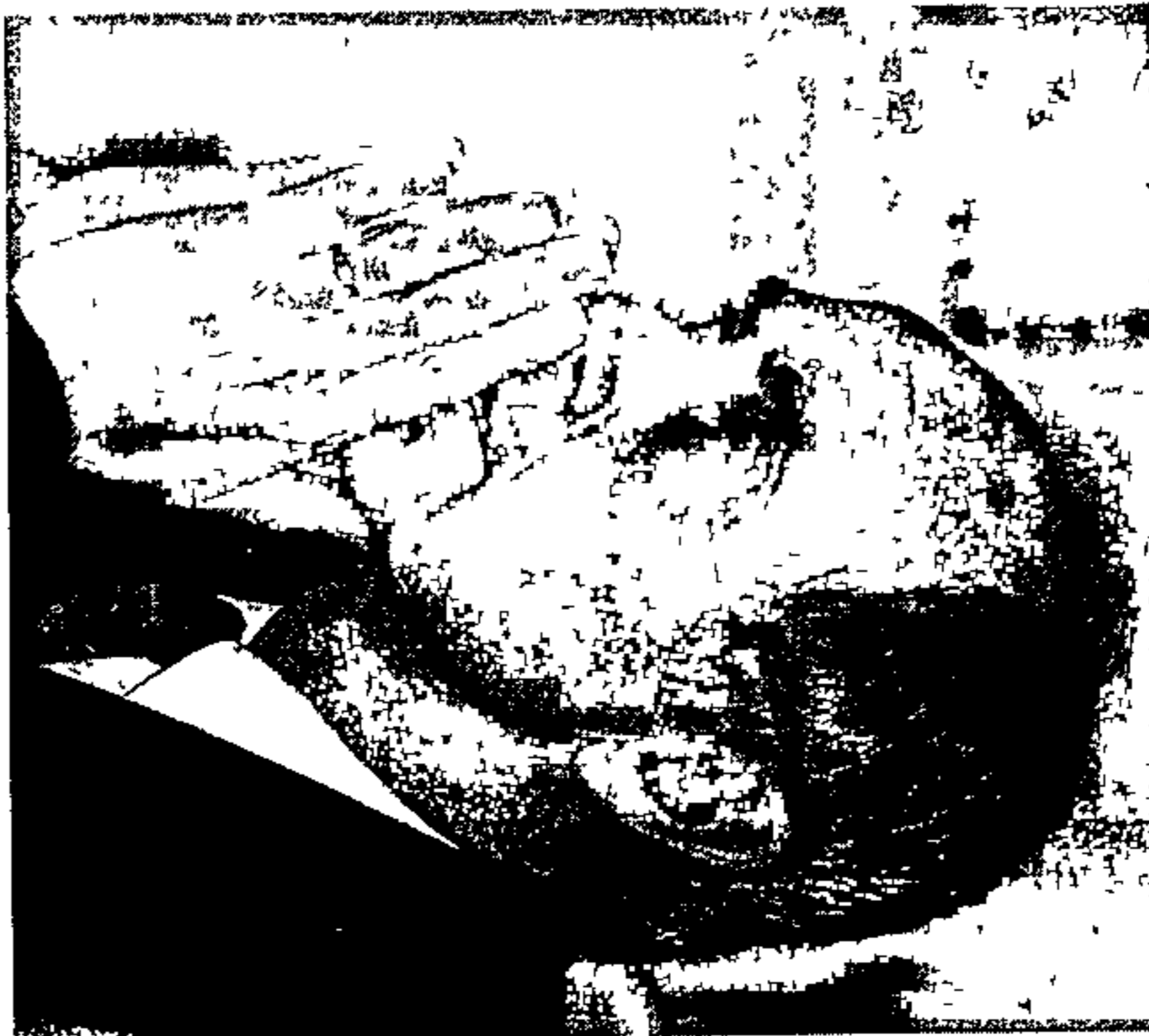
A clause in the Local Government Transition Act, subsequently amended but live when the 1996/97 budgets were passed, stipulates that the metropolitan council can levy its substructures only if the levy is based on the gross or rates income of the substructures concerned.

Judges Arthur Chaskalson, Kate O'Regan and Richard Goldstone, supported by Tole Madala and Lawrie Ackermann, argued the levy was not based on gross or rates income. "The levy" was a surplus produced from the total income after agreement had been reached as to

The Sandton ratepayers' case split the Constitutional Court down the middle for the first time in its history. Jonny Steinberg looks at what happened



Judge Arthur Chaskalson, left, and Judge Johann Kriegler — at opposing ends of the Sandton rates judgment



(127) 00 20/10/98

the expenditure to be incurred by the two substructures."

Judge Johann Kriegler, supported by Yvonne Mokgoro, Pius Langa, Albie Sachs and Zakaria Yacoob, believed to differ.

What precisely is meant by *based on*, Kriegler asked. "In the case of such a proven phrase a resort to dictionary definitions is futile." Instead, he argued, the legislation should be interpreted in its political and institutional context. "What is significant is that the drafters (of the law) used such a vague term (*based on*) and did not specify that a levy had to be, for instance, a fraction or a percentage of income."

Why the furor over whether to interpret *based on* tightly or generously?

In reality, none of the 10 judges had a moral or political problem with the R438m transfer, a legal source said last week. "At a personal level, they are all committed to a sizeable transfer of resources from affluent suburbs to townships. The question which divided them was what this political commitment means when it comes to interpreting the law. For judges like Chaskalson, the rule of law is sacrosanct and there are stringent limits to how far you can push its interpretation, even in the name of justice. Kriegler, on the other

hand, is prepared to push the language of the law to its limits when he knows his cause is just."

Chaskalson's overriding fidelity to the strict letter of the law, no matter what is happening beyond the boundary of the statute book, is clear from his joint judgment with Goldstone and O'Regan.

"It is not clear why the act tied the power of a metropolitan council to exact a contribution from a substructure to one based on gross or rates income. Whatever the reason the fact remains that the council has to comply." Chaskalson, Kriegler found that the council did in fact comply. The way he came to

his conclusion is instructive. He began his judgment with a lesson on the interface between political and legal history. The chapter in the interim constitution on local government, as well as transitional local government legislation, did not arrive in SA as a gift from the gods. It embodied the outcome of over a decade of political resistance to iniquitous urban planning.

"The very reason for the creation of metropolitan areas was to promote, facilitate and expedite the eradication of the inequalities of the past. A single city without a single tax base achieves very little. In order to fulfil its essential

purpose, a metropolitan council needs to be able to reallocate budgetary benefits. One would therefore not readily conclude that the drafters of the interim constitution and (the local government legislation) built a transitional hurdle but didn't give it an engine. We arrive back at the disputed interpretation of *based on*.

For Kriegler, it appears, the context is the political demand for justice to which the constitution and metropolitan government owe their birth. Here the law is shaped by the moralities breathing life into it and is thus their servant. A Does this make Chaskalson a blind and mechanistic stickler for the law? Has he taken it out of its political and moral context and turned its black print into a lifeless and meaningless god?

Perhaps, but not necessarily. There is reason in such legal conservatism. It is about the importance of being ruled by laws of black print, because they owe their existence to procedures which society has agreed is the right way to construct public authority. By making the procedural and the formal sacrosanct, society defends itself against the tyranny of lence and partiality of *receptivity*.

From this vantage point, when a judge reads the words *based on* she must forget the political turmoil going on beyond the bounds of any of the page and focus on the text itself. For it is the legal text which names and limits the turbulence of politics.

It should be added that the split was not just between Chaskalson and Kriegler, but between all 10 judges. Is there any thing to be read into which judges fall into which camp?

"My sense is that the political instincts of most of the black judges told them to rule that the transfer was legal," an insider said. "But they felt queasy about taking the lead. It took an old-guard figure like Kriegler, a veteran and the heavyweight from the heart of SA's judicial system, to stick his neck out. Once he took the lead, the rest followed."

The issue dividing the court is nuanced and subtle. There is probably little more than a hair's breadth separating the judges' jurisprudential instincts. Circumstances had it that the hair's breadth was wide enough to split the court down the middle.

ANDREAS VLACHAKIS



Reposessed ... Heidelberg council officials yesterday ripped up electricity cables at Ratanda Ext 3 where residents owe millions in arrears.

Council pulls up electricity cables of 100 defaulters (127)

BY PRINCE HANNCA

City Desk
Rm 23/10/98

Tensions ran high at Ratanda, Heidelberg, yesterday when council officials ripped up the electricity cables of service defaulters in an attempt to recoup the R13-million owed to the council.

The Heidelberg Town Council disconnected electricity to about 100 residents in Ratanda Extension 3.

Angry residents called for the resignation of their ward councillor. They said councillor May Matlala failed to warn them about the cut-offs.

City Council electrical engineer Willem Mathee said the council aimed to cut power to about 300 more residents.

Mathee said the residents owed between R2 000 and R18 000 and would have to pay R800 for reconnections.

Sandton residents decry 'discrimination'

By ANNA COX

Outraged Sandton rates boycotters claim they are being victimised, discriminated against and bullied into making repayments of their arrears, which collectively stand at R225-million

Greater Johannesburg's Eastern council has hand-delivered final notices to hundreds of boycotting residents, giving them until the end of October to make final payment, failing which they would have their services disconnected

Sandton residents and businesses embarked on a partial rates boycott in 1996 in protest over increases of up to 400%, claiming the increase was unlawful. The Constitutional Court ruled last week that the increases were lawful and now residents face repaying thousands of rands

Residents were also slapped with a R39 bill for the hand-delivery

Now the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers has started legal action against the council to challenge the discriminatory nature of prosecuting Sandton ratepay-

Payment trends

Rates payment levels in Greater Johannesburg appear to be dropping, according to recent council figures. Figures released by the council show Johannesburg has payments of 74%, Sandton 91% and Alexandra 53%.

Payment levels in areas such as Houghton have dropped to 62%, Illovo to 46%, Parkhurst to 52%, Riviera/Killarney to 40%, and Sandringham to 50%.

Council spokesperson Keith Peacock said the computer programme which calculated the figures was not accurate and would take a few months to correct

ers disproportionately to other rates defaulters

Said Sanfed chairperson Peter Harmsen "We are encouraging ratepayers to negotiate individually with their local authority on terms for settlement of arrears. Ratepayers who elect to settle in a single sum are urged to negotiate

on the question of interest charged. Sanfed will assist ratepayers"

Individual residents and businesses owe between R16 000 and R100 000 in arrears

Infuriated residents claim they are being victimised while other residents in Johannesburg, who have not paid for years, have not even received letters of demand

Council records show that, in July, Sandton had R5,5-million owing in arrears while Johannesburg had R29,4-million outstanding and Alexandra R770 000

During the same month, there were 567 water and electricity cut-offs in Sandton, none in Alexandra and only 283 in Johannesburg

Independent councillor Liz Clogg said these actions were blatant discrimination against Sandton residents

The council has denied that Sandton was being targeted

Communications officer Keith Peacock said "The council is committed to treating all ratepayers in arrears in a fair and equal way"

NEW 23/10/98

Deborah Fine

THE Rand Water Board has agreed to increase water pressure to the greater Leandra municipality in Mpumalanga following intervention by the provincial government into the cash-strapped local authority's financial and administrative affairs.

This was confirmed on Friday by local government and housing spokesman Leon Mbangwa who said the board

Water board to improve Leandra's supply

(127) 80 26/10/98

had agreed to temporarily increase water pressure to Leandra to about 60% at the weekend.

The board reduced the town's water supply to a trickle last week in an attempt to force the municipality to pay an outstanding water bill of R1,5m. The local authority has blamed failure to pay for municipal services as the reason for its

inability to service the debt as well as other outstanding payments including R600 000 to the Receiver of Revenue.

Mbangwa said the water board had agreed to negotiations around the repayment of the debt after the provincial government stepped in to assist the municipality to draw up new financial management

and revenue collection strategies.

He stressed that the province could not financially bale out local authorities with cash-flow difficulties.

He said that only four of the nine towns served with ultimatums by local government MEC Craig Padayachee earlier this year to get their financial affairs in order were

still experiencing serious liquidity difficulties.

These were Leandra, Witbank, Greylingstad and Amersfoort.

The administration of Amersfoort had been taken over by the East Vaal district council.

Mbangwa said that while failure to make payments had played a large role in the deterioration of the local au-

thorities' financial positions, the problem was a symptom of what he believed to be a lack of "political maturity" on the part of many councillors and residents.

Both councillors and residents needed to undergo education, programmes to move from the old-style "politics of resistance" to an understanding of the new "politics of governance" with its accompanying responsibilities and duties, he said.

Illegals occupants get ultimatum

Pitso Molebeleli

ILLEGAL occupants of government property including houses and flats in areas around Johannesburg were given 30 days "amnesty" to register themselves with authorities or face evictions, Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

He said this included people occupying provincial or Southern and Northern Metropolitan local councils rental property without a valid lease. These people were mainly concentrated in former representatives and delegates areas such as Eldorado Park, Lenasia and Bosmont, he said. Mofokeng told journalists in Johannesburg that his department estimated that a third of the 50 000 provincial and council rental housing stock

properties were currently either being illegally occupied or sublet at market related rentals.

Mofokeng said the department had jointly launched the recently approved unauthorised occupants policy with the two councils with the aim of regulating occupancy of government rental housing stock.

Describing the situation as untenable, Mofokeng said they were trying to put an end to the problem by giving exploited people and their families an opportunity to apply for legal tenancy.

In terms of the policy, people will be required to go personally to the provincial housing department or any of the two councils administration offices within 30 days.

They have to bring their identity documents, provide proof of marital status and income, birth

certificates as well as produce proof of registration on a waiting list for houses.

People who comply with the procedure stand a chance of taking legal ownership of the occupied property, he said, while those who do not, would be given 30 days eviction notice.

Those who do not qualify in terms of the criteria, will be given three months to vacate the property failing which they will also be removed.

All future illegal occupants of government property, including land in Gauteng, will be treated the same way.

Mofokeng said the department has come up with three steps to manage the properties. These include the compilation of an asset register, updating data system and ensuring that the policy treated all people equally.

'Greed' hampers housing projects

By Charity Bhengu (127)

DECEIT, corruption and greed among some community leaders in Gauteng are threatening the success of provincial housing projects, according to provincial officials

Claims of corruption have been made against community leaders at Leratong informal settlement in Krugersdorp. The community leaders are allegedly enriching themselves out of the West Rand Local Council's Tshepisoong housing project.

About 10 families claimed this week that some "unscrupulous" people who saw homelessness as a good market were selling houses to the highest bidder.

Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng said yesterday "We are aware that there are land mafias, bogus civic association leaders and unscrupulous councillors who are trying to benefit from our projects."

Mofokeng said some community leaders, who had promised to provide people with houses, were now driving

people back into areas "we are trying to clear for development"

About 5 000 houses are being built at Tshepisoong near Leratong for the homeless. Some people have already moved into some houses. The unemployed and those who earn less than R1 500 are being given subsidies and are not supposed to pay deposits.

Mrs Muiam Moeti, who has been allocated house number 2709 in the area, said "I found another person hanging curtains and moving furniture in my house. He said he had paid R5 000."

When *Sowetan* visited Ms Esther Shabalala's house at number 3570, Mr Bethuel Kunene was also there and produced proof of ownership.

A member of Tshepisoong steering committee, Ms Martha Sebogodi, refuted claims of corruption and said "If a person did not pay for services within two weeks, the house is given to the next person on the waiting list. Some people who complained that the houses were small had delayed paying for services and their houses were given to other people."

Sowetan 29/10/98

Govt warns illegal (127) tenants

Sowetan 29/10/98

By Charity Bhengu

THE Government has warned about 1 700 Gauteng families who are occupying its houses unlawfully to apply for valid leases within 30 days or face eviction and prosecution

This was said by Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng at the launch of the new Unauthorised Occupants Policy which aims to regularise illegal occupation of Government property

"If they do not adhere to this warning we will have no alternative but to obtain a court order against them and have them removed," he said

It is estimated that a third of the 50 000 provincial rental houses are currently either being unlawfully occupied or being sub-let

Said Mofokeng "This is an untenable situation and in a bid to put a stop to this illegal and damaging practice we are launching the policy to protect those individuals who are being exploited by the situation."

By complying with the procedure, the families have an excellent chance of being able to take up legal ownership of the occupied property

Affected areas

The affected areas include Eldorado Park, Klipspruit, Bellavista, South Hills, Moffat View, Pioneer Park, Clairmont, Coronationville, Vrede Park, Riverlea, Laudium and Lotus near Atteridgeville in Pretoria

To apply the occupants are required to call personally at the provincial housing department or any of the Southern and Northern Metropolitan Local Council administration offices from today

The applicants are required to bring with them their identity documents, proof of marital status and birth certificates of dependants, proof of monthly income as well as proof of registration on a waiting list

The cost to institute legal action for the eviction of an unlawful occupant amounts to about R722,75 a unit and R1 261 should goods be attached. This means that if all 1 666 families fail to apply for leases, the Government will have to part with R1, 2 million to evict them

It is estimated that about R1 387 200 in rent and services charges and R2 898 000 in water and electricity arrears was owed to Southern Metropolitan Local Council

Settling disputes of tenants and landlords

(127)

IN January 1998 Gauteng MEC for land and housing Dan Mofokeng appointed a Landlord Tenant Dispute Resolution Board, established by the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act Number 3 of 1997, a body to address problems at rented residential dwellings.

Problems have arisen in the past and continue to appear each time there is a dispute between the landlord and the tenants. More often than not the landlord resorts to evicting tenants when there is any kind of dispute.

Tenants might resort to unfair tactics and practices to "fix" the landlord. Chairman of the board Edwin Molalehi says the MEC appointed seven board members whose main task is to mediate between parties in disputes. Molalehi stressed that the mediation provision was a voluntary process and they were in no position to force parties to have their disputes mediated upon.

In the event that the dispute remains unresolved the board sends inspectors to do a thorough check on the building (if the complaints relate to the defects). The inspector is then expected to compile a report and present it to the board.

According to Molalehi the bulk of the problems range from issues of the deposit demanded by landlords and increases in rentals, to evictions of tenants. In terms of the law landlords are barred from demanding a deposit of more than two months' rental. On the other hand if the landlord wishes to bar a rent defaulter from entering the premises, the landlord should give the tenant about 14 days to settle the outstanding amount.

If through negotiations and consultations the parties still cannot resolve disputes then the board will suggest arbitration.

Unfair actions include locking flats, preventing tenants from entering the building and instances where tenants engage in actions that are out of line.

Molalehi's advice to tenants is before signing any lease document "it is important to go through the document, paragraph by paragraph, to make sure there is a common understanding between landlord and tenant".

While the parties are under no obligation to cooperate with the board regarding mediation and arbitration, it is consoling to note that at least there is someone out there who is willing to intervene in a dispute.

REPORT

Soweto traders paying arrears

(127)

Council's cutoff campaign reaps rewards

Star 2/12/98

PRINCE HAMNCA
City Editor

Soweto businesses are paying in millions of rands in municipal service arrears, while payment levels in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, remain as low as 4%

Willie Ramoshaba, convener for the Greater Johannesburg credit control committee, said payment levels had increased after months of negotiations with Soweto's businessmen from 35% in July to 61% in September. He said the commitment they had made would boost the metro council's credit control campaign.

The Southern council said Orange Farm had low payment levels because it did not have proper billing systems in the past. The council has threatened to intensify its cutoff campaigns

Soweto Shopkeepers' Association chairperson Mxolisi Mabuto said the sharp increase had been a result of the Southern council's cutoff campaign. He said they were in the process of clearing the pre-1994 debt with the council. Mabuto added that his organisation was also seeking legal advice on the matter.

President Nelson Mandela and former president FW de Klerk agreed during the pre-election negotiations that arrears accumulated before 1994 would be written off.

Mabuto said businesses believed their pre-1994 arrears should be written off. However, he urged Soweto Shopkeepers' Association members and other businesses to arrange with the council to pay their arrears.

If written off, this could mean an

COLLECTION OF MUNICIPAL LEVIES - 1998

COUNCIL		% COLLECTED	
		JUL	AUG
GJMC	total	81.3	92.8
EMLC	total	80.4	82.8
Sandton	residential	91	64.9
SMLC	total	73.4	112.3
Orange Farm	residential	3.1	4.5
Soweto	business	35.3	61.6
GPMC	total	81.3	90.4
Mamelodi	residential	100.0	58.5
LVMC	total	77.6	87.9
WMLC	total	73.6	84.8
Sebokeng	residential	18.0	14.5
Boipatong	residential	16.2	12.4

end to a deadlock that has existed for years between the council and about 500 businesses in Soweto.

Earlier this year, Greater Johannesburg embarked on a credit control campaign and has since intensified its efforts to recoup R2.3-billion owed to its four councils. The campaign involves the cutting off of water and electricity.

The council aimed to recoup R227-million by February. Johannesburg has offered residents a 50% rebate if they pay their arrears by then.

Plug pulled on 100 Jo'burg service freeloaders

By **PRINCE HANNCA**
City Editor

Water and electricity to more than 100 houses in the Greater Johannesburg area was cut off last night as the city moved to recoup R2,3-billion from service defaulters

Irate residents affected by the cutoffs said they had not been informed of the action

The residents, who were standing in a long queue at the council's paypoint in Braamfontein, said they owed between R600 and R3 000

Greater Johannesburg's deputy chairperson Kenny Fihla said residents were constantly notified on their monthly statements about arrears

He said Johannesburg was determined to recoup what was owed to it "If we are sure we want to bring back financial stability to the city, we will have to intensify our credit-control campaign"

A council official said it would take at least 24-hours for the residents to be reconnected.

The areas affected by the cutoffs included Highlands

North, Craighall Park, Bramley and Waverley

Utility Management Services, a credit-control company, has been appointed to collect outstanding amounts

UMS projects manager Zack Engelbrecht said they were cutting electricity and water to people who were in arrears for more than 30 days: "We are cutting after residents have been given a 14-day notice."

He said UMS had made 2 000 cutoffs throughout the metro this week and was recouping R1,1-million a day

STON 2/12/98 (187)

SOWETO HOUSING

(127)

MIDDLE MARKET HOLDS ITS OWN

But luxury homes not selling

Suburban house prices in Soweto are holding their own better than equivalents in many former white areas

The continued migration of "moneyed" Sowetans to upmarket "white" suburbs is strangling demand for luxury Soweto houses, say estate agents. But properties in the R110 000-R180 000 bracket have shown strength recently. Soweto agent Jeff Mashigo of Mashigo Properties says the average R170 000-R180 000 house today has appreciated by up to R20 000 in the past four years. Houses in the R110 000-R140 000 range have done even better, some have risen from as little as R85 000.

This is despite the fact that many residents want to buy outside Soweto. Johannesburg's northern and southern suburbs are favourite destinations. Most people cite safety as a prime reason for wanting to move, says Mashigo. But room to breathe is also important. Soweto houses are generally no smaller for the same price — in fact, quality and size are often superior — but the stands certainly are.

Property valuer Penny Brothers says where stands in Soweto vary between 240 m² and 300 m², they are 800 m²-1 500 m² in the southern suburbs.

Soweto may be a mystery to most white South Africans but it also has its upmarket areas, such as Diepkloof Extension, known as the "Hyde Park" of Soweto, and parts of Orlando West, often referred to as "Beverley Hills". Protea North and Pimville Extension 5 are also popular, but agents describe Protea South as "overpriced".

Mashigo says homes in the R200 000-plus bracket typically have four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a double garage. Between R140 000 and R200 000, you'll get three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The most active market is in the R100 000-R140 000 bracket — typically three bedrooms and a bathroom — where demand exceeds supply.

After Group Areas restrictions disappeared, the first Soweto push was towards Jo-

hannesburg's southern suburbs. Now, says Remax Soweto agent Lucky Kheswa, it's the north — a view echoed by Pam Golding's Ronal Ennik. He adds western suburbs like Westdene and Melville are also in growing demand from Soweto residents.

Not everyone is moving, of course. While many people still prefer the size and finishes of their Soweto homes, others have no choice. In the R70 000-R100 000 price range, most houses are fully bonded, leaving little over for a deposit on a new home.

Alison Goldberg and Siza Uzoa



Suburban Soweto prices holding despite migration

IFP derails

indaba

(127)

on hostels

Mar 5/12/98

'Obstructive instead of taking the lead'

BY SHALO MBATHA

Attempts to improve and re-develop single-sex hostels in Jeppe, Denver and George Goch are being derailed by some members of the IFP in the area. In a heated meeting on Wednesday night, hostel residents, the local community, a hostel non-governmental organisation and the SAPS were harangued by the local IFP strongman, Vincent Shange.

He declared the meeting invalid because of the presence of hostel dwellers from Nancefield in Soweto.

Two weeks ago, the Development Housing Assistance Company (DHACO), as well as the local community and the Jeppe community police forum, invited Gauteng MEC for Development Planning and Local Government Sicelo Shiceka to discuss development in their ward. The MEC asked the residents to elect representatives to liaise with his office.

It was agreed at the meeting that the approach to development would encompass and benefit people from various political parties.

However, at the meeting to elect the committee, Shange decided to reject the entire initiative.

"Who organised this meeting in the first place? We have an elected councillor, (Gebnezar) Dladla, and he only came as an invited guest, and that is unacceptable to us," Shange bellowed in the meeting, which was held at Bertha Solomon Hall in Fairview. Tempers flared and some IFP-aligned people were asked to leave.

Shange's closing statement at the meeting was that no meeting to discuss progress at the hostels was ever to take place again. If there were any discussion, it would have to be called by Dladla, he added.

Dladla was present, but said nothing. When local residents tried to ask him to account for his actions, he would look at Shange, who would verbally attack people. The meeting ended in chaos, and people left hurriedly.

Joseph Mazibuko, chairperson of the DHACO, explained to the *Saturday Star* that his organisation was formed last year to promote development by liaising between hostels and local government, as well as to improve security at the hostels.

"Life in the hostel has deteriorated terribly since the first national elections. In the

past there was law and order, and no women were allowed in, but now hostels are havens for crime syndicates, and no one feels safe in hostels anymore.

"This has caused a flight of business to safer places in town. Local residents cannot secure loans to buy homes in this area because banks have red-lined this area. Overcrowding, both in the hostels and in flats and houses, has caused enormous strains on the infrastructure. There are no clinics, schools, street lights, public telephones and sanitation," said Mazibuko.

Shiceka told the *Saturday Star* that he was first invited to a meeting with all IFP-dominated hostels a year ago to discuss security and development of their hostels.

"A development forum and councillors were elected, and my office never heard from them until last week. They repeated exactly the same things as they did last year. As we speak, there are no social amenities in hostels, despite the fact that the Denver, Jeppe and George Goch hostels house about 6 000 people, including women

and children. These hostels were never, ever fit for human occupation."

Shiceka added that, "with the scourge of Aids and immorality and decadence", the situation was unacceptable.

"As government, we want to help develop not only the hostels but the surrounding community as well. ANC-led hostels such as in Springs are developing because they have effective forums that communicate with my office about their needs. My office is currently

negotiating with Vosloorus hostels about the payment for services and development.

"Our talks are on track and we will be delivering within a short time."

Shiceka said hostel dwellers qualify for the government housing subsidies, "but it's not possible to know the exact numbers we are dealing with".

He added: "This is typical IFP behaviour - inconsistent and erratic even when they stand to gain. They are politicising development. It's their loss. We will work with community leaders who want to progress."

IFP Gauteng leader Themba Khoza said he was not aware of what had happened at the meeting, having been told it ended "amicably".

He said he found it "interesting" that, in this IFP-dominated area, the IFP members were fighting each other, because he had expected them to take charge of development there.



NEVER FIT FOR HUMANS: Sicelo Shiceka, Gauteng's MEC for Development Planning

Houses transform wild field

CP 20/12/98 (127)

By ELIAS MALULEKE

THE Gauteng Housing Department has ended 1998 on a high note with the delivery of more houses than in previous years.

The government blamed the low delivery of previous years on "red tape".

The allocation of low-income houses now numbers to more than 100 000 in Gauteng, but still falls far short of meeting the magical one million target set by the national government in 1994.

So far an estimated 729 440 units have been built or are under construction in the country.

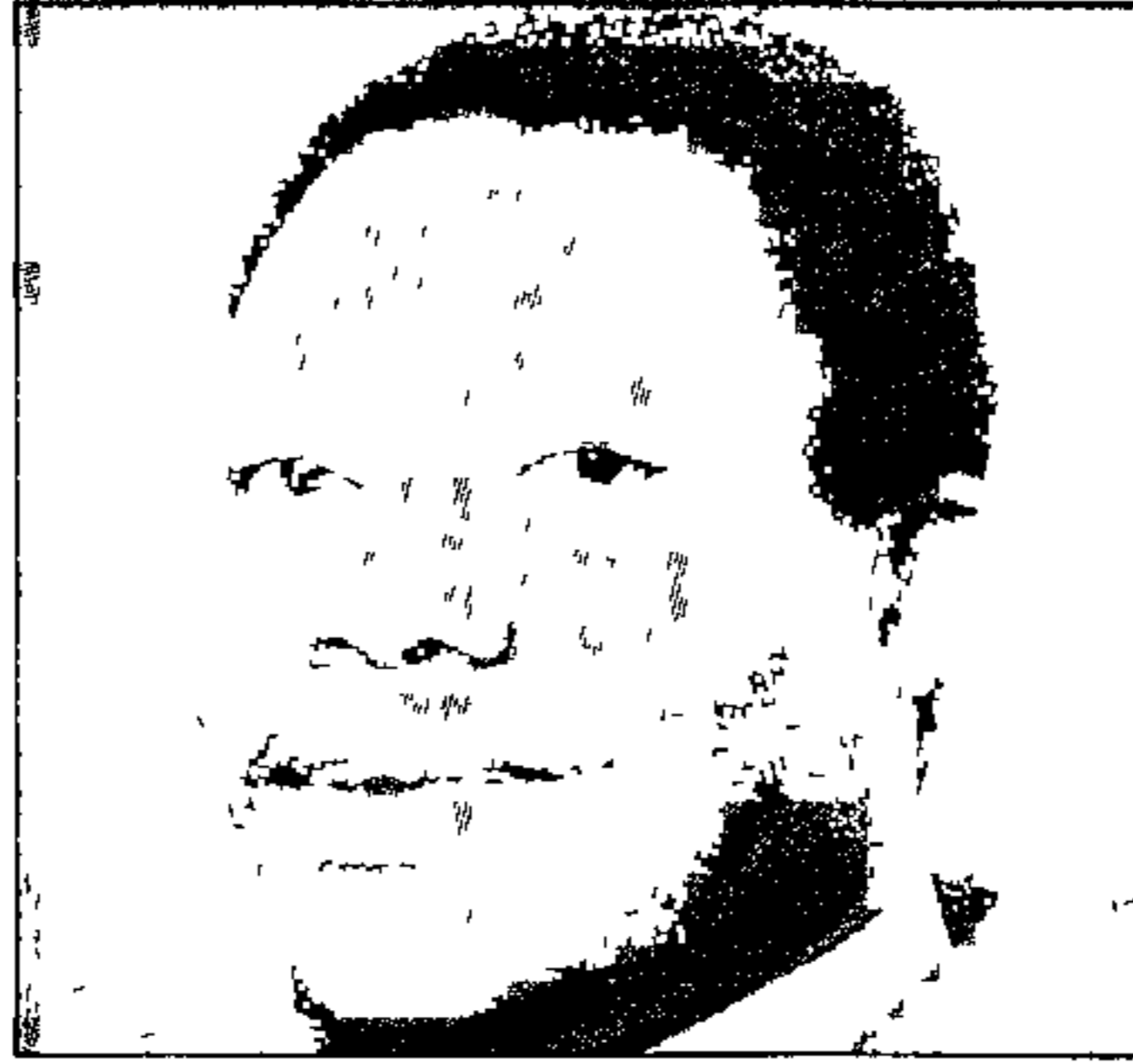
In announcing the transfer of 4 000 title deeds to the occupiers of council-owned matchbox houses in Bophelong in the Vaal, housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said R86 million had been allocated for the construction of 5 000 more houses in the area.

Their construction has benefited from Gauteng's Focus Area Programme which identifies needy areas for upgrading.

The township was established in 1948 and was neglected by the previous government after residents defied its forced removal system.

Mofokeng said the government had prioritised Bophelong for a major development programme.

Last week the government completed an R87 million housing project in which 5 000 struc-



HOUSE MAN...
Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng says the provision of housing is proceeding better than ever before.

tures were completed in record time.

Speaking at a rally in the area attended by Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, Mofokeng said early this year the Vaal area was a vast wild field.

"It is a great honour to report today that we have accelerated the pace of delivery of houses in a manner unprecedented before," Mofokeng said.

He said the record spoke for itself and there was no question that Gauteng was the leading province in providing houses.

The 5 000 completed houses in the area would benefit 20 000 people.

Mofokeng said the Focus Area Programme was unique and was

being run only in Gauteng.

He said "red tape" hindered the delivery of houses in the past and this had not yet been overcome.

He said the Vaal project had created jobs for 900 people and helped to end poverty among these once jobless people.

Mthembu-Mahanyele said the completion of the units in record time was a fitting Christmas present to poor homeless people.

They would enjoy Christmas in sheltered surroundings.

"We will continue to provide houses and shelter for our communities," she said.

An estimated 2,7 million families have now been accommodated in proper houses by the government's housing scheme.

Department cleared of allegations

THE Auditor-General yesterday cleared the Gauteng housing and land affairs department of allegations of irregularities and corruption made by the department's former head, Mr Enos Mkuchana

The AG's report, released by provincial housing MEC Dan Mofokeng at a media conference in Johannesburg, cleared the department on allegations involving lack of management systems, use of consultants, relations with conveyancers, tender procedures and national housing funds

Mofokeng said the AG's investigation could not find that he had pocketed money nor that government vehicles had been used for private reasons

The report further indicated that allegations of lack of management systems and other irregularities were far from true

"The general findings are that this department has in most cases acted decisively and proactively in dealing with these issues," Mofokeng said

The AG exonerated Mofokeng on allegations that he had incorrectly informed the national Housing Department and the media that 200 000 houses were built while in fact only 30 000 were built

"I must say this was no more than just mere slander and malicious disinformation emanating from the dangerous active imagination of a dingruntled element"

In this regard Mofokeng said he had already issued a lawsuit of R500 000 against Mkuchana, and another against the Gauteng leader of the New National Party, Johan Killian, for making slanderous, defamatory and malicious statements

He said similar lawsuits would be sent to several individuals who had made similar claims against him

Mofokeng admitted the department was not perfect, but added that corrective measures had already been implemented, including the appointment of a new head of department, to ensure better administrative capacity

He said Mkuchana's secretary, who was convicted for stealing R600 from the department and using it to buy groceries, was forced to resign

"Our administrative and management capacity has since grown in leaps and bounds the pace of delivery is accelerating and the department is now leading the entire country in terms of delivery of houses," he told the media conference

For instance, in the Bophelong Focus Area Project, 5 000 of the 10 000 houses being built at a cost of R164 million had been completed, he said

Reacting to the report, the New National said last night that the Auditor-General had hardly scratched the surface and a lot of crucial questions remained unanswered

NNP provincial chairman Johan Killian said "The Auditor-General does not have the resources and lacks the required powers of seizure, interrogation and in-depth investigations that are required in these very complicated cases"

"The matters that we, as the official opposition, required to be investigated remain unreported on to this date"

Killian did not elaborate on what the crucial issues were that he claimed were not answered in the report - Sapa

127
Secretary

Mofokeng cleared of corruption by audit

James Eedes

(127) 20 29/12/98

A REPORT by the auditor-general into alleged irregularities in the Gauteng housing and land affairs department clears minister Dan Mofokeng of corruption but criticises mismanagement within the department.

The report found that the department had paid out subsidies for houses which had not yet been built, had not followed tender procedures and had entered into agreements with conveyancers and developers that had not helped speed up the delivery of houses. In one instance R3,4m was paid to a developer who had not completed construction of the houses.

The auditor-general's report said only 17 of the 27 allegations made against Mofokeng's department had been considered. The remaining 10 had been referred to the auditor-general's forensic auditing component.

Mofokeng was cleared of allegations of misuse of motor vehicles by members of his office. However, the report found there was almost 100 000km of unaccounted mileage in four departmental cars. Mofokeng was also exonerated from any implication of wrongdoing in the hiring of contract workers in his office without the approval of the Gauteng provincial services commission.

The report highlighted the use of fraudulent identity documents to secure housing subsidies. The department had incorrectly used net income instead of gross income to determine who qualified for a subsidy. This meant that individuals were paid larger subsidies for which they did not qualify.

Mofokeng conceded that there were "some weaknesses" in his department, but said measures were in place to address them. "The department inherited a complex and large bureaucracy out of which we have been trying to disentangle ourselves," he said.

Many of the allegations levelled at the department by its former head, Enos Ngutshane, at the beginning of the year were found to be either without foundation or lacking supporting evidence.

Mofokeng, describing the allegations as "rumours, half-truths and in some cases utter lies", said he intended to sue Ngutshane for R500 000. "Nobody can say (people in) the department have channelled money into their own pockets," said Mofokeng. "Where we had to correct the situation, we have acted decisively. The pace of delivery is accelerating. The department is now leading the entire country in terms of delivery of houses."

