

# Farm evictions — DP's policy

**Daily Dispatch  
Reporter**

**EAST LONDON** — The Democratic Party believes in fair labour practice and is currently committed to changing existing legislation to bring domestic and farm workers under the aegis of the Labour Relations Act.

This was said by the DP spokesman for agriculture, Mr Errol Moorcroft, in response to an appeal by the Anglican Bishop of Grahamstown, Bishop David Russell, for the DP to spell out its policy on farm worker evictions.

Mr Moorcroft said until such time as farm workers were protected by law the DP would encourage farmers to engage in fair labour practices.

He said there should be no difference in the way city dwellers or farmers treated their workers adding that the farmer carried additional responsibilities towards workers that were not the norm in towns and cities.

He said he resented people living in towns criticising farmers for not providing adequately for their workers, particularly in respect of their old age.

"In my opinion it smacks of hypocrisy," he said.

A man living in town was quite within his rights to fire a worker without having to find him alternative work or accommodation.

Furthermore he was not responsible for providing for the work-

ers' old age.

Mr Moorcroft said in the event of a farm being sold or of a farmer dying and the new owner was not able to take on the existing workers he would be required to give them at least one month's notice.

In cases of "genuine hardship" the DP would encourage the farmer to defer the notice "within reason" until such time as alternative work or accommodation could be found for the workers.

He said it depended on the farmer's individual circumstances whether he would be able to allow retired workers to remain on his farm or not.

Farm workers over the age of 65, however, qualified for old age pensions.

Mr Moorcroft said farmers could not be forced to take on workers, particularly those in "an unemployed state".

In such instances he would be guilty of permitting illegal squatting.

Farmland was zoned for agricultural and not for residential purposes and legal constraints guarded against improper use of farmland, he said.

He said he believed increased media coverage of the farm workers' conditions would only serve to polarise the farming community.

The DP was opposed to summary evictions and of worker exploitation of any kind, he said.