differences, but one key can be seen in the fact that SACOD membership was numbered in the hundreds whilst white democrats (unorganised) today number in the thousands. This is because of very real grievances which a significant and growing section of young whites have. For example, they see injustice all around them and are aware that there will be no peace until there is freedom. They are angry at having to join the army to defend a system for which they are not prepared to die. Very few can play a resource role (apart from the dangers of whites playing this role), and to confine white democrats to this is a certain recipe for disillusionment, and the drifting into exile or complacency of the bulk of white democrats.

TM

Editorial note: The booklet referred to in the above comment is Dissension in the Ranks: white opposition in South Africa, and is published by the National Union of South African Students. An article on Liberal Party and COD: opposition to apartheid appears in WIP 19; the same issue of WIP contains an editorial on some of the issues raised above. The editors would welcome further contributions and comments on this subject.

INFLATION AND FOOD MONOPOLIES

WE are publishing the final part of an article entitled 'The Nature of Economic Growth in SA - 1978-1980: Monopoly Capital and the Erosion of Black Living Standards', by Jeremy Keenan. The first part is an examination of the widely believed statement that earnings of africans have increased during the 1970s.

Jeremy Keenan examines the figures that are used to support this position and points out inaccuracies, misleading information and omissions and concludes:

* that incomes of africans have 'declined more or less constantly in real terms since 1976';
* that the 'increase in Black (african) unemployment is due primarily to the increasing capital intensification (using more machinery relative to living human labour) of most sectors of the economy, and that much of the growth in 1979-1981 has come from the utilisation of spare capacity' (firms had money and machinery that was lying idle, and this could be brought into action);
* that when one looks at the distribution of wealth (the 'National Cake' in South Africa the 'national accounts indicate that the balance of economic power between capital and labour during the last two years has swung dramatically more in favour of capital'.

These findings were confirmed and reinforced by other research that examined incomes and employment within individual households in Soweto. A summary of this research was published in WIP 17 in a section under the title 'Inflation and the Working Class'. Readers are also referred to other contributions in that section of WIP 17.

Keenan introduces the studies of aspects of the local food industry reproduced below by, firstly, examining the nature of inflation; and, secondly, discussing the role of large business in price increases.

THE NATURE OF INFLATION

THE argument put forward in this section of Keenan's paper is that inflation cannot simply be attributed to 'inflation', but that inflation itself needs to be explained.

The commonly held explanation in the media, put forward by the state and by business, is that 'the supply of money has been allowed to increase too rapidly and so cause "demand inflation". Too much money is allegedly chasing too few goods'. In other words, money should reflect the value of goods produced in a society. As is argued in the first part of the Political Economy series (see WIP 19: 27-8) money (gold) is the equivalent of the value of commodities produced. So, if there is too much money, not all of it will find commodities to purchase and, therefore, the prices of artificially 'scarce' commodities will rise (the market - supply and demand - determines the price of goods). The remedy, if one accepts this explanation, is, therefore, simple - reduce the supply of money printed by the state. This also normally means cutting state expenditure (such as welfare expenditure under Margaret Thatcher who is one of the adherents to this explanation).

Keenan presents an argument against this view. He says that Professor Botha (a Wits economist) has shown that if the money supply has risen by 21% during the year July, 1979, to June, 1980, 15% of that increase was taken up by the increase in the price of goods and services (of 15%). We then still have to explain the increase in the price of goods and services, but we will return to this below.

This leaves a real 6% increase in the supply of money. During the same year the South African economy experienced a high 8% growth rate. In other words, Professor Botha argues, the increase in the supply of money could have been too low, rather than too high!

The first argument, the 'monetarist' position (too much money and too few goods) would say that there is a scarcity of commodities in South Africa.

The second position, held by Professor Botha and others, shows that there is no 'scarcity of goods in general and the volume of production has increased'.

If the monetarists can't explain inflation in South Africa, what is the explanation? Keenan says that

> the explanation is to be found in the changing nature of capital and the capital accumulation process (profit making) in South Africa during the 1970s.

Aided by enormously increased foreign investment in the 1960s South Africa passed to a 'monopoly phase of accumulation'. In other words, a few firms (or one single firm) in every sector and in the economy as a whole have grown tremendously and dominate the various sectors and the economy. Two processes have taken place:

<u>concentration</u> of capital - more and more production in one branch of industry has come under the control of fewer firms;

<u>centralisation</u> of capital - a few firms have expanded into and control many different kinds of activity (eg mining firms expanding into the building industry, metal, textiles, etc).