New National Party Gauteng leader Johan Kilian said a member of his party had been ejected from Mofokeng's news conference yesterday. Mofokeng had told provincial legislature member Wally Labuschagne he was not welcome. Kilian said Mofokeng's attempt to exonerate himself was "totally unconvincing".

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HOUSING & HOSTELS

- CANTONG -

1998-1999

Jo'burg plans high-density housing

Concern expressed that infrastructure would not cope with additional strain

By ANNA COX

Greater Johannesburg's planning department has drafted proposals for a new, uniform town-planning scheme for the whole city, including blanket approval to increase the density of housing to 40 dwellings per hectare.

This, loosely translated, means two dwelling units on a 500 sqm stand

The planning department said 99% of applications the councils handled dealt with densification in one form or another and this time could be better spent managing the city. This has caused great alarm, especially among residents of the northern suburbs where large stands are the norm.

Concern has also been expressed that the existing infrastructure, which is already overburdened and largely unmaintained, would not cope with the additional strain of densification.

Greater Johannesburg's head of sustainable development planning, Melissa Whitehead, said densification was

entrenched in much of the new legislation including the RDP and the Development Facilitation Act.

Residents who do not want higher densities would have protection under the proposed new scheme and from their area's land development objectives (LDOs)

Developers will be forced to foot the bill for the cost of additional services and infrastructure if they apply for higher densities

Rosebank/Dunkeld ward councillor Judith Briggs said the older established "garden suburbs" would be threatened "Proposals to grant blanket permission to densify will lead to the destruction of trees, an unmanageable increase in stormwater run-off and an unbearable burden on already overloaded infrastructure. This is a recipe for environmental disaster"

As each of the 11 previous municipal areas currently have different town-planning schemes, the proposal plans to bring about a comprehensive town planning scheme for the greater metropolitan area

In some areas, like Alexandra, there are no town-planning schemes.

"We acknowledge the need to densify the city and create a more compact city with higher residential densities, but care must be taken not to destroy those areas with special qualities," Briggs said

The metro said the specific LDOs in any area would override the rights given in the new town-planning scheme, but Briggs expressed doubt. "First, LDOs for individual suburbs have not been adopted. Only broad framework documents have been adopted. This proviso is meaningless until the LDOs for each area have been accepted by its council

"Second, if the LDOs clash with the town-planning schemes, disputes will arise and it is likely that tribunals and township board committees, as well as the minister, may take the view that the town-planning scheme takes priority."

The proposals are still being debated in public forums and are due for implementation by July

8/07 6/11/98

SKYSCRAPERS that once stood as monuments to mining empires are now mothballed, their owners having fled the "crime-infested hell-hole" of Johannesburg city

Stylish Art Deco buildings, once fashionable addresses, have become slums where law enforcement officers and city health officials fear to tread

On the streets of Hillbrow mattresses can be rented by the hour, while many residents live in flats that have not had water or electricity for nearly a year

Scenes of decay, dirty streets, dilapidated buildings and crumbling pavements seem more appropriate to Maputo than a city with a R7-billion budget — larger than that of some of South Africa's provinces

Once a frontier mining town, Johannesburg is a city of contrasts born 112 years ago and built during the gold rush on a system of huge wealth and extreme poverty

To this day, mansions of almost unethical proportions sprawl across the north, while in the south thousands of people live in crowded shacks

Always an immigrants' town, the city's history lies in the stories of its first residents — those who escaped their mean, working-class lives in depressed Europe, and the migrant labourers who poured into the city from rural villages across the country

Hard-nosed prospectors re-invented themselves as Randlords and built homes in the sun on the city's ridges while miners, forced to live like animals in hostels, died down dangerous shafts

Johannesburg fast became a modern city, with trams and state-of-the-art movie theatres. The first cars in the country carried women in feather boas and men in top hats. These first-generation arrivistes quickly took to their elevated status and even boasted servants who wore white gloves

Yet Johannesburg was also the seat of resistance to apartheid. The historic Freedom Charter, signed in Kliptown in 1955, spearheaded the challenge to white economic power. The inequalities could not be sustained and slowly the system began to crumble

As the city's townsfolk went from rags to riches so they moved from Hillbrow to Parktown. Hillbrow became a cosmopolitan anomaly in the city's political landscape, claimed by bohemians, activists and, ultimately, those who had been barred from living in the city limits by the Group Areas Act

Since 1994 Johannesburg has continued to explore new boundaries, luring newcomers to it. It is now an African city and, while some see this as a disaster, it is in keeping with the city's characteristic capacity for change

As Gauteng's former premier, Tokyo Sexwale, says "This is not a European city or a city in the US. It is a city in the heart of the great African continent"

But as crime and grime threaten to overrun Johannesburg, the future of its four million people hangs in the balance. Here is a city caught in a trap of homelessness, poor infrastructure, unemployment, crime and illegal immigration

SA's unofficial capital has long lost its glitter to grime and crime.

But if Jo'burg wasn't embracing a new frontier, it wouldn't be the city of gold, writes

CELEAN JACOBSON

ST 8/11/98

(177)



Johannesburg does not have a Rudi Giuliani, the mayor who saved New York from the sewers to put it back on the map. Neither does it have a Marion Barry, the free-basing mayor who drove Washington DC into the ground, to blame

Few residents would be able to name its mayor or chief executive, even fewer would know there are five of each

While the council flounders in a sea of bureaucracy, the city has gained a momentum of its own. Even normally optimistic residents may be forgiven for thinking the council is fighting a losing battle, albeit valiantly. All it can do is try to contain the city's force, but there are some serious odds against it

Although the city accounts for 25 percent of the national GDP, the Johannesburg metropolitan council is broke. It lost R130-million a month last year and is owed R2-billion by residents who refuse to pay for the pathetic services provided by previous administrations. It has also been unable to raise loans because banks perceive it as a high-risk client

Almost 20 percent of top-grade office space in the city centre is empty and the flight of companies continues. The JSE is leaving, and the Carlton Hotel and Smal Street Garden Court Holiday Inn are closed. Anglo American Property Services is selling off its buildings and Sanlam has put a freeze on further inner-city investment

Absentee landlords and

crooked management companies have been a major contributing factor to the neglected mess. About 200 people share 12 toilets in Harley Chambers in Jeppe Street, once a prestigious block of doctors' rooms

The financial crisis has paralysed the city and the delivery of services is erratic. Street lights in Houghton recently burnt night and day for weeks, then didn't work at all. Broken traffic lights have turned rush-hour into a nightmare and grass in the city grew a metre high last summer after 22 council lawn-mowers went missing

Recently, one Randburg homeowner got so fed up with not having his rubbish collected that he dumped it in the mayor's office. Almost everybody has a story about errors in their water and electricity accounts, each one a tale of incompetent officials too sad to be funny

The Rosebank fire station had to close for four days recently because of a critical shortage of staff, and the corruption in the traffic department frequently makes headlines

Pollution in the city goes unchecked and 60 percent of schoolchildren in greater Johannesburg have levels of lead in their blood that equal or exceed accepted US levels

Faecal counts are unacceptably high in the water in Alexandra township, outside Sandton, where about 2 700 households live along the banks of the Jukskei, one of South Africa's most polluted rivers

The city's sewerage system is collapsing and the Bryanston bird sanctuary is being flooded with raw effluent. The stench from Bruma Lake, a popular family spot, is caused by sewage seeping into the water

Crime in Johannesburg is legendary. The powerhouse of the SA economy has become one of the world's murder capitals

In the first six months of this year there were 1 012 murders in Johannesburg and Soweto

The ineffectiveness of the police only adds to a growing sense of anarchy. Last year, thieves killed a pregnant woman in front of her three-year-old daughter. The police took an hour and 45 minutes to get to her because, they said, they had trouble finding transport

In reaction to such horror stories, the city has become more polarised. The town's trendsetters have moved from Yeoville to Melville and new businesses districts have boomed in Rosebank and Sandton. Other residents have retreated deep into the suburbs further north, where they live behind high walls and shop in the safety of the malls

But still believing they are targets, vigilante homeowners are taking the law into their own hands. Hundreds of public roads are being illegally closed off in Sandton. When the council recently took down a boom restricting access to Honeysuckle Crescent in Gallo Manor, its residents were outraged

Those who can afford to live

in crime-free seclusion in laagers like Dainfern, a suburb with a golf course and

Used to thinking no more than their well-paved roads, Sandton residents objected when the council upped their rates two

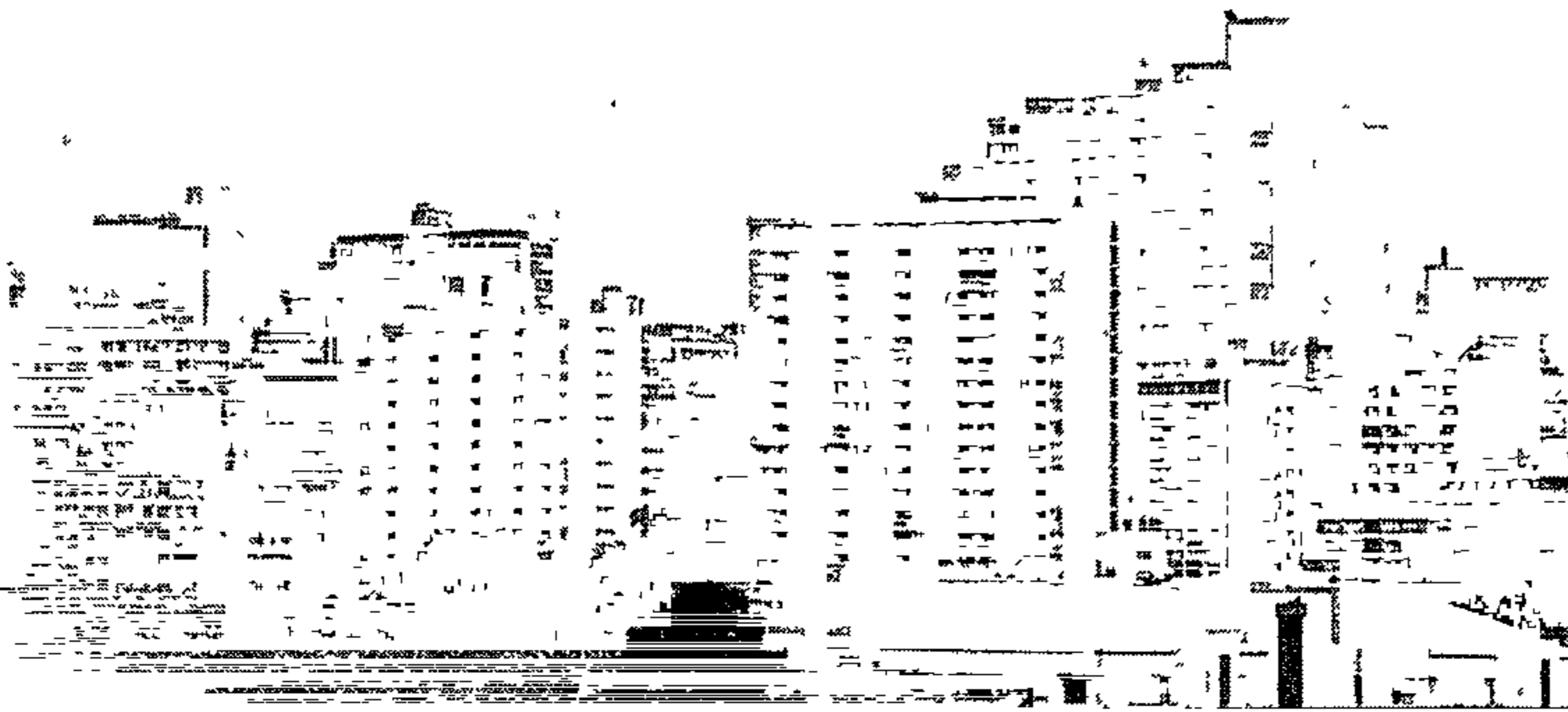
ago to fund development. A rates by Sandton residents and nesses, including top names such as Liberty Momentum Insurance, when the Constitutional ruled against them. No will have to cough up million in arrears

Even leading black movement groups like Nail, by a long-time Soweto Dr Nthato Motlana, have their backs on the city up headquarters in

But the exodus has the city centre dead. Contrary, it is teeming faces, languages, food clothes. Roughly a people pass through

City of rags, city of riches

Picture: JON HRUSA



in crime-free seclusion in luxury laagers like Dainfern, a complex with a golf course and school

Used to thinking no further than their well-paved streets, many northern suburbs residents objected when the council upped their rates two years ago to fund development in Soweto. A rates boycott by Sandton residents and businesses, including top companies such as Liberty Life and Momentum Insurance, ended when the Constitutional Court ruled against them. Now they will have to cough up R220-million in arrears.

Even leading black empowerment groups like Nail, headed by a long-time Soweto resident, Dr Nthato Motlana, have turned their backs on the city and set up headquarters in Sandton.

But the exodus has not left the city centre dead. On the contrary, it is teeming with new faces, languages, food and clothes. Roughly a million people pass through each day

About 15 000 hawkers crowd the streets and 20 000 taxis jostle for fares

The bright city lights continue to draw fortune seekers, just as they once attracted President Nelson Mandela and mining magnate Barney Barnato.

Johannesburg is still, to paraphrase Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, the beating heart of South Africa. It's just that now a busy Saturday morning in the city looks completely different.

Gone are the gentleman tailors and elegant department stores. Today, shoppers stream in from Soweto to buy fake designer gear off the streets while women in colourful scarves cook meals on corners.

Hidden under the highway near the troubled Faraday taxi rank, sangomas throw the bones in a huge herb market.

From outside the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park, which no one visits anymore, you can catch a taxi to anywhere in South Africa.

Once home to Italian and Portuguese immigrants, Berea now welcomes people from Nairobi, Mombassa, the Ivory Coast.

Mandela's once-favourite restaurant, Kapitans in Kort Street, is filled with lurching businessmen while the Rand Club, that colonial refuge of the gin-and-tonic set, has become a popular watering hole for former unionist Cyril Ramaphosa and the new black elite.

Eddie Ndhlovu is a savvy 22-year-old who lives in Soweto but thrives on coming to the "concrete jungle" every day to sell his goods on Diagonal Street.

"Jo'burg is where the action is. The money, the fast life. It is still good. It is where I was born. I love it," he says.

Mozambican-born vegetable seller Henriques Joao Nhamuchuo, 31, who came here four years ago, is more earnest in his appreciation. "There is work here," he says. "You can meet people from different countries. It is easy to find out about the

world, see new fashions."

Sexwale drew attention to this new spirit at the launch of a three-year plan to revitalise the city last year, saying: "Astute businessmen will realise that Johannesburg is undergoing a transformation and has had a change of clientele."

The business sector took note. Absa invested R300-million, Edgars's decision to keep its flagship store in town means it now serves a captive market and Park Station has had a R32-million makeover.

Smaller businesses are snapping up empty offices at bargain rents and property owners are teaming up to form business districts with their own cleaning and security staff.

The council must be given some credit. It may not be able to beat urban decay, but it is trying to manage it.

An agreement signed this month with the taxi associations will see the area around Joubert Park clear of taxis by the middle of next year.

The number of traffic and police officers in the inner city has been increased and plans for a metropolitan police force are in place. More cleaning staff have been moved into the city centre, 6 000 new litter bins have been distributed and there has been a 53 percent increase in the amount of rubbish removed.

About 2 500 homeless people were relocated last year and a number of social housing projects have been started.

In what is one of the most encouraging signs, more and more tenants are exploring options to buy their flats and renovate their buildings.

The council knows that for Johannesburg to survive the city must be unified and people must get equal services. Last year it spent R8-million on street lights in Soweto, an additional 30 000 people got access to water, and 428km of roads were tarred. Clinics are being built and so are houses.

The council is streamlining its functions as it gears up to become a "mega-city" with centralised powers. Dynamic councillors and officials are emerging to help shape the city's future, knowing that there is too much at risk to let it fail.

It is a future being forged in new cultures found in the lingo of the taxi driver, at soccer matches, at the famous Soweto tavern Wandi's and in the Calabash nightclub in Sandton.

Johannesburg is taking on an identity driven by the Y-Generation — named after the million young people who listen to Gauteng's hottest new radio station, YFM.

There is a kwaito expression that says it all: "Msawawa Ziyawa" — Jozi is pumping. It's hot. It's happening.

Own homes for 500 in Munsieville

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng at the weekend handed over 500 houses to families of one of the oldest townships in South Africa, Munsieville, near Krugersdorp

At a ceremony in the township, Mofokeng said that the initiative to grant homes to families would go a long way to ensuring that these families had security, permanent stability and a better quality of life

He said that they must be masters of their own destiny, adding that it was more important given the fact that for many years the community of Munsieville had to endure poverty, deprivation, evictions and no right to own land and houses

The handover of the homes to the residents is the first major housing development project for the community of Munsieville

The chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Bishop Desmond Tutu and his parents lived in this township

First decent home

A resident, Mrs Francina Mojaki, said "I am now 57 years-old and have five children For the first time I will own a decent home where I will have privacy with my family

"I am very happy and I cannot wait to come into a house I will call mine I will only pay for services"

Munsieville residents have been victims of evictions and threats for many years under

apartheid because the predominantly black area was "too close to the then white town of Krugersdorp"

Mofokeng said that the ANC-led Government had made it its commitment to stamp out hopelessness through land and property ownership

As a result of a shortage of homes, people lived in backyard shacks and informal settlements

His department was in the process of approving 1 800 serviced sites in the province and was planning to allocate 18 000 rented houses through its "social housing project"

He assured the community that they must be fearless because "you are the rightful and legal owners of these houses and land, you have investment in this land"

(127)

Source: 9/11/98

NEWS

Failure in transformation leads to breakdown in scientific services division

Racism pollutes Rand Water

(127) CT(MR)16/11/98

THABO LESHILO

BUSINESS EDITOR

Johannesburg — An independent inquiry has confirmed allegations of racism and failure to embrace diversity made against Rand Water by senior black staff

The inquiry was carried out by Brian Currin, the leading human rights lawyer, and businessman Dawn Mokhobo

Last year, senior black staff complained that the R1 billion-a-year water utility had relegated highly qualified black employees to lowly positions and paid them less than their white juniors.

The investigators found that the problems at Rand Water threatened its ability to deliver clean water. The company supplies drinking water to 12 million people in Gauteng, parts of Mpumalanga, the North West, Free State and Kwazulu Natal

The report, leaked to Business Report last week, said the entire scientific services department, responsible for water quality, had virtually broken down and was in dire need of restructuring

The allegations against Rand Water stemmed mainly from this department.

"This is a totally unacceptable state of affairs and needs to be rectified as a matter of urgency," said the report

Currin and Mokhobo found a "singularly unimpressive achievement" in appointing blacks and women to senior positions at the utility. They also found that white artisans were reluctant to train newly appointed black artisans

Their report also said the salary median for blacks and coloureds in operations and scientific services was "consistently well below the median for white staff"

It was noted, however, that black staff had relatively fewer years of related experience, compared with whites

The investigators recommended that remuneration experts be brought in to narrow the gap between black and white salary packages

The inquiry found that attempts to transform the company had clearly failed, despite the right intentions expressed by the

white management, which "does not have the capacity to conceptualise and implement an integrated transformation process"

Currin and Mokhobo said Rand Water staff had no faith in senior management's ability to meaningfully transform the company

They recommended that the management committee be

restructured to become race- and gender-representative and that a revised transformation programme be immediately put in place

During their 10-week investigation they interviewed individual employees and representa-

tives of unions and management

The report said the company's black staff felt they had been reluctantly brought into the historically white company after the 1994 elections and were still viewed as intruders

"It is interesting to note that, without exception, all white artisans who testified expressed the view that implementation of

affirmative action policy and diversification targets resulted in discrimination against them. They feel aggrieved and marginalised," said the report

The investigators said on balance they were satisfied that Rand Water had adhered to its affirmative action policy and staffing diversification targets

It had even won accolades from the Black Management Forum for its professed commitment to transformation

However, the inquiry found that the classification of white women as "previously disadvantaged" had caused problems at Rand Water. Black staff felt white women were appointed to key positions to ensure these positions stayed white

The investigators said problems at Rand Water reflected South Africa's apartheid history

"Consequently, the values of racism, sexism, authoritarianism and adversarialism are bound to permeate the practices, processes and structures of Rand Water. This is not a unique problem," the report said

Rand Water was not available for comment at the time of going to press

Investigators say the clamp on black senior staff threatens the quality of drinking water

New development programme for South

BY ANNA COX

A massive housing development programme comprising the construction of 3 000 housing units for almost 12 000 people near Kibler Park, south of Johannesburg, will change the face of the southern suburbs

Construction on the development is expected to start immediately. There will be business and retail sites

Alveda Park, as it will be known, lies between the Vereeniging Road, Gordon Road and Swartkoppies Road

The stands range from 400m² to 650m² and will be sold as packages with the housing units at a cost of between R90 000 and R150 000

Although Kibler Park and other neighbouring residents initially objected to the housing scheme fearing it would become a squatter area, an agree-

ment on minimum sizes and standards has now been reached.

The developers, PLG have agreed to donate a site for a school to the community.

Spokesperson for the New South Community Forum and

Concerned Residents' Action Group, Derek Skinner, said he was pleased that an agreement had

been reached through a negotiated settlement.

"The south is a fast growing area with huge potential. Unfortunately it tends to be ignored by big businesses who all move to the north. We desperately need office and business development here especially because this council area is home to about 1/12th of the country's population. Most of the people in this area have to travel far to their jobs because there are no industries or office parks around here."

Growing area with potential

Nov 23/11/98 (127)

Housing scheme for homeless

(127)

Cornelius House offers transitional accommodation for low-income earners

Nov 23/11/98

By BUNTY WEST

Elphus Mphama (29) came to Johannesburg from the Northern Province in 1993, seeking work.

He ended up in Yeoville begging

For five years he tried to get work and then he heard about an inner city project which would provide transitional housing to the homeless and applied for a room at Cornelius House in downtown Johannesburg

Cornelius House came about because of a dire need for housing in the city. Many of the homeless have jobs and can afford to pay for their keep, but there is no accommodation in their price range

The Johannesburg Trust for the Homeless, the Central Johannesburg Partnership, the Central Methodist Mission and



Slums ... it's because of areas like this that Cornelius House is necessary.

for the Central Johannesburg Partnership, pays R180 per month for his single room

Residents who earn between R400 and R1 250 per month pay a month's rent in advance as well as a deposit. Rentals start at R60 per month and rooms are available for families, single people and in shared accommodation

Various job creation projects are being started and a work centre set up

"Transitional housing is unique in that it offers both affordable accommodation as well as access to job creation projects," Chris Lund, a spokesperson for the Trust, said

It costs R10 000 per month to run Cornelius House and there is a dire need for sponsorship through funding, training schemes, furniture, volunteers and equipment. If you can help contact Lund at (011) 331-2851.

St George's United Church got together and formulated a different approach to the housing problem. Through project planning and fundraising they made Cornelius House a reality. A disused industrial build-

ing was bought and converted into the shelter at a cost of R2-million, with the help of funding from local and overseas organisations. The first residents moved in in July. Mphama, who now works

Repossessed homes left to rot

Banks shocked to discover that some houses rapidly turn into shebeens and accommodation for squatters

By PETA KROST

Scores of houses repossessed by banks have been turned into "expensive squatter camps", shebeens or bases from which "guards" steal from neighbouring houses.

The *Saturday Star* did an impromptu tour of repossessed homes in several central Johannesburg suburbs and found devastation and exploitation rather than houses for sale.



EMBARASSED Cecelia Martens had to endure guards drinking and partying next door

Repossessed houses are leased by banks to tenants while they are on the market. Many of the tenants make a fortune, by hiring out rooms in the house. In some cases, entire families "rent" a single room. These overcrowded homes are neglected and vandalised. In a once comfortable Kensington house, the toilet had not been running for at least six months, the roof and ceiling were left to rot and there was no electricity.

According to the tenants, the leaseholder, Frank Nkuna, rents out rooms for between R300 and R400. Nkuna said he rents the house from Absa Bank for R850 and claimed he has told bank officials about the toilet and the other problems in the house, "but they don't care".

Most repossessed homes are "looked after" by guards, many of whom are being paid exploitative

wages - as little as R250 a month - to remain in the house 24 hours a day seven days a week. Some companies dock more than a day's wage if the guard is out when their representative visits.

Some guards have found ways of making extra money - by selling liquor from these houses, renting out a room or two, or stealing from houses in the area.

For eight months Cecelia Martens has put up with guards drinking and partying in a repossessed house next door. "It has been one long nightmare," she said. "There are dozens of people in and out of that house. I realised they were stealing when I saw people talking things out by trolley. They even tried to steal the geyser."

She complained to the bank seven months ago, and the guards were changed. She claimed the new guards started selling liquor at night and she would get people knocking on her door demanding to buy beer. She was burgled, and some men climbed over the wall and tried to get into the garden cottage where her daughter lived. "I once walked into my bedroom to find one of the guards from next door there. I screamed and he ran away."

When the *Saturday Star* alerted senior Absa officials to the situation they were "totally appalled", according



DEVASTATION One of the guards who is "house-sitting" a repossessed home points out the extensive damage to the walls ceiling and light fittings

to Absa's assistant general manager of corporate affairs, Nick Cairns.

"This is totally unacceptable and we intend to do a total overhaul of the situation," he said. Cairns insisted that bank employees in charge of these houses would be brought back from holiday to sort the matter out, and the security companies that were

responsible for the guards would be told that if they cannot meet Absa's standards, the bank would review their agreements.

"We have launched an investigation and will be visiting every one of our repossessed properties and will be monitoring them strictly from now on. This is ridiculous. The bank wants to

Photograph: CATHY PINNICK

get the maximum value for these houses, but instead they are being downgraded while in our possession."

Cairns added that although the guards were not expected to defend the houses with their lives, their wages were unacceptable. Standard Bank's divisional general manager home loans, Alan Bennetts,

said he felt that this was "not a huge problem" for his bank, but it had little choice but to get guard companies involved in securing empty houses.

"If we rent out the house, we sign a lease agreement and don't dictate how many people live in the house. The only way we would see if a number of families were resident there is if we personally go and see," he said.

As for the squaring companies, Bennetts said Standard Bank paid significant amounts for their services and it was very particular about which ones it used.

However, the *Saturday Star* spoke to a number of guards who worked for one of the two companies Bennetts cited, Property Watch, only to find its conditions and wages to be "unacceptable".

Henk Wright, managing director of Property Watch, admitted that the wages he had been paying until now were unacceptable. "We can't expect people to work for this but that is all we can afford to pay them," he said.

"We are one of the few companies trying to improve their situation," Wright said. "The money is pathetic, but if the banks don't want to pay more for the service, what can we do?" He admitted there was a "bit of a problem with the shebeens and the crime. I had two faxes complaining about that this morning," he said. "We have 170 houses around the country so we can only get to them every so often.

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What happens there the rest of the time I don't know."

He said he saw what he was doing as "job creation", despite paying his employees less than R15 a day and docking R20 if they are not on site when visited.

He said Absa had been paying R42 to R45 a day per guard for the past two years. "We have sent letters to them explaining our running costs and wages, but nothing changes," Wright said.

It has been one long nightmare - they even tried to steal the geyser

He claimed all the companies doing this work paid their guards similar wages because "the banks have the money, we don't - if they give more than so can we".

Wright added that, as of this month, his staff would get R38 a day. He was also setting up an association with several other companies to try to achieve improved conditions for the guards.

A Nedbank management source said Nedbank did a "massive investigation into these house-sitting and guarding companies and fired the lot of them".

Nedbank has now moved to alarm-based security, specially adapted to secure empty homes. The source explained that Nedbank has moved away from guards because, "instead of fixing the problem, they become the problem" and were something that bothered the bank constantly because there was regular abuse of the system.

91 000 roofs over Gauteng family heads

By ALI MPHAKI

(127)

BY the end of November last year the ANC-led government had provided more than 91 000 housing units which benefitted some 360 000 family members

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng said in a statement to City Press that despite this achievement, huge challenges lay ahead as the estimated housing backlog in the province was about 900 000 units

It is estimated that about 40 000 people immigrate to Gauteng every month, making the land and housing situation even more complex for the authorities. This is so considering that Gauteng is the smallest province with the largest population of about 10 million.

There has also been a concerted effort to upgrade informal settlements, with Mofokeng reporting that 157 000 stands have thus far been upgraded. This means that about 600 000 family members now have access to clean water and sanitation. It is further envisaged that about 28 000 stands in informal settlements would have been upgraded by March this year.

Mofokeng said the speed at which houses were being delivered was noteworthy.

He cited Bophelong as an example. There, the government had allocated R164 million to build 10 000 houses in two phases. The first 5 000 were allocated R78,6 million and had been completed in the record time of about eight months.

CP 10/1/99

Gauteng tops when it comes to delivery

(127)

Southern 12/1/99

By Mbulelo Musi and Tommy Makoe

WHEN the African National Congress-led government came to power in Gauteng in 1994, it inherited one of the worst and most difficult housing problems in the country

There was a bloated, fragmented, ineffective and corrupt bureaucracy, deeply steeped in racist and discriminatory policies. However, from that mishmash, a small but committed group emerged

This group was determined to break with the past, embrace the new changes and share their expertise with all fellow South Africans in order to build a proud and united rainbow nation

The seeds of those brave decisions are now beginning to bear fruit. In the last four years, the department has faced tremendous challenges - a huge housing backlog among people whom the previous government never allowed to own property

Gauteng has always been and continues to be the economic hub not only of the country but of the entire Southern Africa region. It is faced with an influx of people from all provinces and from outside the country who want jobs

It is estimated that about 40 000 people immigrate to this province every month, leading to the mushrooming of informal settlements in a manner unequalled elsewhere in the country.

As Gauteng is the smallest province in the country (only 17 010 square kilometres) and has a population of about 10 million, the housing and land problems become even more complex

Yet, slowly but surely, there has been some progress. There is visible movement in terms of the building of houses, upgrading of informal settlements, provision of land, provision of title deeds and so on

Through the Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme, 157 000 stands have so far been upgraded. This means about 600 000 family members now have access to clean water and sanitation

Massive delivery

The department envisages that another 28 000 informal settlements will be upgraded by March

The pace of Gauteng is changing as a result of this massive housing delivery. As at the end of November 1998, the government had delivered 91 072 housing units. Over 360 000 family members have benefited

Worth noting is the speed with which these houses are now being built, particularly in this province - it is unprecedented in the history of our country

For instance in Bophelong, in the Vaal area, Gauteng allocated R164 million to build 10 000 houses in two phases

The first 5 000 were allocated R78.6 million and were completed in the record time of eight months. Today, all these houses are occu-

ped. Of the second phase, 850 have been completed

This could not have been a better Christmas present to the people of Bophelong, who in the last 43 years were threatened with evictions. For them, freedom was not an abstract slogan or empty promise

Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng noted the significance of these developments when he addressed the Bophelong community recently

"You are now for the first time the rightful owners of your houses and land," Mofokeng told them. "Never again shall you be threatened with evictions nor harassed for passes and permits," he said

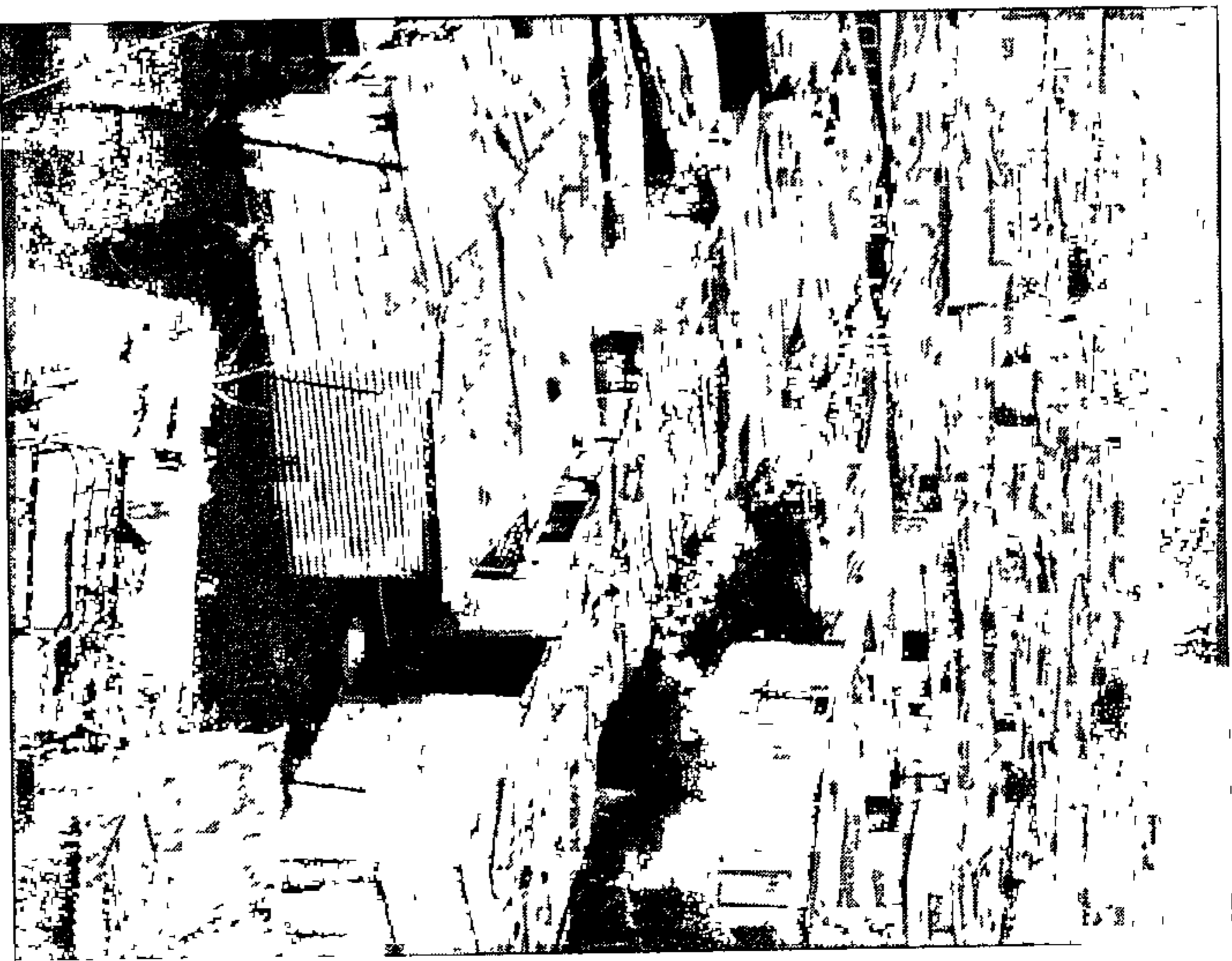
Despite these achievements within such a short time, there is no doubt that huge challenges still lie ahead. It is estimated the housing backlog is now about 900 000 units

Land invasions

Landlessness still remains acute. Land speculators are still active. And land invasions are also still a major problem, causing hindrance to development plans

There is no doubt that the positive changes currently taking place in Gauteng need to be emulated throughout the country in such a way that they touch the lives of all communities. The history of the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs teaches that the key to success is

- An integrated development strategy,



The Gauteng government is upgrading informal settlements through its Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme. So far 157 000 stands have been upgraded.

- Community involvement in the whole process of development
- Strong partnership between government, the developers and the community.
- Cooperation, coordination and proper planning between the three tiers of government (local provincial and national).
- Strong leadership and management principles, systems and personnel, and
- An unswerving commitment to good governance, accountability and transparency
(The writer's work for the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs)

Yeoville

Last week the *Saturday Star* reported how the blind couple pictured on the right, Herman and Cecilia Bedser, were allegedly battered by a Yeoville neighbour when they asked him to turn down the volume of his music. The alleged assailant claimed he was merely exercising his right in the New South Africa to do as he wished. Does this act of violence reflect a broader picture of moral decay in which Yeovillites have lost sight of the true meaning of democracy and good neighbourliness?



Where democracy is pitted aga

By MAURICE SMITHERS

The struggle in South Africa pre-1994 was for a democratic, non racist, non sexist society, free of exploitation and oppression. The Freedom Charter called for a society based on "human rights for all" and for "peace and friendship among all our people upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all".

I was part of that struggle, seeing the inside of John Vorster Square, Hillbrow and Randburg police stations and Johannesburg Prison as a political detainee. I was also banned for a period of time.

In all those years, when asked by non-comprehending whites why I was giving up my life "for the blacks", I answered that I wasn't doing it "for the blacks", I was doing it for everyone's right to live in the kind of society envisaged in the Freedom Charter. And I was doing it for my children and for the children of South Africa who shouldn't have to be brought up under the same evil system as we were.

