

MINING - ACCIDENTS
1983

JAN. — DEC.

Two die in

mine fall

212 S. Post
4/11/83
JOHANNESBURG — Two men were killed and another injured when they fell from a platform at the 71st level of the President Steyn Gold Mine near Welkom yesterday

A spokesman for Anglo American said the men who died were from Transkei and Lesotho. Their names have been withheld pending notification of their next-of-kin.

The injured man, Mr C J Alberts of Welkom, was admitted to the provincial hospital in Welkom — Sapa

7 dead in gold mines 5/11/83

SEVEN miners died and five others were injured within 24 hours in separate incidents at two gold mines. Yesterday five miners were killed at Rand Mines ERP gold mine on the East Rand in two accidents.

Four black miners died in a pressure burst at a shaft about 3000m below the surface in the central area of the mine. Four white miners were injured by the burst and taken to hospital but their condition is not serious.

In an unrelated accident a locomotive guard died in a shunting accident.

The names of the dead miners will be withheld until their next of kin have been informed.

And on Monday two men died and another was injured when they fell from a platform at the 71st level of President Steyn gold mine near Welkom.

The men fell into an ore path a vertical passageway along which ore is transferred.

The injured man Mr C J Alberts of Welkom was admitted to the provincial hospital in Welkom where he is in a stable condition.

Five die in ER ²¹² mine accidents ^{Star} 5/11/83

East Rand Bureau
Five mineworkers were killed and four injured in two accidents at the East Rand Proprietary Mine, Boksburg, yesterday

Four miners were killed and four injured in a pressure burst in the central shaft area about 300m underground at about 9 15 am

The injured are in the local mine hospital where they are said to be in a satisfactory condition. Their names

have not been released
In an unrelated incident, a locomotive guard was killed in a shunting accident in the mine's shaft also at about 9 15 am

A spokesman for the mine said today the names of those killed were being withheld until their families had been told

It is understood they were migrant workers from the homelands.

The cause of the pressure burst is being investigated

Pressure
CAPT TITLS 5/1/83
burst kills
212
5 miners

JOHANNESBURG —
Rand Mines has announced that five black mineworkers were killed yesterday at its ERPM gold mine on the East Rand

Four died in a pressure burst at 9 15 about 3 000 metres below the surface in the central shaft area of the mine

Four other miners were injured and are in hospital Their condition was not serious.

In another incident, a locomotive guard was killed in a shunting accident. The names of the men are being withheld until their families have been informed — Sapa

Technically

*des miners
14. Sapa*

sapa

(217) DSA
**Mine rockfall
kills worker**

A MINERWORKER was killed in a rockfall at President Steyn Gold Mine in the Free State on Monday, a spokesman for the mine said yesterday.

The man's name was being withheld until his family had been informed, the spokesman said — Sapa

212 120M 18/1/83

Owambo overpaid for stone claim

By KOOS COETZEE
Mail Africa Bureau

WINDHOEK — The Owambo administration paid a former Angolan between R50 and R83 a truck load for crushed stone when it could have bought it for R35, the Thirion Commission of Inquiry into the misappropriation of state funds was told yesterday

The commission was sitting for the first time since the Christmas recess

The administration's acting director of works, Mr M J Gouws, told the commission he became suspicious and started investigations after

learning that contractor Mr Antomo Alves was not paid a fixed price for each load of crushed stone

Mr Alves fled South West Africa late last year

The director of works, Mr Frederik de Villiers, who is a close friend of Mr Alves, will appear before the commission again this morning

Mr Gouws said Mr De Villiers became angry when another company, Henning Crushers, offered to deliver crushed stone to the administration at R35 a load

Mr De Villiers told Mr Alves the administration would continue to use him, Mr Gouws said

'Ovambo jobs threatened by irregularities'

WINDHOEK — The jobs of about 220 Ovambo factory workers in South West Africa had been jeopardised by Ovambo Administration officials who circumvented tender procedures, the Thirion Commission of inquiry heard yesterday

The managing director of a furniture manufacturing firm and holder of a State contract, Mr H D Lehnerdt, told the commission in Windhoek the administration had ordered 3 600 beds for schools, hostels and hospitals through a wholesale agent for a South African manufacturer

The Owambo Administration paid R216 000 for the beds — R61 642 more than it would have cost the government had it invited tenders

The commission, chaired by Mr Justice P W Thirion of Natal, is hearing evidence into alleged irregularities in State spending in SWA

Mr Lehnerdt said his company, MKU Enterprises, operated a furniture factory at Okahandja employing 220 Ovambos and 20 others

Had the Owambo Administration awarded the contract for the beds to his company, the transaction would have ensured a month's employment for the factory workers

The purchase order for the beds had gone to a Windhoek-based company, Whyllie Enterprises,

which acted as agent for Edblo of Transvaal

Earlier evidence before the commission was that the wife of a government official was acting as agent for Whyllie in Owambo

Mr Lehnerdt said the beds, which did not carry the SABS mark of approval, would not stand up to "severe use" in school hostels

Late last year, Mr Lehnerdt said, an official of the Owambo Administration had asked him "to condone" the purchase from Whyllie

It was said the administration had been committed to the purchase by one of its employees acting beyond his authority. It had to honour the commitment

Mr Lehnerdt said the official inferred that Mr Lehnerdt's attitude "could have a bearing on future purchases of furniture" from his company by the Owambo Government

The implication was that a "huge order" for school desks was being compiled and Mr Lehnerdt's firm might not be given the order

The Secretary to the Owambo Administration, Mr Frans Viljoen, later telephoned him with a similar request "to condone" the purchase from Whyllie Enterprises

Mr Lehnerdt said he had obtained an interview with the chairman of the Owambo Executive Committee, Mr Peter Kalangula, in which he had pointed out the circumstances of the contract — Sapa

ARGUS 10/2/83 (212)

7 miners die in rescue bid

Argus Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — Seven miners have died while trying to find a missing workmate

The tragedy, about noon yesterday, occurred between 2 400 and 2 900 m below ground at the ERPM gold mine in Boksburg

The bodies of the seven miners and their missing colleague were found in an airway used to extract heat. All died of heat-stroke

An overseer, Mr Wynand van Rensburg, 47, who worked at the mine for 23 years, was among the victims

The names of the seven other miners, all black, may not be released until their families have been told

A mine spokesman said the accident hap-

pened after the team finished repairs underground

"They noticed that one miner was missing and went to look for him. At the surface the management was not aware at this stage of what was going on," the spokesman said

OVERCOME

"It is assumed that the miners decided to enter the airway after realising that the missing man would have to be rescued quickly if he was to be saved from the heat

"Unfortunately, they were overcome in the course of the operation"

The spokesman said that when the management heard about the attempted rescue, a team was sent into the area with a doctor on standby at the surface

WN
BOOK

EVERY CANDIDATE MUST enter in column (1) the number of each question answered (in the order in which it has been answered), leave columns (2) and (3) blank.

	Internal	External
(1)	(2)	(3)
4	13 1/2	
9	11	
6	11 1/2	
1	11	
5	10	
	56 1/2	
Examiners' Initials		

Degree/Diploma/Certificate for which you are registered (e.g. B.A., B.Sc.) ... CTA

Subject.....ECONOMICS.....1B.....
 (to be copied from the heading on the Examination Paper)

Paper No.....
 (to be copied from the heading on the Examination Paper)

NOTE CAREFULLY

1. Enter at the top of each page and in column (1) of the block on this cover the number of the question you are answering
2. Blue or black ink must be used for written answers. The use of a ball point pen is acceptable. Red or green ink may be used only for underlining, emphasis or for diagrams, for which pencil may also be used.
3. Names must be printed on each separate sheet (e.g. graph paper) where sheets additional to examination book(s) are used.
4. Do not write in the left hand margin.

WARNING

1. No books, notes, pieces of paper or other material may be brought into the examination room unless candidates are so instructed
2. Candidates are not to communicate with other candidates or with any person except the invigilator.
3. No part of an answer book is to be torn out
4. All answer books must be handed to the commissioner or to an invigilator before leaving the examination.

