

Government and Sasol accused of gross neglect

Political Staff

THE ASSEMBLY — In a heated snap debate last night the Government and Sasol authorities were accused of gross neglect of security at the strategic installations sabotaged this week.

The special half-hour debate, called for by Mr John Wiley, leader of the South African Party, was marked by sharp clashes between Government and Opposition speakers and between the two main opposition parties.

The Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr de Klerk, rejected charges of

negligence and said urgent attention was being given to improving existing security arrangements.

The Opposition's chief spokesman on police matters, Mr Ray Swart, (PFP Musgrave) drew angry interjections when he said the only real long-term security would be in "the contentment, loyalty and common patriotism of all sections of our population."

Opening the debate, Mr John Wiley (SAP, Simons-town) called for the immediate appointment of a commission of inquiry into "the inadequate security and negligence by Sasol."

Those who had been negligent should be dismissed forthwith, he said.

The nation had been shocked by the sabotage; the people were angry and demanding drastic action.

There had not been great damage, but South Africa's enemies had been rejoicing.

NEW INCENTIVES

Urgent legislation was needed to provide for incentives to encourage expenditure on security by private enterprise. He suggested a scheme for tax deductions.

Mr Swart said his party shared the general grave concern. It was abundantly clear from reports so far that the attack had been made all too easy by inadequate security arrangements.

South Africa had entered a new phase of unrest posing ever-increasing threats to life and property. The Sasol-type operation would be repeated again and again as a crisis situation developed.

"We will never develop a total strategy to achieve real security until we find internal peace and contentment. That is the lesson we must learn from the Sasol sabotage and what it symbolises," Mr Swart said.

NO JUSTIFICATION

The leader of the New Republic Party, Mr Vause Raw, said he wanted to dissociate himself from any implied justification for the use of violence and terrorism for political reasons.

The sabotage had been the strategy of planned communist aggression, Mr Raw said. What was unforgivable was that it had come after the warning South Africa had received from the attack on fuel installations in Salisbury.

He blamed the Government for neglecting civil defence.

'There can't be absolute security'

THE ASSEMBLY — There could never be absolute security at any strategic installations, the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr de Klerk, said last night.

In the special debate on the Sasol sabotage, Mr de Klerk denied Opposition allegations that the Government and Sasol were responsible for the incidents.

Mr de Klerk said the Opposition's approach lacked perspective.

He emphatically rejected the suggestion that there had been a major indiscretion by Sasol.

Reasonable security measures had, in fact, been in operation at Sasol and Secunda.

The Minister said he conceded there might be room for improvement. This was also the attitude of Sasol's management when he visited the plant this week.

Urgent attention was continually given to improving security arrangements.

The country's security structures included a national "key point committee" which made recommendations about security measures.

During the past three to six months, a total of R4.3-million had been spent on new security measures at the Sasol projects, part of which had already been completed, Mr de Klerk said.

He said that at the sites of the explosions the security was such that it had been detected that something was wrong well before the explosions occurred.

Because of the time factor, however, it was just not possible to prevent them.

Since the establishment of the Sasol project at Secunda an enormous amount of R11-million had been spent on security.

Reasonable security measures had been taken at the plants concerned, as could be seen from the speedy action. — Sapa and Political staff.