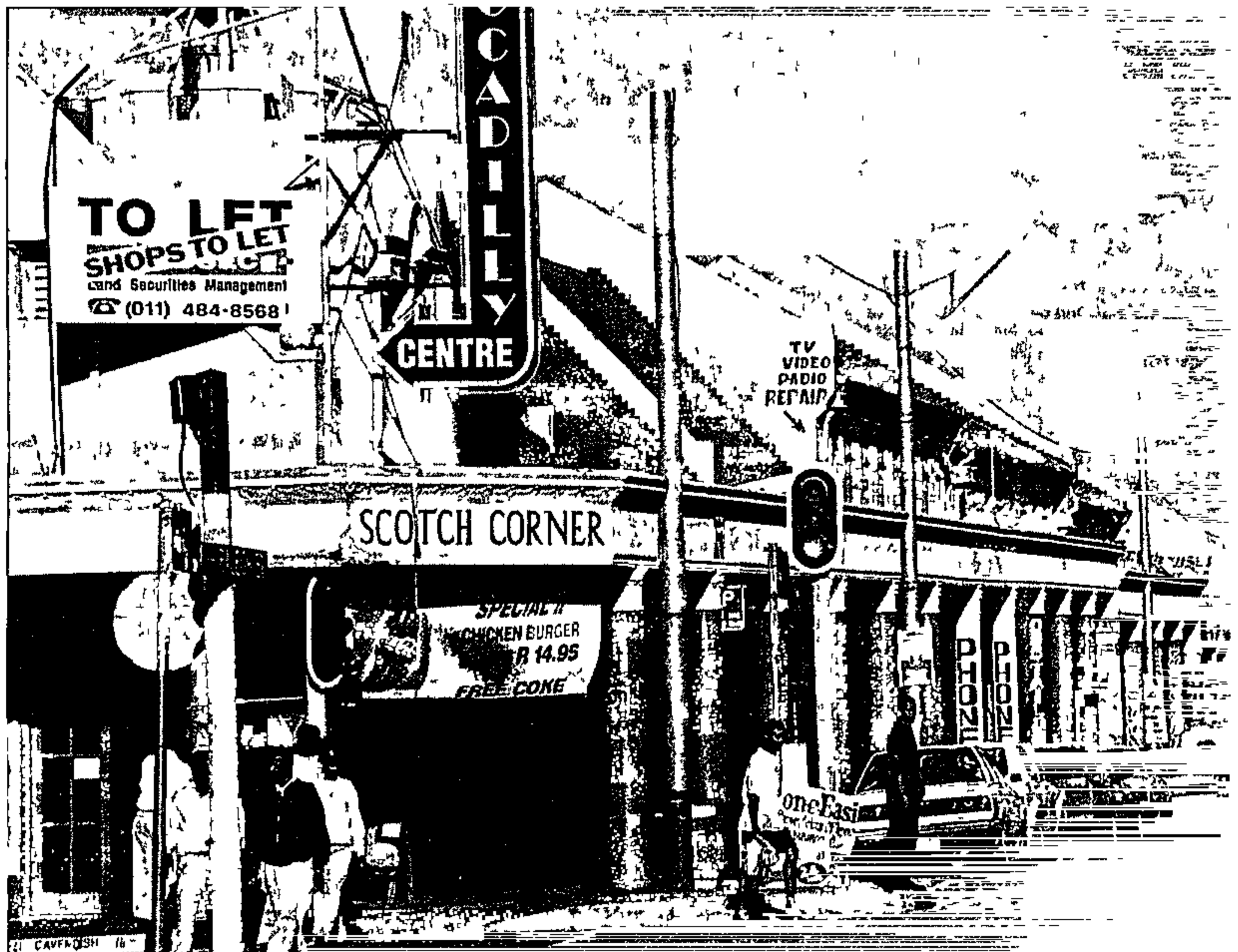
Today we are rid of the legislative system of apartheid. We have a democratically elected government. And we have a constitution which probably protects the human rights of individuals more than any other in the world. But have we made the dream of the Freedom Charter a reality? Sadly not.

Beaten up

I live in Yeoville/Bellevue, probably the most non racial, representative district in South Africa. It has a rich history, politically, socially and culturally. It is one of the most known South African areas in the world, thanks to Rockey Street.

But it was in Yeoville, at 11pm one night earlier this month, that two blind people were allegedly beaten up by a neighbour for allegedly asking him to turn his music down (*Saturday Star*, January 16 1999).

I don't know more than I read in the paper, so I cannot comment on the merits of the case. But I see that the man who allegedly did the beating - who was taken into custody - allegedly said "he could play his music as loud as he wanted to because South Africa is a free and democratic country and he had the right to do as he wished".



DEAD-END STREETS. The deterioration in Yeoville's quality of life should not be accepted without question in the name of democratic law. It is the right of all citizens to challenge this state of affairs and their obligation to work together to bring about orderly change.

I am reminded of people who have said that those who don't like the loudness of music played in Rockey Street should move out of Yeoville. And of the person who once told me that "anyone who complains about what is happening in Yeoville has not come to terms with transformation and should move out".

The subtext of the last statement, of course, is that it is whites who have not come to terms with transformation and that it is whites who are doing the complaining. This is true of many of our white compatriots, and it will be for some time to

come. But I, as a white person, don't have to come to terms with transformation - I fought for it to take place and I continue to play a role in its unfolding - and yet I have much to complain about in Yeoville.

What's more, as chairperson of the Yeoville Community Development Forum, I have taken calls from, and had discussions with, many black Yeovillites who are unhappy about current trends. Is the suggestion that they have not come to terms with transformation?

There is the case of the black mother who, in the new South

Africa, is no longer banished to the townships, but can occupy a flat in Yeoville. She called me and complained about noise from the club across the road which prevents her daughter from sleeping and studying for her matric. Has she not come to terms with transformation? Must she move out of Yeoville?

And those who have raised the problems of litter, of people pissing in the streets, of illegal taxi ranks, of not being able to walk the streets at night, of not feeling comfortable about going to Rockey Street, of the drug dealers in Raymond Street, of

the lack of bookshops, of proliferation of guns, the paving of pavements by traders, the rampant parking and

Presumably they too are still lost in the old South don't belong in Yeoville. Many have moved from Soweto to Hillbrow Hillbrow to Yeoville, quality of life they denied under apartheid. Disappointed, have Yeoville, continuing their

FILE

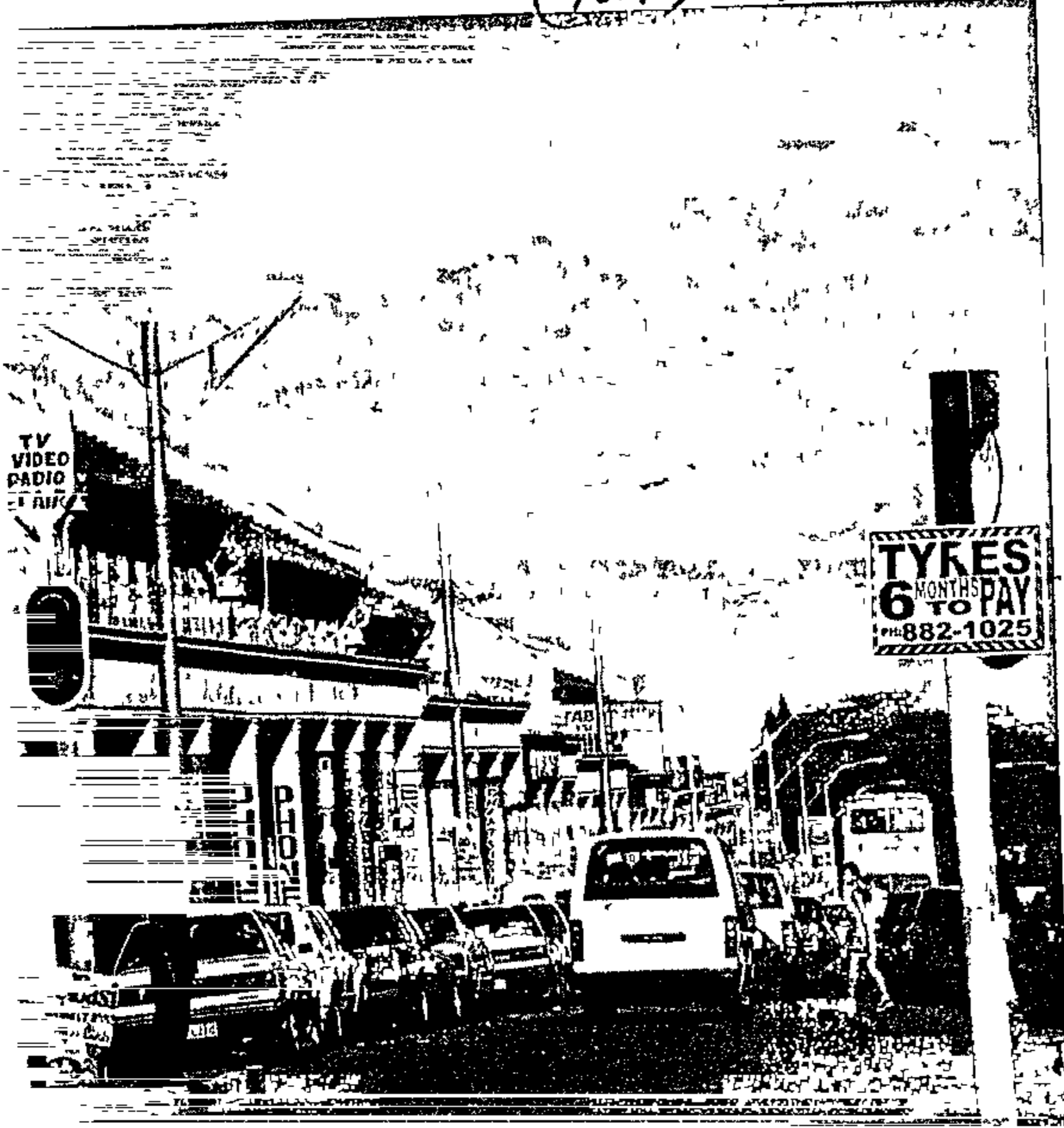


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Hit against jungle law

(127)

Star 23/1/99



new, it is the problems with service delivery from the government and the police, it is the difficulty of redressing the injustices of the past with the resources of an impossibly inadequate economy. Internationally it is the phenomenon of urban change and urban decay.

What are the solutions? If we as Yeovillites, old and new, want our suburb to survive, we must make it happen ourselves. We must recognise that, while the constitution confers rights on all of us, it also confers on us the opportunity to take responsibility for our lives.

In Yeoville we have a community policing forum and a community development forum. Both are working in the interests of a better Yeoville for all. The more people get involved in these two bodies, the more successful they are likely to be.

If we, as Yeovillites, old and new, want to live together in harmony in the richness of our diversity, we all need to understand that the rights of one person end where the rights of another person begin.

To go back to the example of the dispute over loud music. Two "rights" have come into conflict: the right to play loud music and the right to peace and quiet. Whose right is more important, and which is the more legitimate?

These things must be negotiated, and negotiation can take place only on the basis of mutual respect for the rights of the other.

Example

If negotiation fails, however, we must be able to resort to the law for a solution. We, as Yeovillites, must demand our right to enjoy the protection afforded to each one of us as citizens in terms of those laws. We need to work with the council and the police to make sure that that protection is available and accessible. Until that happens, the "anything goes" attitude that prevails at the moment will continue.

I have a dream that, by the year 2000, Yeoville will stand as an example to the rest of the country of what the new South Africa in all its diversity and glory could look like. We are halfway there. Together we can go the rest of the way.

■ Maurice Smuthers is chairperson of the Yeoville Community Development Forum.

without question in the name of democratic transformation, a community leader in the suburb to work together to bring about orderly change, he adds

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the lack of bookshops, of crime, the proliferation of guns, the overcrowding of pavements by informal traders, the non functioning street lights, rampant slumlordism, inconsiderate parking, ad infinitum?

Presumably they too are somehow still lost in the old South Africa and don't belong in Yeoville. And yet many have moved from (for example) Soweto to Hillbrow and then Hillbrow to Yeoville, in search of the quality of life they were always denied under apartheid. And many, disappointed, have moved on from Yeoville, continuing their search

I have been a Yeovillite on and off for more than 20 years. I have a desire for Yeoville to be a suburb that is clean and safe, that has a business area which provides for most of my consumer needs, that has a vibrant, diverse culture, that is a symbol of the new South Africa, that makes me feel welcome and at home. I don't think such a desire is unreasonable and I challenge anyone who suggests I should move away because of it.

Yeoville's problems are the problems of South Africa and the problems of the world. In South Africa, it is the transition from the old to the

Residents refuse to pay (127) illegal occupant's bills

By Mokgadi Pela

RESIDENTS of Phenduka Section in Thokoza have demanded the scrapping of electricity arrears acquired during years of illegal occupation of their homes

The decision was taken at a packed and heated meeting at the RP Maphanzela Higher Primary School in the East Rand yesterday

At the meeting, held under the aegis of the Thokoza Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC), the community vowed "not to pay electricity until our demand has been met by the Greater Alberton Town Council"

Speakers threatened to take the council to the "highest court in the land

to ensure that justice is done. We have employed the services of lawyers to take up this matter"

Chairman of the TPDC, Mr Sam Theron said his committee would seek an audience with Gauteng local government MEC Sicele Shiceka "to put our case across. We hope he will conduct his own survey to test the veracity of our claims"

Residents resolved that should their demands be met, they would prefer a "card system to be introduced so that we can monitor the consumption of electricity"

The arrears, which amount to thousands of rands, were acquired during seven years of illegal occupation of their houses

The illegal occupants were evicted by the Gauteng provincial government and Greater Alberton Town Council in May 1997 following pressure by the formerly displaced people

Meanwhile, leaders of the TPDC, Thokoza Monument Foundation, Inkatha Freedom Party, African National Congress, the local branch of the South African National Civic Organisation and the office of the Gauteng Premier are working behind-the-scenes to secure a date for the unveiling of a memorial tombstone for victims of the violence that swept through the township in the early 1990s

Members of the TPDC will meet again at the same venue on February 7

1999/01/25
Sowetan

Sandton rates boycott over

BD 26/1/99
Deborah Fine

THE municipal rates boycott started more than two years ago by residents in Sandton to protest against massive rates hikes in 1996 is over

Democratic Party councillor Mike Moriarty said yesterday that figures released by the Johannesburg eastern local council indicated that 6 900 of the 12 000 known municipal payments defaulters in the upmarket Sandton area had paid their arrears in full

The defaulters had taken advantage of an agreement thrashed out in November by the Johannesburg Metropolitan council and the Sandton Federation of Ratepayers (Sanfed). It offered ratepayers a 50% rebate on interest if they paid their arrears in a lump sum before December 31 last year.

More than R120m in municipal payments was withheld during the boycott by business, sectional title holders and

(127)
individual households

The cash-strapped eastern council is estimated to have received R112m last month from ratepayers who settled their accounts in full

A further 3 000 defaulters had entered into financial agreements with the eastern council to pay off their arrears over an extended period

It is understood that the council may extend further offers, albeit with less favourable terms, in an attempt to reach the remaining defaulters who did not take advantage of the rebate

The residents embarked on the boycott in July 1996 to protest against rates increases of up to 300%. The boycott was, however, declared unlawful by the Constitutional Court last year.

Sanfed chairman Peter Harmsen confirmed yesterday that although the rates boycott was over, there were still "fundamental issues" which had not been resolved with the city's local authorities

People wait as leaders fight

Bickering in the ANC has frozen a housing project, forcing thousands to remain in their shacks

By CHARLENE SMITH

More than 2 000 Krugersdorp families who were awarded land and subsidies for houses more than four years ago are still squatting on the land given to them because fights within the ANC in the Krugersdorp Council have frozen the project.

The dispute has seen allegations of corruption flung back and forth, a commission of inquiry, the suspending of councillors, Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration hearings and power struggles within the ANC and SA National Civic Organisation. It has also involved provincial and national intervention, and goes to court again soon. Meanwhile, little local governance has taken place.

Squatters Emily Lesetedi, Virginia Morontsi, Tshudi Ramatsho and Esther Manyathela said they were angry that their dream of living in houses had come to nothing. Morontsi said, "Look at the mess this place is in, we are all in shacks, we were made lots of promises but nothing is happening."

Lesetedi said, "We were promised the houses would be built after the 1994 elections, but there has been no development. Our leaders are fighting each other for leadership, they can't seem to get together and come up with a solution for our community. We are sick and tired of living in shacks."

Ongoing bickering

The four, three of whom are unemployed, pointed out that not only were there no houses built - although subsidies had been granted - but the schools, churches and community halls promised for the area by ANC councillors had failed to materialise because of ongoing bickering within the ANC's Krugersdorp caucus in the council.

Ramatsho said, "There is a container in our area which they call a clinic. Facilities are poor, there are not even enough medicines and it takes an hour for our children to travel to the nearest schools in taxis we have to hire."

Problems in Extension 12 are but one example of ongoing local government problems in Krugersdorp. This week the Western Gauteng Services Council removed ambulances from Krugersdorp after complaints that staff were not heeding calls - this in turn led to protests from



THIS FAR, NO FURTHER: Kgotsotso Phivi sits on the foundations of a house in Kagiso Extension 12, which, like many others in the area, has been delayed because subsidy funds have been withheld

ambulance crews in western Gauteng.

At a recent ANC people's forum in Kagiso, a large contingent of residents walked out after ANC leaders failed to address a litany of complaints about failures in service delivery.

In 1994, Kagiso and Krugersdorp seemed set to become a model local authority and an ANC stronghold, but housing, which was targeted as the most important item the council needed to deliver, has become a political football.

Problems began in July 1995 when the Krugersdorp Council's RDP office, together with the Krugersdorp Development Trust, applied to the Gauteng Provincial Housing Board to develop 2 146 erven for homeless people in Kagiso Extension 12. The first applications had been made six years earlier, but had been delayed by the political process then under way.

The R19-million application was approved in 1994. However, in December of that year Issy Dinat, chairperson of the Krugersdorp Council, said the application was not procedural and suspended the RDP head, Christine Crowley, who was later cleared of charges of misconduct by a disciplinary hearing.

Our leaders are fighting each other, they can't seem to get together and come up with a solution

The council agreed to pay her R50 000 in damages on January 12 this year. But the matter did not end there, on July 21 1997, Gauteng Planning MEC Sileo Shicoka appointed a one-man commission of inquiry under attorney Zola Malavu to look into ongoing squabbles over the housing grant.

When Malavu delivered his findings in March last year, he found that "what appeared to be genuine problems were in actual fact political point-scoring tactics". And indeed, witness after witness called before the commission said the same thing.

Photograph: CAMCOURE SWAN

Paul Mashatile, secretary-general of the ANC in Gauteng, said the "executive committee (headed by Dinat) of the Krugersdorp Transitional Local Council is an illegal committee, from the provincial executive committee's point of view".

Councillor Serge Mokonyane drew Malavu's attention to strange dealings around a brickmaking factory, the mayor's accounts and a garage project.

The Grabson brickmaking factory, which had been shut down 20 years previously, was bought by the council at Dinat's behest. A total of R2.6-million has been spent on the plant, but it has yet to sell a single brick.

30/1/99

Olland company the rights to build a garage, but because Dinat "felt that his party would not agree to the project, he refused to allow Olland to proceed". The council had to pay an out-of-court settlement of R450 000.

The mayor refused to reveal expenditure on his general account until compelled. Councillor Ben Ntsamane, who heads the Krugersdorp Development Trust, said that when they queried payments made by mayor Steven Molingo's general account in council meetings, they were "told to shut up".

Dinat, told the commission that the mayor needed an un-audited account to enable him to dress properly and entertain mayoral guests. Malavu found that Morigoa had spent R26 000 at the Eldorado Bottle Store, paid himself R25 000, paid R20 000 to a car hire firm, had his private car repaired using council funds, bought curtains, and paid for membership at a gym using the council account.

The council, which had a deficit of R500 000, had not reconciled monthly banking records since January 1997.

Tensions simmer

The commission also found that the Krugersdorp Development Trust not only did not keep proper books, which as trustees they were supposed to do, but had also awarded themselves amounts of R4 500 to R5 000 - payments not provided for in terms of the trust. Malavu ordered the payments to be repaid.

Nevertheless, Malavu said he could not find that any official from the KDR or the council had been guilty of misconduct. Tensions continued to simmer, and in July and August last year, four councillors - Ntsamane, Barbara Mhlatse, Mokonyane and Eric Molimi - were suspended without pay after taking part in demonstrations by residents protesting against the cutting off of lights and water for non-payment.

Since then an interminable legal process has been under way. But while the fight should only be between the suspended councillors and the council, for reasons that the council cannot explain, no further development has taken place in Extension 12, marooning 2 146 hopeful homeowners.

The ANC Kagiso branch has been riven by the conflict, and now an opposition ANC branch has been set up. In all, around 30 000 people are awaiting homes in Krugersdorp.

Defaulters march, (127) and power is restored

Sowetan
2/2/99

By Dan Fuphe

ESKOM has again switched on the power to payment defaulters in Orlando East, Soweto

This after 350 angry protesters took to the streets yesterday and marched to the parastatal's Diepkloof offices to make their grievances known

The residents claim their protest is against Eskom's "bullying tactics and insensitive attitude" aimed at coercing them into paying huge electricity bills

The march verged on the violent when 30 chanting people invaded a pay-point and would not leave until their electricity supply had been reconnected

Police reinforcements were called in, but the protesters refused to budge

Later, Eskom managers Brian Johnson, Morris Ramatapa and Mathews Mounakoe spent two hours talking to the marchers and their leader, Bejile Ntlanjeni, before coming to "an agreement"

It was decided that the power would be restored

Ms Martha Shongwe claims she has been billed for a total of R34 000 in arrears by Eskom

Shongwe, who is unemployed, says the amount is ridiculous and attributed it to Eskom's faulty metering system

"I am not going to pay until this glaring error by Eskom has been rectified," she said

Others claimed they found themselves in similar situations. Mrs Dorcas Ngwenya, billed for R35 000, Mrs Agnes Mabisi billed for R14 000, and Mr Joseph Setlatlole billed for R13 000, despite having paid, he claims, R4 240 on January 23

Flush out housing

'moles'

(127) CP 7/2/99

Witch-hunt on for suspect staffers in Mofokeng's dept

By ELIAS MALULEKE

A WITCH-HUNT has been launched within the Gauteng housing department for "moles" who have been leaking information to the media about corruption and maladministration.

Judge Willem Heath's special investigation unit has joined forces with the Public Protector, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Auditor-General in a probe into alleged massive corruption and maladministration in the Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng's department.

The head of the department, Mogobodi Mokoena, last week suspended the department's deputy director of administration, Prudence Matima-Mashile.

Mashile, who was suspended with full benefits and remuneration, is said to be a key witness who the investigation unit want to question regarding the allegations.

She was suspended on Tuesday for allegedly urging residents of Soweto and the Vaal Triangle to expose some of the alleged corruption in the media.

According to a letter informing her of the suspension, which was leaked to City Press on Friday by a source in the department, the department has an affidavit which indicates that Mashile referred complainants to newspapers.

She is being suspended under section 22(7) of the Public Service Act of 1994.

The letter states "Arising from certain allegations against you in the form of an affidavit, the department has reason to believe that you have advised members of the public to approach the media to expose their complaints.

"The department is of the view that should the allegations prove to be true, your presence (in the department) will provide the possibility that you may engage in similar activities."

The letter further states that Mashile should hand in her access card and may not enter the department's premises until she is recalled.

The department has confirmed her suspension.

City Press Gauteng understands

that another senior manager was forced to resign and one was suspended with Mashile.

Insiders said the department was putting the heat on employees who were likely to co-operate with the investigation units.

Mashile was previously linked to axed, former housing department head, Enos Ngutshane, who was fired from his post for insubordination and alleged maladministration.

At the time of his suspension and subsequent dismissal, Ngutshane claimed his dismissal was a cover-up involving corruption.

City Press Gauteng was told that the Mashile incident involved the irregular transfer of 600 subsidised sites from Naledi Extension One in Soweto to Sebokeng in the Vaal Triangle.

The department has confirmed in a letter that the sites, which were fully subsidised, were transferred to Sebokeng.

City Press Gauteng understands that the sites were allocated to controversial developer Keith Laurence of the SA Land Development Organisation, for the construction of 600 units.

Although Laurence was paid the subsidies for the sites in Soweto, he later transferred the project to Sebokeng without informing the beneficiaries.

Laurence was involved in a scandal in Hammanskraal last year in which the department allegedly paid 10 times more for sites than their going value.

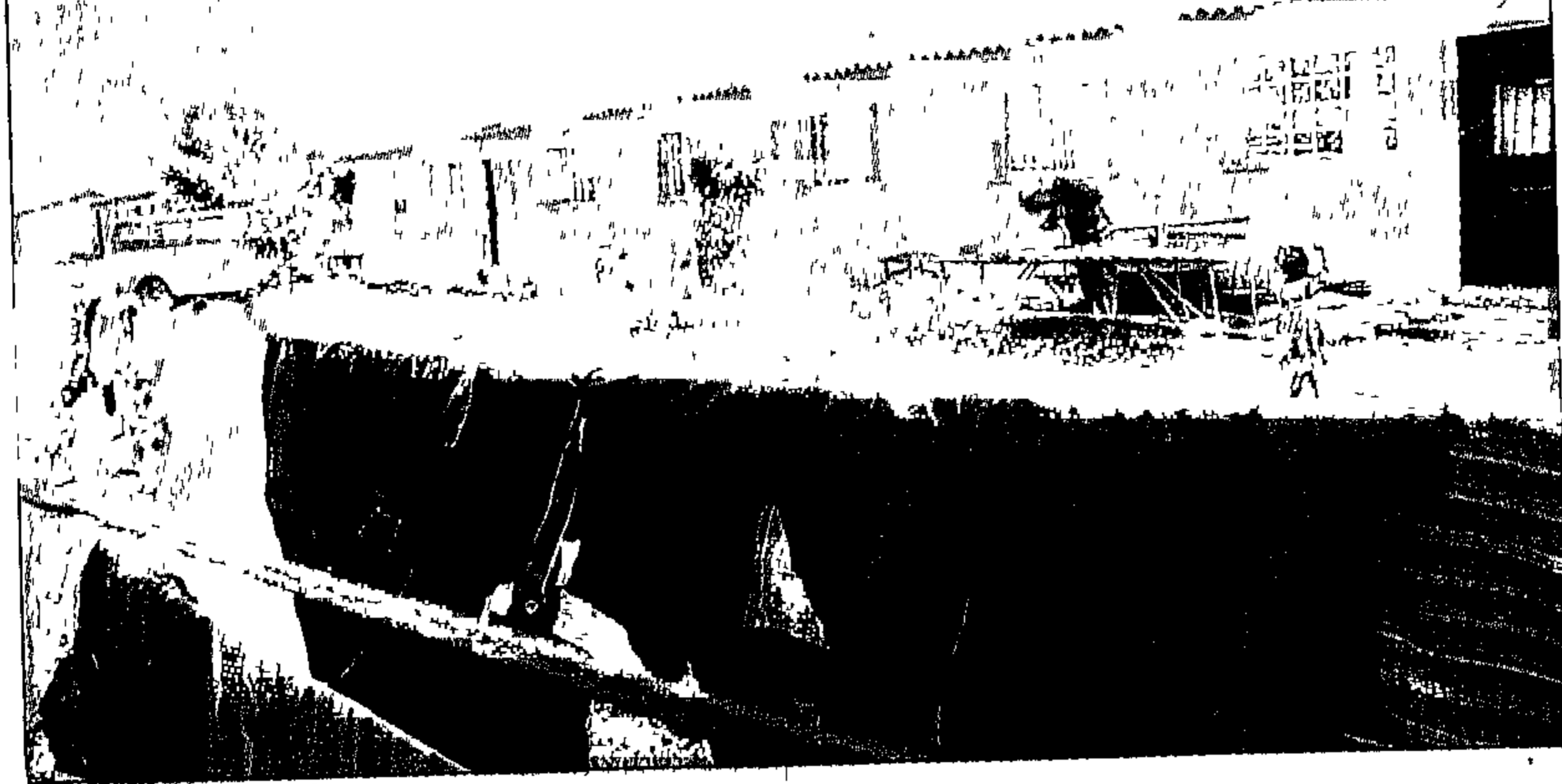
Residents affected by the transfer of the project are said to have reported the matter to the department when their houses were not built in Soweto.

One of those who had been promised a house in Soweto said the affected residents had not been informed that their homes would be built in Sebokeng.

"I only discovered this when I applied for another subsidy and was told that the government had already granted my subsidy," said one resident.

Mashile was suspended a day after the investigating units announced their collective forces would conduct the investigations after being mandated to do this by President Nelson Mandela.

Life getting better... Jabulani Hostel
now has partitions, electricity
and inside toilets.



Hostels upgrading awaited

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

(127)

Residents of four men's hostels within the Greater Johannesburg Southern council area are eagerly awaiting the start of the third phase of the upgrading of hostels. It will cost about R35-million.

The National Hostel Residents Association (Nahora) expressed the hope that, although the administration was faced with great financial constraints, there would be no delay to the upgrading of Jabulani, Merafe, Nancefield and Lifateng hostels in Soweto which is expected to start next week.

Nahora representative at Jabulani Hostel, Bongani Mveli, said since the late housing minister Joe Slovo initiated the upgrading of hostels, there have been vast improvements in the lives of most residents. "We now have privacy because the rooms have been partitioned. There is electricity, we have toilets inside the rooms and there is also a ceiling."

Turning to payments for services, Mveli said they remained very low and there was no mechanism in place to encourage people to pay. "We have asked the council to come with a workable method.

"Many people are not working, but have some artisan skills," he said, pointing at Welcome Thabethe doing some welding.

Star 8/2/99

Mofokeng suspends top housing official

(127)

Sowetan 9/2/99

By Joshua Raboroko

HOUSING and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng has started to crack the whip by suspending the deputy director in his department and warned that heads will roll if any employee is found guilty of misconduct

The head of the department, Mr Mogopodi Mokoena, said yesterday that Ms Prudence Motima Mashile was being investigated by the department for alleged misconduct

Mokoena would not disclose reasons for the suspension, except that the department had already started the investigation and would release its findings soon

He said more people would be investigated and if found guilty, would be dismissed or prosecuted

Mashile was suspended with pay pending the outcome of a departmental probe

Mokoena said the department would enforce strict measures to ensure employees behaved properly

He would neither confirm nor deny claims that Mashile had allegedly leaked information to the opposition parties and former provincial head of the department Mr Enos Ngutshane

Improper

He said it would be improper to discuss the suspension letter written to Mashile, adding that news reports at the weekend were a clear example of what they meant about leaked information

"We did not go to the press to announce her suspension, but we

were surprised when we saw reports that we have suspended her. Is that not information leaking?" he asked

Mashile's suspension comes barely a week after Mofokeng announced that he would put in place mechanisms with immediate effect to deal with corruption

It also comes after the announcement that the Health Investigation Unit, the Auditor-General and the Public Protector would investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in the Gauteng housing department

The provincial government has also established an anti-corruption cabinet committee aimed at rooting out criminals from the housing sector

The committee has said the initiative was yielding good results

Gauteng can now complete a house every three minutes

Star 12/12/99 (129)
Gauteng's housing and land affairs department built 91 000 houses in the past four years, MEC Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

Addressing a media breakfast in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, Mofokeng said the province was not only leading with the delivery of houses, but was now capable of completing a house every three minutes.

"In Bophelong we will be completing 10 000 houses in less than two years. This is unprecedented."

The department had also provided services to more than 150 000 sites, ensuring that more than 600 000 families had access to clean water and sanitation.

Mofokeng said the challenges facing the department consisted of, among others,

managing the high level of expectations from the community and the pace of delivery, ensuring improved effectiveness and efficiency, and coming up with a five-year plan that would enable the department to enter the 21st century with high productivity and delivery levels.

Communities had to be mobilised to play an active role in development programmes, and corruption had to be rooted out.

Housing department and land affairs' chief director of policy and development Monty Narsoo said studies undertaken by the department indicated there was an influx of people from North West, followed by Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and Northern Province. "There is no indication that the huge influx is from outside the country. It is largely internal." - Sapa

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Whites also benefit from subsidy plan

By Joshua Raboroko

MORE than 42 whites are to benefit from the Government's R15 000 housing subsidy when the Gauteng provincial government hands over title deeds to them next month.

Provincial MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said yesterday the move was an important milestone in the history of low-cost housing delivery.

The beneficiaries are people living in Brakpan in Eastern Gauteng and are probably the first group of whites to benefit from the scheme, previously perceived as being for blacks only.

Mofokeng said the move was a clear indication that the subsidy was not intended for blacks only.

There are more than 450 000 on the waiting list for homes, while the provincial housing backlog is estimated to be 900 000. Immigrants contribute to the housing shortage.

Mofokeng said when the African

National Congress-led Government came to power, it inherited a situation that did not have a comprehensive policy on housing and land.

The social and political consequences of that scenario was the high expectation for change and delivery of houses, land and essential services among the poor communities.

Mofokeng said the department had developed programmes that delivered over 91 000 houses and benefited more than 360 000 family members.

Gauteng was not only leading with the delivery of houses in the whole country, it was accelerating delivery and now complete a house every three minutes.

It had provided services to more than 150 000 sites thereby ensuring that more than 600 000 people had access to clean water and sanitation.

The programme of upgrading hostels, providing subsidies, transferring title deeds, providing land and essential services was being accelerated

Sowetan 16 Feb 1999

(127)



Soweto power cuts backlash

CP 21/2/99 (127)
*Eskom workers down tools
in the face of intimidation*

ESKOM workers, who are being threatened by Soweto residents for cutting off the electricity to non-paying households, have gone on strike for fear of their lives.

The workers, members of the National Union of Mineworkers (Num), claim Eskom management is putting pressure on them to continue with the cut-offs despite the danger they are facing.

"My family and I have been intimidated and blamed for the cuts by residents and I've had shots fired at my house because I was involved in cutting off electricity in my neighbourhood," said a technician from Eskom's depot in Dobsonville who did not want to be named.

"But management says I have to do it whether I like it or not."

The strike started last week after residents attacked vehicles belonging to Eskom and stoned the technicians.

Eskom embarked on the massive cut-off early this month in a bid to recoup losses running into millions of rands due to non-payment by Soweto residents.

All Eskom depots in Soweto have stopped working. Even the paypoints are not operating, and residents who want to pay their bills are unable to do so.

Eskom has removed its fleet of vehicles from some of the depots, fearing that workers may set them alight due to the rising tension.

More than 400 Eskom workers have downed tools and are demanding protection at work, in the streets and at their homes.

Workers at the paypoints claim they have been robbed several times and no longer feel safe. They say Eskom is doing nothing to ensure their safety.

"Security at the paypoints is almost non-existent," said a worker from Dube.

Many workers claim to have been

threatened at Eskom's paypoints throughout the township by angry residents demanding to be reconnected.

The workers say the tense situation is partly the fault of a company contracted by Eskom.

They claim the company is slow in reconnecting the power to households that have since paid up. Residents then threaten Eskom's workers.

In addition, the company has also cut off electricity at the wrong addresses.

The situation is being made worse by a dispute over the use of Eskom cars, according to Num official Oupa Komane.

Workers claim four employees have been suspended since the start of the strike and that Eskom has pulled out several of its cars from the Dobsonville and Ezola depots.

Some workers see this as a sign that Eskom wants to phase out their jobs and bring in the contracted company to do the cut-offs.

Eskom workers this week insisted they were not on strike but merely wanted to

draw Eskom's attention to their demands.

"Our members are not on strike. They are simply withdrawing their labour because they feel unsafe," said Komane.

Eskom confirmed there had been disruption at its paypoints and depots.

Eskom spokesperson Angie Dubini and customer services manager Zami Nkosi said the matter was in the Labour Court and that Eskom regretted the inconvenience caused to customers by the strike.

They conceded that the strike had crippled operations at paypoints.

"Everything possible is being done to bring the situation under control," they said.



By
Andie
Nouinta

Residents refuse to pay arrears

By Mokgadi Pela

22/2/99

A HEATED meeting of about 200 formerly displaced people refused yesterday to pay electricity bills until the impasse over arrears has been settled

The gathering, held at the RP Maphanzela Higher Primary School in Thokoza, also demanded an audience with the Gauteng MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka "to convey the feelings of the people"

The arrears, which run into thousands of rands, came about during the seven-year absence of 600 families who fled their homes at the height of the internecine warfare between hostel inmates and residents

Chairperson of the Thokoza Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC) Mr Sam Theron said it was crucial for Shiceka to "listen to the plight of the formerly displaced people"

Speakers from the floor said once this issue had been addressed, they would be prepared to pay for what they consumed. Their options include a flat rate of R40 or a card system

They further accused community councillors of failing to address grievances of residents in the entire East Rand township

They said they had lost confidence in the councillors "who had promised us heaven and earth before we voted them into office in 1995".