1999

Any dishonesty will render the candidate liable to disqualification and to possible exclusion from the University

ed ife

man I could not make a new life or acquire new friendships"

Ansell said he had then strangled her with a tie, acting without intention to kill her

He told the judge he had had no desire to live without her. He had taken an overdose of drugs and all he could remember was holding her in his arms before he lost consciousness

Dr S E Salmond, a psychiatrist, said Ansell had been under severe emotional distress as a result of the divorce, of being in a strange country and his physical handicap

gain She the state we bick-told me not coming more and going to a friend of -tified heart on o her and xpectedly, ture hap-shed and elderly

Orsmond in new post

The founder of Boys' Town in South Africa, Father Reginald Joseph Orsmond, has been appointed Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Johannesburg, the Vatican announced this morning

Father Orsmond attended St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria and was ordained in 1964. Born in Johannesburg 52 years ago, he founded Boys' Town for problem boys in the late 50s. He has also been curate of Regina Mundi Church in Soweto

7 miners die in gallant rescue bid

212 Stair
10/2/83

By Joao Santa Rita
A brave rescue mission ended in tragedy yesterday when seven miners lost their lives trying to save a colleague

The men died at about noon, at a depth of between 2 400 and 2 900 metres at the ERPM gold mine in Boksburg

The seven miners and the colleague they had tried to save were later found dead in a duct used to expel heat from underground. They had all apparently died of heat-stroke

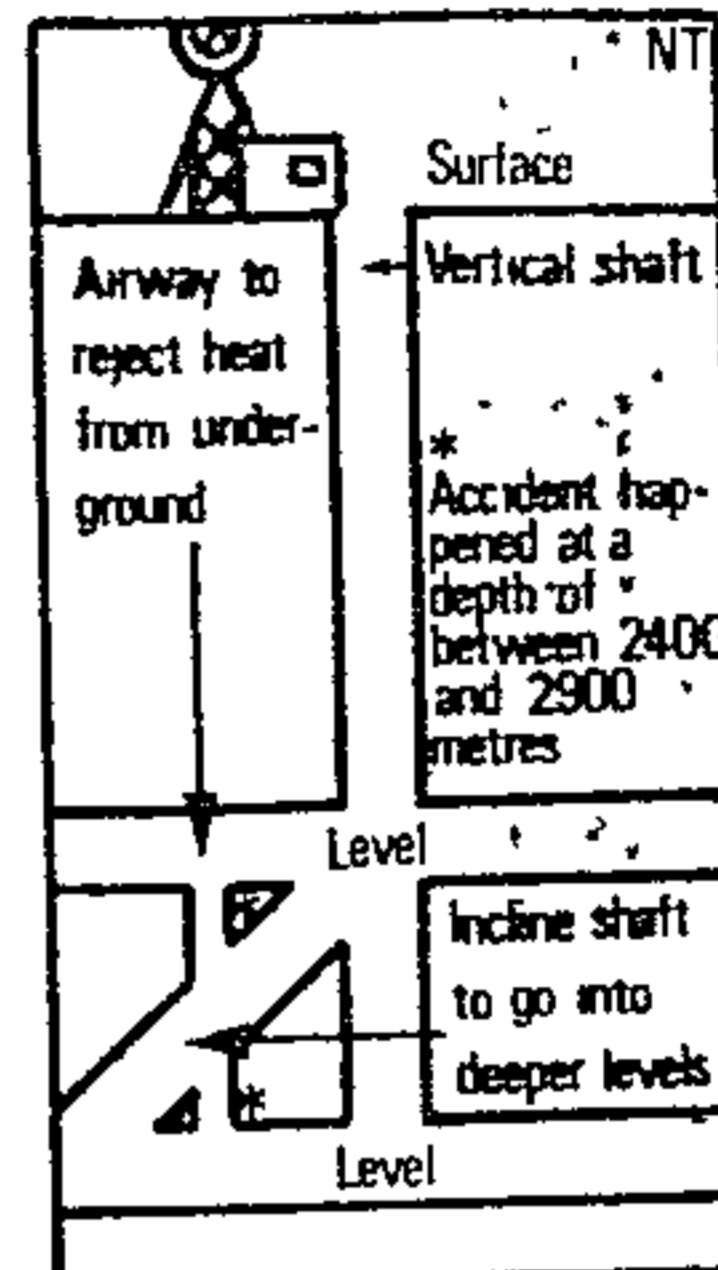
The name of one miner, an overseer, has been released. He is Mr Wynand van Rensburg (47), who had worked in the mine for 23 years

The names of the other seven miners, all black, cannot be released until their next-of-kin have been informed

According to a mine spokesman the accident occurred after the team completed repairs underground

"They noticed that one miner was missing and decided to look for him. Management was not aware what was going on," he said

"It is assumed the miners decided to enter



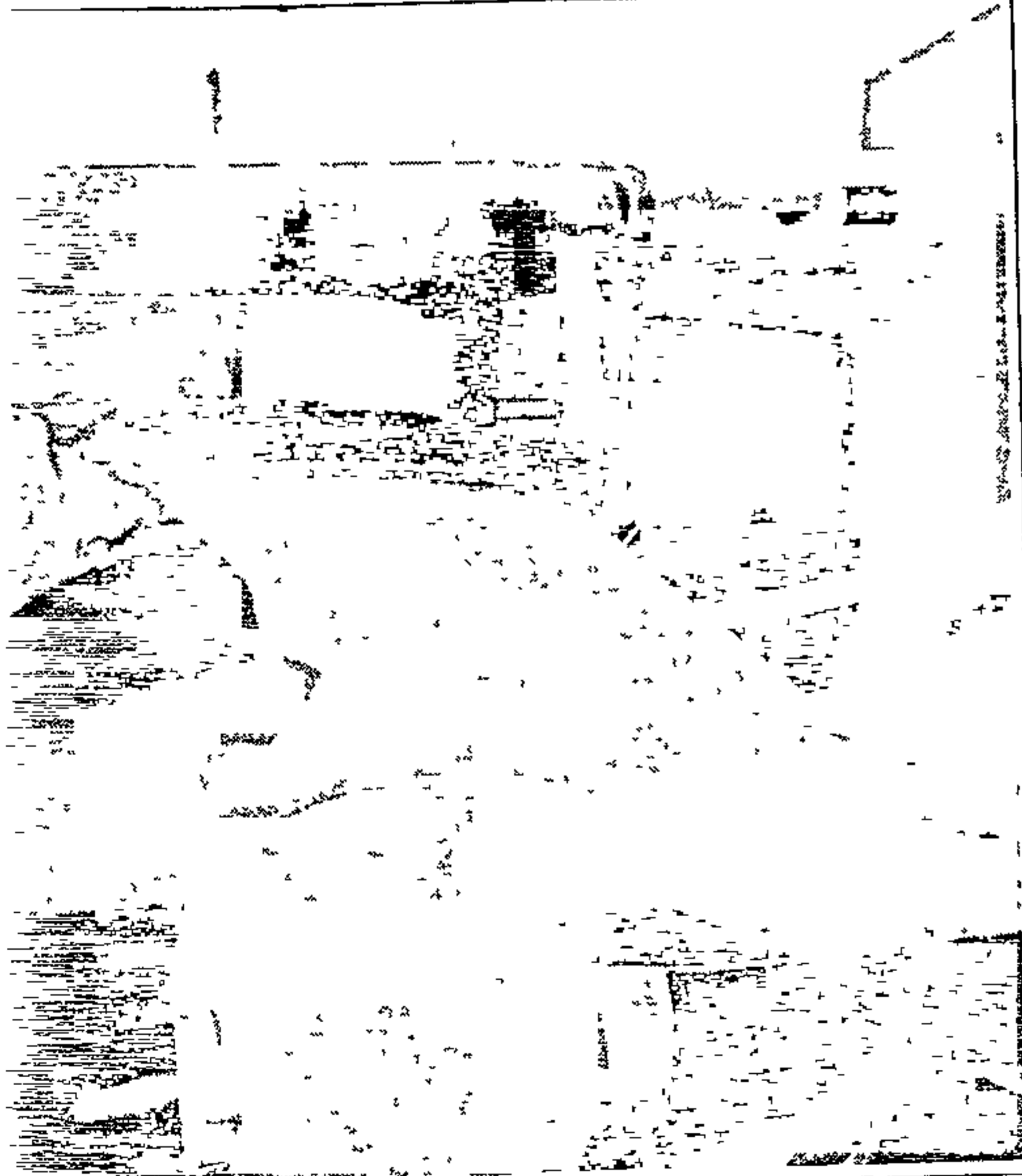
the duct after realising the missing man would have to be rescued quickly if he was to be saved from the heat. Unfortunately they were overcome in the course of the operation"