But, Keenan says, the process of growth (through take-overs) was expensive because share prices were high at the time of the take-overs as the economy was growing. This meant that when the crisis of profitability of capital in South Africa started in the mid-1970s, large-scale capital had a difficult task of getting back the money that had been spent while growing, and also achieving a high rate of profit. Their position was worsened by growing working class action and the blow that the 1976 uprising gave to money availability.

> It was the rise in the gold price and a concerted assault on the Black working class (viz Wiehahn and Riekert) under the ideological guise of 'reform' (that) provided the stimulus and necessary confidence for the economy to move slowly at first, from mid-1978, into a boom phase.

<u>MONOPOLIES AS FETTERS OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS</u>

KEENAN argues that, because of the processes of concentration and centralisation of capital, most sectors of the economy became oligopolistic (a few firms dominate each sector) or monopolistic (a single firm totally dominates the sector).

This means that prices of commodities produced in that sector are set by the controlling firm or firms, and are higher than what it costs to produce them. The large firms can do this because they also control how much of anything is produced - if too much was produced the price would fall.

However, normally increases in production would mean that less time is spent on producing each commodity and, therefore, its value and price decreases. But because monopolies control the market they can increase a price while productivity increases and it costs less to produce that commodity. This is called 'monopoly super-profits'.

Keenan says that 'this is precisely what happens in many sectors of the South African economy', and that it is this that causes inflation.

He continues:

> THESE processes are seen most clearly in the South African food industry. It has been food prices more than anything else which has fuelled the rapid increase in the rate of inflation of the last two years, and especially in the last twelve months. During the twelve months to April 1981 the food price index had risen by 30%, with the meat prices alone going up by 57%.
>
> It is these price increases that have had the greatest effect on the lower income group, that is mostly africans, and which are primarily responsible for the erosion of their material conditions of living.
>
> What has been going on in the food industry? The industry has undergone a radical change in structure and emphasis during the seventies. The increase in real black incomes in the first few years of the 1970s offered new horizons to the industry. The general poverty of the black population made it obvious that much of their additional disposable income would be spent on foodstuffs. The two big food giants, Tiger and Premier Milling, consequently geared themselves up for a massive anticipated black consumer generated growth, particularly in the more profitable protein rich secondary foods. Between about 1972/3 and 1978 Premier and Tiger have invested about R100-million and R150-million respectively in capital expenditure (buying machinery and buildings) to meet this new demand.
>
> The giants basically transformed themselves

by diversifying away from their traditional bases of primary foods, which, although protected by government price control are not so likely to release big profit margins, and integrating their production both vertically and laterally (controlling all aspects of food production and distribution).

By 1980 Tiger had listed investments in 16 companies and unlisted investments in another 111 others. It consisted of 170 wholly-owned direct subsidiaries; ten partly-owned direct subsidiaries; 42 wholly-owned indirect subsidiaries; and 106 partly-owned indirect subsidiaries. Its interests extended from its traditional base of maize milling (12 companies), wheat milling (five companies), oat milling, baking and confectionary (49)to vegetable expressors and refiners; manufacture of fats and peanut butter; manufacture of margarine; animal feeds; egg production, processing and hatcheries for layers; mushroom growing and canning; fishing (rock lobster processing; pelagic fishing; production of fishmeal and fish oil; salt snoek processing; deep sea trawling, and cold storage); manufacture and distribution of pharmaceuticals, hospital surgical supplies; wholesale and retail chemists; pet food manufacture; export and shipping; distribution; etc, etc.

The activities of Premier were broadly similar. By 1980 Premier's interests involved 349 operations ranging from wheat and maize milling (18 mills); biscuits (two plants); *bakeries (46); distribution plants (46 in most* centres); agribusiness, animal feeds and processing in eggs, poultry, food sugar and cotton; edible oils and preservatives; industrial feeding; bookshops (18); pharmaceuticals (ten marketing outlets and wholesale distribution outlets); liquor (15 outlets and one bottling plant) (liquor interests were sold off in September 1980 with the exception of 51% holding in Benny Goldberg); and about 60 other sundry installations and branches involving travel, leasing, shipping and clearing, packaging, general trading, etc.

By 1980 these two food giants dominated the industry with annual turnovers of R1 175-million (Tiger, 1980) and R1 205-million (Premier, 1981)

The structure of the other food giants was not dissimilar:

Imperial Cold Storage (ICS) in which Tiger has an 18% holding (1980 turnover R588-million)

Fedfood (1981 turnover R444-million)

Tongaat (1980 turnover R308-million)

Irvin and Johnson (1980 turnover R200-million).