Some said Phenduka residents could consider electing an independent candidate to represent them within the Greater Alberton Town Council

"That councillor will have to listen to us instead of the other way around. Often councillors forget they were elected by residents and do as they please as soon as they taste the gravy," said a resident Mr Vusi Radebe

02

70 000 title deeds to be issued - MEC

(107)

By Joshua Raboroko

MORE than 70 000 people in Gauteng are to receive title deeds in probably the biggest ever home ownership scheme to be announced by a provincial government in the country since 1994

Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said at the weekend that the issuing of title deeds meant that thousands of families would be provided with home ownership which they never had during apartheid

Opening a one-day provincial workshop in Johannesburg on "Family Title", Mofokeng said "This is an unprecedented achievement in the history of our country and a reflection of our continuing acceleration of delivery to the people"

The workshop, which was attended by representatives of housing bureaus representing local authorities, was told that the issuing of the title deeds meant that about 280 000 family members would now have a relatively stable life and secure tenure

Mofokeng said that was very important given the history of poverty and discrimination blacks had to contend with

He said the purpose of the meeting was to make proposals for possible policy and legislation regarding housing titles

"You must seek to ensure that the proposals for policy lead to empowerment, and bring stability and harmony to families and communities," he said

The title deeds have been handed over to families in Greater Johannesburg's metropolitan areas, Pretoria, the Vaal Triangle, Khayalami, Ger-

miston and other townships in the province

Mofokeng also said the issuing of title deeds should be handled carefully and sensitively because many intricacies such as family disputes were involved when people applied for ownership of homes

● Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom yesterday launched a small-scale co-operative dairy in Ennerdale, south of Johannesburg

The Department of Land Affairs helped the 75-member Ennerdale Farmers Co-operative buy 16 121 hectares of land to develop the dairy

Hanekom said the Simunye Dairy Project, which will employ about 400 people, was unique, and would act as a pilot for other dairies

The project is to be used in other regions through a franchise scheme

Sowetan 20/10/94

Loan for infrastructure upgrade on East Rand

(127)

For the first time the Development Bank has offered R133-m for improvements in the Greater Germiston area

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

The Development Bank of Southern African and the Greater Germiston Town Council will today sign a R133-million infrastructure loan agreement to improve the lives of the community of Germiston

The loan is a first from the DBSA to Greater Germiston and is earmarked to provide much needed infrastructure in the form of roads, water supply, storm water control and electrical infrastructure

According to the mayor's spokesperson Sinah Kunene, mayor Kaifus Sambo and DBSA regional manager for Gauteng and Northern Province Luther Mashaba will sign the agreement at the council's monthly meeting today

Sambo said the funds provided will enable the council to achieve substantial progress in the provision of infrastructure

He said 50 000 residents mainly from disadvantaged communities would benefit from the loan

"With the financial support provided by DBSA, a meaningful contribution will be made towards improving the living

Hope that cash is an opportunity to address backlogs

conditions and laying the foundation for economic development and growth

"Several strategies which include expenditure curtailment, credit control measures, public/private partnership agreements and the rationalisation of non-core activities are in progress

"This will ensure that council remains financially healthy and will be able to continue providing acceptable services at affordable prices," Sambo said

Mashaba said the signing of the loan would be a milestone in the DBSA's commitment to support and improve infrastructure in Gauteng

"We hope that this first loan will open up opportunities for the council to mobilise more funds to address the remaining infrastructure backlogs," said Mashaba

Nico Malan, DBSA project manager, said the loan would help to address the backlogs in the formerly disadvantaged communities in Germiston. This includes Katlehong, Palm Ridge, Magagula Heights and the Zonkizizwe informal settlement where more than half of the population resides

Malan said the loan would also stimulate economic activity and job creation

Handwritten note: How do you...

Still no housing department audit six months down the line

Forensic auditors to investigate 10 allegations of irregularities in Gauteng's department of housing have not been appointed six months after the auditor-general ordered the audit.

The auditor-general's representative, Louis van Rooyen, said the public protector had not been in a position to ap-

point the independent auditors required for a forensic audit.

The auditor-general ordered the investigation after completing an initial investigation on 27 allegations which included that housing subsidies were being paid out by the department and conveyancers although houses were not built, that

agreements with developers contained flaws which adversely affected housing delivery, that subsidy applications contained false identification numbers and personal particulars; and that the department accepted income figures on subsidy applications without verification - Staff Reporter

Star 23/2/99
(127)

Slum landlords (in absentia) pack 'em in and make 'em pay

Three-bedroom, one-bathroom house in Somerset Road, Mayfair, has 24 tenants – each paying R200 a month

By BUNTY WEST

Slum landlords in Mayfair, Pageview and Fordsburg are raking off a fortune from their tenants by packing them in to small houses and rooms and charging exorbitant rents, according to council health officials who visit the area regularly

The Star visited a three-bedroomed house at 52 Somerset Road in Mayfair, after complaints from the neighbours, where at least 24 people were living in terrible conditions. Even the kitchen had been rented out and tenants were charged R200 per person to live in cramped accommodation with just one filthy bathroom between them.

Outside rooms were built on, for which no planning permission had been given, nor did they comply with any health or safety regulations.

The landlord – whose name on official documents is given as Irshad Karvello, but is known as Arashad Khan – does not live at the address shown on his rates and elec-

tricity statements.

He owes more than R30 000 in municipal accounts, and electricity to the Somerset Road house has been cut off by council officials.

But when *The Star* visited the house the electricity was back on and, according to neighbours, it was done illegally.

66
**Owner owes
the council
more than
R30 000**

99
Fatima Shaik, a council health inspector, said she had been trying to contact Karvello/Khan since the end of 1997 but even though summonses were issued they were returned because he doesn't live at the address shown.

Residents at Somerset Road

(127)
say they pay rent to a man called Azar, who lives in Railway Road, but when the authorities visited him, he said he was a relation of the owner and did not know where Karvello/Khan lived.

Shaik said Karvello/Khan had another house in the area with similar problems but could do nothing to alleviate the situation for neighbours, who complain constantly about the smell and noise, because they could not summons the man.

Building inspectors have been to Somerset Road and declared the six outside rooms are illegal.

According to Shaik many landlords in the area prey on foreigners who have nowhere to stay, offering them rooms at exorbitant rents.

"Although we investigate complaints there is little we can do if we cannot summons the landlords who blatantly flaunt the by-laws," Shaik said.

Despite several attempts to get hold of Karvello/Khan, *The Star* was unable to contact him.

R86-m reserved for low-cost homes

By Joshua Raboroko

(127)

THE Gauteng department of housing and land affairs has set aside R86 million towards building low-cost houses on land that was donated by Eskom in Kaalfontein, Midrand, north of Johannesburg

The land, which is worth about R12,6 million, will hopefully help more than 20 000 homeless families secure tenure

Speaking at a ceremony to hand over land yesterday, provincial MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said his department had budgeted more than R86 million for the construction of no fewer than 5 700 homes on the land

The occasion was also addressed by Public Enterprises Minister Stella Sigcau, the mayor of the Khayalami Local Council Mr Isaac Mahlangu and Eskom chairman Mr Reuel Khoza

Mofokeng said Gauteng was the most developed yet smallest province

in the country. The need for land was therefore huge. About 300 000 people migrated from other provinces and countries into Gauteng every month.

The provision of land would help the government build more homes for the poor in an attempt to reduce the provincial housing backlog which stood at more than 900 000 units.

As a result, he said, informal settlements, land invasions and homelessness had become serious problems which the department had to contend with.

"Land invasions constitute a serious hindrance to development. They stifle and consume the already scarce resources and time," Mofokeng said.

His department had built 92 000 houses and serviced more than 158 000 stands in the province in the past four years. About 300 000 families have been provided with decent houses and no fewer than 600 000 have been provided with clean water and sanitation.

sewera 21/10/1995

Council bosses lose

(127) lose free homes

APR 25/99

Officials living in luxurious houses owned by the Johannesburg Metro are set to forfeit the perk

By Prince Hamnca
City Editor

Greater Johannesburg's top officials are to be kicked out of their luxurious council-owned houses, which will be sold as part of a major privatisation plan which could net the council more than R300-million.

The privatisation plan, dubbed *Igoli* (Xhosa for place of gold) 2000, was hammered out during a two-day bosberaad which ended yesterday. It will be publicly announced today.

Apart from the sale of the houses, the council plans to privatise Johannesburg stadium, Rand airport and the fresh produce market.

It also plans to "corporatise" the Civic Theatre, Johannesburg's zoo and council-owned farms.

Sources said the council houses, which are currently occupied by the council's four chief executive officers, have drained the financial resources of the city. Officials living in these houses are paying only for electricity and water.

The council is already selling the house formerly occupied by Nicky Padayachee, after he resigned his post as CEO late last year to take up a post with the University of Cape Town.

Sources who attended a high-profile council bosberaad, which was held in Johannesburg, said the fresh produce market at City Deep, Rand airport and Johannesburg stadium had to be sold because they were not making money for the council.

The council will conduct comprehensive investigations before it decides on the future of the fresh produce market. The bosberaad could not reach a conclusion on the future of

the market because some felt it was making money for the council and should not be sold. Greater Johannesburg's Transformation Lekgotla head, Kenny Fihla, remained tight-lipped about the outcome of the bosberaad.

He said they were still finalising the resolutions and recommendations of the bosberaad.

Fihla said the council was expected to make major announcements at a press briefing today. Greater Johannesburg's superboss, Ketso Gordhan, will outline a two-year plan mapping out the city's future political and administrative structures.

Greater Johannesburg is expected to move swiftly in its attempts to corporatise - that is, running along business lines - the zoo, the Civic Theatre, the bus company and council-owned farms.

The council also intends selling the Johannesburg Metropolitan Centre in Braamfontein and would consider a lease-back arrangement.

The bosberaad also agreed to establish three utility companies for electricity, waste management, and water and sanitation within the next 18 months. The companies would be council-owned and governed by the Companies Act.

A senior source said the council was also expected to form an agency to maintain roads, stormwater drains, parks and cemeteries. The agency would act as contractors of the council.

Highly placed sources said Gordhan is likely to clash head-on with union bosses when he presents his master plan to privatise key assets of the city.

The South African Municipal Workers Union said it would vehemently oppose privatisation plans.



Grim task ... rescue workers search for survivors of a massive avalanche

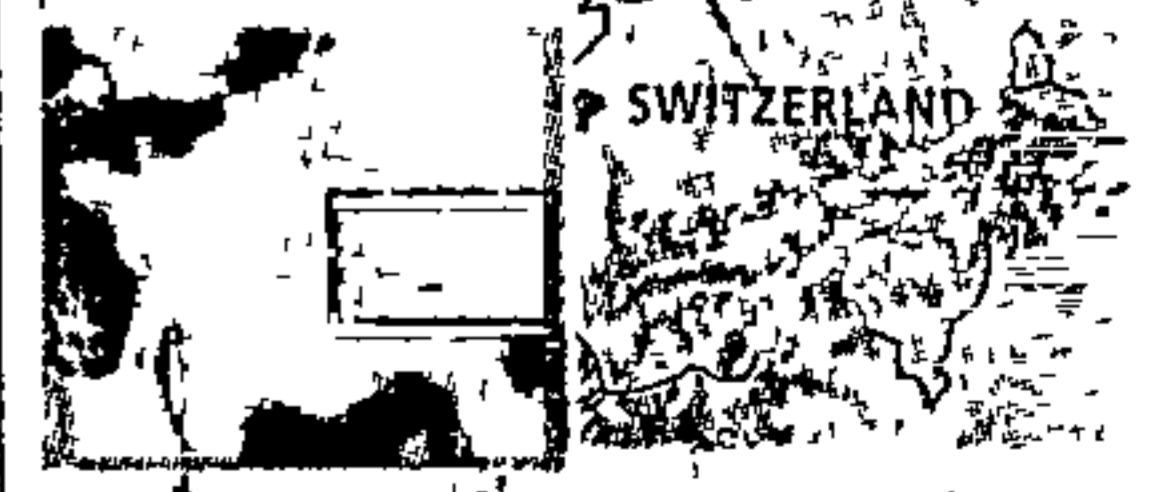
Fresh Austrian avalanche

Landeck, Austria - Disaster struck again for thousands of holidaymakers imprisoned by snow in the Tyrolean ski resort of Galtur yesterday as an avalanche devastated the resort of Valzur, while storms cut off their link to the outside world.

An army spokesperson, Major Thomas Schonherr, said three helicopters had set off for Valzur, but their arrival could not be guaranteed. "It will be extremely difficult because it is snowing so heavily."

Schonherr described the

About 20 000 tourists have been trapped in Austria's resorts by heavy snows for the past week.



latest snowfall in Valzur as serious. "It was another major avalanche," he said. "Three houses were destroyed."

First whites get govt subsidised housing

(127)

~~20~~ 26/12/99

SPRINGS: The first white person to receive a low-cost state housing subsidy since 1994 was given the keys to his new home here yesterday by Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele

"I am very happy about this. My wife is in hospital having a heart operation at the moment and we will move in as soon as she is out," said former bricklayer Harry Swanepoel.

Swanepoel, 47, and his wife, who live on his R300 disability pension, are among 40 white families who bought homes in a 2338-unit housing project on two sites on opposite ends of the small East Rand town.

Swanepoel said he and his wife wanted to settle down in a place of their own after staying with their adult children for the past few years.

For their R15 000 government subsidy, the Swanepoels have got a 30-square-metre single-room house built of pre-cast concrete blocks with a tin roof on a small plot in the new Reedville development adjacent to KwaThema township.

"We have water with a toilet and a basin in the little kitchen and I am told they are going to be putting electricity in later," he said during the handover ceremony, which was addressed by the housing minister and her Gauteng counterpart, Dan Mofokeng.

Swanepoel appeared oblivious to the novelty of the moment. "It is a very mixed area but I get on well with black people because I have dealt with them all my life," he said.

"I stayed here over the weekend, and I have already met my neighbours and had tea with them. They seem very nice."

Mthembu-Mahanyele praised the white families moving into the homes for breaking racial barriers.

"Mr and Mrs Swanepoel, you have shown that the notion of a non-racial society is not only an ideal but a reality. What we are witnessing today is a merging of communities with common problems that have surpassed racial boundaries and are beginning to forge a common ground.

"We are not only building houses, we are engaged in building a nation that has been battered by years of exclusion characterised by artificial divisions," she said.

Many of the new white residents of Reedville and Welgedacht have been living in rented council flats in Springs, while the new black homeowners have come from informal settlements around the town.

Not all of Springs' white home-seekers, however, are satisfied.

Thomas and Linda Pinard were granted a subsidy and applied for a new home in Reedville. But after seeing the finished product, they decided to withdraw from the project.

"We thought it would be a proper house but for me it's just an uncomfortable bedroom," said Thomas Pinard, who currently rents a three-bedroom council house from the Springs council at R250 a month.

"For people who have been used to living in shacks it is probably a very good thing and it will be an improvement on what they have got, but for us to go there would be a step down.

"But I know the government is trying to do whatever it is capable of and it is a good thing that they are building houses to keep people off the streets." — Sapa

ZOE SELSKY



Not home and dry even in dry conditions when it has not rained for days, underground water seeps onto the street surface, causing problems for residents in Sebokeng's Zone 6

Housing project washed out

Sebokeng residents waging battle over homes built on unsuitable land

Star 1/9/99 (127)

By RAHWAN BAHWA

A housing project facilitated by the mining company Gencor for a group of employees in Sebokeng has become a nightmare for some of the owners because the houses were built on unsuitable land.

The affected houses have no access roads, and home owners are often forced to leave their cars on a main road or park at friends' properties.

Some residents have tried to dig drainage areas to carry the water inundating their homes. In one of the houses, water rises into the toilet and kitchen whenever it rains, and there is evidence of walls crumbling.

The residents' battle has been waged since they moved into the homes in the late 1980s and the controversy has embroiled a local residents' committee, the local metro council,

the Housing Consumer Protection Trust and the Mortgage Indemnity Fund.

Questions are being asked on whether a proper survey was conducted before the construction of the houses, some of which were built on clay soil.

The project involved the construction of 45 two-bedroom houses costing R20 000 each, and 15 three-bedroom houses that cost R34 000 each. The problem has affected eight of the 60 home owners.

Gencor, which unbundled last year and sold some of its assets to Billiton, said the affected house owners were its employees at the time the houses were constructed.

"Gencor was merely the facilitator between the developer, the banks and employees who were interested in purchasing the houses," according to correspondence between Gencor and the Housing Consumer

Protection Trust that has been made available to *The Star*.

The mining company had introduced the employees to the banks and stood behind the employees as first-time buyers," said Michael Campbell, Billiton's public affairs manager.

He said it was the banks that had given the go-ahead for the construction of the houses. Following complaints by home owners, his company had hired a consultant to investigate the nature of the waterlogging. The consultant's report, which outlined several measures to rectify the problem, was submitted last year.

"We have now asked the consultant to proceed with the quotations on the various options he has recommended," Campbell said, adding that by mid-year a "way forward" would have been found.

He said the employees could not access bonds and had

approached a developer, who selected land that he owned. The developer allegedly went into bankruptcy shortly after completing the project.

Vereeniging/Kopanong Metro Council mayor Chester Moflourng said residents had informed him, in a memorandum after a march in 1997, that they had not been aware the homes were built on unsuitable land.

"What we are trying to do as a council is to get money from the provincial government so that we are able to put in the infrastructure that would suit those conditions, because it can't be ordinary infrastructure," he said.

The council had approached the relevant authorities last year for funds, he added.

Moflourng said the council had appointed a special committee to investigate the situation. "We are trying to mobilise funds," he said.

Poor will bear the brunt of rates increase

(127)

Expected hike of 9,7% set to batter some families

By THEMBA SEPOTOKELE
City Desk

Poor families will be hard hit by the proposed 9,7% average rates and services increase for Johannesburg. The increase is expected to be announced in the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's 1999/2000 budget, which will be presented in May.

One family living below the breadline is the Makhubela family of Naledi, Soweto. The family depend on an average combined income of R600 a month, generated by daughters Daphne

start 10/3/99
(31) and Elizabeth (29), who work as casuals.

Last month the Makhubela family had their electricity supply switched off because they were in R2 337 in arrears and had to pay R450 before their power supply was restored. They also owe the council R5 462 in rates and pay an average of R100 for their telephone.

According to Daphne, the family have to make ends meet with the combined R600 she and Elizabeth bring home every month.

"We have to pay for electricity, rent, the phone, and buy

groceries. Normally we buy basics like sugar, bread and maize meal. We even sell sweets, and loose cigarettes and use the money to add to our groceries and buy meat when necessary," she said.

With the rates and services increase looming, the family believe they will not be able to cope.

South Western Joint Civics Association president Basil Douglas said yesterday the rates increase would be especially hard on the poor. He also said communities had not been consulted about the hike.

Ratepayers march against billing system

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE
City Desk

About 5 000 ratepayers from Ennerdale, Lenasia, Lawley South and Zakariyya Park, all south of Johannesburg, on Tuesday heeded a call to register their grievances against the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, the provincial government and Servcon.

Under the auspices of the Joint Forum, comprising various civic structures, ratepayers took to the streets to present memorandums to Servcon managing director Denis

Creighton and Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga

Creighton accepted the memorandum on behalf of Servcon, a company involved in housing provision, while Eddie Maloka, Motshekga's adviser, accepted one on behalf of the premier.

Led by Thabo Masemola and Farouk Jardine, a former ward councillor in Ennerdale, ratepayers said the council was charging exorbitant electricity and water rates based on estimates.

He said the march had been called after numerous fruitless discussions with the council to review its billing policy.

Masemola said some electricity meters in Zakariyya Park were of low quality, faulty, and resulted in false readings.

Residents said the establishment of Servcon to resolve the huge housing backlog was a blunder because Servcon was representing only the banks

"By marching we are not advocating any form of boycott or encouraging non-payments. Our purpose is to attract urgent attention to the grievances of the communities," Jardine said.

Both Creighton and Maloka promised to respond to residents' demands with two weeks.

MARCH 14, 1999 ★★



MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS ... Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng and Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele handing out keys to Harry and Renee Swanepoel, recipients of RDP houses in Welgedacht, Springs

White families (127) 'have moved to better housing'

By MOIPONE KOMANE

CP 14/3/99

A CITY PRESS report two weeks ago that white families were living in harmony with blacks in a *mkhukhu* settlement in Welgedacht, Springs on the East Rand, has proved to be unfounded.

When Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele and Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng handed over about 600 reconstruction and development (RDP) houses last month - 42 of which were allegedly earmarked for white families - they announced that the aim of the project was to integrate communities.

When City Press visited the area on Friday, we discovered that one such family, Harry and Renee Swanepoel, who were supposed to be

living alongside Alpheus Mokoena and Ntswaki Thakanyane, were said to have been moved to Rietvalley, near Kwa-Thema.

But City Press found no white families living in Rietvalley nor in Welgedacht.

Speculation has surfaced among residents in the area that the Swanepoels and other white families have been moved elsewhere, where "conditions are better".

The Gauteng housing department denied the allegations and the Springs Town Council sent us on a wild-goose chase.

Mthembu-Mahanyele's spokesperson Keke Kekana said: "There are white families living in Rietvalley but they are not interested in appearing in newspapers."

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UP IN ARMS . The protest march ended outside the premier's office with the handing over of a memorandum demanding the scrapping of all rates arrears

Rates row leads to march on Premier

By ANDILE NOGANTA

HUNDREDS of people from six black townships this week marched to the offices of Gauteng Premier Makhosi Motshhega in protest against service cuts.

The residents came from Ennedale, Lawley, Lenasia South, Daxi ma, Mngoson Manor and Zakarya Park townships south of Johannesburg.

The marchers said the city council had been cutting off water and lights in the townships even after they had made payments for the services. They accused the council of rely-

ing more on "guess-work" and of not doing proper calculations of both water and electrical meters.

"They said council workers did not take meter readings in the townships and the council has been producing electricity and water bills with incorrect figures."

"One week the bill would be R4 000 and before you pay a cent the statement would come out saying R3 000 the next week," according to one marcher.

"You could go for twelve months without paying your water bills but nobody can tell me that your bill would be R30 000."

"It's simply unacceptable," another said. Hitting out at the council for fail-

ing to produce evidence of arrears owing, the residents are demanding the council scrap all debts.

The marchers handed a memorandum of demands to a representative at the premier's office.

Makhosi Motshhega's spokesman Nkosi referred City Press to the local government department whose spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

The residents also handed over a memorandum to Servoon, slaming the company for not playing its role in solving the problems of home buyers who have defaulted on the bond repayments. Servoon was set up to take over bank repossessed houses and make arrangements for payment with the

buyers who were in arrears. The residents said they believed Servoon was acting in cohorts with the banks to repossess their houses.

In one of the demands made in the memorandum the residents also said the government should compensate home owners who had RDP houses built next to their "bank houses".

However a Servoon spokesman, Dennis Cryton denied that anybody who was part of the Servoon programme could be evicted from their houses for defaulting.

"People have not come forward and accepted our programme. Nobody has been evicted for being poor or for being behind on their bonds," he said.

(27) CP 14/3/99

'NO blacks - Whites only'

Blacks in Muldersdrift charged for trespassing on land they have bought

By MAX MARX

FORTY-SEVEN Muldersdrift residents, including four toddlers, spent last week in jail after being arrested and charged with trespassing on land they believed they owned and which is earmarked for low-cost housing.

They were arrested after going to look at the land. Among them were homeless people who also brought building materials to erect shacks. Police confiscated their building materials.

The dispute over the land's ownership, which is due before the Johannesburg High Court soon, is between a trust set up by Muldersdrift farm tenants three years ago and the land's owner, Clifford Michael Campbell.

In January last year Campbell agreed to the sale of the Rietfontein land to the trust and signed a Deed of Sale in which he agreed to accept a R40 000 deposit and monthly instalments until the trust had paid off the R154 500 owing.

In November last year, after the trust had already paid him R126 000, Campbell informed the trust that he wanted to cancel the contract and returned a cheque for the R126 000.

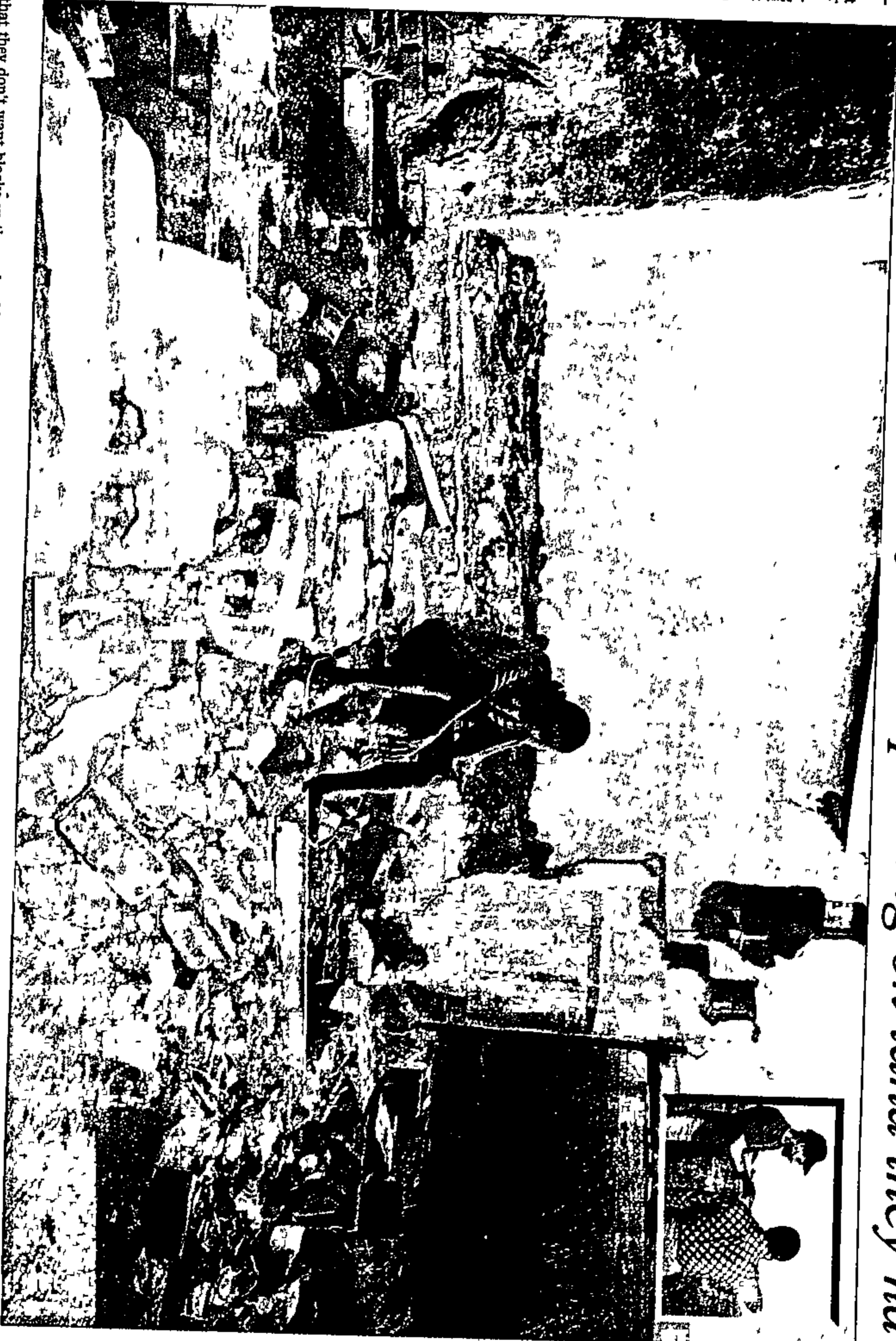
Trust members decided they would continue to pay their monthly instalments as they had done most of the groundwork in preparation for creating a township on the land, and would not accept the contract's cancellation.

They had made all the relevant applications to the various authorities to register the land as a township and applied for government housing subsidies, not only for Campbell's land, but for 3 500 housing units on 21 other farms surrounding this land. The area has been earmarked for low-cost housing development.

Trust spokesman Thomas Mthombu told City Press that Campbell decided he wanted to cancel the contract shortly after a meeting of the Muldersdrift Community Planning Forum. Mthombu said this organisation consisted mainly of white home owners.

He said he believed members of the forum had pressurised Campbell into reneging on the deal because they did not want black people living in the area.

Whites around here talk freely



EMICTED This farm labourer, who lives on the farm adjacent to the land in dispute, was also arrested for trespassing last Friday night. He spent the weekend in jail and on his return found the farmer had taken a hammer and demolished his home. He and about 20 others were told to leave the property even though they say they have been paying the farmer rent and had lived there for a number of years. (Inset) Muldersdrift trust member Thomas Mthombu (left) discusses the land dispute with a trust member.

"The question the legality of this when the application was on behalf of land owners who were not made aware of the application," she said. Lewis said that according to the Deeds Office the land that was "invaded" on Friday was still owned by Campbell.

"We will not deal lightly with attempts at invasion. Some of the people arrived with building materials to erect shacks. If you let this happen you will soon have a squatter situation on your hands."

Lewis said the forum had been fighting in the past but added that the new leadership, appointed last October, had been trying to assist the community to establish housing initiatives. However, the lack of sewerage infrastructure meant the area would not be able to support 3 500 low-cost housing units on these farms.

A legal representative for the trust said the Deed of Sale stipulated the land would be used for low-cost housing. The trust had legally bought the land and had therefore acquired occupation rights.

"You can take transfer after you have paid 50% of the purchase price. Trust members were entitled to occupy the land from the day the transaction was concluded in January 1988. The problem is the adjacent owners who do not want this black development sandwiched between their properties because it is going to affect their property values."

The 47 people charged with trespassing will appear in the Krugersdorp Magistrate's Court tomorrow. They were released on R200 bail each on Monday this week.

that they don't want blacks in the area. It makes me feel as if oppression is alive and well in South Africa. There are many tenants in Muldersdrift who are being evicted by farmers even though they have lived on their properties for many years. I think the government

should appoint a commission of enquiry to investigate what is going on in Muldersdrift," Mthombu said.

Billy Watson, the Stratprop estate agent who negotiated the contract between Campbell and the trust, said he believed Campbell

was trying to cancel the contract because his neighbour had told him he could get more money for the land and because the white land owners did not want black people moving into the area.

She Lewis, secretary of the Muldersdrift Community Planning Forum (MCPF), said the forum's function was to ensure everybody in the area, black and white, knew what was going on in Muldersdrift.

"There is no attempt by the community to prevent black people from having houses in the area. Through our housing sub-committee we are trying to arrange housing initiatives in the area."

MEEC lashes Heath over housing fraud inquiry

Another top ANC figure takes corruption-busting judge to task, this time over his intention to probe Gauteng department

STAFF REPORTER AND SAPA

Angry Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has lashed out at the Health Commission, saying it should do its work rather than raise suspicions through the media.

Mofokeng was reacting to a report in the *Sunday Times* quoting a spokesperson for Judge Willem Heath's unit saying it would probe each of Gauteng's 990 000 applications for housing subsidies, because as many as one out of 10 could be fraudulent.

"Never has Gauteng handled such a number of subsidies. The fact of the matter is that more than 900 000 subsidy applications have been approved nationally and only 25% were from Gauteng," Mofokeng said yesterday.

Ian Davidson, DP spokesperson for housing, said he welcomed the Health Commission's probe into the Gauteng housing and land affairs department.

"All opposition parties agree there are levels of corruption in that department and that there has been possible complicity in allocating subsidies," DP justice spokesperson Douglas Gibson said corruption busters were not popular with the ANC, and called on the party to accept Judge Heath's bona fides.

"The ANC cannot tackle criticism, even from an impeccable source such as Judge Heath. The ANC must learn that criticism is not always driven by malice or political concerns, that it is sometimes justified and must be listened to," said Gibson.

The ANC could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele vowed at the weekend to blacklist several construction companies that she said had built almost 400 000 "substandard" low-cost houses.

Mthembu-Mahanyele said more than half of the 600 000 homes built for the poor since 1994 were either too small or badly built.

"The Government would introduce tough new standards next month to protect home buyers from unscrupulous developers," the *Sunday Times* said.

From January next year, developers in the subsidised housing sector would have to guarantee their workmanship to the new statutory National Home Builders' Council.

Developers would have to repair any structural problems up to five years after completion.

Mthembu-Mahanyele accused the building industry of pursuing profit at the expense of the poor.

From 19/3/99

(127)

Council owed (127) more than R600 million

By Gershwin Chuenyane

MORE than R600 million was owed to the Pretoria City Council by service defaulters at the end of January this year, according to a city council report

The report reveals that a further 12 961 electricity defaulters throughout Pretoria had had their electricity cut off by the end of January

Households accounted for 12 340 of these cut-offs

Pretoria suburbs claimed the highest figure with 5 837, followed by Atteridgeville with 4 001 then Mamelodi with 2 246, Eersterust with 621 and Lotus Gardens with 256

From July to December 1998, 716 water connections were removed. During January this year a further 113 were removed

The council also notes in its report that the water disconnections proved an effective measure to address the escalating debt on rates and service accounts

The council also warns residents about

illegal power reconnections and says it will monitor rent defaulters whose electricity supplies have been cut off

"These inspections are regularly carried out and cable connections are removed if the warning is not heeded," the council says

A large number of residents, whose power supplies had been cut because of arrears, are securing the services of unqualified electricians to reconnect their supplies at a fee ranging between R50 and R80 a household

The Atteridgeville-Saulsville Concerned Residents Association (Ascora) has planned a protest march to the local town council today against the electricity cuts and water disconnections

Ascora general secretary Mr Themba Ncalo said he expected residents, teachers and taxi operators to participate in the protest action

Ncalo said a sit-in at the council offices could not be ruled out as a result of the council's continued cut-offs and inflated service accounts

Power 17/13/99

Payment levels to councils improve ⁽¹²⁷⁾

By Joshua Raboroko

PAYMENT levels to most of the 51 Gauteng municipalities, which are owed more than R5 billion for essential services, rates and taxes, have improved from six to an average 75 percent in the past few months

Delivering his budget to the provincial legislature yesterday, MEC for development planning and local government Mr Sicelo Shiceka said this had led to a general improvement in the cash flow situation of the municipalities

His department had intervened to enhance the administrative, institutional and financial viability of the local authorities

The province had managed the inter-governmental grants to the tune of R923 million earmarked for the poor in the municipalities. The department spent R2 million to train 820 councillors and 8 000 community leaders

Shiceka said several officials and councillors from the previous apartheid government were dismissed after being convicted on charges of corruption

The department was able to save about R3 billion for municipalities after eight commissions of inquiry were held in the past four years. "We have adopted a policy of zero tolerance against corruption within municipalities," he added

The department is to spend R48 million on rejuvenating towns through the Vusani Amadolobha Pilot Programme (rejuvenate the towns programme) in conjunction with the private sector and local governments

Shiceka said the project would create 1 500 job opportunities. The number of municipalities were reduced from 63 to 51, four metros with 12 substructures, two service councils, 14 transitional local councils and 19 transitional regional councils

Sowetan 18/3/99

Residents march on council offices

By Gershwin Chuenyane (127)
ABOUT 500 Atteridgeville, Pretoria, residents marched on the local town offices yesterday in protest against electricity and water cuts in the township.

Atteridgeville-Saulsville Concerned Residents Association (Ascora) general secretary Mr Themba Ncalo handed over the memorandum containing residents' grievances to Atteridgeville town clerk Mr Henk Viljoen.

Residents gave the Pretoria City Council 14 days to meet their demands. The demands include the scrapping of all municipal service accounts; an investigation into the administration of the city treasurer; installation of prepaid meter boxes in Extension 7 informal settlement; an immediate end to electricity and water cuts and a meeting of the council and Ascora.

Residents warned that if the council failed to meet their demands, they would take the law into their own hands.

against those implementing the cuts. Residents also threatened to boycott the June 2 elections if their demands were not met.

Ncalo also lashed out at the exclusion of Ascora from the ongoing meetings between the Atteridgeville-Saulsville Taxi Owners Association, Community Policing Forum and Atteridgeville Bus Service over routes in the township.

He questioned the wisdom of excluding Ascora from the meeting.

He reminded the protesters that last year when Ascora protested against the taxi fare hike in the township, they were told by certain taxi association officials to use buses if they wanted cheaper transport.

A large contingent of police patrolled the streets yesterday after rumours that residents had been ordered to stay away from work.

However, most residents reported for work and taxis operated normally. No incidents were reported at the time of going to press.



A group of concerned residents from Atteridgeville, Saulsville and Mshenguville gather outside the Pretoria City Council offices to hand over to the council a memorandum containing their grievances. The residents have given the council two weeks to meet their demands.

PIC: CLEMENT LEKANYANE

18/3/99
SOWETAN

As rich flee, Joburg CBD looks to new lease of life

Low rents, new projects lure small firms to 'city for all'

(127)
ARG 22/3/99

From afar, Johannesburg's CBD looks like any other glossy modern city centre

But a closer look reveals "For Sale" and "To Let" signs at every turn. Entire blocks of storefronts are bricked over, and traffic on the main streets is light.