When management heard about the rescue operation a large rescue team was sent into the area while a doctor was on standby at the surface

"After arrangements had been made to introduce fresh, cool air into the system, the rescue team found the bodies," he added

An inquiry will be held soon

rested



Cricket special

All you need to know about the South Africa v West Indies one-day cricket internationals tomorrow night and Saturday will be published in a special colour section in The Star tomorrow

THE FAVOURITE

Dead
miner
named

212

2004
11/2/83

Mail Reporter

The mine overseer who died of heatstroke along with seven other miners at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg on Tuesday has been identified as Mr Wynand van Rensburg, from Boksburg

Mr Van Rensburg, 47, leaves a wife and four children

The names of the other dead men will be released when their next-of-kin have been notified, a spokesman for Barlow Rand mines said yesterday

The men died after entering an underground airway used to eject heat from underground workings while searching for a miner who had gone missing after a repair operation. The missing man was one of the dead

Barlow Rand mines have said the miners were not a rescue team and had no authorisation to enter the airway

2+



In death's dominion

212
12/2/83
Economic
South African mine safety
Unsafe and not sorry

JOHANNESBURG

'Production is more important than safety.' That statement by the chief safety engineer of one of South Africa's big mining companies goes a long way towards explaining the appalling safety record of South Africa's gold mines. In 1982, accidents killed 596 miners and injured 15,250 badly enough to keep them away from work for two weeks.

South Africa's mining industry paid R60m (\$55m) in pensions and compensation to accident victims and their families in 1982. The size of payments depended on the nature of injuries and on the miner's earnings.

Mine bosses argue that the casualty figures look less alarming when measured against the 500,000 or so working in the mines. Not so. The fatality rate last year was around 1.25 per 1,000 workers—about eight times as high as the annual death rate among Britain's 220,000 coal miners, for example.

Mining in South Africa is more dangerous: some mines go as deep as 12,000 feet; high temperatures, complex geological formations and a high turnover of unskilled workers add to the risks. Mines with the worst accident records, such as Anglo American's Western Deep Levels, also have the highest labour turnover. A big accident invariably pushes up absenteeism and resignations.

Some mines have tightened up on safety. The rate of injuries at the President Steyn mine in the Orange Free State, for

example, has halved in the past decade. Better underground ventilation has improved working conditions and productivity in a number of mines, and reduced the death toll from heat exhaustion. A new way to detect fires—using electrical monitoring of carbon dioxide and dust—has replaced fire patrols. Losses from fires in Anglo American's mines have declined sharply.

Yet the overall fatality rate has barely fallen in the past two decades. Better safety records have been offset by the fact that the industry is now exploiting deeper reefs. Production of gold reefs is reckoned to be too dangerous to exploit in the 1940s and 1950s, but now being mined. Companies are tempted to put their workers at risk by the shortage of new reefs and the rising price of gold.

Casualties could be reduced if the mines were more mechanised and better lit. That would be technically difficult and say the companies too expensive. Tunnels would have to be bigger to accommodate more machinery. And machines themselves cause accidents. Gencor's Evander mines, among the most labour-intensive in the industry, report fewer fires than their competitors because these mines have fewer electric cables and winch ropes, which can easily cause fires by fusing or rubbing against wooden props.

Bigger tunnels would also mean more rock bursts—the sudden collapse of rocks into tunnels and shafts—which account for about a quarter of all deaths in the mines. As the mines dig further—Driefontein Consolidated, the second biggest gold producer after Vaal Reefs, removes over 5m tonnes of ore a year—the rocks around them become unstable. Western Deep recorded no fewer than 4,268 tremors in 1982, of which 789 damaged mine workings. The chamber of mines and Anglo American have been trying for three years at Western Deep to predict rock bursts by computer analysis of tremors as light as the impact of a pencil being dropped on the floor. But mine managers cannot tell whether these tremors are likely to cause accidents. If they evacuated men whenever one occurred, the deeper mines would never do any work.

Mining waste mixed with cement is now pumped into disused shafts at one gold mine to prevent them from collapsing. And in several of the deepest mines along the West Witwatersrand, rectangular pillars of rock are being left at regular intervals along the rock face to hold it up. This precaution means that one in every seven ounces of gold stays in the ground, but mining companies can still make fat profits on that.

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79
47 7

ment Dr Pie' Koornhof said yesterday

This did not constitute an irregularity — Mr 1973 stressed his gov admis... He confirmed that a

within the MPLA More than 30 mem of the party were e led towards the en last year following ported divisions wi the government, how far Angola sh be prepared to .. South Africa with a to ending the war southern Angola

This irregular practice was stopped immediate ly when detected Dr Koornhof said in re sponse to a question by Mr Pat Rogers (NRP King William's Town)

212 Def... Wrong body buried in coffin mix-up

His disclosure caused much amusement in the House and Mr Alf Widman (PFP Hillbrow) wanted to know whether the 'presiding officer pro-cutor had con ducted the case from the bench or the bar

By WELLINGTON SANGOTSHA

coffin to his family at Feni near Peddie

land man who died in the same accident

D. Koornhof chuck ling said suitable arrangements had been made to avoid the prac tice recurring by provid ing adequate staff

EAST LONDON — A Peddie family who lost a relative in a mine acci dent have been told that they buried the wrong body

An assistant magis trate at Peddie Mr N. Khonza confirmed yesterday that several days after the burial ser vice another coffin con taining the body of Mr Qwabe was delivered to his family

The mistake was disco vered by relatives of the Zulu man when they viewed the body

Mr Qinggo Qwabe died in a Free State gold mine Fellow-workers clubbed together and delivered what they be lieved was the body of Mr Qwabe in a sealed

It appeared that there had been a mix-up and that the first body deli vered was that of a Zulu-

Mr Khonza said the people who delivered Mr Qwabe's body yester day had requested that the body buried at Feni be exhumed He told them they would have to make a forma applica tion

Mr Jorge also in out the prospect of n tiation with Dr J. Savimbi's Unitar ment which has widely speculated "The central com tee believes ther absolutely no que of reconciliation tween us and that b of puppet and traito which has massive port from Pretoria"

Alleged shot
No price request
The shooti place at 6 pm day after Ser Ngoduka had search of a m ing the rape of old Duncan woman Sgt Ngoduka

EAST LONDON — The Union Agricultural Union (ECAU) decided at a meeting held in Queenstown that it would not request an in crease in the floor price of mutton and beef for the coming season the public relations officer of the ECAU, Mr L Schoeman said yester day

Mr James Starke chairman of the meat commodity committee would have a meeting with the general mana ger of the meat board by the meat board directly to the producer

He said the survey showed that 95 per cent of the farmers were in favour of using the quota system at those abate-
EAST LONDON — An opinion poll conducted by the meat commodity committee of the East Cape Agricultural Union (ECAU) showed farmers to be overwhelmingly in favour of retaining the quota system of supplying markets with meat, the public rela tions officer for the ECAU, Mr L Schoeman said yesterday

Shebeen fined R11 for assault
The ment with Mr S President of the Gampo Tavern Association, Mr Gladstone Mzwondle Sowazi, 49 was found guilty in the East Lon don Magistrate's Court yesterday of assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm

Mr Sowazi, of Mende- from eye proble and said he still Mr Sowazi pleaded not guilty to a charge of assaulting Mr Malcolm Sam on October 31, 1982