The food giants geared themselves up for real growth that did not materialise. With the onset of the recession they were left with large surplus capacities and turned to relatively vigorous but short-lived price wars amongst themselves in the many sectors of the food industry least controlled by the government.

This general situation is reflected in Premier's declining profit margins for 1975 to 1978.

The beginnings of an upturn in the economy presented the food industry and 'monopoly' capital in general with the opportunity to recoup these costs of transition. The effective cartelization (see postscript below) of most markets enabled prices to be raised excessively in relation to the price of production. This has been nowhere more apparent than the food industry in general and the meat industry in particular.

With the onset of 'boom' conditions in 1980 it seems to have been widely assumed that incomes would rise across the board. After all, the dominant ideology in the market place was testifying that economic growth was beneficial to all sectors of the population. Indeed, one reason why this economic growth has not benefitted *the black population is because the food industry* in particular, from its position of monopolisation and consequent muscle in the market, was able to set prices. This has assured excessive profits in most branches of the industry and has been the major contributor in driving up inflation.

Most sectors of the food industry, and monopoly capital in general, deny these sorts of accusations. The food industry, in particular has been particularly reticent and careful not to release information that would furnish 'proof' of these charges.

We can, however, look at some of the ways in which these companies have attempted to control the market and so establish a monopoly rate of profit, and the extent to which profits have been achieved through excessive price increases rather than increased turnover or productivity.

THE 'EGG SCANDAL' (NEPCO)

THE sort of muscle that the food giants have brought to bear on the market in their attempts to control and cartelize (see 'postscript' below) specific branches of production and marketing is probably nowhere better seen than in the field of egg production.

In the first quarter of 1978 the big three milling companies (Premier, Tiger and Tongaat) are alleged to have held a confidential meeting to discuss ways of 'stabilising the egg trade' (RDM, 27.09.79). The head of the Public Relations Department of the SA Co-ordinating Consumer Council informed the RDM that the chief executives of these three milling companies met to discuss the possibilities of 1) a price war against smaller producers. It was estimated that this would cost R27-million and would be too expensive, particularly as it would not guarantee protection from competition as it would not stop free entry into the market place;

2) starting a loose cartel;

3) forming a formal cartel and inviting the 'independents' to join them.

The big three decided on the third of these strategies in the form of a co-operative, namely the National Egg Producers' Co-operative Ltd (NEPCO), which was registered as limited liability company on 27 September, 1978, and began trading on 16 October, 1978. The formation of a co-operative as distinct from a loose cartel was particularly significant in that it required that all members pool their profits and their losses.

The co-operative comprised a number of egg producers owned and controlled by Tiger Oats, Premier Milling and Tongaat, referred to as the 'majors', and a number of producers who were not controlled by these three companies, referred to as the 'independents'.

In the early 1970s these milling companies expanded their chicken feed production capacities and then began buying egg producing organisations to ensure outlets for their feed. Since then the number of egg producers has constantly diminished with the majors coming to own more than 40% of the laying hens under permit in the country. With the formation of NEPCO, the majors acquired effective control of approximately 70% of the permitted laying hens in the country.

The problem for the majors was that they had been pushing feed (80% of egg costs) and consequently over-producing eggs. This increasing egg surplus meant that they were very often losing on egg production, or having to sell at substantially less than many of the independent producers. With the establishment of the co-operative, the majors thought that they had established an effective monopoly of egg production. As such NEPCO wrote a tough letter to the retailers on 4 October, notifying them that they would be supplying them with eggs as from 18 October and that credit terms from then on would be strictly ten days net from date of statement, with a penalty rate of 1,5% per month or part thereof on all overdue balances.

It was clear to the supermarkets that a monopoly situation had been formed and that if it was allowed to continue they would clearly be paying more for their eggs.

The effective monopoly held by the big three meant that most of the independents had to buy their feed from them, buy their day-old chicks or pullets from them, and then finally ask them for credit. In the event of a confrontation with the independents, the majors were not only in a position to cut prices below production costs, but were also in a position to disrupt feed supplies, provide inferior laying stock and to cut off credit.