The pending departure of the Stock Exchange is the latest significant blow as downtown Johannesburg is gradually deserted by high powered companies fleeing "crime and grime" for the suburbs

But some contend the transformation, although jarring, reflects the broad changes the country has undergone

"The character of the city is changing. It has become much more accessible to an entire population," Johannesburg city councillor Sibusiso Buthelezi said

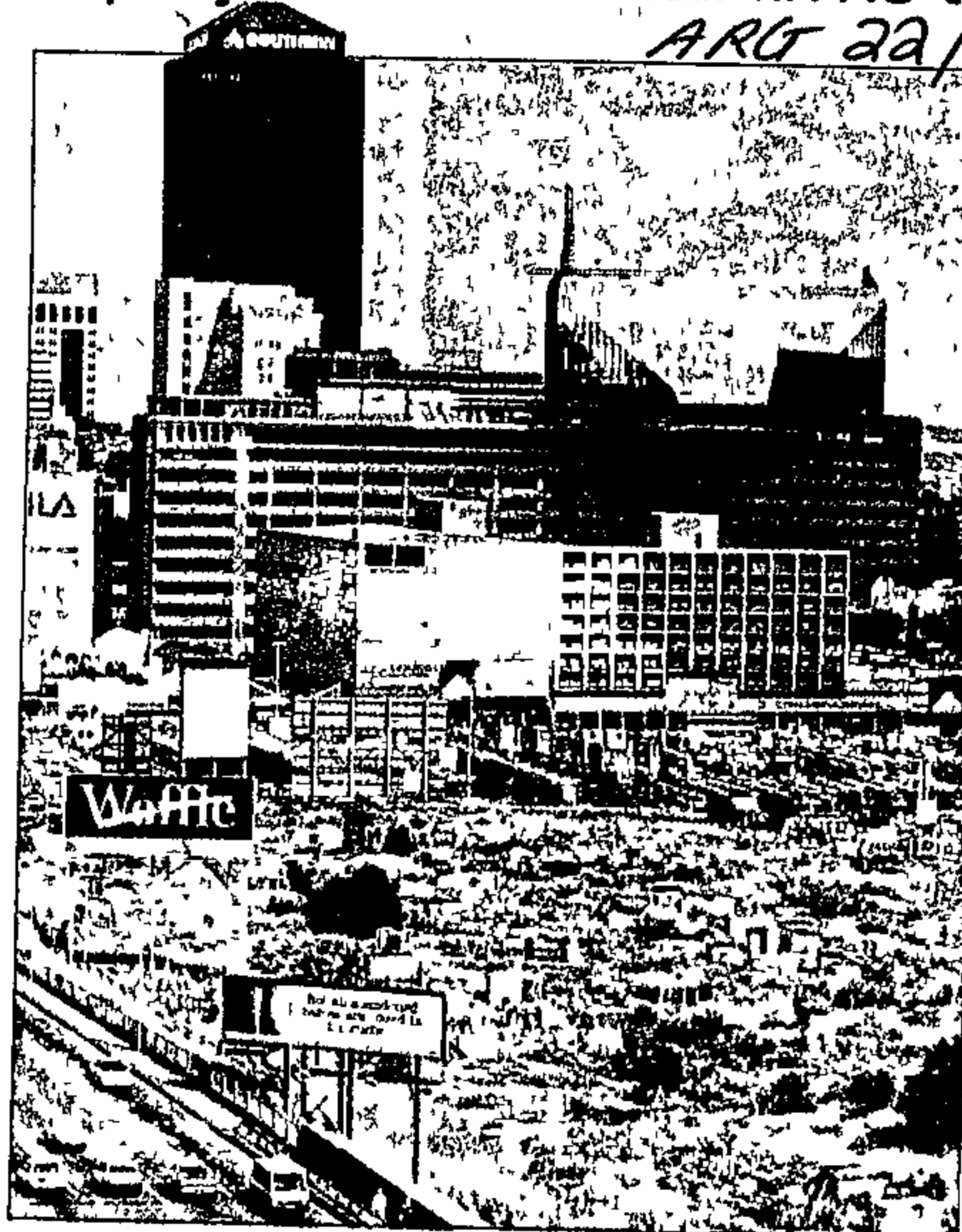
"It is the centre of life for blacks historically barred from the city. It is the economic hope for small entrepreneurs who also were historically barred."

Mr Buthelezi said the opening of the city to blacks had created "unfamiliar conditions" that prompted businesses to move to northern suburbs, such as Sandton and Rosebank. Police had been unable to deal with the changes, he said, exacerbating the crime problem.

A telling sign that the CBD was losing its status as the country's financial capital came when the JSE announced it would move to Sandton in 2000, abandoning the tower on Diagonal Street in which it was housed for 20 years.

Another big loss was the closing last March of the Carlton Hotel.

But the big banks and the mining houses that helped build the city are,



Edging in squatter camps are spreading their tentacles deep into Johannesburg's CBD

for the most part, staying - mainly because they are so heavily invested in city property

Des Kilalea, a mining analyst who works downtown at Flemming Martin Securities, said some of his co-workers rarely ventured outside

He said they drove into parking garages, took a lift to their offices, ate lunch in the cafeteria and left the same way

Pointing out of the window of a 10th floor conference room to a vacant building, he said "That's a



Street trade: a hawker in the CBD

great building. Ten years ago you would have to queue to get into it. Now no one wants to be there because the services in town aren't as good as they used to be, there aren't as many policemen as there should be and the streets don't get swept as much as they used to."

Mr Kilalea, who has worked in the city centre for 17 years, says he is happy to stay.

"The removal of apartheid means that everyone is sharing this city now."

Mathole Motshekga, Premier of Gauteng, announced recently that business leaders and government officials had formed a committee that would draw up plans to revitalise the city centre. "Those who left Johannesburg will queue to get back in," he promised.

Mr Motshekga said some effects of urban decay, such as inexpensive office space, would help the downtown turn around.

He said city officials had noted that professionals, such as physicians and dentists, and small businesses and industries were moving to the CBD because of bargain rents.

Mr Buthelezi, who heads a city council committee on planning and urban renewal, said the city would improve street cleaning, crack down on gangs blamed for street crime and create market space to keep vendors off the pavements.

Gert Dry, head of property development at Absa, said the bank believed Johannesburg had reached "the lower ebb of the normal economic cycle" and it made sense to expand while building costs were low.

Absa, in a R514,6-million project, has bought six city blocks around its headquarters complex. It is erecting two new towers, more parking garages and a shopping and restaurant area.

It plans to install better street lighting, place security cameras at strategic points and hire extra security guards - The Washington Post



City of gold? not for much longer, as big business evacuates central Johannesburg

THE STAR

Luanda?



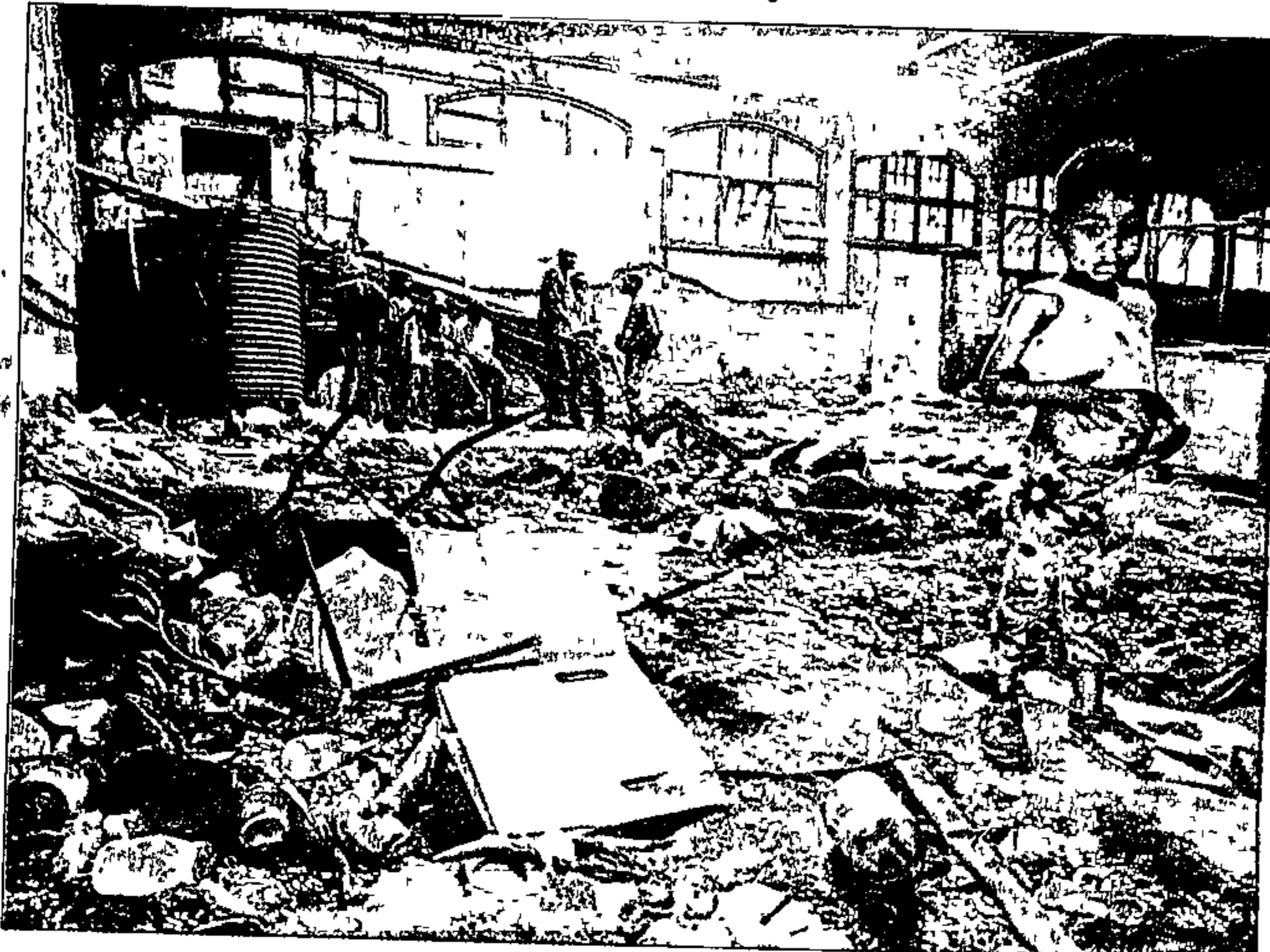
City of fifth: once

BD life for all'



Luanda? Kinshasa? no, it's an everyday scene from downtown Johannesburg

THE STAR



City of filth: once-proud buildings in central Johannesburg have become slums, inhabited by the homeless

CAROLINE SUZMAN

THE STAR
In the CBD

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will better street ay cameras at and hire extra The Washington

Housing (127) scam probe intensifies

Soultan 24/3/99

By Joshua Raboroko

THREE watchdog bodies are investigating about 32 allegations of low-cost housing subsidy corruption amounting to more than R100 million in the Gauteng housing and land affairs department

The offices of the Public Protector, the Auditor General and the Heath special investigating unit are in the process of investigating the complaints and allegations of "improprieties" pertaining to the housing subsidy scheme in Gauteng

The public protector's spokesperson Ms Nicolette Teichmann said yesterday that her office had "noticed with concern" comments in the media by Gauteng's MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng

In media reports Mofokeng is quoted as claiming that the Public Protector Mr Selby Baqwa had issued a report stating that no corruption could be found in his department

He said the offices of the Public Protector, the Auditor General and the Heath special investigating unit were presently still probing the complaints and allegations of improprieties pertaining to the housing subsidy scheme in Gauteng.

Teichmann said in a meeting on February between the unit, the offices of the auditor general and the public protector, a decision was taken on a joint cooperation regarding the Gauteng housing case

It was envisaged that the investigation would take some time to complete because of the number of complaints that had been lodged and the amount of money involved

Teichmann said the investigations involved about 32 projects of housing development and that the amount involved might exceed R100 million

Residents have sinking feeling

People living in the Thembalilhe informal settlement disagree over council plans to move them to another area, and plan to march to the Premier's Office tomorrow

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

Residents of the Thembalilhe informal settlement near Lenasia are divided over the Southern council's plan to relocate them to Vlakkfontein, south of Johannesburg.

Those in the camp of the Thembalilhe Development Forum (TDF) are preparing to relocate to Vlakkfontein near Zakaryya Park, while those who support the Masibambabe Civic Organisation are reluctant to move out.

This division threatens to tear the settlement apart and those sympathetic to the civic organisation have planned a march to the office of Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga tomorrow to demand that the area be proclaimed a township.

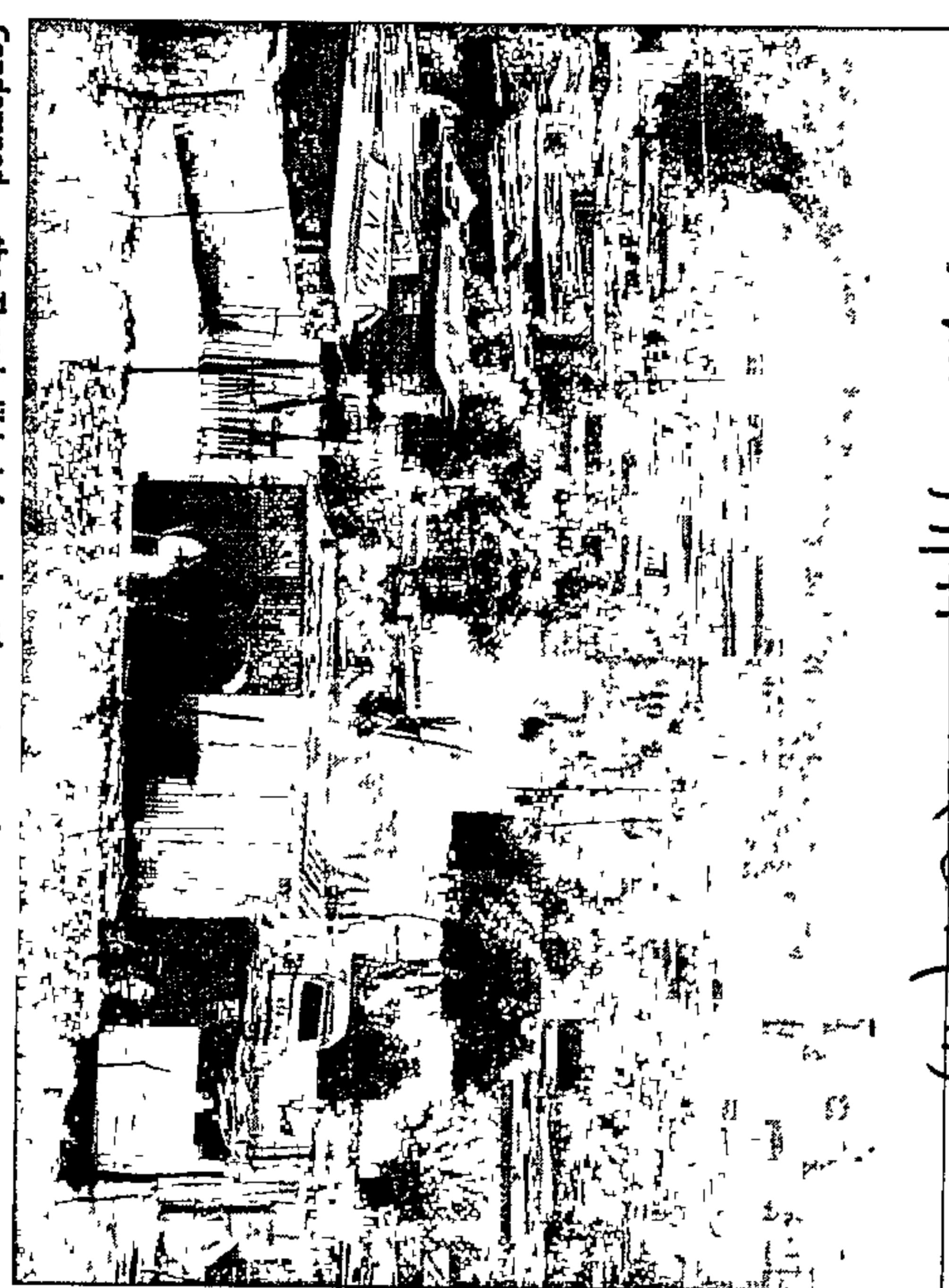
Despite being warned that the area was at risk because it had been built on dolomite and might sink, some of the residents are opposed to being relocated to Vlakkfontein, and say they enjoy and prefer living in Thembalilhe.

Rufus Meyra, Masibambabe Civic Organisation secretary, said residents had been lied to about the area being dolomitic.

"It is surprising that council appointed geologists keep on claiming that the area is not suitable for development but nothing has happened for the past 10 years while we've been staying there.

"I do not understand why the council failed to develop the area. They upgraded a taxi rank but failed to install street

STAN RAJHQA (202) (187) STEVE LAWRENCE



Condemned .. the Thembalilhe informal settlement may show a peaceful scene, but council plans to move residents to Vlakkfontein may be strongly resisted.

lights and ablution facilities for us," Meyra said.

He said residents were billed for services which they were not receiving, but stopped when plans to relocate them to Misgund North, near Naturena hit the rocks in 1996.

Realising that a low cost housing project was on the cards, residents of Naturena protested. Residents were promised accommodation at Daveland

but the area was invaded by people from other parts of Gauteng.

They were later promised they would be settled either in Finetown or Poorfye, but refused to go because the areas were too far from the Johannesburg CBD.

Those who are prepared to start a new life in Vlakkfontein, are expecting to move in July. According to Meshack Tebe TDF spokesperson, more than

2 000 residents have registered to move to Vlakkfontein.

"People are divided about this issue because they don't understand the area. They have been misinformed and told that it is an agricultural area.

"Despite that, people are preparing to relocate because they have seen that sites are being developed. "They are tired of staying in shacks where there are no services and security," Tebe added.

Entrepreneurs must follow rules

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

The Southern council recently served 265 people with summonses for illegally operating businesses on council land within its jurisdiction.

Prerna Naidoo, the council's chairperson, said over the last three months, council had issued 70 summonses to people operating spaza shops from their homes without the council's permission.

Naidoo added that 195 summonses were served to people for operating pavement panelbeaters and spray painting services and those operating businesses from makeshift offices or medical surgeries on council's land.

One resident served was July Moosa of Eldorado Park who received a spot fine of R1 000 for operating a spaza shop from his house.

Moosa a retrenched municipal employee has operated the shop since 1984. He was infuriated by the fine because he said the business helped to pay his children's school fees, food, monthly rental and his services.

Naidoo said residents needed to understand that an ordinary trading license was in itself not enough for any person to start trading.

"We are not unsympathetic to the needs of the community and we will view each case on merit. We understand the plight of the jobless and the poor and promise to assist wherever possible.

"Provisions of the town planning scheme and related municipal by-laws must be complied with before trading can take place," Naidoo said.

Residents wanting application and rezoning forms should contact council offices and application for consent-use costs R300.

Applicants must write a motivational letter to back their application. Application for consent-use may be granted based on motivation and taking into account the conditions under which the application is applied for," Naidoo added.

He said complainants were based on property values being lowered, damage to roads, residential areas used as storerooms and panel beaters and spray painters using harmful chemicals.

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Garbage in (127) Soweto costs council R4-m

Sowetan 15/4/99
By Justice Mohale

THE Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) is spending more than R4 million a year to collect garbage in open spaces around Soweto

Acting executive officer of waste management for the SMLC Mr Les Venter said yesterday that Soweto residents should realise that dumping garbage was illegal and had serious detrimental effects on people's health

He said the council was providing each household with two plastic bags for them to store the garbage until it was collected

"It is unacceptable that some residents dump the garbage in the streets or in open spaces, instead of waiting for the refuse removers to collect it on prescribed collection days," Venter said

He said the council was spending more than R300 000 a month on garbage collection in Soweto

Mr Richard Cebekulu, a funeral undertaker in Zondi, said he was afraid to tell residents to stop dumping waste in front of his mortuary because he thought some would fight him

"Sometimes adults send children to dump waste in front of my mortuary and this is quite unacceptable," Cebekulu said

He blamed the garbage collectors for not collecting the waste regularly "That is why there are always heaps of uncollected garbage near my mortuary," he said

When *Sowetan* visited Lavela High School in Zola yesterday, garbage was strewn next to the gate

Principal Mr John Mngadi said the problem of waste dumping next to the school's yard was discussed with the residents in the neighbourhood last year

"We appealed to the residents to furnish the school management with addresses of residents who throw unwanted objects next to the school gate, but they failed to do so," Mngadi said

He said the school management was disappointed when nobody came forward to identify the people who dumped garbage next to the school

In Central Western Jabavu, heaps of plastic bags containing garbage could be seen in the streets Residents said they were afraid to tell people not to dump there

"We see people dumping here daily but we can't stop them because we are afraid they will fight with us," one woman said

Star 19/4/99
Protests as hostel
upgrading halted

(127)

About 2 000 residents of Meadowlands hostel embarked on a protest this morning after learning the funding of hostel upgrades had been halted

Resident and community leader Bonginkosi Dlamini said the hostel dwellers learnt at a meeting with the Gauteng provincial housing department that the R14-million promised for phase four of the hostel upgrade had been re-allocated to other housing projects

"The money was meant to upgrade facilities and provide bathrooms in family units"

"At the moment 200 families share three toilets," he said

"In Meadowlands about 3 500 families and about 12 000 single hostel dwellers were affected by the redirection of funding, Dlamini said - Political Staff

By Justice Mohale

THE Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) will continue with its plan to relocate about 3 000 residents of Thembehle squatter camp to Viakfontein, south of Johannesburg.

The SMLC's chairman of the executive committee, Mr Prena Naidoo, said the relocation programme would take place after thorough consultation with the residents.

"We have applied for housing subsidies for the residents of Thembehle from the Gauteng government and we are hoping that the applications will be successful," Naidoo said.

However, he expressed concern about politicians who tried to instigate some of the residents to resist the relocation proposals.

"We are heading for the general elections and people must be careful of

Council presses ahead

With relocating squatters

(R7) *Soewetan 19/4/99*

politicians who intend using their plight for political points scoring," Naidoo said.

He said the council wanted to relocate the Thembehle residents because the land on which they lived was dolomitic and could sink at any time.

He said the council had already secured a large tract of land adjacent to Zakariya Park which would be serviced before the squatters were relocated.

Meanwhile, deputy chairman of Mazibambane Civic Organisation (MCO) Mr Petrus Hlomuka has told

Soewetan that the residents took a resolution last Wednesday to resist any attempts by the council to relocate them.

Last week about 300 residents of Thembehle marched to the office of Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga and presented a memorandum of their grievances.

Motshekga said he would consult the leaders of the Thembehle community to try and find ways of solving their problems. "The government and the community will form a community development forum to oversee the

delivery of essential services to the residents," Motshekga said.

Among the residents' demands are that their ward councillor should resign, the council should stop sending residents accounts because there was no delivery of services, and the council should authorise its local offices to be used as pay points for pensioners.

Hlomuka said the residents refused to be relocated to Viakfontein because the area was far away from their places of work.

● **Joshua Raboroko** reports that the

Gauteng government is due to announce R900 million in allocations for housing projects in the province.

Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng said at the weekend the projects would help to reduce the backlog which was estimated at more than 90 000 units.

The announcement will be made at the All Africa Games. Village in Alexandra tomorrow. The village will house participants at the games that will take place in Johannesburg in September.

"Our aim is to provide resources and capacity to Gauteng regions with the aim of maintaining equal development in all areas in the province," Mofokeng said. He said his department would enter the new millennium with a five-year plan which would ensure the rapid delivery of the targeted 188 000 houses for poor communities.

Council under fire as tenants fail to pay bills

(127)

Landlords can't sell or rent out properties

because of huge outstanding services bills

Star 20/4/99

By ANNA COX

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council has been accused of forcing landlords to pay huge water and electricity arrears chalked up by tenants and thereby eroding its tax base, devaluing areas and reducing the rental stock – especially in the inner city.

Infuriated landlords and estate agents said many houses were being left to fall into disrepair as landlords faced bills of up to R300 000 in unpaid water and lights services which their tenants failed to pay.

They said landlords were often unaware of the bills for services that the council failed to terminate.

Landlords who cannot pay bills find they can neither rent out a dwelling again, as the council will not provide electricity until arrears have been paid, nor can they sell the property, as they will not get clearance from the council because of the outstanding bills.

Estate agent Clive Gilbert said there was "chaos out there" as hundreds of properties were being left vacant and abandoned.

"It is grossly unfair. The tenants enter into agreements with the council, not the property owner, who is more often than not unaware that the bills are mounting.

"If the owner is to be held responsible, then he should be made to sign the agreement with the council and be forced to pay the electricity and water bills monthly.

"Alternatively, the owner should also get an account every month so he knows what's going on," Gilbert said.

He said the council had also failed miserably in its duty by allowing such high bills to accumulate, and even if tenants were illegally reconnecting when cut off, the council should have taken note of this by the mounting bills each month.

The result was that hundreds of houses were standing empty, and would eventually be vandalised and

taken over by squatters, which would result in the devaluation of property and neighbourhoods – thereby depriving the council of rates, said Gilbert.

Another major problem was that there were hundreds of blocks of flats without electricity because only a few tenants failed to pay their bills.

"Each flat should be metered individually," he said.

Democratic Party spokesperson Mike Moriarty said the situation was unacceptable.

He said he was certain that the courts would not hold owners responsible for the bills accumulated by third parties.

Moriarty said it was ironic that the ANC was targeting the northern suburbs by cutting off homeowners who owed only a few hundred rands while those in ANC constituencies were being allowed to run up bills of hundreds of thousands of rands.

Pensioner Arthur Roland recently found himself owing R156 000 for unpaid water and lights on a house he owns in Berea.

Roland, who suffers from cancer and has only a few months to live, says he is devastated.

"We didn't know these people weren't paying. This was to have been my wife's income when I die. Now I will probably lose the property," he said.

Another pensioner, who owes R33 000, said: "I don't have the money to pay. The council can take me to court and take the property, for all I care.

"It is their fault that this amount was allowed to accumulate – I will certainly not pay it," she said.

Council spokesperson Sobantu Ndlalalavu said the debt of services was reducing after the appointment of private consultants last year to terminate services.

"Previously the council could not exercise proper credit control because it was under-capacitated and the only effective credit control action available was legal action," Ndlalalavu said.

Council under fire as tenants fail to pay bills

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R964-m

2/14/99
housing

project (127)

unveiled

Sowetan

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng unveiled a R964 million housing project for 1999-2000 yesterday which, he said, would help reduce the housing backlog plaguing the province

Announcing housing projects for all Gauteng regions at a ceremony at Alexandra's All Africa Games Village, Mofokeng said the housing projects research arose from a survey that helped them identify needy areas

He said his department would enter the new millennium with a five-year plan that would ensure rapid delivery of 188 000 houses

The announcement comes barely a week after Mofokeng was criticised for his involvement in financial and administrative irregularities that led to the Heath special investigation unit probing his department

He has been accused misconduct in the running of provincial housing activities

It also comes at a time when auditor-general Mr Henry Kluever and public protector Mr Selby Baqwa have been asked to investigate irregularities in the department

Mofokeng said R5,4 million would be spent to deliver 3 429 houses, R19,25 million on May-buys upgrading, R11,9 million on institutional subsidies, R19,5 million on a consolidation subsidy, R2,4 million on 154 developer-driven projects, R29,8 million on 5 234 essential services and R20,3 million on subsidy-linked projects

These allocations, Mofokeng said, resulted from actual demand

His department had introduced a rural housing and people's housing process aimed at assisting poor communities to build houses for themselves

R1 million was earmarked for this

Mofokeng said despite the criticisms aimed at him, new projects valued at R500 000 would be initiated over the next five years to meet the acute shortage of houses estimated at 900 000

Budget provides for thousands of new houses

Star 2/14/99

(127)

Amount will cover construction, purchase of land and upgrading, and provide shelter to about 300 000 people

By Anna Cox

The Gauteng housing department announced yesterday that R964-million would be allocated to housing projects for 1999/2000 to provide housing for more than 300 000 people

The amount will cover the costs of construction, the purchase of land, the establishment of services, the upgrading of hostels, and high-density

and rented accommodation projects.

Making the announcement at the All Africa Games athletes' village in Alexandra - where the units are to be sold to Alexandra residents after the Games in September - housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said a five-year plan had also been introduced with the aim of accelerating housing delivery

Over the next five years, new projects, to the value of

over R500-million for another 200 000 units - for about a million people - would be initiated to address the backlog of an estimated 462 000 units in Gauteng, he said

Formal housing projects will get 50% of the 1999/2000 budget - expected to deliver 85 000 units for 300 000 people, 37,5% for the securing of tenure, land and essential services, and 12,5% for institutional, rental and high-density

housing projects.

Based on current supply and demand, the Eastern Gauteng Services Council will receive the most housing units with 70 145 (40%), followed by the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council with 48 780 (28%), Western Gauteng Services Council 21 282 (12%), Greater Pretoria Metro Council 20 611 (11%), Khayalalm Metro Council 8 120 (5%) and Lekoa-Vaal 7 302 (4%) Small contractors were

being brought in for empowerment and training, Mofokeng added

Two innovative housing programmes have also been launched by the housing department - the Rural Housing Programme and the People Housing Process

Mofokeng said these pilot projects, with a budget of R1-million, involved women, the disabled and the youth, and were expected to deliver 600 units.

"Our emphasis over the next five years is to accelerate delivery while ensuring quality service, integration of communities into towns and places of economic development, job creation, and equitable development in terms of geographical spread

"We want to improve and emphasise community involvement, private sector partnerships, and capacity-building in local authorities," the MEC said

NATIONAL

Gauteng housing off to an early start

New approach enables province to allocate R1bn for 119 projects that will provide more than 176 000 dwellings

Robyn Chalmers

GAUTENG has allocated almost R1bn in subsidies to low-cost housing projects for 1999/2000, the first time its funds have been approved for a range of schemes so early in a financial year.

Local authorities will develop most of the province's 119 approved projects, and private developers will undertake the rest. More than 176 000 units will be delivered by the projects.

Provincial housing boards generally approve housing projects piecemeal, depending on funds available and waiting lists. The national housing ministry allocates

housing funds to provinces

Dan Mofokeng, Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC, said yesterday that the allocations were the result of extensive research into land development objectives, demand for low-cost housing and the need to empower small and medium-sized business.

Mofokeng said the goal was to speed up delivery by focusing on programmes like upgrading settlements and providing essential services to communities. New programmes were being launched for rural and social housing. Analysts said funds were going to local councils that were struggling with delivery, and projects teams were being set up to help.

An SA National Civics Organisation spokesman welcomed the fund allocation, and said Gauteng led SA in housing delivery. He called for a housing summit to iron out challenges facing banks and private developers.

More than 40% of the projects approved fall under the eastern Gauteng services council, 28% under Johannesburg's greater metro council and 13% under the western Gauteng services council.

Large private developers that obtained approval for projects include Grinaker Housing, Group Five Developers and Thebe Housing Projects, and smaller developers included the Homeless People's Federation, Daqing Devel-

opments and Hive Properties

Mofokeng said that over the next five years, new projects valued at more than R500m would be initiated to address Gauteng's housing backlog, estimated at 462 000 units.

"Our emphasis is to accelerate delivery, while ensuring there is quality service, the integration of communities into towns and places of economic development. (and) job creation," he said. A new five-year plan was being developed to encourage more initiative in housing development.

Gauteng had delivered more than 100 000 low-cost housing units around the province, housing more than 400 000 people since 1994.

(127) RD 21/4/99





Construction of the 1 800 units making up the athletes' village for the All Africa Games in September is expected to be completed by the end of July. The village, which will house about 6 000 athletes, will be converted into low-cost housing when the games have run their course. Construction began in November last year. Picture: BRETT ELOFF

Sport village seen as housing model

Co-operation was key to speed of the Alexandra development, writes Deborah Fine

THE pace at which the development of the All Africa Games athletes' village in Johannesburg has progressed is a solid example that the delivery of quality, affordable housing need not be a drawn-out, trouble-ridden procedure.

This is the message from Johan van der Merwe, urban policy and strategy executive officer at the Johannesburg metropolitan council. His statement is particularly topical given delays in the delivery of low-cost houses nationally and numerous problems of housing standards and size.

Van der Merwe also heads the games village management task team and will oversee transportation to and from the village of the 6 000 athletes expected at the games in September. The athletes will be drawn from 52 African countries, including SA.

The development, situated on the far east bank of Alexandra along the N3 Highway, will consist of 1 800 freestanding and semidetached housing units of between 32m² and 50m².

The final cost of the development is estimated at about R65m, which also includes the construction of a new school that will be used as a canteen and leisure centre for the athletes. Once the games are over, 1 700 of the units will be sold as low-cost accommodation in line with state housing subsidies, while 100 units will be allocated as rental stock.

Van der Merwe said yesterday that the village would be able to house slightly more than 6 000 people after conversion because some of the units would be used as offices or medical suites during the athletic events.

Because the units contained "betterments" such as carpets, ceilings, curtain rails, running water, electricity and paintwork, the development would be aimed ultimately at the "top end" of the affordable housing market, he said.

It had taken about six months to finalise the "paperwork" once the

games team had chosen to construct an athletes' village instead of accommodating the visitors in hotels or student hostels.

This option was chosen so that money spent would contribute to the alleviation of Gauteng's large housing backlog.

Construction began at the end of November last year, and it is expected that 1 200 units will be completed by July 1 this year. The remaining 500 units will be completed by the end of July, according to Van der Merwe, "even if they have to work three shifts per day".

He attributes the rapid pace of the development to the "creative fast-tracking" of legal procedures, as well as "commitment, co-operation and co-ordination".

Those involved in the project include the games team, the Gauteng housing and land affairs department (which committed R25,5m in

institutional subsidies), the Johannesburg metropolitan council and the Johannesburg eastern municipality, which holds jurisdiction over the Alexandra area.

Other participants are the National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency, National Benefits Consultants, the National Finance Housing Corporation, and the National Electricity Regulator, which have all agreed to bridging finance to top up the funding provided by the provincial department, the games and the local authorities.

The development was managed by Tsepo Development Corp, incorporating EVN Consulting Engineers and Project Management, LVM Architects, Bain and Heyns Quantity Surveyors, Netplan Consulting Electrical Engineers, Urban Dynamics, and Group Five Construction.

(127) BD 2/4/99

Project-based system aims to boost low-cost houses' quality

(127)
Robyn Chalmers

BD 22/4/99
GAUTENG's new project allocation system for low-cost housing should lead to a significant improvement in quality of homes delivered by contractors, say industry officials

The Gauteng housing department has allocated almost R1bn of subsidy funds to projects, the first time a province has approved funds for a block of schemes so early in the financial year. Projects are usually approved on a first come, first served basis.

SA Residential Developers' Association president Chris Cudmore yesterday welcomed the decision to approve schemes upfront, saying it would give developers certainty and allow them to plan ahead.

Cudmore said the province was being strict on the minimum size of units. The national housing ministry recently introduced national norms and standards on low-cost housing, setting the minimum size of houses built with the subsidy at 30m².

Cudmore said the new method of allocation was moving closer to a tender system with developers being awarded contracts according to their project proposals. "This new process will result in a better end product," he said.

Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng said the province received about 500 project proposals for about 1-million units, of which almost 120 projects totalling 176 000 homes were approved.

Mofokeng said the total allocation for the year amounted to R964m. The majority of projects approved were submitted by local authorities throughout the province. Cudmore said a significant portion of this work would be subcontracted to private developers.

Housing department spokesman Mbulelo Musi said several projects held back by the department would be put out to tender for private development.

These projects related to schemes in areas like Mamelodi, Benoni and Johannesburg city centre.

Cherished dreams end in frustration, despair (127)

Star 1/5/99

By THEMBSILE MAKGALEMELE

They waited years for homes of their own, but now they have places they scathingly call "toilets" because they are so small - and many of the houses are breaking up because they were shoddily built.

However, the dream of their own homes for angry and disillusioned occupants of government-subsidised houses in a development on the Far East Bank in Alexandra has turned sour for another reason: they have discovered that bureaucratic delay means they are not yet the legal owners.

The people, who have lived in the area for more than two years and have been paying regular amounts each month to the local council, do not have title deeds to prove ownership.

Provincial housing department spokesperson Steyn van Blerk agrees that the people have no proof of ownership.

"They do not have their title deeds because it is a lengthy process," he said. When the development was first begun in the early 1990s, the housing department agreed to extend the size of the individual stands to 250sq m from the previous standard of 150sq m.

"The ideal situation would be to first get the place right, reach an agreement with the local authority, and have a plan layout

approved. Then a township register should be opened and surveyor's diagrams approved, and only then should building start," said Van Blerk.

He said it was officially decided that the legal and technical procedures would be done together with construction. In 1992, the township register was finalised, but it has taken since then to get the various other aspects approved.

Van Blerk said the department hoped that the approvals would come through soon and that people could then start getting their title deeds.

However, security of tenure is not the only thing worrying residents.

France Chiloane told the *Saturday Star* that residents had complained repeatedly about the cracks beginning to show in the walls of many of the houses. They had also complained about incomplete work by the construction company, but nothing had been done, Chiloane said.

"The streets have no names, and when you want to buy furniture, shops don't want to sell because they say they need the street name and address," he added.

Grace Mabazo acknowledges that her small place is slightly better than those occupied by many around her - at least she can get a double bed into her room. But she is concerned about the mounting



BOXED IN: After years of waiting for her own home, this woman is upset because the house she bought isn't registered in her name

bill, which is more than R16 000 so far.

"I only moved to this house sometime last year - how can it happen that I owe so much money?" They need to explain to me," Mabazo said.

Disgruntled Bennet Makoena said his house needed fixing and that he has to pay for the repairs.

Other residents said they had decided not to pay rent because they did not know what they were paying for, besides waste removal and water.

"Our houses are leaking, the roofs are moving apart, and walls and floors have

cracks," said a woman who identified herself only as Mrs Mashobane.

Van Blerk said he was not aware of any problems with the construction of the houses, but "we have site offices where people can lodge their complaints with the development committee, which will take messages back to our offices."

Regarding complaints about the size of the houses, Van Blerk said: "It is about affordability - if people can afford bigger houses, they can communicate with the department to make arrangements for a bigger place."

Gauteng acts to stop housing feuds

(127) 003/5/99
Nomavenda Mathiane

FAMILY members involved in housing disputes would now be allocated family title deeds, Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng told Vaal residents yesterday.

Addressing housing delivery victory rallies in Sharpeville and Sebokeng, Mofokeng said the family title deed was not a general rule, but would apply only in those homes where family members were fighting over home ownership.

He said that in some cases when parents died, the children fought over the house and at times would go as far as killing one another.

This new policy, Mofokeng said, would ensure that all members had the right to the "contested" house.