Mr Justice Zietzman reme Court yesterday charged of rape when he appeared in the Sup-
EAST LONDON — A man who raped a 54-year-old woman was sentenced to four years' imprison ment of which one year was suspended for five years

Mr Mbulelo Pistol 20 of no fixed abode, pleaded guilty to the charge of rape when he appeared in the Sup-
EAST LONDON — A man who raped a 54-year-old woman was sentenced to four years' imprison ment of which one year was suspended for five years

WORLD CENTRE
COMMERCIAL ROAD
EAST LONDON
Telephone 23618

Trial postponed
ZWELITSHA — The Fort Here violence trial was postponed yesterday to April 11 in the regional court here after the sixth defence witness had given evidence
Nineteen people in cluding a 15-year old girl have pleaded not guilty before Mr J A Dracatos to charges of public violence The trial is a sequel to an alleged stoning of Cis- kel Government ministe rial cars at the gradu ation ceremony at the University of Fort Here last year — DDR

ing to Mr Jeremy Riches a manager at a store it is the furry animals that are
e's Day is an old tradition, now updated its declaring undying devotion Some of gets include small mechanical dolls ver messages written by the admirer and box the size of a matchbox which plays
DON — Love means big business for es here as the days draw closer to

Man found guilty of rape
Farmers favour quotas — survey
request

Gold mines reject UK safety slur

212
Stew
15/2/83

By David Braun
While South Africa's mining fatality rate remains among the world's highest, the local industry is nevertheless proud of its efforts to improve its safety record.

The Chamber of Mines today reacted sharply to an article in the British magazine, *The Economist*, which claimed that the shortage of new reefs and the rising price of gold tempted South African companies to put their workers at risk.

Under the headline "Unsafe but not sorry," *The Economist* quotes, without naming the chief safety engineer of a mining company as saying "Production is more important than safety."

This statement, says the magazine, goes a long way toward explaining the appalling safety record of South Africa's gold mines.

Mr John Imrie, spokesman for the chamber,

retorted that the headline was inaccurate and the claim that production was more important than safety was untrue.

The *Economist* charges that some gold mines have tightened safety, yet overall fatalities have barely fallen in the past two decades. Better safety precautions have been offset by increasingly dangerous mining conditions.

The fatality rate of South Africa's 500 000 miners last year was 1,25 for every 1 000 — about eight times as high as the death rate among Britain's 220 000 coal miners.

The Chamber of Mines commented that this was like comparing apples with pears. Although the fatality rate among local coal miners was 0,99 a 1 000 — 6,6 times higher than Britain's rate of 0,15 — the true position was not as easily comparable.

"British mining condi-

tions are different. They have closed all but the most accessible pits, have invested heavily in mechanisation and have more sophisticated miners — usually people who learned their skills from their fathers," said Mr Imrie.

SAFETY POLICY

"The British fatality rate is therefore about the lowest in the world. Even the US rate is four times worse."

The safety policy of the South African Chamber says that no phase of operation or administration is of greater importance than accident prevention. It is the aim of the industry to provide, and maintain to the best of its ability, safe and healthy working conditions and to follow operating practices that safeguard all employees.

One clause states "Accident prevention must be an integral part of production and in the case of conflict should receive prior consideration."

Mr Imrie said hundreds of million rands were spent annually on mine safety. The chamber's budget for research aimed at improving safety, health and efficiency this year alone was R30-million. In addition, each mining group spent large sums on safety aspects.

INSPECTORS

Tough safety legislation, viewed by the industry as the best in the world, was strictly policed by Government inspectors and all mines were subject to regular and surprise inspections.

"South African mining conditions are probably the most difficult in the world. In spite of this, each year we are able to expand our activities in hitherto unthinkable areas with no increase in fatality rates."

"The large increase in mining activity, coupled with no corresponding rise in fatalities and injuries, means that the industry is improving safety and working conditions considerably," said Mr Imrie.

SAFETY SCHEME

As part of the bid to cut fatality rates, the mines recently introduced the international mines safety rating scheme which allocates up to five stars for safety precautions and practices.

"This has already had a significant impact on the fatality and injury figures. Gold mines which took part in the system last year reported a fatality rate of 1,08 a 1 000, compared with the industry's average of 1,25. The two collieries awarded five-star status reported no fatalities or injuries in one case and no fatalities in the other."

"So the system appears to be working and the industry is implementing it with enthusiasm."

(2/2) 0214 23/2/83

Klerksdorp miner dies from fumes

A MINER died and 21 others were evacuated from the Kloof Gold Mine near Klerksdorp on Monday after a fire broke out on the 24th level. The Gold Fields Group

said in a statement in Johannesburg yesterday the miner died from exposure to fumes. The statement said the fire was detected at 3.30pm on Monday about 2 150m below

the surface. Firemen worked to control the blaze yesterday and the Gold Fields Group said it expected "a slight loss in production" for the day — Sapa

WEDNESDAY, 23

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~~267~~
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Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works
Hansard Act Q 61-267

23/2/83

*29 Mr R B MILLER asked the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs

- (1) Whether he anticipates that (a) benefits granted in terms of section 101 (2) of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, No 78 of 1973, as defined in section 1 of the Act, and (b) special awards, as referred to in sections 101 and 115 of the Act, are to be increased during the current session of Parliament,
- (2) Whether he will make a statement on the matter?

The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY AFFAIRS

(1) and (2) The Advisory Committee established under section 59 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, 1973, which Committee consists besides the Compensation Commissioner for Occupational Diseases of representatives of employer and employee organizations in the minerals industry, has been requested to advise me regarding a possible increase in benefits payable in terms of the said Act. As soon as the Committee's report has been received and studied, I will consider to make an announcement in connection with the matter.

Mr W V RAW Mr Speaker, arising out of the reply of the hon the Minister, can he tell the House whether there has been a commission of inquiry which has reported on the payment of those pensions, and, if so, what the result is of the report of such a commission? Here I am referring to the Nieuwoudt Commission of Inquiry.

The MINISTER Mr Speaker, I would appreciate it if the hon member would table this question.

Sapa-News

(212) 1204
Mine still sealed as fire burns
24/2/83

SECTIONS of the Kloof Gold Mine near Klerksdorp were still being sealed off yesterday, following the fire on Monday in which one miner died and 21 others had to be evacuated

A spokesman for the Gold Fields Group, the holding company, said yesterday the areas affected by the fire were being sealed off and the miners moved elsewhere

Production had been affected, but the extent had not been assessed, the spokesman added

The fire broke out on the mine's 24th level, 2 150m below the surface. The dead miner was overcome by fumes — Sapa

Three miners killed

JOHANNESBURG—Three men were killed on Tuesday in a rockburst at President Steyn gold mine near Welkom, an Anglo American spokesman said yesterday. The incident occurred at 10 45 a m on the 37th level of the mine's number two shaft. The names of the dead have not been released. — (Sapa)

212

Mercury 3/31/83

16/3/83 212 ROOM

Search for miner's body

By JOHAN BUYS

PROTO teams of the Leslie Gold Mine at Evander in the Eastern Transvaal are still searching for the body of Mr Flip Harmse, a 50-year-old shaft timberman who plunged down the shaft during a rock fall on Sunday afternoon.

A spokesman for the General Mining Group said the search could take seven days

Mr Harmse, of Salonica Road, Evander, was about to finish his shift when the accident occurred at about 4.30 pm

He was underground with eight black mineworkers when the rockfall occurred. They survived the mishap.

Mr Harmse's widow, Mrs Chrissie Harmse, 44, said her husband had phoned from the mine at 3pm to say he would be home by 6pm. When he had not arrived by 7 pm, her 13-year-old son, Flippie, phoned the mine.

"They said Flip was still underground. Then half an hour later, the mine manager and two other officials arrived and told me there has been an accident and there

was little hope that my husband was still alive," she said.

A mine spokesman said yesterday a loading box fell down the shaft, taking hundreds of tons of rock and Mr Harmse with it.

