

Workers fight for injury rights

THE NUM has launched a campaign to make sure all workers who are injured get proper compensation and their rights.

NUM says the two main problems regarding compensation are many workers do not get paid out while others do not get enough money.

COSH says more than 12 000 mineworkers are badly injured at work every year. All of these workers are entitled to compensation or injury money.

But compensation money is paid according to a law called the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1941.

This law gives workers the right to get compensated for illness and injuries which result from work. But the law discriminates against black workers.

Compensation money is calculated on the basis of wages. Because black workers earn so little money, the compensation paid out is very low.

Some of the aims of the campaign are:

- To ensure that every injured or sick worker gets compensated.

This can be done by making sure that every injury is reported.

The doctor who treats a worker for an injury or illness must explain the problem and treatment properly. He must also write a proper report.

Management must fill in a compensation claim form and send it together with the doctor's report to the compensation commissioner or to Rand Mutual Hospital.

A union member must accompany the injured or sick worker to hospital to make sure that these things are done.

- Worker must make sure that they receive the right amount of money.

They must demand that management gives a proper breakdown of the compensation money. Some of the questions asked must be: What is it for? How was it calculated? Have there been any deductions? What are they for and how much are they?

The amounts can also then be double checked at the unions' offices where there is a copy of the law and the union's compensation manual.

- Workers must start demanding more money.



An injured workers is rushed to hospital. But who will make sure he gets adequately compensated?

Union members must discuss what they think a good compensation system should take into account.

Problems with compensation can be raised in the branch committee meetings with management. Demands can also be raised in Chamber negotiations, and the union can go to the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner with these demands.

The law also needs to be discussed and changes proposed. The 1989 NUM congress resolved that we must fight for removal of all racist definitions in the Workmen's Compensation Act.

- Injured workers must be re-trained.

Most workers who are injured or who become paraplegics through mine accidents can never return to their old jobs.

They are sentenced to a lifetime of unemployment. Workers can change this situation.

At our 1989 congress delegates resolved to put pressure on management and the Chamber to set up training centres where these workers can learn new skills to make them self sufficient.

Workers interested in health and safety should discuss whether we need to set up special campaign committees at branch and regional levels.

The task of these committees will be to identify the problems and to see that they are being followed up.

ACCIDENT MONITOR

ELANDSRAND GOLD MINE: - Two miners died and three were injured in an accident on 19 May. The accident happened when two material cars went out of control in an incline shaft.

One mineworker died in a rockfall on the 25 May.

STILFONTEIN: - A mineworker died on 8 May after a fall of ground at the Hartebeesfontein gold mine. The accident occurred at the Number 6 shaft.

KLOOF: - Six workers died on the 9 of May at Gold Fields' Kloof Mine.

The workers died after falling down a 30 m stope ore pass after a steel grid on which they stood collapsed.

On April 17 one worker died in a rock-fall, and four were killed on 29 April.

BLYVOORUITZICHT: - Five miners died after a rock burst and 48 were injured on 27 April.

WESTERN DEEP LEVELS WEST: - Two miners died and three were injured after a rock-burst on 26 April in no 2 shaft.

One worker was killed in another rock burst on 2 June.

VAAL REEFS SOUTH: - One mineworker was killed on 30 May.

VAAL REEFS WEST: - Two workers were killed and one injured on 25 May.

WEST DRIEFONTEIN: - Two workers died in a rock fall on 2 June.

PRESIDENT BRAND: - One worker died in a rock fall in no 4 shaft on 10 May while another was killed in no 3 shaft. On 22 May a third worker died.

ST HELENA: - Two workers were killed on 16 May, one in a cage accident on the surface and another in a rock fall underground.

HARMONY: - A rock fall underground claimed the lives of two workers on 23 May.

AIDS is a world problem

NUM OFFICIAL, May Hermanus, attended the world AIDS conference at the beginning of June.

More than 12000 people from all parts of the world went to Montreal, Canada for the week long conference.

The keynote address was by Zambian president, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, whose fifth son had died of AIDS in 1987. Dr Kaunda said: "AIDS affects my family, my nation, my country and my world."

He called on people "to unite to defeat this appalling adversary" which threatens the human race.

Speakers said AIDS was a dis-

case which needed medical resources as well as social and political action to combat it.

They pointed out that although AIDS could affect anyone, it flourished in a world where poor people were exploited by rich people.

Comrade May said that all the people she spoke to at the conference said that AIDS was a problem across the world - from Peru to North America, from Chile to Spain.

A speaker from South Africa, UCT Professor Gideon Knobel, criticised the apartheid government for its racist and short-sighted approach to AIDS.