Mofokeng announced also that 6 000 Vaal residents would receive title deeds and that 5 000 houses would be delivered in Bophelong township.

He said the R300m allocated for Vaal housing in 1994 had produced 21 000 houses. This included the upgrading of Sebokeng hostel into family units.

Mofokeng said the Vaal was leading in the province's housing projects and had delivered new houses in Bophelong, Bopatong, Sharpeville and Sebokeng.

Joburg metro seeking to explore new housing strategies

By ANNA COX

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council is in the process of formulating a housing strategy because the new Housing Act of 1997 assigns responsibilities to local government.

In a report to council, head of the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council Housing Task Team, Yasmine Coovadia, said the current population of Johannesburg was estimated at 3,16 million.

This figure includes an average growth rate of 3,4% allowing for a 2,4% natural

increase in population, as well as a net migration rate of 1%, it was expected that the population of the city in 2001 would be 3,61 million, she said.

There are at present only about 670 000 units in the form of houses and multiple units in the Greater Johannesburg

Accommodation is provided for a further 83 000 people in private and public hostels

It is estimated that 70% of households earn less than R3 500 and qualify for assistance in the form of a housing subsidy. There was a theoretical

backlog of 250 000 units, said Coovadia.

In South Africa it was difficult to estimate an exact backlog because housing in the low-cost arena was not demand driven, but supply driven where delivery agents planned projects around the available subsidy, especially the R15 000 band, and took no account of the willingness or ability to pay

This resulted in a large segment in the R1 000 to R3 000 income group being ignored or massed into low-income housing

The shortage of housing is about 55% in the Southern council area, 13% in the

Western council area, 18% in the North and 14% in the East.

About 36 000 units are currently being delivered in the form of site and service.

There were certain aspects of housing delivery and administration which demanded urgent attention by local government, said Coovadia

These include the investigation into alternative institutional arrangements with regard to effectively dealing with problems relating to housing delivery and the setting up of an in-house metro housing co-ordination system, to ensure housing de-

livery prior to the finalisation of the organisational review process.

Following the 1994 elections, the delivery of housing had been slower than anticipated, said Coovadia.

In Greater Johannesburg, research shows that there has been a flurry of activity in the secure, high-density complexes in the price range of R100 000 to R400 000

This was probably due to the combination of residents down-scaling and seeking security, and others moving to areas which were previously denied to them, she said. Activity in prices above

this range has been slow, probably due to lack of investor confidence, emigration and market saturation, said Coovadia

At the subsidised end of the market, projects were being picked up. More so in the upper bands of the subsidy range from R3 000 to R3 500 which buys a 40sq m structures on a 250sq m stand. Coovadia has written a document called "Towards a Metropolitan Housing Policy and Strategy" which will be used as the starting point for the establishment of a final document that will guide housing issues in the metropolitan area

Heath to probe housing department

Robyn Chalmers

THE Heath investigating unit has been given the go-ahead to scrutinise 18 alleged irregularities in the Gauteng housing and land affairs department

This comes a day after the unexpected removal of MEC Dan Mofokeng from ANC candidate lists

The 18 allegations include theft, corruption, mismanagement and other irregularities such as abuse of the subsidy scheme by departmental employees and developers, and failure to comply with tender procedures. The unit will also investigate the awarding of licences by the Gauteng gambling board

Democratic Party Gauteng leader Peter Leon said it was "significant and, perhaps not unrelated, that Mofokeng has been left off the ANC's election list"

However, no clear evidence of a link emerged yesterday

Industry officials said that the extent

and number of allegations, which involve millions of rands in subsidies, were of grave concern

The colourful Mofokeng, once tipped for national housing minister, was originally second on the provisional provincial list of candidates earmarked to serve in the Gauteng cabinet after this year's elections. He was unavailable for comment yesterday

Officials said Mofokeng's abrupt removal caused consternation in the department as well as the construction and housing industries

"At this stage it is pure speculation as no one, including Mofokeng, appears to have been informed about the reason behind his removal from the list," said one official. An industry source said Gauteng had been at the forefront of housing delivery in SA, and Mofokeng had helped put housing on the map in the province

Two possible explanations for Mofokeng's fall from grace emerged yesterday

BD 6/5/99

(127)

day. The first, from an industry official, was the allegations of departmental corruption, largely made by opposition parties, which led to the Heath investigation

An analyst said the second reason could be that Mofokeng fell out of favour politically after supporting Mathole Motshekga to take over from Tokyo Sexwale as Gauteng premier. However, some analysts discounted this as Motshekga and other of his supporters remain on the list

Motshekga said yesterday that the Gauteng cabinet noted and welcomed the proclamation for the Heath unit to begin work in the province. "Now that this proclamation is signed, the Gauteng cabinet gives its assurance that any alleged culprit is brought to book with the full might of the law"

Leon said he hoped the Heath unit would be able to get to the bottom of the allegations and stamp out "the corruption which seems to have taken root in certain departments"

Corruption probe in housing starts

By Joshua Raboroko

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela has finally signed a proclamation for the Heath special investigating unit to probe corruption in the Gauteng department of housing

This was confirmed yesterday by Department of Justice legal adviser Mr Aubrey Tsholetsane

The proclamation was signed last Friday

The investigation follows memorandums from the New National Party and the Democratic Party to the Government urging an investigation into irregularities in the department headed by Mr Dan Mofokeng

The proclamation comes after months of waiting for the signing of documents that would facilitate the investigation

The office of the Public Protector said it envisaged that the investigation would involve about 32 housing development projects

It said indications were that the amount involved was more than R100 million

Commission spokesman Mr Guy Rich said they should have started the investigation earlier but they could not because of some delays

Terms of reference

He said the unit did not have powers to summon witnesses to testify against the department's officials without terms of reference that would be enshrined in the proclamation

Rich refused to disclose the terms of reference of the investigation but said they might include the

recommendations of the auditor general's report earlier this year

He said they would follow procedures before starting the probe

This included working with the auditor general and Public Protector Selby Baqwa during investigations

Mofokeng recently requested Baqwa to expedite the investigation as he regarded it in the interest of the public and himself that a report be released before the June 2 elections

Mandela's proclamation also empowers the unit to investigate alleged irregularities in the Gauteng Gambling Board

The board would be investigated for unauthorised or irregular furnishing of information or the rendering of assistance by board members to certain applicants for casino licences

(127)
Sowetan 6/5/99

Heath probes alleged Gauteng housing scam

By SEKOLA SELLO



IN TROUBLE? ... Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng, whose department is under investigation for corruption

THE HEATH Special Investigation Unit which is investigating the Gauteng housing department is expected to unearth a multi-million rand corruption scam implicating very senior officials in the department

And as Judge Willem Heath begins his probe, there is a strong possibility that those who are found to have been implicated in the scam could face criminal charges and the likelihood of going to jail

The scam, which involved, among other things, paying kickbacks to strategically placed officials in the housing department is linked to the awarding of tenders in the province's R1,2 billion low-cost housing projects

A proclamation signed by acting President Thabo Mbeki this week empowered the Heath unit to investigate a wide range of irregularities in the housing department headed by Dan Mofokeng who is also MEC for land affairs

A press statement released by Gauteng premier Mathole Motshekga said his cabinet has "given the assurance that any alleged culprit is brought to book with the full might of the law" This raises the possibility that criminal charges could be brought against the culprits and if found guilty, they face the prospect of going to jail

The signing of the proclamation in the same week that the African National Congress decided to axe several prominent members from its list of national and provincial legislatures is interpreted as Mbeki's first salvo in his publicly stated bid to root out corruption in the party and government

The person who blew the whistle against corruption in the department was the then head of department Enos Ngutshane

He uncovered a scam in which in one case a "developer" successfully tendered for low cost houses and then claimed to have built a certain number of units but on investigation it was established that no such houses had been built

This scam cost the provincial government R8,5 million The developer, Louis Botha, was convicted of more than 30 counts of fraud and corruption and sentenced to 11 years imprisonment two years ago

Apparently the scam by Botha was not an isolated incident and there were other bogus contractors who also skimmed the department of millions by claiming to have built houses in Kruisfontein and at Mooifontein

The department is believed to have lost about R2,9 million to a developer on a project in Kruisfontein who falsely claimed to have developed sites in the area

In Mooifontein the department paid out R3,4 million for 633 houses that were never built

After exposing corruption in the department Ngutshane was suspended after being accused of "insubordination, dereliction of duty" and of employing a consultant without following proper procedures

He was later offered another job within the provincial government which he declined and settled for a substantial package

The wastage of public funds was also uncovered by forensic auditors called in by Ngutshane in one incident when a cheque for R20 000 was paid out to a catering company for "lunch and flowers" for the department's tender board officials who do not number more than 14

Apart from the astronomic amount paid out, the

Turn to page 2

Heath probes alleged Gauteng housing scam

From Page 1

cheque was made out to an employee of the department who is also a member of the tender board

The cheque was made out by this department although in terms of departmental policy, it should have been issued by the director for housing administration who has the budget for such expenditures

"The director for housing administration would not have paid out R20 000 for lunch and flowers. So, to circumvent this, some people decided to send the bill to a different section where it was improperly authorised by another department," a source within the department told City Press.

Before this scam was stopped, the department had already lost about R280 000 according to our informant.

In one instance, four building contractors are alleged to have accessed the department's privileged information on tenders and building sites under false pretences

This gave them an unfair advantage against other competitors especially the small black companies.

It is alleged that these companies accessed this information by pretending to be employees from the national housing ministry

It is claimed their entry was facilitated by some seniors in the department

In another instance, a building company at which Mofokeng's wife works was awarded, according to estimates, about 60 percent of the tenders of the R1,2 billion project.

ANC secretary general Kgalema Motlanthe is believed to have received an "explosive" nine-page document which could further expose corruption in the housing department

It is widely speculated within ANC circles that this web of corruption in Mofokeng's department forced Mbeki's hand to axe him from the provincial list where he was originally placed in second position

Mofokeng has repeatedly said he is not guilty of any wrongdoing and welcomes the Heath investigation

A SOWETO residents' association this week won its 10-year struggle to force South Africa's big banks and the local council to pay compensation for allowing their homes to be built on an unstable rubbish dump

The Zone 9 Reconstruction Trust was launched in Soweto on Thursday with R2,8-million in its kitty to repair or rebuild the 97 houses in Meadowlands Zone 9

Absa, First National, Standard, Saambou, Perm and Peoples Bank contributed R1,1-million and the Western Metropolitan Local Council R1,7-million

According to a technical report compiled for the trust, some of the homes in the Zone 9 housing development are too dangerous to live in. They were built in 1988 as one of Soweto's first freehold projects but the planning and construction were so bad that all 97 houses need repairs. Some have to be demolished and rebuilt, either because they have no foundations or because they were built on land which should have been a road and thus have no title deeds

The problems are numerous

- The entire development was built on an uncompacted rubbish dump, so houses have inadequate foundations and have developed major cracks as the garbage has subsided,

- The substandard workmanship and material of Johannesburg developer Piet Smit of Group Housing Corporation Contractors resulted in cracks developing within weeks of the owners moving in,

- Non-existent or inadequate drainage systems have led to rising damp and massive fungal infestations, and

- Smit's team ignored the surveyor-general's plan to the extent that houses were not built on their allocated sites and several were accessible only through their neighbours' gardens

Despite regular inspections by officials of the then Diepmeadow council and by valuers and inspectors from six different banks, the standards were woefully low. Bank officials not only visited the sites to value the properties, but approved phased progress payments to Smit's company at different stages of construction

Apparently neither they nor the council noticed the unstable ground, the foundationless houses sitting on rubbish dumps filled with plastic bags and beer bottles, the shoddy workmanship, the substandard materials or the fact that the houses were not built where they should have been

In terms of municipal by-laws and building regulations, the council had a legal "duty of care" to ensure that the houses were properly built. The Diepmeadow council refused to accept responsibility but its successor, the Western Metropolitan Local Council, has acknowledged its obligations

Although the banks have contributed to the trust, they deny a similar "duty of care" obligation, apparently wary of setting a precedent for similar claims

The out-of-court settlement is unique in that no other community has succeeded in getting South African banks or local authorities to pay damages for defective construction

Community leaders Moses



SWEET VICTORY: From top right, Sharon Trail, Jerry Steeneveldt, Odette Geldenhuys, Moses Majola, Primrose Modiselle, Bob Tucker and John Molifinyana. Left, homeowner Michael Nong, pictured in 1997

Pictures: CATHY PINNOCK and ELIZABETH SEJAKE

Patience pays as owners win long struggle

(127) ST 9/5/99

Majola and John Molifinyana say the community of 400 never lost hope that justice would prevail

"We were fighting for what was right because the banks and the council did not look after our interests as their clients. The residents were united throughout the long battle and never gave up, even when the banks refused to speak to us," said Majola

One of the reasons the banks agreed to contribute to the reconstruction trust was that the "Zone 9 development is a special case, having regard for the co-operative spirit of the residents". The banks were also persuaded to contribute to the trust because Zone 9 homeowners had never boycotted against paying their bonds. Remarkably, throughout their struggle, the owners made their monthly payments of about R700, even though some houses were "too dangerous" to be inhabited

"We had many discussions about whether to boycott the banks when they ignored our pleas, but we didn't want to give them an excuse to take our houses away," said Molifinyana

The Zone 9 struggle began in 1988 when Smit, with council backing, began building and

offering the houses for sale, with finance offered by all the major banks

At the time, Smit was an unrehabilitated insolvent and should not have been allowed to secure either a land allocation from the council or finance from the banks

Just two years after the owners moved into the houses, an SA Bureau of Standards report found "very serious signs" of construction defects

The Legal Resources Centre, which has represented the Zone 9 residents since 1988, won 17 default judgments against Smit but has never been able to execute these as his companies had no assets

In 1997 the Sunday Times tracked Smit down to his large home in Bryanston, one of Johannesburg's most affluent northern suburbs. He told the Sunday Times he was not responsible for the Zone 9 fiasco and blamed it on his former partner, Tony Baxter, who has since returned to England

Led by Majola, the local repre-

sentative for the South African National Civics Organisation, Zone 9 residents complained to the Diepmeadow council. It promised to send inspectors to clarify and correct the problem but they never arrived. They also failed to produce plans for the development and other documents vital for the homeowners to establish exactly where their

The settlement is unique in that no other community has succeeded in getting South African banks or local authorities to pay damages for defective construction

houses should have been built and where site boundaries, drains and roads should have been located

The owners began pressuring the banks, arguing that they had inspected the sites and houses and had handed their money over to Smit. They also argued that as the banks had charged

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In 1997 the Sunday Times tracked down the man who built 97 defective houses in Soweto. This week the door finally closed on the story

EXPOSED

We track down man behind rubbish-dump homes scandal



the South African Organisation, complained to low council. It inspectors to ect the problem rived. They also plans for the other docu- the homeowners ty where their

fees for the valuations, carried out as a condition for the granting of bonds, homeowners should have been able to rely on their accuracy.

All six banks refused to acknowledge any responsibility. It was only in 1994, with a change in government and after taking their campaign to the media, that the homeowners won their first victory. A commission of inquiry by the old Transvaal Provincial Administration found that

● Smit's land-availability agreement with the Diepmeadow council was "highly irregular and voidable".

● Actions by Diepmeadow town clerk J F de Jager and director of housing Jooste Mothapo were "highly irregular and shocking", and

● City engineer L S Manyatse could "easily have corrected the encroachment of the walls and fences that blocked the entrances to some of the houses", but failed to do so.

Crucially, the commission proposed that the owners be financially assisted by the PWV (later

Gauteng) Department of Housing. It was not yet time to celebrate, however. The owners had four more years of struggle ahead.

The new PWV cabinet referred the commission's findings to the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council.

The post-1994 restructuring of local government inevitably delayed the process. But after the 1996 local government elections, the transitional council passed the issue over to the Western Metropolitan Local Council, where ANC councillors Jerry Steeneveldt and the late Mokone Maruping championed the homeowners' cause. In April 1998 the council finally agreed to compensate the community.

The owners waged an equally drawn-out struggle with the six banks.

Their first demand, that their bonds be reduced by R10 000 to allow them to repair their houses, was flatly refused.

The community continued to pay their bonds, but in desperation they occupied bank premises and held placard demonstrations.

In 1997 the homeowners discovered the banks had "red-

lined" Zone 9, demarcating it as an area not considered for housing loans. Even if the owners could have found buyers for their homes, the banks would not have granted bonds.

They reacted by "red-lining" the banks. Ahead of a meeting of the Mortgage Indemnity Fund, where representatives of all six banks would be present, the homeowners sealed with hundreds of metres of red ribbon the building in which the meeting was to be held.

"We had been lobbying the banks for almost 10 years by then. We were getting very frustrated and some residents were beginning to doubt that our responsible campaign would ever bear fruit," recalls Majola.

But the campaign got the banks' attention. A breakthrough was achieved soon after the red-tape demonstration when the Banking Council of South Africa agreed to represent all six banks in negotiations with the owners.

With the council negotiations moving towards a conclusion, banking council chief executive Bob Tucker secured an agreement that the banks would negotiate an out-of-court settlement if, in exchange, the owners

dropped plans for legal action.

The banking council financed a comprehensive assessment of Zone 9, including geo-technical and land surveys and assessments of the houses' structural faults. It concluded that almost R3-million would be needed to restore Zone 9 to the condition it would have been in if the banks and the council had exercised diligence in their approval and financing of the development a decade earlier.

Last year the banks, the council and the owners agreed to establish the Zone 9 Reconstruction Trust to oversee reparations to the area. Representatives from all three parties will sit on the trust.

They met for the first time on Thursday to plan the reconstruction of the houses and the development of a community that stood steadfast for 10 years against the most powerful forces in the country — and won.

"After everything we have been through together we think the rebuilding will be the easy part," said Majola. "The residents know that we need the council and the banks to work with us to make Zone 9 a model area. This is the real RDP."

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ANC MP linked to company at centre of Heath graft probe (127)

BD 10/5/99

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — African National Congress (ANC) MP Limpho Hani has been linked to Creative Housing Solutions, a company allegedly involved in irregular housing transactions with the Gauteng housing department.

Gauteng New National Party leader Johan Killian said yesterday he had handed over an organogram to the Heath anticorruption unit last week which cited Hani as a corporate consultant to the company.

Unit spokesman Guy Rich confirmed yesterday that documents related to Creative Housing Solutions were received.

Rich said the Gauteng housing department was working closely with the Heath unit on the probe. The unit was recently given the go-ahead to investigate 18 alleged irregularities in the department.

The irregularities include theft, corruption, mismanagement, the abuse of the province's housing subsidy scheme and failure to comply with tender procedures.

According to Killian, the company was allegedly involved through a number of front companies in securing housing subsidies from the department. The money was not used to build houses and some of it was used as collateral for foreign loans.

He said it was difficult to determine how much was involved but estimated that the entire Gauteng housing scandal could amount to as much as R470m.

Unemployed resent service charges

(127) Star 10/5/99

BY THEMBA SEPOTKELE

Unemployed residents of Newlands, Claremont and Montclare north-west of Johannesburg are up in arms because the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has implemented credit control measures before introducing a policy to exempt those who are unable to pay for services.

Claudius Strydom, chairperson of the Concerned Residents Committee said unemployed and disabled residents in arrears with their municipal payments

were left in the dark about the Indigent Management Policy.

He said the council's policy to subsidise poor residents seemed discriminatory because residents of Newlands, Claremont and Montclare had their electricity cut before addressing the issue of those who were genuinely unable to pay

"In December, the council sent letters advising residents on the policy decision it has taken with regard to the

resolution of rates and service arrears. But the letters came a few days before the December 31 deadline, and were written in English. Unfortunately most people are Afrikaans speaking and don't understand English," he said

"Chapter 1 (b) of the Constitution states that municipalities must take into account the language usage and preference of their residents. On that score, the council

failed us," Strydom said

He said residents requested council to address the problems of the indigent, payment of services and housing transfers

Johannesburg Council Credit Control chairperson Prema Naidoo urged residents who were unable to pay for services to register at their local municipal offices

He said the indigent policy is for pensioners, single parents, the unemployed, the disabled and households earning less than R800 a month

For more information phone toll-free 0800-0018-66

Council has policy to aid the indigent

Heath spotlight turned on Gauteng housing allegations

BY PRINCE HAMNCA

(127)

The Heath Special Investigating Unit's probe into allegations of nepotism, irregularities and corruption in Gauteng's housing department moves into full swing today, when the unit meets senior departmental officials

Gauteng housing and land affairs head of department Mogopodi Mokoena said his department would be meeting the unit to outline issues that needed to be investigated

He said the meeting was also expected to be attended by the provincial auditor-general and the public protector's office

"I have no reason to believe that the investigation will be hindered. We are going to set out time-frames for the findings of the investigation," he said

Mokoena said the department wanted to ensure the investigation was carried out as smoothly as possible. "Our doors have been and will

always remain open for public scrutiny," Mokoena said

He urged the public to allow the investigation process to take its course. He said co-operation from all staff members was guaranteed

Gauteng-Heath investigation manager Tinus Rheeder confirmed today's meeting, saying it would identify problem areas and issues

A proclamation signed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki last week gave the Heath unit the go-ahead for an investigation into allegations made against the provincial housing and land affairs department

The proclamation outlines 18 allegations which implicate housing developers, conveyancers, department members and the Gauteng Housing Advisory Board. They also include the irregular awarding of contracts by the department - and/or the housing board - to companies in which members of the board had interests

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Heath begins Gauteng housing, land probe

Robyn Chalmers

(127)

BD 11/5/99

THE Heath special investigating unit yesterday began probing 18 allegations of fraud and corruption in the Gauteng housing and land affairs department.

The unit is working in tandem with the public protector and the auditor-general. A joint statement issued by all parties involved said the various players had held a series of meetings, aimed at creating an enabling environment to ensure that the investigations were carried out smoothly.

Delivering the statement, Gauteng housing department head Mogopodi Mokoena said the meetings were fruitful and the management of the housing department was co-operative.

"This will go a long way in enhancing a speedy investigation, and will help recover whatever state resources may have been lost either through corruption or negligence which can be uncovered," said the statement.

The 18 allegations include theft, corruption, mismanagement and other irregularities like abuse of the subsidy scheme by department staff and developers and failure to comply with tender procedures.

The parties said that the cases were categorised and prioritised. Allegations dealing with the management of the department and the provincial housing board would be the first to be probed.

The three agencies would then deal with general problems relating to the public and the developers — and finally move on to other allegations.

As far as the agencies were concerned, "all that has been said or reported thus far are mere allegations. The guiding principle is that no-one is or should be judged guilty until proven so by a thorough investigation."

Gauteng housing and land affairs MEC Dan Mofokeng was supporting the investigations. "He has and continues to maintain that the route of co-ordination of efforts against corruption as undertaken presently by the agencies involved, is the best," they said.

Mofokeng was unexpectedly absent from African National Congress candidate lists issued last week.

He was originally second on the provisional list of candidates to serve in the Gauteng cabinet after the elections.

Last week, he reaffirmed his commitment to the ANC.



Gauteng housing and land affairs department head Mogopodi Mokoena announces the start of an investigation by the Heath special investigating unit, along with the public protector and the auditor-general, into allegations of fraud and corruption within the department

Picture: TREVOR SAMSON

Triple investigation targets Gauteng housing

From 11/5/99

(127)

By PRINCE HANNCA

Three high-powered government investigative agencies cited Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng's office and the provincial housing board as their top priorities as they kicked off their probe into corruption and maladministration in the Gauteng Housing Department yesterday.

The Heath Special Investigating Unit, the Auditor-General and the Public Protector's office began their investigations against Mofokeng, who is said to have been axed from the ANC's list of election candidates following serious allegations of irregularities in the allocation of low-cost housing subsidies in the province.

Mofokeng is still waiting for a response from the ANC's national executive committee regarding his fate.

The axing, which was described as shocking by some re-

gional ANC leaders, is said to be the final blow to Mofokeng's political career.

A proclamation signed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki on April 29 effectively autho-

rised the probe into the Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs Department. Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga and his cabinet issued a statement last week supporting the investigation.

The proclamation outlines 18 allegations which implicate housing developers, conveyancers, department members and the Gauteng Housing Advisory Board.

They also include the irregular awarding of contracts by the department and/or the

housing board to companies in which members of the board had interests.

Gauteng Heath Investigating Unit manager Tinus Rheeder said at the joint press conference yesterday that the unit had received a number of allegations against the department.

"We have received various allegations from the public but I cannot reveal whether the MEC is personally implicated in allegations of corruption and maladministration,"

Rheeder said.

Charles de Chermont, who represents Public Protector Selby Baqwa's office, said his department was committing itself to a thorough investigation into the allegations

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We've had
various
allegations
from the
public
”

"The three agencies will each conduct their own investigations into the matter. We will produce independent reports on the findings," he said.

Gauteng Housing and Land Affairs head Mogopodi Mokoena said his department welcomed the investigation.

"We first want to deal with allegations that relate to management so that the agencies know the integrity of management. We want the unit to take their time for this investigation and (we) want proper findings and recommendations," he said.

Mokoena said Mofokeng fully supported the investigation into his department.

"The management of the Department of Housing and Land Affairs has been co-operative and its commitment to assist in the eradication of any form of corruption is unquestionable," Mokoena said.

Anger over 10% rates hike in Jo'burg

(127)

Star 13/5/99

By ANNA COX

Opposition parties reacted angrily to the imposition of a 10% increase in tariffs and 9,7% in rates in Greater Johannesburg, effective from July 1

Tariffs include water, sewerage, electricity, gas, and refuse removal

Homeowners also lose 1% of their rebate - from 60% to 59% - while sectional title unit own-

ers get an additional 9% rebate - from 40% to 49%. Owners of rented blocks of flats retain their 40% rebate

Opposition parties claim this figure is above inflation and residents in formal areas, where service has declined over the past few years, and in formal areas where people have low income, cannot be expected to pay the increases

The new fees were approved

by the Western council last night and are likely to be approved in the Eastern council tonight and the Northern and Southern councils next week

They are likely to pass because the ANC holds the majority required in the councils

New city manager, Ketso Gordhan apologised to ratepayers, saying the increases were needed to maintain services and for capital expenditure

"The increases, marginally above inflation, will bring in between R35 and R40-million above the inflation rate. If we did not implement it there would have to be cutbacks. We need the money to survive the next 12 months

"I ask ratepayers to bear with us for the next 16 months while we restructure finances. After that there will be reduced rates and tariffs," he said

E Rand residents to try resolve arrears issue

By Mokgadi Pela (127)

HUNDREDS of Phenduka Section residents are to converge on the Thokoza Auditorium today to present a list of grievances bedevilling their relationship with the Greater Alberton Town Council to a special task team appointed by the Gauteng government

The task team comprises mayor of Greater Boksburg Mr Eric Xayiya, mayor of the Greater Germiston Mr Kaphus Sambo and a representative from the Premier's office, Mr Dan Masitiso, who will investigate the grievances

The team's terms of reference include

- How many of formerly displaced people returned to their homes and how many did not return and the reasons,
- The financial liability of displaced people since returning to their homes in 1996,
- The total debt owed to the Greater Alberton Town Council,

● The credit control measures employed

Xayiya told a packed meeting at the RP Maphanzela Higher Primary School in the East Rand township yesterday that after conducting interviews with several people, they would compile a report and make recommendations on ways to resolve the problem

Co-ordinator of the Thokoza Phenduka Displaced Persons Committee Reverend John Khumalo said "We want arrears accumulated during years of illegal occupation of our homes to be written off. To this end, there is no compromise"

Chairman of the committee Mr Sam Theron said "We are on record as having said we want water, electricity and other services to be rendered to us and we will pay for these"

Sambo explained that similar interviews had already been conducted with Gauteng MEC Dan Mofokeng, Greater Alberton councillors, the Kathorus Special Presidential Project as well as the leaders of the committee

17/5/99
Mokgadi Pela

Joburg's inner city: from bad to worse

By MALOSE MONAMA

JOHANNESBURG's inner city - home to some 160 000 people - is collapsing fast despite efforts to arrest the dilapidation which has been accompanied by an equally alarming rate of moral decay.

Hillbrow and Berea are the worst affected. Buildings appear neglected and are in such a state of disrepair that they pose a threat to their occupants. Many streets in these areas are so filthy that passing through them poses a health hazard. The stench of urine which hangs high in alleys is suffocating, and one also runs the risk of being nudged in broad daylight.

Out of concern, the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) established the Inner City Committee, whose responsibility it is to uproot the inner city decay.

The committee first set out to identify the symptoms of the inner city blight. It found that high crime levels, dirty streets and congestion caused by an unregulated taxi industry were among the causes, and that the growth in informal street trading had stretched the capacity of the council to keep streets clean.

The committee also discovered that buildings, particularly residential blocks, had been allowed to degenerate.

The GJMC's objective is urban renewal to be achieved through a series of interventions outlined in its development strategy. Its development strategy objectives in

clude making the inner city a desirable residential area, turning it into an economic hub, and providing a desirable quality of life for residents. GJMC spokesperson Jenny Moodley said the struggle to reverse the inner city blight was only beginning.

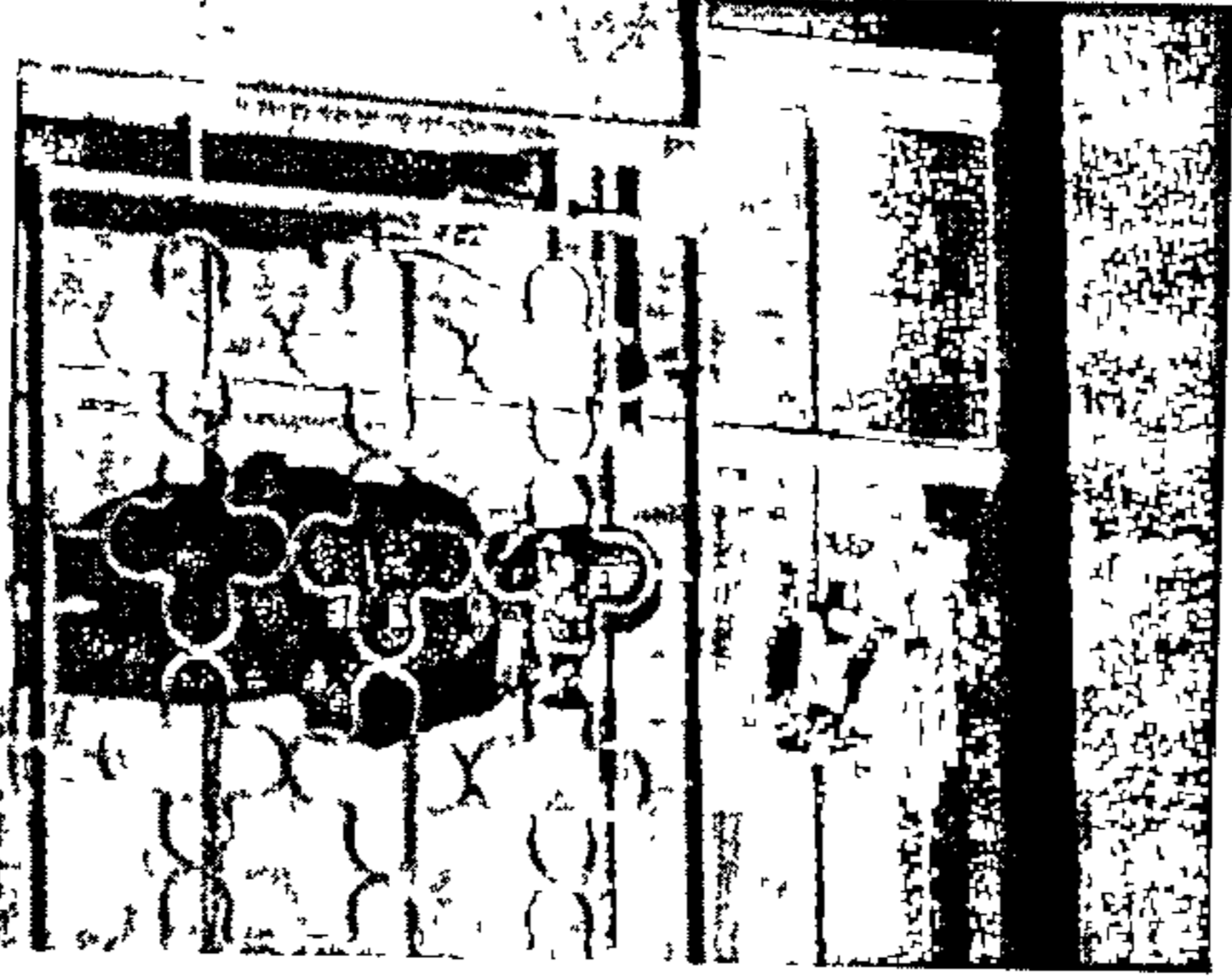
Given the commitment of all in the Inner City Office (ICO) she hoped they would succeed.

"As part of its work, the ICO will be addressing the issue of bad or dilapidated buildings. The tendency has been to blame the problem on overcrowding."

"However, recent studies have shown that the most significant contributing factor has been the lack of sound management and maintenance," said Moodley.

The problems of dilapidated or bad buildings in the inner city can be categorised as follows:

- Landlords who have abandoned their buildings and in some instances cannot be traced.
- Existing property owners who are unable or unwilling to invest in the upgrading of seriously degraded buildings.
- Tenants in many bad buildings failing or refusing to pay both rentals and municipal services charges.
- Buildings in which municipal services including water supplies, have been disconnected in line with various credit control policies of the council.
- Poor and inadequate management leading to further dilapidation, and
- Vacant commercial buildings in a potentially dangerous state which are susceptible to squatter occupation.



UNSAFE HOME This toddler's home, a neglected Hillbrow block of flats, looks like it can do with renovation.



SQUALOR A street hawker scratches the Hillbrow debris for firewood.



SORRY SIGHT An inner city building which is in an advanced stage of disrepair. Pictures by George Mashini.

(1st) CP 23 15 99

Waste campaign in Alex to cut litter, create jobs

By ANITA COX

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has launched an integrated waste and management campaign in Alexandra to improve conditions in the area.

It is the second to be launched in the province, the first being in Yeoville.

The aim of the campaign is to reduce littering by 70% and create voluntary clean-ups by the community.

The aim of the campaign, which is a national one, is to consolidate inter-governmental

partnerships in waste management, to create at least 3 000 sustainable jobs in each province, and to promote public awareness about environmental issues.

It is hoped that an 80% efficiency in waste removal can be achieved along with the establishment of 20 sustainable recreational facilities in the form of parks in each province, 20 sustainable vegetable food gardens and at least two waste removal systems per province.

An amount of R12-million a year for each province over

three years has been allocated, totalling R108-million.

Said DEAT spokesperson Lucas Mahlangu "Environmental poverty, insecurity and general degradation are among the most severe and defining legacies of the past injustices.

They constitute the form and content of challenges facing our nation.

"The waste situation in Alexandra and the inner city areas of Johannesburg is unacceptable. We want both these areas to be cleaned up, so they can be places that people are proud of," he said.

A task team has now been set up in Alexandra under the Greater Alexandra Development Forum to identify problem areas and to map the way forward.

The project was launched in Yeoville in March and a task team was set up under the auspices of the Yeoville Community Development Forum.

The first step was the identification of empty stands where food gardens could be established.

The upgrading of a sorting plant in Turfontein was also being examined for the recycling of waste from the inner city, said Mahlangu.

It is hoped that 3 000 jobs will be created in Gauteng through recycling, sorting, making and selling of products from recyclable material, food production and the maintenance of recreational parks.

The environment department is being assisted with funding by the departments of education, labour and welfare, the National Government Poverty Relief Fund as well as the fund created by business as a contribution to the Jobs Summit.

Even rich suburbs owe council millions of rand

Stephané Bothma

BD 28/9/99

(127)

PRETORIA — Debt owed to the Pretoria city council for municipal services has increased by R116m in the past six months to R650,3m despite an average of 14 500 consumers having their water and electricity supply disconnected each month.

The town council of Akasia, north west of Pretoria, also expressed concern about its debt situation which has increased 15,3% to R174m in less than 10 months.

According to a Pretoria council spokesman, only 49% of council debtors paid their monthly accounts in full. Although credit control action was instituted against about 19 800 consumers a month, consumers still lapsed on special arrangements made with the council to pay off arrears.

Although the traditional black township of Mamelodi owed the council R213,4m, by far the most of any other suburb, followed by Atteridgeville with R55,9m, Saulsville with R44,4m and Pretoria Central with R29,4m, the city's

most upmarket and traditionally white suburbs also owed huge amounts.

Waterkloof Ridge, one of Pretoria's richest suburbs, owed R7,3m, while Faerie Glen and Moreletta Park, both upmarket, owed R6,3m and R7m respectively.

Zakhele Phungwayo, chairman of the Akasia-Soshanguve town council, said this week he agreed that municipalities had only themselves to blame for the nonpayment of services. He said as a result of delivering unaffordable services to consumers, many municipalities were under extreme financial pressure. "A critical issue in municipal service delivery is whether people are being offered services they can afford," Phungwayo said. Councils should embark on municipal services partnerships that should take place in a structured way, he said.

In an attempt to encourage residents to pay their municipal accounts, the Pretoria city council will be the first local authority to embark on a radio advertising campaign. This will be presented with humour.



A Soweto resident crosses a Central West, Jabavu, street that has had raw sewage running along it for the past three months because of a burst pipe.