Mr Harmse's 22-year-old son, Mr Bennie Harmse, on border duty in South West Africa, returned home on hearing of the tragedy.

The Harmse couple would have left for the Natal North Coast soon to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

(22) | v

READERS' VIEWS

Some mines in South Africa have high accident rates

In his letter (Readers' Views, March 9), Robert W Vivian appears to be undecided whether British and South African mine safety statistics may, or may not, be validly compared

He first asserts, "the world safety record is held by a South African mine," then — when conceding that South African fatality rates are higher than British — questions whether "the British and South African statistics do compare apples with apples"

Clearly if South African statistics may not be validly compared with those of other countries, then no South African mine can hold a

"world record"

However, it is more fruitful to look at the statistics themselves than to conjecture about their comparability. The figures are for the years shown and represent fatalities per 1 000

Country	Type of Mine	Rate	Year
UK	Coal	0,15	1981
USA	Coal	0,60	1981
SA	Coal	0,99	1982
SA	Gold	1,25	1982

(The Star and SA Mining World)

While it is true that an apple is not a pear, each may be judged by similar standards of acceptability such things as colour, shape, texture of flesh and flavour, and

graded by those standards.

Similarly in mining the acceptability of any standard will depend on the strategic importance of the commodity mined, its value to the community and the tolerance level for injuries and deaths arising therefrom

While in SA gold mines an overall rate of 1,25 is tolerable, some deep, rockburst prone, mines have a rate three times higher. The chamber of mines must, in its own interests, seriously consider whether such rates should be tolerated

Jack Curtis

Norwood

(212) RWM
Search for
17/3/83
miner's body

Mail Reporter

PROTO teams of the Leslie gold mine at Evander were yesterday into the fourth day of an underground search for the body of a 50-year-old shaft timberman, Mr Flip Harmse, who plunged into a shaft on Sunday afternoon.

Mr Harmse, of Salomica Street, Evander, fell into the shaft during a rock fall.

Four die, one hurt in rock fall

12 Mail Reporter

12 19/3/83
FOUR men were killed and an underground mine official injured in a rock fall at the Western Deep Level mine, near Carletonville, at about 11am yesterday, according to an AAC spokesman

The rock fall occurred at 3 600m below the surface. The condition of the injured man, Mr Richard Steyn, is

"satisfactory". The names of the dead are being withheld until their next of kin have been informed.

The names of the men killed at the President Steyn gold mine near Welkom this month have been released. They are Steven Ndingwa, 29, of Port St Johns, Sekola Mokhosi, 33, and David Sehlabaka, 32, both of Leribe, Lesotho.

12/21/83 C. Post

Four killed in mine rockburst

JOHANNESBURG — Four mineworkers were killed instantly and an underground mine official was injured in a rockburst yesterday in the Western Deep Levels goldmine near Carletonville

A spokesman for Anglo American said the rockburst occurred 3 600 metres underground at 11am

The names of the four dead men are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed

The Western Deep Levels mine is the deepest in South Africa — Sapa

Miner's body found in shaft

212 By JOHAN BUYS 21/3/83 search

THE body of Mr Flip Harmse, a 50-year-old Evander mineworker who plunged down a shaft on the Leslie Gold Mine last Sunday during a rockfall, was recovered over the weekend

The body was found at the bottom of the shaft by proto teams after a five-day

The body was brought to Springs for a post mortem

Mr Harmse, a shaft timberman, of Selonica Street, Evander, was about to go off shift when he plunged down the shaft during the rockfall

Mr Harmse leaves his wife, Mrs Chrissie Harmse, 44, and three children



Vroue van Normandie" best producer of youth and children's programmes, David Lister, for "Riding High"

Awards in the radio section were best broadcaster, musical performance excluded, Johannes van der Walt, best drama producer, Margot Luyt, best programme maker, drama excluded, Leon Schuster, best contribution to the advancement of serious music, Manuel Escorcio, best contribution to the advancement of light music, Johnny Boshoff best contribution in operations, Loekie Olivier, best microphone reporting, Christopher Dingle, best news reporting, Piet Myburgh

Mining safety award

Mail Reporter

THE Free State Geduld goldmine has been awarded the Chamber of Mines' "Millionaire Shield" for completing a million fatality-free shifts

This is the seventh time the mine has won the shield, which was presented to mine officials by Mr L van der Bosch chairman of the chamber's mine safety division, in Welkom last week

Mr Van den Bosch said the first mine to achieve million airt status this year was Western Areas on February 12

He said that rockbursts were the "No 1 killer" in mines and that a programme — Safety through Communication — had been implemented to stress ways of preventing rockbursts and falls of ground

The new headquarters of the Colliery Environmental Control Service was opened last Friday to monitor gases during coal mine fires, helping to control such fires

According to the president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr W W Malan, 42 people died in mine fires and explosions last year

Govt is 'raping' SA, says Dr Treurnicht

THE Government's proposed constitutional reforms amounted to the "rape" and annihilation of democracy in South Africa the leader of the Conservative Party Dr Andries Treurnicht, said at the weekend

Speaking in Koedoespoort, near Pretoria at a festival marking the first anniversary of the CP Dr Treurnicht said the proposals, if implemented would spell the demise of white authority and usher in a multiracial parliament

It would then just be a question of time before "numbers will overtake us" and the Indians and coloureds will be dominating the whites, he said

He warned that the Government's proposed tricameral parliament could also lead to religious clashes, as most of the Indians were

either Hindus or Moslems and turn South Africa into another Northern Ireland where people were killing one another over religious differences

"The Prime Minister (Mr P W Botha) is embarking on an intolerable coalition in which he sees chance for the impossible, Dr Treurnicht said

He said the CP believed in separate development and self-determination for each population group 'in every sphere, including sport'

Each group must have its own parliament and its own area with say and control over its own affairs' he said

"The National Party's proposals make a farce of self-determination"

He also claimed the Government was intimidating CP supporters — Sapa

News by Rev Faure 514 Barclays Bank Building Church Square Pretoria

MATTER OF FACT

TO CORRECT specific errors of fact, write to the Editor at P O Box 1138, Johannesburg, or telephone the Editor's secretary at 710-9111 between 9am and 5pm on weekdays

If you have broader complaints about the Rand Daily Mail these can be taken up with the Mail Ombudsman, James McClurg, c/o the Editor's secretary

POLITICAL comment in this issue by R A Gibson David Hazelhurst newsbills by Bernard Wessels headlines and sub-editing by Paul Holroyd cartoons by David Anderson all of 171 Main Street Johannesburg

Weather Mail

THE Weather Bureau's forecast for today —

TRANSVAAL — Fine to partly cloudy and warm to hot with isolated thundershowers over the centre and south-west It will however be cloudy and cooler over the east in the morning with fog and drizzle along the escarpment

FREE STATE and the CAPE north of the Orange — Fine to partly cloudy and hot with isolated thundershowers over the Free State and eastern Cape

CAPE south of the Orange — Fine to partly cloudy and hot over the interior with isolated thundershowers in the north-east but cloudy and cooler south of the Winterberg and over Transkei clearing gradually from the west

NATAL — It will be partly cloudy and hot with isolated thundershowers over the interior but cloudy along the coast becoming partly cloudy and warm

SOUTH WEST AFRICA — Partly cloudy and hot with isolated thundershowers over centre but scattered in the north