It is alleged that the big three's disregard for the ethics of a free market even went so far as to 'induce' independents to pay protection money. Under the guise of a franchise agreement, Nulaid, owned by Premier Milling, allegedly induced independents to pay a fee of 1 cent a dozen for eggs sold and to buy only Epol feeds (made by Premier Milling) in return for not marketing in their areas. The alleged background to the 'franchise' agreement was a prior short period of price cutting, undertaken significantly by Steinbro (Tiger) and not Nulaid (Premier), 'in order to soften up the independents'.

The deputy-chairman of Premier, Mr Wrighton, told the Sunday Express (30.09.79) that 'as a large public company we feel we contribute substantially to the economy of the country and are <u>entitled to a place in the sun</u>' (my emphasis).

As far as egg production went, Premier did not find its place in the sun. As Premier's chairman, Tony Bloom, admitted, 'the egg division continues to be a disaster area' (Sunday Times, 26.08.79). The supermarkets, aware of the monopoly situation created by NEPCO, backed the independents. When NEPCO cut its egg price in the Lowveld by five cents a dozen, the Norwood Hypermarket cut its price by nine cents a dozen in order to support the independents and so bring competition back into the market. On 7 December, 1979, Premier announced that it was pulling out of NEPCO at the end of the financial year (30 June, 1980). Gerhard Scholtemeijer, an executive director of Premier, explained that the main reason for Premier quitting NEPCO was '<u>the blatant misuse of the organisation by people outside it</u>' (my emphasis). He said that Premier had 'bent over backwards' to bring about a fair deal for companies, producers and marketers through NEPCO (RDM, 08.12.79).

The impediment to a monopoly rate of profit is competition. As the chairman of Tiger Oats explained in his annual report for 1980, 'In the case of margarine, increased competition between producing companies also affected profitability as is evidenced by the fact that, in spite of an increase of about 20% in oil seed prices in 1980, the maximum price of margarine was only increased by 15%'(!).

An even more blatant example of monopoly pricing is found in the food canning industry. In February, 1980. Langeberg bought out H Jones, the canning side of Piccan. A memorandum on the takeover noted that 'the takeover of Piccan will cost the company just under R7-million over the next 5 years, for the five factories that have been taken over, but will give Langeberg a 75% share of the domestic canned food market, with the resultant rise in selling prices of canned foods'. Canned food prices were immediately increased by 15%!

As far as the meat industry is concerned prices have risen by over 50% in the year. The industry is controlled by three 'giant' companies. The most recent annual general report of the chairman of one of these companies, Imperial Cold Storage (18% owned by Tiger) on 19 May, 1981, made particularly interesting reading.

The chairman, Mr Neate (on the board of Tiger), began his review of the red meat industry by summarising some of the general causes of concern that had been felt in the industry over the preceeding three years. These, he said, were the increasing marketing of beef on the controlled market caused by adverse climatic conditions in certain pastoral areas; only marginally increased producer prices despite much higher production costs and the decline in the country's cattle production.

'The cumulative affect of these factors', said Mr Neate, 'with the exceptionally buoyant demand in the current economic climate resulted in a steep rise in meat prices in the last quarter of 1980. (CPI for meat rose 57% in 1980 - JK). This in reality was <u>the correction of prices which remained below the CPI during the previous 5 years</u>' (my emphasis).

If we are trying to make sense of Mr Neate's report, it seems that he is saying that the one (the main) reason for the present meat price rise was under-supply due to a decline in the country's cattle production in the face of 'exceptionally buoyant demand'. As far as the herd size is concerned, widespread allegations have been made that Mr Jan Lombard, general manager of the Meat Board, actually 'suggested' that red meat producers should cut back herd sizes over the last year or so. The meat industry would appear to be a perfect example of restricting production in a monopoly situation to force prices up.

As far as the 'exceptionally buoyant demand' is concerned, consumer resistance led to a substantial decline in consumption. This was denied emphatically by the meat board, but Mr Neate obligingly tells us later in his report that 'the consumption of red meat dropped alarmingly (in 1980)'.

Having begun to explain the massive meat price rise as due to the reduction in size of the national herd (9,4-million in 1980 to 8,3-million in 1981), Mr Neate carries on to advocate a further raise in the meat board's floor price (raised on June 26th!) 'to encourage producers to increase the national herd' (white-owned).

There we have it. If the supply goes down prices go up. For supply to go up, prices must go up further! It would be much easier to have explained it all in terms of straight-forward monopoly rather than taking shareholders through the contortions of Catch 22.