PIC SEFAKO MABUYA

Sewage problem plagues Jabavu ⁽¹²⁷⁾

By Sipiwe Mpye

RESIDENTS of Khetile Street in Central West Jabavu, Soweto, are fed up with an ongoing problem of burst sewer pipes. It is a problem they attribute to shoddy repair work by the local council.

Resident Moses Twala said "For many years the pattern has been the same, pipes burst, we call the council, they fix the pipes and a few weeks later they burst again."

When *Sowetan* visited the area yesterday the street was overflowing with sewage, emitting the most unbearable stench. Twala pointed out

that the pungent smell was more tolerable in winter. In summer, residents are forced to vacate their homes in the afternoons. The neighbourhood reportedly has elderly people and young children whose health is affected.

Evelyn Twala wants "the problem sorted out once and for all".

"The council comes and checks when we complain but take their time to fix the problem. We've been waiting for over two months now but nothing's happened."

"When they come they should do a thorough job. They are always in such a hurry to finish and as a result the same problem recurs," she said.

The residents cite health problems as a major downside to the sewage problem. The neighbourhood reportedly has elderly people and young children whose health is affected.

Pointing to a child walking by, Evelyn said "That child has just recovered from a serious illness. His mother had to keep him indoors. Some of the elderly people have also complained of chest problems and we are convinced it has something to do with this sewage."

Prema Naidoo, chairman of the executive committee of the Southern Metropolitan Local Council, said "This is the first I have heard of such a problem. I'll look into it."

Sowetan 31/5/99

Sowetan

Gauteng housing bottlenecks cleared

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Gauteng department of housing and land affairs has cleared all bottlenecks in the adjudication process regarding the transfer of houses to their rightful owners in Soweto and neighbouring townships

Department spokesman Tommy Makoe said six family disputes had been handled by adjudicators since the reopening on June 7 of the operation which was suspended earlier this year

The department suspended the adjudication process after reports of maladministration and corruption but special investigation found no corruption and the process resumed

Makoe said that the department had worked out mechanisms for a speedy resolution. The transfer of houses to

their rightful owners would be accelerated in the future.

Cases referred for adjudication included disputed ownership of the family home after the death of parents and homes being wrongly awarded to people by the local authorities

Makoe said there was progress in the transfer of houses. About 80 000 have been transferred to the owners

More than 350 000 direct family members had been provided with secure tenure through this programme

The department's target was the transfer of 370 000 properties in the next five years. This would provide secure tenure to more than a million people

Families disputing homes should contact the department at 37 Sauer Street, Johannesburg, for advice



SOW 14/6/99 127

Arrears blamed *Southern 18/6/99* on faulty meters

By Justice Mohale (127)

RESIDENTS of Ennerdale, Lenasia South, Zakariya Park, Lawley and Migson Manor have called on the Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) to write off the money they owe for rates and services because they say their water and electricity meters are faulty.

An executive committee member for the United Community Forum (UCF), Mr Motale Shoro, said although the council had admitted that there were many faulty water and electricity meters in the SMLC, it however continued to threaten them with legal action.

"It is not our fault but the council's. We are prepared to pay for the rates and services rendered to us in order to show that we are responsible people, but it should charge us reasonably," Shoro said.

He said at a meeting on May 21, the council promised to start replacing the faulty meters as from July 1.

The SMLC's executive officer for revenue collection, Mr Andy van Zyl, said there were about 19 000 faulty meters in the entire council that could not be read.

"The meters have either stopped functioning, are broken, buried or flooded and as a result the readers cannot read them properly," Van Zyl said.

He said the situation was so serious that council officials had drafted a report and submitted it to various service departments of the council and the provincial government informing them about the problems.

Van Zyl said the council was owed more than R1,1 billion for rates and services. The council billed residents more than R165 million each month for rates and services but only collected R140 million, he said.

By Joshua Raboroko

THE police and Gauteng department of housing and land affairs are investigating claims that a black farmer in Lawley, south of Johannesburg, is selling Government land to destitute and homeless people.

Sowetan has learnt that the man, who cannot be named, is demanding payment ranging from R10 to R30 a site from hundreds of victims without informing them who the owner is.

More than 300 homeseekers from Lenz, Ennerdale, Lawley and parts of Soweto have built shacks after buying

Homeless tricked into buying Government land

Sowetan 20/6/99

the land, which was managed by the house of representatives during apartheid.

Mrs Pearl Mpongwane (50), who is a member of the ANC Women's League, told Sowetan that she was desperate to get a house. She went to

Lawley Extension 2 where she bought a site for R10 and built a shack.

Mpongwane said her shack was destroyed by a group of people barely a month after she complained to the man about the water supply and

roads. She has since left the area. Police spokesman Superintendent Piet van Deventer confirmed that the woman laid charges of damage to property and that a suspect will appear in court this week.

Mr Mopope Mokoena, who is head of the housing department, said they would investigate the allegations.

Spokesman for the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council Ms Jenny Mordley, said an urgent meeting would be held between the council and the man involved in selling the land.

Many other people claim the land dealer is referred to as "the president".

The Gauteng government says it has a housing backlog of 460,000 units.

Low-cost housing delayed

(127)
By Joshua Raboroko

A LOW-COST housing project in Daveyton on the East Rand, scheduled to have been completed by May-June, has been delayed following work stoppages by about 400 workers in protest over wages

The workers – bricklayers and labourers – downed tools after their demand of R25 a day was turned down by 10 black subcontractors who employed them as part of an empowerment effort in the poor communities

More than 1 000 low-cost houses were expected to be completed on the site and handed to first-time home-owners between May and June. However, the process has been delayed by the strike

At a meeting of all stakeholders this week housing practitioners said the delay may affect the delivery of houses in the province which boasts of building more than 111 000 houses in the past five years

The workers claimed that the project was developed by the New Housing Company, which contracted building companies Multi-Focus and JD Estate to build the low cost houses using the R17 000 Government subsidy

It is expected that the project, seen as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, will enhance black empowerment among the previously disadvantaged communities

According to their contracts, the workers are supposed to be paid R25 a day after completing each house

"The money is little. There is unemployment and we have families to maintain," Mr Moses Mokoena told *Sowetan* on site this week

Mr Theo Mthembu, chairman of the Daveyton Builders Association which represents subcontractors, said the workers downed tools after contractors failed to deliver building material to the site

"The workers demanded their pay. They blamed the contractors, saying that it was not their responsibility that material was not supplied," said Mthembu

Multi-Focus managing director Mr Jaco Nel blamed the subcontractors for employing extra workers who they could not afford to pay. He said that R25 a day for each worker was not agreed to by the stakeholders

New Housing Company executive Mr Oupa Thibele said that a solution had been reached with all stakeholders and the project would be completed next month

Sowetan 9/7/99

Yeoville residents reclaim streets

Druglords, gangsters and greedy landlords may soon be out of business

ARG 10/7/99 (12F)

AURELIA DYANTVI

Concerned residents of Yeoville, Johannesburg, are digging deep into their pockets to reclaim the streets of the once-trendy suburb that has been afflicted by drug-dealing operations, violent crime and falling business confidence.

About 35 residents forked out just more than R250 000 to buy the landmark Bizarre Centre at the corner of Rockey and Raymond Street, in the heart of the suburb's commercial

and entertainment centre. Xoliswa Sithole, one of 25 members of the Bizarre Centre Consortium, has lived in Yeoville since 1985 and remains passionate about it. She is actively involved in the Yeoville Policing Forum as a police reservist.

To Ms Sithole, the purchase of the centre was not solely a business venture, but a means to keep away "greedy landlords who are turning Yeoville into a slum".

"When business people purchase or rent a place in Rockey Street they open a beerhall," Ms Sithole said

"The people who frequent those places are outsiders who like the idea that Yeoville is 'Africanised' causing legitimate businesses to close down," she said.

"Our strategy is to begin by mobilising businesses, and later to deal with the landlords who are running the area down by renting one property to many families and not paying for services."

Maurice Smithers, a member of the Yeoville Community Forum, said, "Bizarre Centre has potential because of its structure and layout,

which is unique and lends itself to a number of uses. We can have an open-air coffee shop surrounded by speciality shops, a craft centre and tourist attraction, a small development centre and so on.

I would not like it to be just another drinking hole. I believe we need to move away from the notion that the only money to be made in Yeoville is beer money.

"We are sending a message to the banks who have red-lined the area and also to investors to come and invest here. The council has donated

R50 000 to establish the Yeoville/Bellevue business district as a city improvement district," said Ms Smithers who has been living in the area for more than 20 years.

The drug peddlars hover around the centre, trading in broad daylight, but Ms Sithole warns that their days are numbered.

"We want to feel safe in our environment and bring our children up here. But we can't do that with these people messing the area up. Yeoville has beautiful architecture and I regard Rockey Street as a historical

place - being the first place to fully integrate South Africans from different communities."

However, tenants at the centre fear for their future under the new landlords. Alexcity Dlodlu, who runs a herbal shop, fears things will change for the worst.

"Business is not doing well at the moment and if the new owners are going to increase rent I won't be able to keep this business. They have not spoken to us as the tenants and we don't know what's going to happen," said Dlodlu.

Govt gives hope to homeless

By Paul Mashatle

GAUTENG is the dynamo of our national economy and the hub of our subcontinent. This province is the country's smallest and has a population of about 7.3 million with a land surface of 17 010sq/km.

Yet no fewer than 40 000 people migrate every month from other provinces and countries to Gauteng.

It is also here that we have a housing backlog of about 482 000. No fewer than 200 informal settlements are found in Gauteng and so there are many housing challenges facing this province.

Cooperative housing is a relatively new concept in our country.

This conference on cooperative housing provides an ideal opportunity to work out strategies that will also factor in best international practices without losing the character of our history as a people.

The first five years were an acute learning curve. Our government has over the past five years created the necessary enabling environment by among other things:

- developing the constitutional and legal framework for equitable development
- building institutional capacities,
- mobilising the various communities into housing programmes
- developing partnerships with business and other sectors,
- developing creative programmes to address housing needs, and
- enhancing a human rights culture.

However, a lot more needs to be done. For instance, there is no legislation on cooperative housing.

This conference should come out with practical suggestions that can inform policy, legislation and, most importantly, programmes of delivery.

The critical factor should be sustainability, characterised by financial viability, institutional sustainability and strong control measures to protect public funds. In essence, this conference should not be a mere talk shop.

Every country has its own valuable housing history and experience. South Africa is no exception.

We are not here today inventing the wheel from scratch. However we must be humble enough to admit that we do not have a rich history of successful social housing or that housing cooperatives have flourished as a model for



Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatle

housing the poor. Yet, to the extent that social housing has delivered shelter to poor families in South Africa over the years - it has been fraught with problems like unfairness, inefficiency and corruption borne of the apartheid past.

We would all be doing ourselves and future generations a great disservice by sticking rigidly to one particular delivery formula because it may be successful in the short term.

We need a multi-pronged approach to deal effectively with the huge challenges of housing.

The government is keenly aware that it takes much more than a piece of land, a few bricks and some mortar to create residential environments suited to happy, productive and proud individuals, families and communities - the bedrock of our economy.

One thing that will threaten our success is non-payment of home loans and municipal rates and service charges.

We must pitch our new neighbourhoods at a price that people can afford, and create jobs so that our people have the income to pay their monthly housing costs.

This is an ambitious but achievable plan.

The various social housing approaches, including cooperative housing, are significant primarily because they place the people themselves as masters of their own destiny



A major problem facing the government today is to provide homes at an affordable price and create jobs so that our people have the income to pay their monthly housing costs.

This is a departure from the approach that believes that the job of housing delivery stops when the last title is placed on the roof.

Importantly cooperative housing recognises that it is the unhouseed, or inadequately housed, themselves who usually take the first step towards improving themselves.

Recognising this, all agencies including government, need to remain prepared to reform our housing strategies in order to deliver housing in a diverse environment.

We would be wrong to restrict the outside environment to the strategies and models that we, as housing practitioners and professionals, think are the best. Sometimes real life demands do not fit into any predetermined model.

The challenge for us all is to achieve a balance whereby we provide guidance to emerging housing cooperatives without being too restrictive. The departure point is the needs of the communities themselves.

The programmes of cooperative housing should have a strong but clearly targeted social component.

This should be done in such a way that not only the poor benefit from it, but also the youth, women, the disabled

and the rural populace, who, on most occasions are marginalised.

In Gauteng we are faced with this exact challenge, especially in the Johannesburg inner city.

The provincial department of housing is frequently approached to fund the upgrading of inner city flat buildings and their purchase by resident-based housing cooperatives.

This is a common practice all over the world. Government, together with its other funding and development partners, must devise innovative ways to fund these types of developments.

With this in mind, the government is putting its money where its mouth is. The Gauteng housing department has committed itself to funding some 13 000 social housing units over the next three financial years and to establishing a social housing registrar to monitor such institutions.

Already we have completed 2 300 units through various models, including housing cooperatives. We have to help build on that on the basis of a strong partnership.

In this regard, some of the areas that the strategy on cooperative housing should factor in are:

- enhancing integrated develop-

ment that ensures that people are closer to socioeconomic amenities,

- complementing and supplementing other housing processes like rental stock,
- involving communities more meaningfully
- building systems that negate corruption and maladministration,
- fostering and consolidating strong partnerships between all three tiers of government, business, the communities and civil society at large, and
- enhancing capacity-building, job creation and economic growth that will ensure sustainable development.

In conclusion let us borrow from the valuable experience and knowledge built up in Kenya, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom and other countries.

But let us at the end of the day, emerge with a South African cooperative model, or even a South African range of models that will best satisfy the needs and aspirations of the poorest of our country.

(This is an edited version of a speech by Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatle at an international conference on cooperative housing in Johannesburg recently.)

Move on hostels (127)

By Justice Mohale

THE illegal occupation of hostels will soon be a thing of the past as the Northern Metropolitan Local Council has decided to formally register the occupants

The decision was reached during an ordinary council meeting of the NMLC recently Executive officer for urban development Ms Yasmin Coovadia said the illegal occupation of hostels in areas under the jurisdiction of the NMLC was a major problem

She said the planning and urbanisation department had helped establish a system of accommodation registers

66/17/191
sewer 16/7/99

127

Campaign nets council R2,08-m

(127)

By Dan Fuphe

THE Midrand Metropolitan Local Council has announced that it had successfully recouped R2,08 million of the R4,5 million owed to it by residents of Ivory Park during the first half of this year through its Masakhane campaign

These figures, which averaged 50 percent during the first six months, were revealed by the deputy chief executive officer of the MMLC, Mr Ahmend Moonda, during the eighth quarterly Midrand Masakhane awards ceremony at Randjesfontein this week

According to Moonda, the current figure was boosted by the payment of R1 million received from the Gauteng department of education for schools in the Ivory

Park area "We got about R1 million from the department of education for the outstanding payment of almost five years for schools in the area," he said

Moonda added that the schools were billed like other consumers that received services from the council but the institutions had failed to pay on time

"I had personally to go to the offices of the department of education to demand outstanding payments which were crippling and slowing our service delivery process," he said

The Midrand Masakhane awards ceremony is aimed at honouring zonal leaders from Ivory Park for their efforts and the dedication they had displayed to encourage residents to pay for the services they received

In his speech, deputy mayor of the Khayalami Metropolitan Council, Mr Enoch Dlamini, said the success of the Masakhane campaign had helped the council to speed up delivery at Ivory Park

He said the council was presently engaged in building about 100 low-cost houses each month using local contractors and MidDev at Ivory Park

He said that in the three years following the launch of the Masakhane campaign, the local council had erected street lights, tarred roads, put in flushing toilets, built parks, a sports centre and opened a new police station

The event coincided with the Midrand Community Builder of the Year 1999 award, which was bankrolled by both Siemens and BMW SA

16/7/99
Sowetan

Changing hostels into family units hits snag ⁽¹²⁷⁾

By Justice Mohale

THE upgrading and conversion of hostels into family units in Greater Johannesburg's local councils is slow and in some cases the projects are temporarily halted because of a lack of funds.

This was said by Southern Metropolitan Local Council executive officer of housing Ms Uhuru Madida at the weekend.

She added that the council had not budgeted for the upgrading of hostels for the 1999-2000 financial year. Only the Mapetla and Orlando West hostels would be entirely converted into family units.

Private hostels under the jurisdiction of the council included Selby, Bushkop and City Deep, while public ones included Lifateng, Nancefield, Orlando West, Mapetla and Jabulani.

"Staff hostels will not be upgraded because of financial constraints and also because they do not qualify for a government grant as they are regarded as private property," Madida said.

Mr Mbuso Khumalo, one of the Mzimhlophe hostel dwellers, said he had lived there for almost three years without electricity and warm water.

"Now we are happy because the government is implementing its promises." He showed *Sowetan* the newly completed bathroom with warm water, the kitchen, dining room and bedrooms.

But the Diepkloof hostel had not been developed. There is no electricity or warm water. Mr Aaron Nxumalo said hostel residents refused to pay the monthly rental because the council was not rendering any services to them.

Phone mugger shot dead

A PUBLIC prosecutor shot dead an alleged robber and wounded another when he intervened in a mugging in

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Protest at halt to housing project

By Justice Mohale (127)

RESIDENTS of Protea South in Soweto have called on Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Paul Mashatile to intervene to ensure that a low-cost housing project which was halted abruptly in the area be resumed immediately.

The secretary of the Protea South branch of the SA National Civics Organisation, Mr Godfrey Mekana, said yesterday the community was angered by the stoppage of the project.

He said in terms of the agreement reached between the Southern Metropolitan Local Council and the developer, 1 650 houses should have been built but only 200 were available.

"We decided to approach Mashatile because our meetings with the officials of the council have yielded no fruit. The community is expecting tangible development which will lead to the upliftment of their living conditions," he said.

Mekana said the community was also concerned about the non-delivery of services in the area. "We have no proper sanitation, water supply, refuse removal and no tarred roads," he said.

However, chairman of the executive committee of the council Mr Prema Naidoo said the council was rendering services to all informal settlements.

He said housing projects were the function of the Gauteng department of housing.

"As far as we are concerned, there is proper delivery of services which include the provision of clean water and waste removal," Naidoo said.

Spokesman for the Gauteng housing department Mr Tommy Makoe said the delay had been caused by the withdrawal of the proposed township plan.

6617/08 Naidoo
Sowetan 20/7/99

'Developers paid, but properties not traced'

By ELIAS MALULEKE

THE Gauteng housing department "paid" millions of rands to developers for low-income (RDP) houses which were not built

The Heath Special Investigation Unit, which is probing corruption and maladministration in the housing department, said in its report handed to Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa that more than R10 million was paid to one developer although the "properties could not be traced"

The unit is probing allegations of corruption and maladministration in the department in conjunction with the Auditor-General Henry Kluever and Public Protector Selby Baqwa

The report was handed to Shilowa and the new Housing and Land Affairs MEC, Paul Mashatile, last week

At the time the payments were made, the department's MEC was Dan Mofokeng who has since been axed Mofokeng could not be reached for comment

The office of Shilowa confirmed it had received the "preliminary" report

Shilowa's spokesperson, Thabo Masebe, said the report had serious implications and its contents could not be made public at this stage as it might jeopardise investigations

Masebe said Shilowa and Mashatile met Judge Willem Heath on July 12 at the request of the judge to brief Shilowa on the progress regarding cases which had been referred to the unit by the Gauteng government

The probe involved housing subsidies, procurement of tenders in the health department, Gambling Board and housing guarantees

"Judge Heath indicated that his unit had already made progress and that, in some cases, steps have been taken to recover lost property or prevent losses," Masebe said

He said Shilowa expressed his appreciation for the work of the Heath Unit and pledged his con-



AXED ... Former Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng

tinued support in its investigation

"The premier also pledged his and the entire Gauteng Executive Council's co-operation with investigations," Masebe added

According to the unit's report, a copy of which is in the possession of City Press, the investigation started on May 11 after accusations levelled against Mofokeng in the Gauteng legislature by members of the opposition parties as a result of media reports of alleged widespread corruption and maladministration

The unit said it was probing 147 projects and allegedly false promissory notes, totalling more than R180 million

It was at this stage not sure how much money could be recovered

The allegedly false promissory notes and guarantees involved more than R136 million

The report states that while investigating the Mpumalanga Parks Board promissory note scandal last year, it came upon a similar situation in which three guarantees to the amount of R136 640 000 were falsely signed on department letterheads

"Substantial investigation progress has been made in this regard," the unit said

The unit said it has down-load-

ed data from the housing subsidy scheme data-base and is cross-checking with the department of home affairs and the Registrar of Deeds to establish how many individuals received subsidies they were not entitled to

The unit said some people may have received more than one government subsidy and others may have owned homes before

In other cases, the unit has found that developers transferred registered properties of successful subsidy applicants from one place to another without authorisation by the applicants and department

Some of the developers were overpaid

In other cases, developers have been found to be renting out houses to lodgers and collecting rent instead of passing the completed units to their owners

Other applicants have been made to pay deposits into the accounts of developers after they were told their subsidies were not enough to secure homes

The other cases under investigation involve.

- The unlawful or irregular payment by the department of state subsidies for low-income houses;
- The failure by the department to ensure compliance with statutory contractual requirements;
- The conclusion by the department of contracts containing improper, inappropriate and insufficient provisions pertaining to delivery of low-income houses;
- The improper proclamation of townships by the department;
- The irregular administration and the granting of access to the subsidy management system by employees of the department and unauthorised people;
- Unlawful payments made to attorneys for the purpose of conveyancing, involving the development of low-income houses;
- Failure by the department to follow tender procedures;
- The illegal awarding of contracts by the department; and
- The abuse of the subsidy scheme

(127) CP 25/7/99

Tiff over vacant council house

(127) Sowetan 26/7/99

By Justice Mohale

THE Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) is paying R5 600 a month to a security company for it to guard an empty house at 6 Xavier Road, Robertsham, Johannesburg.

The council-owned house, which has so far cost the council more than R84 165 and is worth more than R200 000, is under heavy guard around the clock.

Manager of public housing for the SMLC Mr George Huntley said the

house was identified for sale because it had been unoccupied since last year. He claimed that it was previously occupied by one of the managers of the old Johannesburg City Council and became vacant when he retired.

He refused to name the manager and said it was "unnecessary" to divulge such information.

"The council has hired a security company to protect the house from possible vandalism and invasion," Huntley said.

It would be sold to the highest bidder on public auction soon

When Sowetan visited the house last week, it was in a state of neglect with old newspapers scattered inside and outside. Some of the windows were broken and the long grass was further evidence that it was not cared for.

The security guard who was in charge said his job was to guard the house and not to clean the yard.

A council official who spoke on condition of anonymity told Sowetan that certain council officials in charge of housing did not want anybody to occupy the house but appeared to have no apparent reasons.

He said the house became a tug-of-war between a newly appointed official and his predecessor in the housing department after the local government elections.

"The tension between the two officials reached boiling point when the new incumbent felt the pressure and as a result vacated the house in disgust last year," the source said.

However, the chief executive officer for the SMLC Mr Chris Ngcobo admitted that the house was costing the council money in maintenance.

"It is our guest house but the council intends leasing it to one of its staff members in an effort to shift responsibility in the next few weeks the council will send a circular to all staff asking them to apply," Ngcobo said.

He said the council intended negotiating with the owners of the houses along Xavier road to sell their houses to council because it planned to widen the road.

"But our plans will be guided by our ability to raise funds for our capital projects," he said.

Games village houses for the poor (127)

By Justice Mohale

THE Government will continue to implement its policy of integrated communities in an effort to eradicate the racial division of the past

Speaking during the formal inspection of the All Africa Games Village in Alexandra, Johannesburg, Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele said more than 5 000 people would be allowed to rent the houses after the Games.

She said the beneficiaries would be given the opportunity to rent until the Government had finalised the mechanisms of handing the houses to them. About 2 000 beneficiaries would be residents of Alexandra.

"The Government's intention is to ensure that it helps the low-income people to benefit from its schemes," Mthembu-Mahanyele said.

She said since the inception of a democratic government, homeless people were gradually being accommodated.

She was accompanied by Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour, who said the project was a sign of 'cooperative governance'.

"Staging the All Africa Games in our country will serve as a boost to our bid to host the 2006 soccer World Cup," Balfour said.

He said the Government would continue to support the sporting events of the All Africa Games magnitude to ensure inter-cultural exchange between people of different backgrounds.

Final work at the All Africa Games Village was continuing at a fast pace yesterday. It emerged during the tour of the village that future residents, who qualified for subsidies, would not pay for improvements worth R1 million which was part of a pilot project in energy and water efficiency put in by Eskom and Rand Water.

Slum homes put people's lives at risk (127)

Sowetan 23/7/99

By Russel Molefe

A TENANT who suffered a severe electric shock in a slum house in Mayfair, Johannesburg, has again put the spotlight on the dangerous and unacceptable conditions of some residential buildings in the suburb.

While the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council is in the process of assessing residential buildings, the problem continues of landlords making a fortune out of the situation.

The problem was again highlighted when Ms Gladys Ncube suffered serious burns over almost all her body when she received an electric shock in the bathroom of the dilapidated, squalid and overcrowded house in Mayfair's 2nd Avenue.

The seven-roomed house, with two back rooms, is occupied by no fewer than 20 people, who share the rooms and pay the landlord R380 each a month.

Electrical wires are exposed and some run on top of water pipes and a

geyser. Taps and other equipment give electric shocks when they are touched.

Ncube, who shared a room in the house with another woman for about three months before the incident, spent almost two months at Helen Joseph Hospital receiving treatment.

"The electrical problem at the house has been a matter of concern since I moved in," Ncube said. "I once tried to raise the matter with the landlord, who is unknown to the tenants."

"But my efforts were frustrated by a man who collects rent on behalf of the landlord."

She said the police at the nearby Brixton police station initially refused to take up the matter after she was discharged from hospital.

However, the intervention of the Johannesburg Community Legal Centre led the police to investigate the possibility of charging the landlord, who Sowetan could not trace.

Alex exiles still wait for homes

29(127)

By Charity Bhengu

IT IS now eight years since thousands of families were displaced by political violence between the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party supporters in Alexandra, Johannesburg.

The families fled their homes in the Beirut area in 1991 and sought shelter in municipal offices, school buildings and churches. Their stay was supposed to be temporary.

More than 9 000 families between First and Sixth Avenues fled and their houses were burnt, vandalised, and looted. The same happened to shops and schools and health services were halted.

The area was declared a disaster zone.

The grand plan of the past government had been to repair houses and schools and return families to their homes.

The present Government started discussions on the redevelopment of the area in 1995. But, outsiders invaded

the land earmarked for housing development and shacks sprang up.

A court application for their eviction was made and about 1 000 shacks were demolished in the Far East Bank and more land was identified at Riverpark for development.

Although 1799 units have been constructed at the All Africa Games Village on the Far East Bank, people believe construction is slow.

They were expecting more houses to be built at Riverpark by the beginning of July, but this has not happened.

This has caused uncertainty among the 250 families who are staying under dire conditions at the Alexandra City Hall.

They are some of the families who fled their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs and learnt later that their houses were taken over by their attackers.

Also, illegal immigrants, migrant workers and criminals have moved into the units as tenants. They are paying rent to people who had taken over the houses.

There is little land for development in Alexandra which has an area of about four square kilometres. So the Government would have to buy more land from other substructures to accommodate 18 000 stands.

The redevelopment of Alex may take 15 years, depending on the availability of funds. The area is densely populated with an estimated 350 000 people. However, Alex should accommodate only 160 000 people.

Blandford said "People can no longer live in these stressful and life-threatening conditions. The area is crime-ridden."

He said a redevelopment plan for Alexandra is in five stages - the Riverpark project, All Africa Games Village, the Beirut project and Zandfontein. The Government needs to clear people from Alex to build new houses for stage five.

The Riverpark fully serviced 250 square metre houses will be occupied only by the displaced families staying at the halls, schools and

churches.

The Village comprising a shopping centre, primary school, garage and hall will be given to the majority of Alex people.

The framework has been done to redevelop the notorious Beirut area. Plans to build houses in Zandfontein have been submitted and the capital budget for the infrastructure has been approved.

Alexandra township was started in 1912 when the owner of the land began selling plots on his farm to blacks and coloureds, thus making it the country's first offer of freehold ownership to non-whites.

Later, the Government tried to abolish freehold for blacks. Many families were relocated to Tembisa and Soweto and the rest stayed on as government tenants.

In the late '60s there was a plan to turn Alex into a hostel city for migrant workers, but the scheme came under attack and funds ran out. After an intensive campaign by residents in 1979, Alex was saved.

6 People can no longer live under these stressful conditions

Some original owners long to go back to their homes, while others are afraid to and say they would rather move into the government houses.

The ever increasing number of people in Alexandra has also complicated the redevelopment project and has turned the area into one big slum area surrounded by upmarket suburbs.

Alexandra executive officer for project facilitation and support services Mr Anthony Blandford said "There are no true statistics of the population of Alex. A programme to register every dweller in the area is under way. This will give us an idea of how many people we need to build houses for."

Residents burn down repossessed houses

(127)

CP8/8/99

By DOMINIC MAHLANGU

ANGRY Katlehong residents on the East Rand have resorted to vandalising and burning down houses which have been repossessed by banks from bond defaulters.

The move may lead banks to red-line townships in order not to lose their investments.

Some of the banks financing township houses have been reluctant to grant loans for township dwellings and improvements to houses due to the culture of payment boycotts.

The national housing minister, Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, made a passionate plea to banks to reconsider their stance not to grant loans to township residents.

Residents of Katlehong said their action was to show their displeasure with evictions in the township. This was to show sympathy with the people who had been evicted from their houses.

A house worth more than R90 000 was the second this week to go up in flames in Katlehong Gardens in retaliation of the eviction of the bond holder.

As flames shot up from the burning house on Friday, youths stripped the roof and stoned the walls.

The residents have vowed to burn and vandalise more houses as long as major banking institutions continue to seek court orders to

dered the house by removing doors, windows, carpets and other reusable materials before setting the house alight.

Jabu Nkosi, who joined the protest, said as long as their problems were not solved, they would continue to burn down every house once the owner had been evicted.

"Since 1990, when we moved into these houses we have been running up and down to the banking institutions, but every time we asked them to repair the falling houses, they failed to respond.

"Now that they are starting with evictions, we will take it upon ourselves to ensure that there are no houses that are left standing," said Nkosi.

The residents claim that they have tried all avenues to resolve their problems with the banks but that nothing had been done.

"If they take us out we will burn the houses to the ground," shouted the crowd.

Dorothy Mbele, a mother of three, said the house that she moved into three years ago was also falling apart. It was also being flooded when it was raining.

"When summer rains start I know I will not enjoy any sleep.

"I totally support the move taken by the residents. It will show banking institutions that we can take action that will also make them lose investments," said Mbele.



ALUTA CONTINUA .. Residents of Katlehong Gardens on the East Rand plunder and burn a house, allegedly in retaliation against the bank after the owner was evicted for failing to pay his bond. **Picture: Sipho Matluka**

evict owners. They said since 1990 they have been engaged in talks with the banks for better services and repayment because the houses were "falling apart".

The owner of the house which was burnt on Friday was evicted on Thursday. The residents first plun-

dered not to pay their full monthly bond repayments and the banks started to seek court orders to evict them.

Poor to receive 370 000 houses

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Gauteng housing department is to transfer more than 370 000 properties worth billions of rands to poor communities over the next five years.

The department's target is to provide tenure to more than one million people, who will be empowered once the formerly state-owned houses and land have been transferred to them.

MEC for housing Mr Paul Mashatle is to empower more than 10 000 Soweto families when he transfers about 100 properties to the present occupants-tenants at a ceremony to be held at the Jabulani Civic Centre today.

The hand-over of the title deeds will bring the total number of registered properties in the province to 100 000 with an estimated market value of about R1,4 billion.

Government sources have estimated that the market value of the present four-five-roomed houses - formerly dubbed matchbox houses in the townships during apartheid - is R40 000 each.

Mashatle said it was no mistake that his department chose Soweto to hand over the 100 000 title deeds because "Soweto is the biggest township in the country with an estimated population of four million people."

"It is in this township that history reminds us of the brutality of the apartheid system which denied

the people property ownership in an effort to try and keep the majority away from the socio-economic amenities that were made the exclusive preserve of the white minority," Mashatle said.

Greater Johannesburg mayor Mr Isaac Mogase and the mayor of Soweto Mrs Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, both activists and advocates of home ownership during the former regime's rule, are expected to attend the historic event.

Government sources have disclosed that about 80 000 houses have been transferred to their rightful owners in the past four years. As a result over 350 000 family members have been provided with secure tenure through the programme.

Sowetan 24/8/99 (127)

Tight budget halts housing project

(127) MD 31/8/99

Robyn Chalmers

ONE of Gauteng's largest low-cost housing developments, Braam Fischer, is set to be halted halfway through the project due in part to budgetary constraints at provincial level.

A number of other developers and local authorities involved in large projects around the province are also experiencing a cash crunch.

This is due in part to reduced housing budget allocations to provinces, but also to the way in which subsidy funds are allocated by provincial housing boards. Boards are cancelling non-performing projects and reallocating funds to schemes with a proven track record.

Grant Fischer, MD of Rand Leases Properties, which is developing

Braam Fischer, said the Gauteng provincial housing board had indicated that it could only allocate further funds to the project in April next year.

Fischer said the project, undertaken as a joint venture by the Western Metropolitan Local Council, Rand Leases and Gauteng, had received an initial allocation of 13 470 subsidies valued at R280m spread over two-and-a-half years.

After a longer-than-expected lead time, during which consultation with communities and other stakeholders on the project and the proclamation of land took time, the project has to date produced 4 000 low-cost houses.

"We are now producing 500 houses a month and the project has been accepted as a solid success in terms of the quality and size of houses delivered. We will finish the first phase of

5 000 units by the end of October."

However, the housing board has indicated that the project will receive no new subsidy funds until April 1, the start of the province's new financial year. This not only puts the future of the project in jeopardy, but also the jobs of more than 1 200 people.

Fischer said this placed Rand Leases in an invidious position. "We would like to come up with a solution but we are likely to be another private sector developer exiting the market."

The national housing budget for 1999/2000 was scaled down 5,8% to R3,53bn from an adjusted R3,75bn in the 1998/99 budget, which follows a 24% fall in the budget for 1997/98.

The housing and construction industry warned that the reduced budget could affect government's low-cost housing programme.

Disaster looming for homeowners

Falling concrete roofs force residents into their backyards

(R7) 085/9/99

By DOMINIC MAHLANGU

A DISASTER is looming in Soweto as the concrete roofs of houses in White City Jabavu and Mzimhlophe begin to fall apart.

Residents said it was just a matter of time before they were all buried under the concrete rubble of the collapsing roofs.

Some homeowners have resorted to building shacks in their backyards for fear of the roofs caving in while they are asleep.

The southern metropolitan local council said it had already devised plans to start a major renovation programme because some of the houses were in danger of caving in.

Simon Boloka, a father of three in White City, said he fears to sleep in his own house after a chunk of concrete fell out of the roof and injured two of his family members.

His son Elliot, a university student, escaped death when a chunk of concrete knocked him out while he was resting.

Boloka said his mother Janet (65) died in 1997 after sustaining a gash on her head from falling concrete.

"The old lady had eight stitches on her head after she was knocked to the ground by a falling concrete block. She died months later," he said.

When the houses were built in

the early 1940s, White City Jabavu and Mzimhlophe, also known as *ezindlovini*, were renowned for their concrete roofs.

Boloka, who City Press found trying to repair his falling roof, said his efforts were in vain.

"Every day I have to climb the roof and try to cement the big cracks that have emerged," he said.

Boloka said when he complained to the council he was given a huge plastic bag to cover his roof.

"The plastic bag is good for stopping leaks, but it cannot stop the concrete falling down," he said.

Like many residents, Boloka said the council was dragging its feet.

"It's a nightmare to sleep under such conditions," he said, looking at the concrete pieces that littered the floor.

The residents said they were sceptical about the conditions placed by council to repair the houses.

They said the council wanted to relocate them before fixing the roofs.

Mzimhlophe residents said they have been complaining to the council for the last three years.

They said they had tried all means to stop the cracks but every year the cracks seem to be getting bigger.

"People might think that we don't have problems with these concrete

roofs I wish they could come here and just spend a night with us, they will be shocked," said one of the residents.

Stanley Sono, a veteran resident in the area, said the houses were built in the early 1940s by the former Johannesburg City Council as a temporary settlement for black people who had moved to the city.

Sono said in those days it was a privilege to stay in the houses.

"That was the best accommodation one could find in Soweto."

The old Johannesburg City Council used to paint the concrete roofs every two years," said Sono.

The council's urban development chairman, Parks Tau, blamed the lack of progress on residents.