BOTSWANA — Partly cloudy and hot with isolated thundershowers — Sapa

TEMPERATURES ARE CELSIUS MAXIMUMS EXPECTED FOR EACH CITY

Rand Daily Mail Weather Station

YESTERDAY

SUNDAY

March 27 1983

Temperatures

09h00 14h00 21h00

21°C 27°C 22°C

Humidity

60% 35% 60%

Max temp: 28°C

Min temp: 15°C

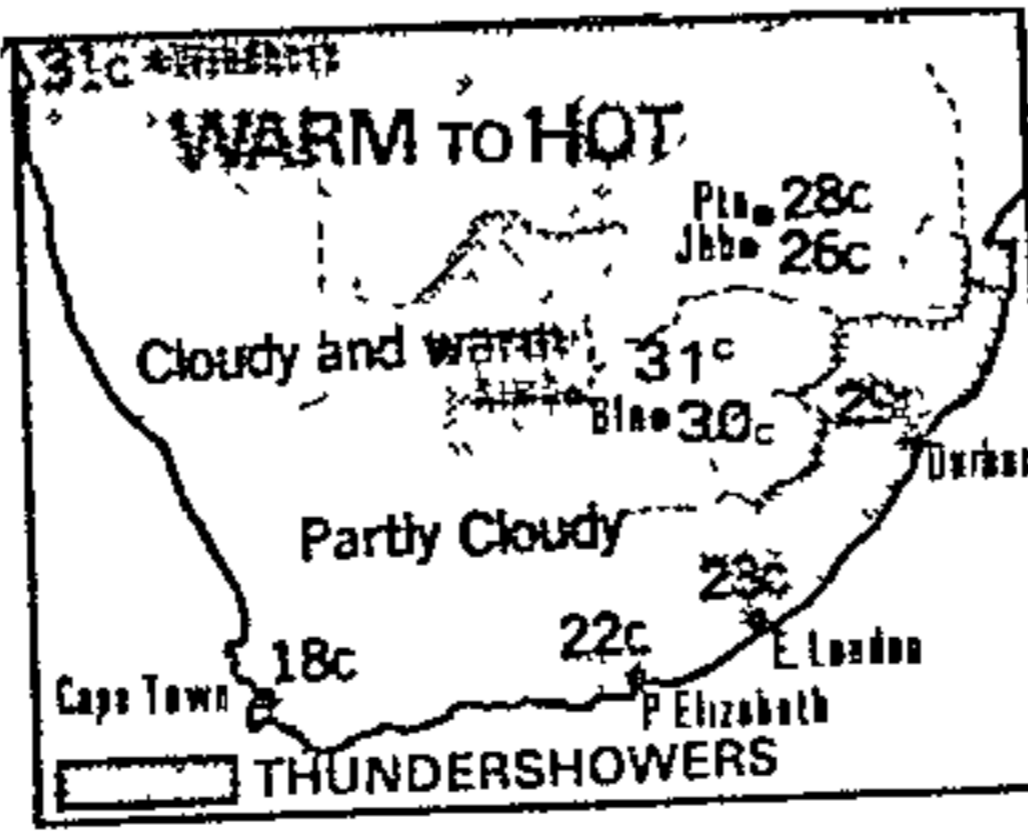
Rain 24 hours to 20h00:

Nil

Sunset today 18h13

Sunrise tomorrow

06h15



SOUTH AFRICA YESTERDAY

Temperatures at 14h00

°C	°C	°C
Bloemfontein 31	Jan Smuts 27	Pretoria 29
Cape Town 26	Nelspruit 28	Rustenburg 32
Durban 26	Pietersburg 26	Skukuza 32
East London 23	Port Elizabeth 22	

SOUTH AFRICA Hottest at 14h00 Upington 38°C Coldest at 08h00 Sutherland 6°C
TRANSVAAL Hottest at 14h00 Kroondal 32°C Coldest at 08h00 Bethal 13°C

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Min °C	Max °C	Weather	Lisbon	9	19	Clear
Amsterdam	2	6	London	5	8	Cloudy
	14	17	Los Angeles	14	21	Rain
			Madrid	1	17	Clear
			Miami	14	24	Cloudy
			Montreal	3	2	Ice
			Moscow	7	11	Cloudy
			New York	3	11	Clear
			Paris	2	7	Rain

TRANSISTOR RADIOS

AT

BELOW WHOLESALE
SORRY! NO MAIL ORDERS

WE IMPORT DIRECT

FM/AM POCKET RADIOS
NOW **R15⁹⁵**
WORKS ON 2 PENLIGHTS

FM/AM MEDIUM SIZE RADIO
with tone control

NOW **R25**
FM/AM/SW R29 95

LARGE SIZE FM/AM, BATT./M.AINS RADIO

R32⁵⁰

MUSTANG FM/AM CLOCK RADIOS
1 YEAR GUARANTEE

R35

BATTERY/MAINS STEREO FM/AM RADIO/CASSETTE RECORDER
R129⁹⁵
ALSO PHILIPS PITACHI, NATIONAL

PRICES EXCLUDE SALES TAX

16 killed in mine blast

(212)

D. Dipatru

9/4/83

WELKOM — Sixteen people died and about 50 were injured in an explosion at the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom yesterday.

A spokesman for the holding company, Gencor, said the cause of the blast was still being investigated but that it could have been caused by a spark igniting methane gas

The explosion occurred on a level of the mine's number 1 shaft, 450 m below the surface

One man was killed instantly in the explosion and two workers died later from severe injuries. The names of 13 workers who died were being withheld until their next-of-kin were notified

The two men who died from their injuries were Mr Reiner Johannes Rudolf Barnard, 28, and Mr John Ogalvey Douglas, both of Welkom. Mr Dirk Daniel Jansen van Rensburg, 24, of Lakeview was killed instantly

Mr Barnard, who was married with two children aged five and two, was a developer and had worked on the mine for 13 months

Mr Douglas was a shift boss. He was also married, with four children aged 10, nine, seven and six. He had been employed by the mine for three years

Mr Van Rensburg was an environmental assistant. He was married with two children and had worked at the mine for two years

About 50 workers were being treated in hospital for minor injuries

The spokesman said rescue operations had now been completed and clearing up after the blast would take about 24 hours before the affected area was again operational

Details of the damage caused by the blast were not available but a spokesman said it had been established that ventilation, air and water appliances over a distance of more than 120 m had been affected

A spark which could have caused a methane gas explosion may have been generated by falling rocks or "any of a number of other ways," the Gencor spokesman said

Such explosions were "always a problem in mining," he added — SAPA

16 die in Free State uranium mine blast

212 DOM 9/14/83
By CHRIS OLCKERS

SIXTEEN Free State miners died and 50 were injured when the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom was rocked by a methane explosion early yesterday morning

Three of the dead were white while 13 were black workers

It is believed that the ex-

plosion which occurred on the "A" north level of the No 1 shaft of the mine, 450m below the surface could have been caused by a spark igniting methane gas

The identities of the dead black workers are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed

The whites who died in the blast were a developer, Mr Reimer Johannes Barnard,

28, a shiftboss, Mr John Ogalvea Douglas, 29 and Mr Dirk Daniel Jansen van Rensburg, 24, an environmental assistant

Mr Barnard of 73 Hamlet Rd, Lakeview Welkom had been employed at the mine for 13 months He leaves his wife and two children

Mr Douglas, of 6 Stirling Street, Lakeview had been working at the Beisa mine

for three years He leaves his wife and four children

Mr Van Rensburg, of 14 Mynah Street, Lakeview, was married with two children and had been at the mine for two years

A mine spokesman said 50 black mineworkers were taken to the Welkom Hospital with minor injuries and more casualties were possible

16 die in OFS mine ^{CARL Times} blast ^{9/4/83} (212)

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Sixteen Free State miners died and 50 were injured when the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom was rocked by an explosion yesterday morning

Three of the dead were white while 13 were black workers

A spokesman for General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor) said yesterday there could be more casualties

Fifty mineworkers were taken to the Welkom Hospital with minor injuries

The blast was 450m underground and it is believed to have been caused by a spark which ignited methane gas.

"The spark could have been generated by falling rocks or any of a number of other ways," the spokesman said

The identities of the black workers are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed

The white miners who died in the blast were developer Mr Reimer Johannes Barnard, 28, shiftboss Mr John Ogalvea Douglas, 29, and Mr Dirk Daniel Jansen van Rensburg, 24, an environmental assistant.



early this month. The royal tour by the princess and Prince rest for the couple from public duties — and parenthood The the severest floods in its history. Cheering crowds have greet- ent where Prince Charles spent some of his schooldays But princess's car had to swerve when a man jumped in front of it cd to a mental hospital, pending his court appearance

Unique US hand swop op

BOSTON — In a revolutionary operation, eight doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital have transferred a man's right hand to replace his badly mangled left hand

The 19-hour operation was done six weeks ago, but was disclosed only on Thursday

Dr James May, the micro-surgeon who headed the surgical team, said the hand should become completely useful

The patient, photographer William Anderson, 35, had lost his right thumb, use of his right arm, and four fingers on his left hand in an explosion six years ago when a cannon he was loading for



Kloof fire still burning

212 RDM 12/4/83

KLOOF Gold mine lost 20 000 tons of milled production in the March quarter because of a fire which started on February 21 and is still burning.