Mr Neate's report is particularly helpful in that it basically confirms what this paper has been arguing, namely that the current high rate of inflation is not the result of demand, but rather of cost or price increases. In the case of meat, prices were forced up by 57% in the face of alleged demand, while consumption actually dropped dramatically. This is in line with what appears to have happened, albeit on a less dramatic scale, in several other sectors of the economy (eg food). It would appear that increases in prices and hence profits have been increasing more rapidly than physical volume of turnover. This has not been because of excess money supply, with too much money chasing too few goods. On the contrary, excessive price increases, have enabled 'monopoly capital' in general to generate super-profits, in excess of the rate of increase of turnover in volume terms.

The figures that we have for the food industry as a whole are indicative of this. The Consumer Mail published figures to show that consumption of food in volume terms has dropped since 1976. Food consumption, instead of expanding in line with population growth, has declined in real terms (RDM, 21.04.81). Results in the food industry over the last 12-18 months are indicative of the successful establishment of a monopoly rate of profit. What is horrific about this is that it would appear to have been brought about, at least in part, by certain deliberate cut-backs in production (eg meat) to generate a 'recovery' in prices - and this in a country and at a time when infant mortality rates in some of the bantustan areas are in the order of 400 per 1 000 in the first 12 months of life.

It is this so-called 'recovery' in prices, reflected in massive 'super-prufits' in most of the country's major companies and corporations over the last 12-18 months that has given capital a dramatically larger share of the 'national cake'; that has led to a massive increase in the rate of inflation and consequent erosion of black living standards; and which led the Minister of Industries, Commerce and Tourism, Dawie de Villiers, to warn commerce that 'the government will not sit idle when exploitation - the ugly face of the free-market system - and unfair trade practices make their appearence' (Star, 21.05.81). (What he meant was that capital - whether small or large, monopoly or competitive - should not expose its ugly face. Exploitation is inherent in capitalism - eds).

EDITORS' POSTSCRIPT: A 'cartel' is an agreement between manufacturers regulating output and prices. Such an arrangement is also called a syndicate.

At the end of August it came to light that several maize millers (some of the companies mentioned in the article above) were proposing to form a cartel to 'stabilize the chaos in the industry' (as one of the millers involved put it in the language of capitalism, and interestingly enough, the same language used about the establishment of NEPCO - see above).

Among the firms in the proposed cartel are said to be the Premier Group, Tiger Oats, Tongaat and Fedfoods Ltd. A document to be signed by member firms makes it clear that prices and output will be regulated 'to ensure a fair return for the parties on their investment' (in other words, to increase profits as much as possible); and to undercut in specific areas in order to close down and buy out 'rebel' producers (RDM, 28.08.81 and 31.08.81).

Let us just briefly see what profits and statements some of these firms are already making:

Fedfood - 'In the year ended March 31, Fedfood, which has its main interests in milling, fishing, snacks, frozen foods and edible oils, boosted attributable income by 54,7 percent to R16,7-million...

After-tax income was up 59,1 percent to R463,6-million' (Star, 18.08.81).

Tiger Oats - This firm 'announced an after-tax profit of R27 085 000 for the six months ended June 30 as an increase of more than 20 percent on the R22 457 000 profit for the same period last year' (Star, 12.08.81).

Tongaat Group - 'The Tongaat group is on target, for its objective of earning at least 125c a share in the year ending March 1982 ... This would be a 25,5 percent increase over the record 101,2c earned in the year just ended...'

Said chairperson, Chris Saunders: 'The restructuring of the foods division has proceeded satisfactorily and the benefits of this have started to materialise. This division, particularly, offers substantial scope for improved profit performance and this began to be realised during the current year' (Star, 03.08.81; Sunday Tribune, 02.08.81).

Premier Group - managing director, Tony Bloom, in an interview before the planned maize millers' cartel became public news, denied talk of cartels in the food industry - 'It's patent rubbish. The food industry is probably the most competitive sector of all'.

He also claimed that Premier aimed at 'attainment of excellence and it is also a service to the community. We are also very hungry (sic), profit-motivated, and aggressive. We just don't think the two are incompatible' (RDM, 31.07.81).

The Minister of Agriculture, PTC du Plessis, said that he would institute price control on maize products if the cartel should push up prices or 'exploit consumers'.

The PFP's Philip Myburgh asked for stronger action in terms of the Promotion of Competition legislation than the Minister of Trade and Industries has at his disposal. Myburgh suggested that the members of the cartel must have taken legal opinion on the move - 'It would appear to me that they must be pretty sure of their case and one wonders whether the creation of this monopoly is not taking place with the knowledge of our Government authorities' (RDM, 01.09.81).

