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EDITORIALS

1. The Group Areas Act:

If the end of apartheid starts with the end of the Group Areas Act, then there is no joy to be had out of the majority (all Nationalist Party) report of the President's Council on the Act. Nor is there any in the President's response to it.

If there is one step which the Government could take to restore some credibility to its reform talk it would be to scrap this Act. Certainly that would need courage on its part. There would be an inevitable white rightwing backlash of which the Conservative Party would take full advantage. But the benefit to its image in all sections of the black community and internationally would be enormous.

Unfortunately neither the State President nor his Government seem to have that kind of courage, if indeed they want to get rid of Group Areas at all. The most they seem able to contemplate is giving local authorities the option

to decide whether areas under their control should be open or not, with residents having the right to petition for or appeal against, changes to the Government-appointed Administrator. This is just passing the buck. It is **Government** policy and legislation which has decreed that over 80% of the country is in white ownership and it is **Government** action which is required to remedy that gross disparity. This can only be done by **the Government** removing the present restrictions on black ownership and occupation of land and by its embarking on a programme of land redistribution which will bring agricultural land into productive use in black hands and release land at present under white control to be made available to meet the massive backlog in black urban housing.

Local option leaves black land ownership and residence at the mercy of local white prejudice. No great change will come that way.□

2. Allan Hendrickse:

The one good thing to come out of the present Group Areas rumpus has been Allan Hendrickse's threat to force the government into an election it doesn't want unless it repeals the Act.

If he has the nerve to carry out his threat, the tri-cameral Parliament may suddenly start to look more interesting.□