Tonnage milled in the March quarter was 480 000 — 4% down from the December quarter's 500 000 tons. This rate is expected to be maintained in the current quarter.

"The fire might take a few months to burn itself out," says Mr Colin Fenton, chairman of Kloof

The fire has caused mining to be suspended in the 27 longwall and the scattered mining areas north of No 1 shaft

It is sufficiently under control to allow mining to continue elsewhere and crews from the affected areas have been relocated to other stope faces

"Production should be easily maintained at 480 000 tons a quarter," says Mr Fenton

Kloof has been seriously affected by fires in the past few years

Mr Fenton told a news conference yesterday that the incidence of fires at Kloof was no greater than at other Gold Fields mines, but several factors meant the results of fires at Kloof were devastating as they could not be controlled easily

The mine had a high stopping width on the Ventersdorp Contact Reef of between 1,5 m and 2 m compared with a metre for stopes on Carbon Leader Reef

This meant more timber was required for larger supporting matpacks. The volume of timber needed for one of these larger matpacks was eight times that of a standard matpack for Carbon Leader reef stopes

The hanging wall at Kloof was difficult to support, requiring extra timber sup-

ports The mine's high grade of about 15g/t meant everything was mineable Few rock support pillars were left in the workings and more timber supports were needed

Kloof had no surface ore reserve dumps from which losses of tonnage from underground could be made up because of the effects of previous fires on the mine's production rate

Grade in the quarter was not affected by the fire and rose to 15,2g/t from 15,1g/t giving the mine a gold production of 7 296 kg (7 550 kg previously) Net profits were slightly lower at R41 498 000 (R41 721 000), but profit after capex rose to R29 078 000 from R27 867 000

Generally it was a stable quarter for the Gold Fields producers with all mines maintaining unchanged tonnage milled except for Kloof and Venterspost, which was also affected by a fire

Average yield for the nine mines declined to 9,5g/t (9,7g/t) and gold production fell 3% to 34 222 kg from 35 196 kg

The average gold price received improved 4% to R16 214 a kg (R15 569 a kg), pushing up working revenue R7 400 000 to R556 600 000

Capital expenditure was R7 500 000 down at R60 000 000, which resulted in a 5% increase in tax and lease charges to R216 700 000 from R205 900 000 Taxed profits were 4% down at R191 800 000 compared with R199 600 000 in the December quarter

Driefontein Consolidated had profits after capex of R80 217 000 (R79 514 000 previous quarter) as capital expenditure dropped to R26 820 000 (R30 331 000) This offset a dip in taxed profits to R107 037 000 from R109 845 000

East Driefontein maintained its excellent control

By BRENDAN RYAN

Mining Editor

over costs, reducing them nearly 2% to R33 066 000 on unchanged tonnage milled of 705 000 However, at West Driefontein costs rose 5% to R41 393 000 from R39 417 000

According to Mr Fenton, West Drie's costs look well on a year-on-year basis, but the last two quarters have not been good The mine is older than East Drie and has to pump much water from its workings

Libanon had a steady quarter with unchanged tonnage milled at 420 000 and a slight dip in grade to 6,1g/t (6,3g/t) which brought gold production down to 2 548 kg from 2 660 kg Profit after capex dropped to R6 610 000 (R7 193 000)

Deelkraal had a sharp drop in grade to 4,4g/t from 5g/t in the December quarter which was caused by the mine's taking advantage of the higher gold price to move into areas which were previously unpayable

It will be three to four years before grade improves significantly at this mine when it reaches the higher-grade ore reserves deeper down Profit after capex was R4 333 000 (R7 207 000 previously)

Venterspost was affected by a fire which has been sealed off on 27 level at the No 3 tertiary shaft Tonnage milled dropped to 372 000 from 375 000 and grade to 4,1g/t from 4,3g/t Profit after tax and capex was virtually unchanged at R3 499 000 (R3 613 000)

Doornfontein's tonnage milled was unchanged at 366 000 The mine held its costs to a 2,6% increase to R22 063 000 from R21 513 000 Profit after capex was R5 919 000 (R5 948 000)

Vlakfontein held its tonnage milled steady at 195 000, but milled 112 680 tons from outside sources compared with 85 157 in the December quarter

Grade improved marginally to 1,3g/t (1,2g/t) pushing up gold production to 254,7 kg (230,7 kg)

	Tons milled 000s	Yield g/t	Costs R/ton	Costs \$ oz	Rev \$ oz	Rev R/kg	Net profit R000s	Profit after capex R000s	EPS after capex cents
DRIE CONS							107 037	80 217	78,6
December							109 845	79 514	77,9
WEST DRIE	720	14,2	57,49	115,9	461,1	16 063			
December	720	14,4	54,74	103,8	428,4	15 652			
EAST DRIE	705	11,9	46,9	113,5	467,4	16 281			
December	705	12,0	47,79	108,7	425,1	15 532			
LIBANON	420	6,1	48,0	227,1	462,3	16 103	15 449	6 610	83,3
December	420	6,3	46,77	202,1	425,2	15 535	16 647	7 193	90,6
KLOOF	480	15,2	66,4	125,4	470,7	16 397	41 498	29 078	96,2
December	500	15,1	61,9	112,2	425,7	15 553	41 721	27 867	92,2
DEELKRAAL	360	4,4	51,15	331,2	464,9	16 196	7 539	4 333	4,3
December	360	5,0	49,63	271,8	424,1	15 494	11 339	7 207	7,2
VLAKS	195	1,3	11,33	329,0	468,0	16 302	654	654	10,9
December	195	1,2	10,6	265,2	422,1	15 422	650	650	10,8
VENTERS	372	4,1	52,94	374,4	466,8	16 259	4 924	3 499	69,3
December	375	4,3	51,59	328,4	424,4	15 506	4 771	3 613	71,5
DOORNS	366	6,6	60,28	263,5	464,1	16 165	13 338	5 919	59,2
December	366	6,7	58,78	238,6	425,4	15 541	14 584	5 948	59,5

Riot after death of miners

CME T.M.K. 12/4/83
212
Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG —
Nearly 700 miners went on the rampage at the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom on Sunday after 16 of their colleagues had been killed in a methane gas explosion on Friday

The violence erupted when the miners, unnerved by the explosion, which also injured 50 miners, refused to go on shift on Sunday night

Nobody was injured during the disturbance, but five men were arrested by police and will appear in court today on charges of public violence

Yesterday 509 miners out of a work force of more than 4 000 asked the mine management to cancel their contracts and send them home

A spokesman for General Mining Union Corporation said yesterday that production would be affected for an unspecified period until the work force was back to normal

The District CID Chief for the Northern Free State, Major Koos Calitz, said damage was estimated at more than R100 000

MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER BLAST

WELKOM police have arrested five workers at the Beisa uranium mine near the city after violence erupted when about 650 workers refused to go on normal shift following Friday's methane gas explosion there.

The Chief of the CID in the Northern Free State, Major Koos Ca-

⁽²⁾ said the police were summoned to the mine when several workers apparently refused to go underground because of the explosion in which 16 workers were killed and 50 injured, according to the SABC

Several buildings at the mine were damaged in the unrest yesterday and the contents of a

sowetan 12/4/83
storeroom were destroyed when the building was set on fire. Major Calitz said damage was estimated at more than R100 000.

The five miners are being held on charges of public violence.

More than 500 workers decided to leave yesterday after the unrest, a Gencor spokesman said in Johannesburg yesterday.