Then the farmers entered the fray. Firstly, because they stand to gain nothing directly from a price increase on maize meal (the price of maize grain is fixed); secondly, and of greater importance, they opposed the planned cartel because they were going to lose money! The argument runs like this:

1) the maize industry has had a record harvest for the second year running (a surplus over domestic consumption of 7-million tons this year);

2) however, this surplus is partly exported (transport limitations are said to prevent more than 5,39-million tons from being exported during the current year) but at a loss. This loss would amount to R275-million plus a deficit of about R66-million from the previous year;

3) farmers have to pay levies of R15,42 per ton (white maize) and R18,25 per ton (yellow maize) to 'replenish the stabilisation fund' that in part cushions the export losses;

4) *so if the millers' cartel pushed up meal prices* this could reduce local consumption (which would not necessarily affect the cartel members' profits) and, therefore, increase the mass of maize to be exported. This would then, obviously, increase the loss on exports and increase the amount farmers have to pay into the stabilisation fund (RDM, 23.07.81 and Star, 09.09.81).

Dr Kit le Clus, of the National Maize Producers' Organisation (NAMPO), said that any 'millers' cartel would be fought tooth and nail'.

(The maize producers also have it in for the state's policy of subsidising and protecting local industry, such as steel, tractor engines, etc, which push up costs to agriculture. Said the NAMPO journal: 'Despite the role the protected domestic industry plays in pushing up maize prices, the State expects the maize producers to bear the brunt of the losses incurred on foreign markets' - the export of maize could earn R800-million in foreign exchange).

The Minister of Agriculture has repeated his threat to re-introduce price control on meal 'if the consumer should be exploited'. When and how will he decide that the consumer is being exploited? Starvation, malnutrition and poverty is there already - will it need food riots?

SCHOOLBOY POLICE

THE use of 'schoolboy police' arises directly out of the starvation and landhunger that characterises the bantustan regions, and indirectly out of the 'militarisation' of white society that is essential to the maintenance of white political domination.

This briefing will trace the origins of the present moves to include white boys formally in the repressive structures of the South African state. It needs to be situated within a wider analysis that looks at other examples of such political and ideological preparation of, primarily, white society; and that looks at the range of 'police' forces that exist in South Africa at present (from industrial commandos to pistol clubs (see, for example, WIP 7:15-21)).

CATTLE THEFT - TERROR OR STARVATION

ONE of the first reports that appeared on the use of schoolboys to aid the regular South African police said that cattle were having their tendons slashed, in the same way as the 'terrorists' had been doing in Rhodesia in order to 'help along' the depopulation of certain border agricultural areas. In this case it was the northern areas of Natal being spoken about, and the operations being reported on were against cattle rustlers.

Twenty boys, aged between 16 and 18 from the Vryheid and Newcastle High Schools were being used to aid the police operating in the Ubombo area of northern Natal. The boys manned (sic) roadblocks 'to search vehicles for dagga, weapons and illicit liquor', patrolled routes thought to be taken by poachers, and searched for snares. This was at the end of 1979.

One article quoted SAP Public Relations Officer Lt Col Leon Mellet (the one who wore camouflage uniform to appear on television) as saying:

> We're undermanned and asking the schoolboys for help seemed like a good plan. It also gave them some idea of what being a policeman is all about, and as a result several have indicated they want to join the force when they leave school. That's great - we really need them (Scope, 21.03.80).

Another report on the same incident spoke of the scale of the poaching that was going on - 'an average of 25 stock thefts a month were reported in the past. In the first six months of the year 425 cattle were stolen from farms' (Natal Mercury, 14.12.79).

During 1979 the SAP investigated 27 000 cases of stock theft involving 130 000 animals, and initiated 8 000 prosecutions involving 12 000 people. 'Most thefts were for the pot', concluded the same article (Sunday Tribune, 04.05.80).

DAGGA - CORRUPTING THE YOUTH?

DURING the early part of 1980 schoolboys were used in several raids against dagga plantations in Natal. For example, in January 32 schoolboys were enlisted to help with the pulling out of dagga plants after crops had been spotted by an air force helicopter (Star, 17.01.80). This was at Paulpietersburg in Natal. Early in April a report said that 'Volunteer schoolchildren, police reservists and South African Defence Force aircraft helped destroy huge dagga plantations in Northern Natal' (RDM, 02.04.80).

Later that month the man who was said to have introduced the idea of using schoolboys