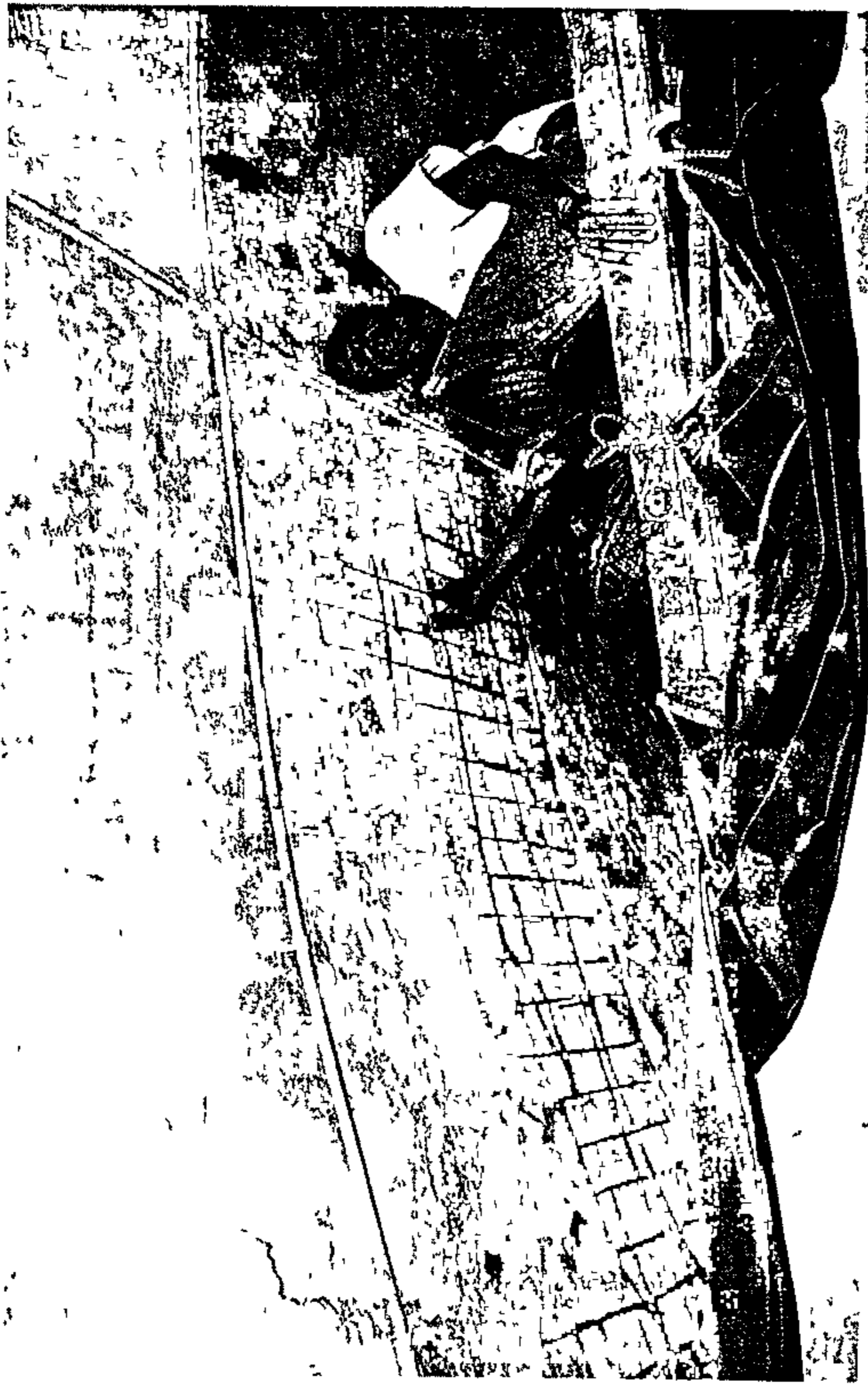
He said the council has held meetings with them to discuss their temporary relocations to enable the council to repair the houses.

But the residents did not want to be relocated to an area outside Soweto.

Tau said some of the houses were not fit for occupation and could cave in any time.

"Our moves to restore the houses are hampered by residents who are not willing to be relocated to areas outside Soweto," Tau said.

"They will have to move out of the houses before the process of reconstruction can start."



INJURIES SUSTAINED Simon Boloka trying to repair the roof inside his house in White City, Soweto, after two family members were injured by falling concrete. Picture Mpho Mphofino

Games bring houses to Alex's homeless

(127)

Sowetan 8/9/99

By Lucia Mutikani

ORGANISERS may be battling to whip up enthusiasm for the All Africa Games, which begin in Johannesburg this week, but the event will change the lives of 1 800 poor families.

Days after the games end on September 19, the brightly painted houses of the athletes' village on a slope above the Johannesburg black township of Alexandra will be handed over to the community.

For Nohlalala Vilakazi, who has shared a single room in a dilapidated migrant worker's hostel with her two children and four other families for close to a decade, life will change overnight.

"I am so happy At last I will have a place to call my own and privacy It's a dream come true," said Vilakazi.

Developers of the All Africa Games Athletes Village will hand over 1 800 one- and three-bedroom

cottages to new owners and tenants who have already been selected from the country's estimated three million homeless families.

Since 1994 the Government has built 800 000 units at a cost of R9 7 billion and it estimates the housing backlog at up to three million units.

Alexandra, alongside the plush northern suburbs, was selected by the developer Tsepo Development Group as the site for the athletes' village in the face of stiff opposition from all quarters, including the Government.

"When we tendered for the accommodation of athletes, there were quite a number of sites.

"We decided to focus on Alexandra because it was the most densely populated township (in Johannesburg)," said Tsepo chief executive Slumka Sowazi.

He said initially the Gauteng provincial government would not provide subsidies for the project, but reconsidered its decision after they presented an inte-

grated social housing package.

Tsepo Development invested R100 million in the construction of the units, ranging from 32 to 60 square metres.

"This is a first for South Africa. By giving these houses, we are giving back something to the community," said Sowazi.

Families with a joint income below R3 500 a month qualify to buy the houses. For the unemployed, who make up a large portion of the township's impoverished population, there is an option to rent at low cost.

"We have already selected our occupants and collected more than R200 million in deposits for rental," said Sowazi.

That process has not been without controversy, however. Some residents have accused the Alexandra Development Forum, which identified candidates, of corruption and nepotism.

Residents alleged that some members of the forum had selected family



Minister of Sport Ngcode Balfour and Minister of Housing Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele listen to the NSE's chief executive officer, Mvuzo Mbebe, at the athlete's village.

PHOTO ANTONIO MUCHAVE

forum of allocating some people more than one unit.

However, Sowazi said they were satisfied the forum had made the allocation fairly.

"The selection of dwellers was done through extensive market research in Alexandra. The Alexandra Development Forum is a community body within the township," he said.

For people like Mashishi, dreams of a real house remain a dream, as the Government battles to provide accommodation to the growing urban population - *Reuters*

and friends, most of whom already had suitable accommodation, to occupy the new units.

"The whole process has been unfair. People who genuinely deserved better accommodation have been left out," said Lydia Mashishi, a resident of Alexandra.

"We were told that priority would be given to those staying in shacks and the overcrowded hostels. But we have seen people with decent housing receiving keys for the new units," Mashishi said.

Residents have also accused the

10 000 houses handed over

127
Seulatan 9/9/99

By Justice Mohale

THE Government will maintain a partnership with various stakeholders to ensure that proper delivery of low-cost houses to the homeless became a reality, Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatile said yesterday.

Speaking after handing over 10 000 houses to the residents of Bophelong township in the Vaal Triangle, Mashatile said "We have pledged during the general election that we will deliver proper shelter and now is the time to fulfil our promises. This project will restore the dignity of the poor."

He said the project had cost about R176 million and would accommodate over 50 000 people.

The project employed local residents and more than 900 jobs were created.

"I am glad because at the end of the project, some of the residents would have gained skills in bricklaying and administration which can help them become self-employed," he said.

Mashatile assured residents the government would build schools, clinics and recreational centres as a matter of urgency.

Western Vaal Local Council chairman Mr David Mthimkhulu said the houses would change the lives of the people, some of whom had never owned a house.

"The council will try to ensure that it releases land for housing development. We are also concerned about the wave of crime that is scaring potential investors in the area," Mthimkhulu said.

He said the council had already identified land in the area on which a police station could be built.

Only 49% of council's debtors pay in full

Xolani Xundu *BD 27/9/99 (127)*

ONLY 49% of the Pretoria city council's debtors pay their monthly accounts in full, spokesman Antoinette Mostert said yesterday

This has resulted in the council's arrears rising from R692,4m in July to R708,8m in September. Private households are responsible for 72% of this

She said R341,3m is owed in rates and services, R153m in arrangements on suspense and arrangement instalments, R51,2m in other levies like disconnection fees, R88,9m in interest on arrears and R66,7m in VAT on services already paid over to the Receiver of Revenue. Deposits were responsible for R5,8m and rentals for R1,9m of the total debt

The illegal consumption of services, which is increasing "at an alarming rate", is also contributing to the arrears.

The council carried out 4 205 cut-offs of water and electricity between September 13 and 17. However, 92 of these could not be executed because of intimidation and violence by members of the public.

Pirates

Heath Unit uncovers R2-m housing scam

By Jimmy Seeps
Political Correspondent

AN INTRICATE web of corruption involving criminals and certain Gauteng housing department officials in the transfer of funds and payments into a fictitious corporation which performed close, consistent duties has been uncovered.

The fictitious company, which officially appears on the records of the Registrar of Companies and Close Corporations and has been operational in the past few years, has been found not to be operating at the address it had reflected.

A preliminary investigation con-

ducted by the Heath Special Investigation Unit after a referral from the department in June has been completed.

It is alleged that an official within the department were involved in the submission of fraudulent claims for services rendered and funds totalling R2 million were transferred to the bank account of the company.

Judge Willem Heath confirmed that the matter was under investigation and the unit will be instituting several actions before the special tribunal to recover the funds.

Housing department spokesman Mr Tommy Makoe said the office had initiated the investigation into the scam and sought the help of the Heath Unit

department to root out corruption.

The department asked the unit to investigate the case after it became clear that there were irregularities. We have also approached the police to investigate a case of fraud against individuals concerned.

Concern has been raised that the irregularities pertaining to this case have not been officially proclaimed and the unit might be accused of working beyond its official mandate.

This information comes a week after Government indicated it might have to appoint other judges to investigate cases and confine Heath to Eastern Cape.

Investigations revealed that a bank

account was opened by a member of the corporation using a false ID.

The person concerned cannot be traced although it appears that money has been withdrawn.

The Health Unit's legal representative, Ms Claudia Kidson, found that there were double payments after claims were re-submitted.

A report by Kidson, by the *modus operandi* of the perpetrators was to fraudulently re-submit documentation in support of a new claim, which was previously validly submitted by the

Khayalami Metropolitan Council in Johannesburg and on the strength of which the department had previously made valid payments to the council.

It alleged that the documentation

was then "touched up" to make it relevant to the fraudulent claim submitted by the perpetrators concerned.

Officials within the department also prepared a document to confirm that the claim was verified and forged the signature of certain officials within the department, the report said.

The report said the unit proceeded with an urgent application before its special tribunal to freeze the bank account of the business and the accounts of individuals suspected of receiving the funds.

The total amount held in the accounts is said to be R134 256,46 An individual who benefited from the scheme has agreed to repay R99 521 to the department.



nt out during its journey from Johannesburg to from Protea Glen, managed to park the vehicle a hasty exit before the fire destroyed the

PHOTO MBUZENI ZULU

Relief for West Rand homeless

(127)

By Joshua Raboroko
MORE than 700 homeless families living in squalid conditions on the West Rand can sigh with relief after the Greater Johannesburg's Western Metropolitan Local Council bought vast tracts of land where homes will be built for them.

The council has bought land belonging to Durban Deep mine near Roodépoort, south of Johannesburg,

for R3,6 million to accommodate 719 families living in conditions described as "circumstances of crisis". The area has also been renovated by the council at a cost of R3,3 million. Council spokesman Sobantu Ndlangalavu said their intention was to stop illegal occupation of the area by homeless and destitute communities. He said the council will provide basic services and infrastructure and therefore expected the occupants to

pay for the services

The site measures 22 hectares and was originally developed as hostels for mine workers. It will accommodate 48 housing units

Of the 48 units that are available, 14 are double storey while the rest are single storey units. Ndlangalavu said the families will be accommodated according to their size, but the main aim will be to keep families together

Sevelan 30/9/99

Occupants get ownership of state houses

Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng housing department and the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council are to transfer the ownership of 27 500 state houses valued at about R700m to their occupants

This is a continuation of the department's transfer process, initiated in 1997, in which ownership of 132 000 state houses valued at R1,4bn in former black townships are being transferred to their occupants

Councillor Ruby Mathang said yesterday the transfer process had now been extended to include all state houses in "so-called" coloured and Indian townships throughout the province

Mathang said many occupants would not be able to pay their accumulated debts, necessary for full ownership of the houses. As a result, houses would be sold at their historic cost and occupants could apply for a R7 500 discount scheme

Mathang said bonds at low state interest rates with a 20 to 30-year term would be provided to secure payment of outstanding balances. "Bonds will be provided at the rates specified in the existing contracts," he said

Carien Engelbrecht, chief director of land and asset management in the Gauteng housing department, said the 13 960 houses up for transfer in the province ranged in price from R30 000 to R50 000

Mathang said the council would also embark on a project to transfer its housing schemes for senior citizens as part of an attempt to redirect council's activities to its core functions

The housing schemes, which total 2 341 units, provide only accommodation. Residents have to seek frail care, medical and welfare services from other institutions

"The initiative will allow private sector and nongovernmental organisations involved in this field to take transfer of existing projects to provide a better service and help develop the schemes," he said

(127) 06/10/99

Protesters halt building work

Sowetan 8/10/99

By Sowetan Reporter

A GROUP of protesters at Weilers Farm, south of Johannesburg, prevented developers from starting work yesterday on a section of land earmarked for the building of about 3 200 low-cost houses.

Weilers Farm is one the many settlements earmarked for upgrading to fully fledged townships.

But a small group is opposing the proposal to move them to another section of the area to make way for the construction of new houses.

The protesters are accusing the developers - Weilers Thuthuka Foundation - of ripping them off

The group, which yesterday gathered at the Emmerdale railway station on their way to the office of Gauteng Housing MEC Paul Mashatle, said they would not move.

Mr Bongani Khuzwayo (45), the group's leader, said the developers should upgrade the stands instead of moving them into new homes.

The protesters also accused the developers for being slow in delivering new houses.

Weilers Farm Thuthuka Foundation director Mr Wilson Bangisa told *Sowetan* that it was only a small group that opposed the move to upgrade the settlement.

"We have had workshops with the

community and we explained to them how the move would work."

The company's planning was done in such a way that the upgrading would take place in vacant land next to the settlement. Once the houses were complete, then those whose subsidies had been approved would move into their new houses.

"Already 200 subsidies have been approved. Trouble started when the engineers wanted to move a certain number of shacks which were to be demolished.

"Initially most of those affected agreed but there has been outside influence which could be responsible for the protest," Bangisa said.

Department ignores order

(127) (310)

By Siphwe Mpye

THE demolition of shacks in Lawley, south of Johannesburg, continued yesterday despite a court order prohibiting the Gauteng department of housing from evicting people in the area.

The court ordered the return of material and property confiscated from the site and prohibited evictions of any kind.

However, Ms Delca Maluleke, the spokeswoman for Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatile, said they were evicting people who had built new shacks.

"Empty and partially built new

shacks were being demolished, not the old ones," Maluleke said.

As the order did not prohibit the demolition of new structures, they were pulled down, Maluleke said.

She said she expected about 1 500 shacks to have been destroyed by late yesterday afternoon.

Maluleke said the area was unsafe because it had a large concentration of dolomite and was unsuitable for housing development. "The area is earmarked for further development other than housing," she said.

She said residents would have to go on to a housing waiting-list and the ones who could prove that they

had lived in the area "for a long time" would be provided with alternative accommodation.

At the site of the demolitions, amid heated exchanges between residents, the police and members of a security company, the residents' representative, Mr Patrick Kubheka, and the department's Mr Mbulelo Musi appealed for calm.

Kubheka called for the return of all the confiscated property and the department acceded to the demand under supervised conditions.

During similar demolitions last week, a person was shot dead and four others were in clashes between residents and security guards.

Sowetan 12/10/1999

Council dismayed by union's claims

(132) (127) (127)
NELSPRUIT — The Nelspruit town council said yesterday it regretted that the SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) had spread untruths about the 30-year water privatisation contract won by British multinational company Biwater in April.

Samwu said on Tuesday Biwater had begun to break promises made when it was awarded the contract. Samwu provincial secretary Steve Sihlangu said although Biwater promised to take over all water workers, they were being approached individually and told to take "early retirement" by the end of October. Biwater begins its contract at the beginning of November.

Nelspruit CEO Roelf Kotze denied the claim yesterday, saying: "In terms of the concession contract, workers have to be taken over by the concessionaire on the same or better conditions of services and no retrenchments may take place."

He denied Samwu's claim that the concession agreement did not comply with requirements of the sectoral framework agreement. Kotze said the council twice postponed the signing of the contract during April in order to amend the document to accommodate union concerns.

It was not true that the council refused to disclose any of the terms of the contract to the union, including future water tariffs. — Sapa

802/199

Mamelodi owes R257-m for services

sewelan 28/10/99 (127)

By Gershwin Chuenyane

THE City Council of Pretoria is owed just over a quarter of a billion rands in arrears by service defaulters in Mamelodi township alone, according to the council's latest statistics

The extent of the debt owed to the council was disclosed at a press conference at the Munitoria yesterday. At least 26 663 defaulters from Mamelodi top the arrears debt list with a staggering R257,5 million owed to the end of September.

Hot on their heels come the defaulters from Atteridgeville and Saulsville, with a combined arrears debt of R114,9 million. They are followed by defaulters from Pretoria City and its suburbs at R77,2 million for the same period.

City treasurer Ms Marie-Lise Fourie revealed that "despite the current cut-off action and credit-control measures, the arrears debt owed to the council for municipal services had amounted to R723,1 million by September 30.

"Approximately 61 percent of the city council's account holders pay their accounts in full every month, with private household arrears amounting to 79 percent of the total arrears.

"It is really serious that the bulk of arrears can be attributed to households," said Fourie.

She pointed out that intimidation of contractors performing cut-off action for the council in certain areas was escalating at an alarming rate and has forced contractors to employ private security companies to escort them to and from the cut-off sites.

She added that although "this intimidation poses a risk, the cut-off action will continue."

Fourie appealed to the communities to assist and cooperate with the council in identifying of the culprits responsible for the intimidation.

Despite the intimidation 4 665 cut-offs were effected in the second week of this month, while they were unable to carry out 230 cut-offs as a result of intimidation.

The cut-offs yielded about R2,02 million from defaulters who reacted. The average monthly cut-off figure for water and electricity was between 14 000 and 17 000, according to Fourie.

Utility management services spokesman Mr Leon Vermaak said that the council was "currently intensively investigating seven cases of intimidation."

Hostel upgrading progressing slowly

(127)
By Justice Mohale

THE upgrading and conversion of public hostels into family units in areas under the control of the Greater Johannesburg local councils is progressing at snail's pace much to the disappointment of scores of dwellers living in these structures.

Some even feel the development of hostels is no longer a priority for the local authorities.

A *Sowetan* snap survey revealed that development projects had ground to a halt at some hostels while others were in appalling condition. The councils say the renovation of hostels was temporarily suspended due to lack of funds in some instances.

Of the three hostels in the Western Metropolitan Local Council (WMLC) Soweto's Dube Hostel was the only one still to undergo full refurbishment while the conversion of single quarter units at Mzimhlophe and Dobsonville into family units has been completed.

Although the council claimed to have budgeted R9 million for the upgrading of Phase Three at Dube Hostel for the 1998-1999 financial year, no major renovation has taken place save for painting of the complex.

The WMLC has allocated a further R3 million for the 1999-2000 for the continuation of the project.

The council's housing executive Ms Daphne Ngoasheng said it has also spent R7,6 million to upgrade Dobsonville Hostel during the 1998-1999 financial year.

The council spent R15 million for the upgrading of Phase Three at Mzimhlophe Hostel for the 1998-1999 financial year and added R6 million for the current financial year, she said.

Mzimhlophe Hostel resident Mr Mbuso Khumalo said although most residents had been sceptical about the conversion of hostels into family units, they were now happy with the conversions.

He was happy to live with his family rather than leaving them behind in KwaZulu Natal as was the case in the past.

"Although there is only one bedroom I am grateful that the council has extended it with a well-fitted bath room, dining room and a kitchen," Khumalo said.

When he moved into the hostel about three years ago, there was no electricity. The entire hostel was dilapidated and windows and doors were broken.

"We were living like animals in a filthy environment with no delivery of basic services such as garbage collection," he said.

Dobsonville Hostel once resembled a bomb site following the three-year political violence between hostel dwellers and the rest of residents in the township from 1990. Five years after South Africa's first democratic elections, Dobsonville Hostel bears no traces of structural damage caused by the fighting.

Another resident Ms Nomsa Kubheka had never owned a home until she moved into a vacant room in the complex after many dwellers fled the violence. The room had no doors, windows and electricity.

Kubheka, a self-employed tailor supported the council's system of registering all hostel dwellers. She believed the system would help the council to introduce credit control measures against defaulters.

When the process of upgrading the hostels started in 1994, Kubheka never thought her dreary room could be renovated and converted into a four-roomed apartment. She is now a proud tenant of a unit which has two bedrooms, a dining room and a kitchen. Each hostel house hold pays R72 a month for services.

Southern Metropolitan Local Council (SMLC) housing executive Ms Uhuru Madida said the council had not budgeted for the upgrading of hostels for the 1999-2000 financial year.

She said only Mapetla and Orlando West hostels would be converted into family units.

Meanwhile, private hostels under the jurisdiction of the SMLC include Selby, Bushkop-pies and City Deep, while the public ones included Ifateng Nancefield, Orlando West, Mapetla and Jabulani.

"Staff hostels will not be upgraded due to financial constraints and also because they do not qualify for a government grant as they are regarded as private properties," Madida said.

The upgrading of Nancefield Hostel was inexplicably halted by the council. Although there is electricity supply to Mapetla Hostel, the place looks unkempt with long grass and broken windows.

Hostel residents have accused the council of failing to collect garbage regularly resulting in bad smells around the hostels.

The situation is a lot worse at Diepkloof Hostel, where inmates have been living in squalid conditions for more than 10 years. *Sowetan's* visit to the hostel this week revealed unhygienic and appalling conditions.

There is no electricity and as a result inmates have no warm water for bathing and washing clothes. About 15 families share three fly-infested communal toilets whose floors are drenched with pools of sewerage water from

leaking pipes.

There is a bad odour from the unflushed toilets. But this situation has become the order of the day for Diepkloof inmates, who seem to have resigned themselves to living in squalor.

Residents have complained that garbage is piling up as the council has stopped collecting rubbish. As a result, many of them dump litter in the yard.

Mr Aaron Nxumalo, a hostel leader, expressed "disgust" at the authorities for having failed to maintain the hostel.

"I have been living in this hostel for more than 16 years and I still use candles at night because there is no electricity. The living conditions are not suitable for humans," he said.

There are six hostels in the NMLC: Klipspruit, Orlando Pimville, Antea, Northern Farm and Northern Works hostels.

Mkhonza said only Antea had been upgraded and the council was in the process of compiling a report that would serve as a guideline on what to do with unused hostels.

The SMLC continues to provide services such as electricity and refuse collection at Johannesburg's Jeppe and Denver hostels,

which are drab, crowded structures in need of painting and other improvements.

Interestingly, residents told *Sowetan* that they were happy with the way things were, living on their own without their families. They resented the idea of converting their single quarters.

Jeppe hostel manager Mr Aaron Nkwane said residents at the two hostels had rejected the plan to convert the hostel into family units. He admitted the hostel was facing serious problems such as non-payment of services and illegal tenants. Hostel residents were refusing to pay the R27 monthly rental.

"Recently Eskom threatened to cut off the electricity supply but after extensive negotiations it abandoned the plan," Nkwane said.

Jeppe hostel owes Eskom more than R622 933 in unpaid electricity bills and was in arrears of R209 000 for other services.

Mr Tencent Nkosi of Denver Hostel attributed the rent boycott to the fact that many residents were unemployed.

The conversion of hostels was part of the Government's 1992 strategy to tackle the relics of apartheid such as the migrant system which discouraged migrant workers from bringing their families to live with them in hostels.

Sowetan 29/10/99

Contaminated water project 'is viable'

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL DAILY NEWS

COMMODITIES EDITOR

Johannesburg - A R1 billion project to clean 240 million litres of contaminated mine water and feed it into Gauteng's drinking water supply took a step closer to implementation when a preliminary feasibility study found it could be commercially viable, JCI Projects said yesterday.

Graham Wanblad, the chief executive of JCI Projects, the company in charge of the study, said

the preliminary feasibility study into the project found that selling the water could in time pay for the costs of pumping and treating it.

If untreated and unpumped, the contaminated water could pose a danger to the environment.

"There are still a number of technical issues under investigation that could influence the commercial feasibility of the project and we await with interest the results of the final report," Wanblad said.

Part of the full feasibility study

entailed building two pilot treatment plants, which should be operational by November 90.

If the full feasibility study, which should be complete by the end of the year, provided a positive outcome, work on the R250 million first phase of the project could begin in March.

The project is managed by a joint venture of five mines to find a solution to the potential pollution problem posed by rising levels of contaminated water in several of Gauteng's gold mines.

R165-m to phase out hostels

(127)

Sowetan 10/11/99

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Gauteng government is to spend about R165 million to upgrade hostels and convert them into family units in the province in the next five years

Speaking after visiting two hostels in Diepkloof and Meadowlands in Soweto yesterday, Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Paul Mashatile said the government intended to phase out hostels as soon as possible

At present there were 20 hostels that the government wanted to convert into family units. The department had already spent about R54 million to upgrade hostels in the province this year alone

His department had allocated R13,7 million to develop more than 3 444 units in Meadowlands hostel

Meadowlands hostels had already received about R31,8 million for upgrading

The MEC said that the govern-

ment had also set aside R22 million to upgrade the Diepkloof Hostel over the next three to four years, starting in the 2000-2001 financial year. The programme would benefit about 5 000 people

Other hostels earmarked for upgrades include those in Thokoza and other areas on the East Rand

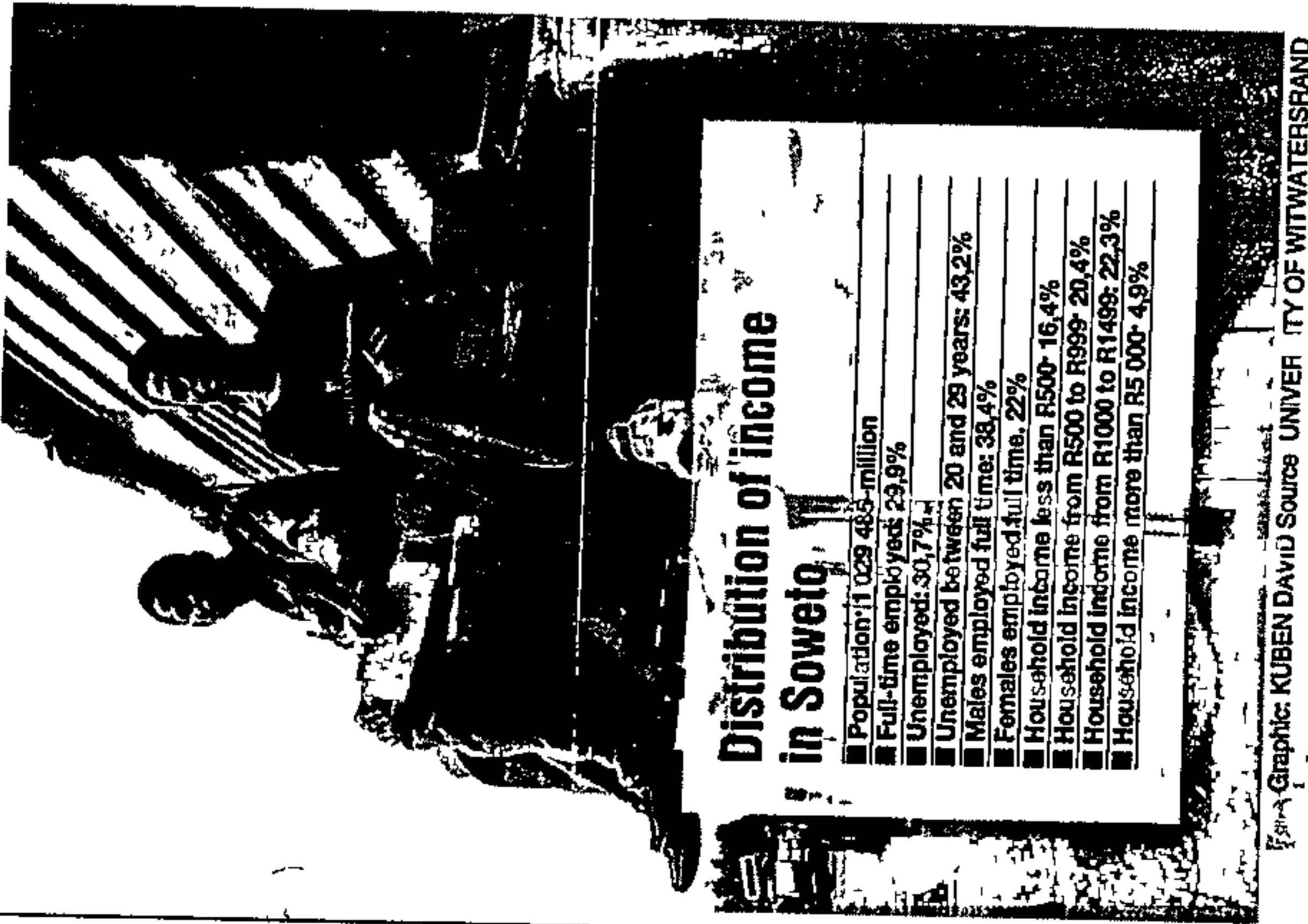
Mashatile said the upgrading of the hostels programme will bring about job creation and skills development for the people living in those areas

"The government, both local and provincial, the communities in and around hostels and the private sector must work together in partnership to tackle this gigantic task effectively," said Mashatile

He said he had received disturbing reports about the state of living conditions in the hostels since he became provincial MEC for housing and that he would make it a priority to convert them into habitable accommodation

mine focus ark relations

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a working group focusing on rebuild-
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Placer Dome president Jay Taylor
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months since Placer Dome's decision
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secretary Gwede Mantashe said the
ould have "no no-go areas" it would
s from retrenchments to working con-
ome spokesman Patrick Evans said
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rganisations. Placer Dome, he said,
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Study shows upgrading Soweto is a mammoth task

(127) 00 11/11/99

The research reveals some startling facts about AIDS awareness in the township

Xolani Xundu

THE Johannesburg metropolitan council faces a mammoth task upgrading and delivering services in Soweto, a study by the University of the Witwatersrand department of sociology reveals.

The study, carried out in 1997, has found that the population of the township stands at 1,02-million people, which is close to estimates made by the 1996 census. The census concluded Soweto's population was 904 166.

Wits University sociology department researcher, Alan Morris, said there can be a marginal error of about 5% in these figures. Morris said about 57% of Sowetans live in council houses, 20% in one-roomed backyard structures — half of which are shacks and half are solid brick and mortar dwellings.

The survey of 2 927 households in Soweto says the employment status of Soweto residents reflects the disastrous levels of unemployment in black townships.

Of the 1-million residents, 29% are in full-time employment, 30,7% are unemployed but looking for work, while 5,8% have not bothered looking for jobs.

In the 20 to 29-year-old age group, 43% are unemployed and only 21% have full-time employment. Morris said this is a disturbing figure and is a challenge to the council.

Employment status also has an important gender dimension.

Unemployment among adult women and men who are not studying disabled or retired indicate that female unemployment is

higher than male unemployment.

The study, called Continuity and Change, says the income profile illustrates two features of Soweto. Firstly, it shows that a large part of the population is poor and, secondly, that, in terms of income, there is significant differentiation in Soweto.

"The levels of poverty are striking," says Morris. According to the study, about one-third of Sowetan households have a total household income of less than R1 000/month, and about six out of 10 have a household income of less than R1 500/month.

Not surprisingly, the poorest section of Soweto's population is to be found in informal settlements and hostels where eight out of 10 households have an income of less than R1 500/month, and only 4,5% have a monthly income of more than R3 000/month.

On the other hand, the private housing sector is occupied by a different class of people. Six out of 10 households here have a monthly income of R3 000 or more, and three out of 10 have an income of more than R5 000/month.

Although private-sector dwellings make up 6,6% of Soweto households, they account for 30,6% of households earning R3 000/a month, and for 46% of all households with a monthly income of more than R5 000, the study reports.

The council and private sector houses account for 84,2% of households earning R5 000/month.

Morris acknowledged that it is difficult to measure household income as there is

bound to be a level of error. "What is clear, however, is many households are poor and can't afford to pay for services," he said.

Something that poses a significant challenge to health is the fact that 47,7% people live in one-roomed houses while about 40% are in three-roomed houses. A total of 81,8% have no separate bathroom, 65% rely on an outside-toilet in the backyard for water, and 10,4% have no electricity.

Morris said a disturbing finding is that a quarter of the respondents said they did not know what HIV/AIDS is and 30,6% did not know how it is spread.

Cross-referencing with education levels revealed that about half the respondents who have no education do not know how AIDS is spread, while about one in 10 respondents with a post-matric education knows.

Morris said about seven out of 10 respondents maintain crime or violence has increased in the past five years.

People identify murder, 26%, and rape, 34%, as crimes that worry them most in their neighbourhoods. They also point out that the youth is responsible for these and the causes were unemployment and poverty.

Morris said income figures and the knowledge of AIDS among the residents of Soweto is the most startling finding of the survey.

Johannesburg metropolitan council's transformation committee chairman, Kenny Fihla, said the survey will add momentum to the redevelopment of Soweto.

"This study will contribute to making Johannesburg a world class city and to the igoli 2002 plan," said Fihla.

Self-build housing scheme gets a boost

BD 19/11/99(127)

Robyn Chalmers

THE Gauteng housing department is poised to allocate almost R22m to the People's Housing Process programme this year, a move which will allow more people to build their own homes in the province

At a workshop on the process yesterday, Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatile said the People's Housing Process was a key element of the province's attempts to deal with its housing backlog of 482 000 units

"The process will be given more emphasis and attention over the next five years in the department's programmes

It will be implemented in a complementary manner to other programmes under way in the province," he said

Earlier this month Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanye announced the body's board of trustees, which will play a key role in implementing and supporting the initiative

The minister said the growth of the programme would see the

removal of informal settlements around the country, to be replaced by formal housing units

The policy, which was first launched in April last year, focuses on the poorest families who are living in both urban and rural areas, using capital subsidies to allow people to build their own homes

It also helps people obtain access to technical, financial, logistical and administrative support to build their own homes, either individually or collectively

Mashatile said there was a dedicated provincial budget of R6m for the policy and the department has allocated R15m to housing support centres for 1999/2000

The centres will give advice on a range of issues and allow access to building materials

"Through the process, we need to design mechanisms that will create the necessary environment to empower the previously disadvantaged communities to enter the mainstream of the economy through housing," Mashatile said

Women head poorer homes

~~127~~ (127)
Xolani Xundu BD 2/11/99

MOST households in informal settlements are headed by women and are likely to be poorer than those headed by their male counterparts, a survey commissioned by the Gauteng housing department has found.

The study, Communities in Transition, sampled 200 households in Albertina Sisulu, Eatonside, Johandeo and Soshanguve squatter camps, and focused on working men and women, unemployed women, youth, local councillors and community leaders.

Carien Engelbrecht, chief director, land and asset management, in the provincial housing department, said yesterday that household income in two of these informal settlements had declined to an average of about R640 a month.

The study found that 78% of households depended on one person's income, causing instability in the family in the event of the breadwinner becoming unemployed.

The surprise finding of the survey was that the need for housing was not informal residents' top priority. Instead electricity, water and sanitation and social services, especially schools, were

City puts water and sanitation to tender

ET(BR) 7/12/99 (127)

STEWART BAILEY

Johannesburg – Khetso Gordhan, the chief executive of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC), announced yesterday that the council had called for prequalifying submissions for the management of the city's water and sanitation operations

"We will retain the ownership of Greater Johannesburg's water storage and supply infrastructure, but we will contract out the management and operations component for a period of three to five years," said Gordhan

After the initial contract period, the operation of the water and sanitation system would revert to the council

Tender documents would be issued to successful prequalifying candidates by May next year

Concor-Thames, the joint venture between Thames Water International, the British water operations company, and Concor, the South African construction

company, confirmed that it would bid for the management contract

Douglas Smith, a spokesman for Concor Thames, said "Both member companies in the joint venture have the requisite expertise in water operations, infrastructural development and public-private partnerships to make a success of this project"

Smith also said that one of the biggest challenges facing the management contractor was bad debt, which could be countered effectively by enhancing customer service

Brian Hlongwa, the city's co ordinator of privatisation and corporatisation, confirmed that unofficial enquiries had been received from a number of local and foreign companies

One of the most pressing problems that would be faced by the incumbent operator would be "unaccounted-for water", which was costing the city millions of rand each year

"Johannesburg is currently losing

between 35 percent and 40 percent of its water. If we implement effective water demand management the city could save as much as R160 million a year," Gordhan pointed out

Hlongwa said 25 percent of the water was lost because of technical flaws such as broken pipes. "The remaining 75 percent is effectively lost because we can't bill for it accurately"

The GJMC currently had 150 000 unmetered water connections which were each charged at a flat rate. The rate was calculated on the assumption that each connection supplied no more than 20 kilolitres a month. Gordhan admitted this was open to abuse and said the problem would be addressed in the tender

"The management contractor will have to clean up the water-supply database to determine who the paying customers are. They will also have to extend the infrastructure to provide water for those who have not had access to it before," said Gordhan