In a statement to Sapa, the spokesman said about 650 workers refused to go on normal shift on Monday night.

Abschats Cost
State | *Advantages*

August 18/87

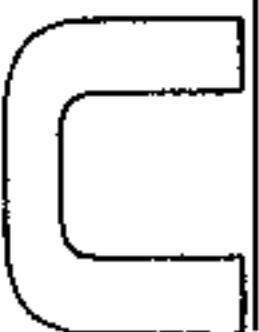
4 miners die in pressure burst

(212)

JOHANNESBURG — Four workmen were killed, 21 injured and three are missing after a pressure burst in a stope at the Kloof goldmine

A statement by the Kloof Gold Mining Company said today that the burst occurred at the weekend in the stope, which is 2 100 m below the surface

Rescue operations were continuing, the statement said. The names of the dead men would not be released until their families had been informed — Sapa



5 miners killed, 21 injured

(212)

By DAVID CAPEL

19/4/83

FIVE miners were killed, 21 were injured and two are missing — almost certainly dead — after a pressure burst in a stope at the Kloof Gold Mine on Saturday

A spokesman for Goldfields, which owns the mine, said yesterday the burst occurred at 7.30am in the stope 2.100m below the surface

He said rescue operations had been instituted immediately and were continuing, though he was doubtful the two missing miners would still be alive

Initially four miners were killed and three were missing, but late yesterday a fifth body was recovered

Rescue teams are working around the clock in dangerous conditions to recover the two missing miners. The ground where the search is taking place has totally caved in and rescuers have to work slowly and carefully. The spokesman said the search would continue until the miners were found

Names of the dead will not be released until next of kin have been informed

(212) KSM 21/4/83

Mine sewerage manhole fumes kill three workers

Mail Reporter

TWO men died trying to help a colleague who had been overcome by gas fumes, seconds after a valve in a sewerage manhole was opened at Stilfontein gold mine yesterday

All three men died in the hole

A statement issued by General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor) yesterday said the accident happened when a black sanitation assistant went down a manhole to open

a stuck valve to drain sewerage effluent from a circular settling tank

He was overcome by sulphurated hydrogen gas after opening the valve and releasing a sudden rush of sewerage into the manhole

The assistant went to his aid and was also overcome by the fumes

Apprentice electrician Mr Sven Frederikssen, 25, of Stilfontein climbed into the manhole to help but was also overcome by fumes and died.

(212) RSM
29/4/83

Mine pay talks end in stalemate

Labour Correspondent

WHITE mine unions will meet today to decide on whether to declare a dispute with the Chamber of Mines after rejecting its 8% pay offer at a negotiation meeting yesterday

The unions met the chamber yesterday to continue talks on this year's wage increase for white miners

The chamber has offered white union members an 8% increase on standard pay rates and a 1% rise in employer contributions to the Mine Employees' Pension Fund

The unions are demanding a 13.1% increase with fringe benefit improvements which mine employers say bring the total demand to nearly 23%. The unions have withdrawn some of these demands

At yesterday's meeting the unions rejected the 8% and the chamber refused to increase its offer

Declaring a dispute with the chamber is one option the unions will consider at today's meeting

"The unions argue the 8%

doesn't come near to compensating members for rises in the cost of living and that the chamber can afford to pay more" a unionist said yesterday

He said a key issue which unions would have to discuss was that declaring a dispute would take time and would delay increases

"We may decide to ask members whether they want to accept this delay" he said

Another unionist said unions would be better able to accept the offer if the chamber agreed to a demand for a week's extra leave for union men

"This is a burning issue among our members who find it very difficult to accumulate leave," he said

Informed sources believe that even if a dispute is declared, it is unlikely that the negotiations will end in confrontation

A spokesman for the chamber said yesterday the chamber preferred not to comment on the negotiations until it had received a reply to its offer from the unions

Miners' union lags on dispute

212
Labour Correspondent

NEGOTIATIONS on white miners pay remained unresolved yesterday as mine unions decided to delay a final decision on the Chamber of Mines' 8% offer until Wednesday

The unions met yesterday to discuss whether to declare a dispute on the offer which the chamber has said is final

But a union source said yesterday it was decided to delay a decision until the

weekly meeting of the Council of Mining Unions which is due on Wednesday

The delay reflects divided opinions among union members, some of whom favour accepting the offer on the grounds that the economic climate is unfavourable for a dispute

But unionists say there are still "strong voices" urging rejection of the offer from union members who argue that both gold and coal mines

are able to afford more than an 8% increase

The unions are demanding a 13.1% increase with fringe benefit rises which employers say originally brought demands up to 23%. Some demands have now been withdrawn

The chamber is offering an 8% rise on standard pay rise together with a 1% increase in employer contributions to the Mine Employees Pension Fund

Handwritten notes:
212
Labour Correspondent
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^{15/6/83}
4 miners
(12) Mercury
killed

JOHANNESBURG—Four mineworkers died and twelve others were injured in an explosion at the Harmony Gold Mine in the Free State yesterday

The mine said in a statement that an accidental explosion had occurred in a stope on the 17th level of the Virginia section of the mine.

Those injured in the blast were admitted to the mine hospital at Harmony.

The mine was investigating the cause of the accident, the statement said
— (Sapa)

15/6/83
**Four die in
mine blast**

Mail Reporter 212

FOUR mineworkers were killed and 12 injured in an underground explosion at the Harmony gold mine at Virginia in the Free State yesterday

A mine spokesman, Mr G Kukard, said last night the cause of the blast was still being investigated

The blast occurred about 11am in a stope on level 17. The injured mineworkers were admitted to the mine hospital at Harmony

The names of the dead and injured, who were all black, would not be released until their next of kin had been informed, Mr Kukard said

CAPL TIMES 15/6/83 (212)
4 mineworkers killed

JOHANNESBURG — Four mineworkers were killed and 12 injured in an explosion at the Harmony Gold Mine in the Free State yesterday

The mine management said in a statement that the accidental explosion had occurred in a stope on the 17th level of the Virginia section of the mine

The mineworkers injured in the blast, which

occurred about 11am, were admitted to the mine hospital at Harmony

The statement said names of the dead and injured would be released when their next-of-kin had been informed

The mine was investigating the cause of the accident, the statement said — Sapa

*attribution
distribution
attribution
attribution
attribution*

212 ~~244~~ **MEN AT WORK**

Soaked by heavy underground rain, two workers stand like sentinels on a shaft sinkers' kibble

GEORGE SMITH was working his shift, with the banshee whistles and the thunder-rush and the crashing cement water all around him, when it happened. He felt his breath catch against the wall of his throat. He looked down the shaft.

He saw a man lying there in the shallow, grey water. Others stood and knelt around him. Some were looking down at the man and others were looking up at the stage and waving their arms.

George rang up for a stretcher and took the kibble down for a look. There was a hole in the man's helmet.

Meanwhile, in the site manager's hut on the surface, Jannie Coetzee stirred his tea and chuckled.

"Well, the record itself is very weak. We've had no fatalities so far, but"

A man knocked and opened the door at the same time.

Daar't 'n boy seergekry daaronder, meneer

Is hy ernstig?

Ek weet nie, meneer. Hulle het net gelui. George was op die stage.

Stuur hom in.

There was a safety chart on the wall. The peaks and valleys were marked in red. Jannie Coetzee stirred his tea, and the silver spoon clucked at the bottom like the tongue of a dull bell.

George Smith was standing in the doorway. He licked the cement on his lips and the words rushed out like a pressure burst.

Looks like the outa's badly hurt, sir.

What happened?

Well, he was either hit by the cactus (a big mechanical hand) or a rock. The grab-driver says it was the cactus. Tjaart says a rock fell on the boy's head. I don't know, sir. No one saw directly.

Could it have been a stone from the kibble?

Sir, I don't think so. I, he wouldn't have been hurt then. The kibble comes 2m above his head at the maximum. The grab-driver just saw the outa lying there when he hoisted up the kibble. I would think it's a rock, sir. There's a hole in his helmet.

Is he conscious?

Sir, his head is pap, it's pap over here.

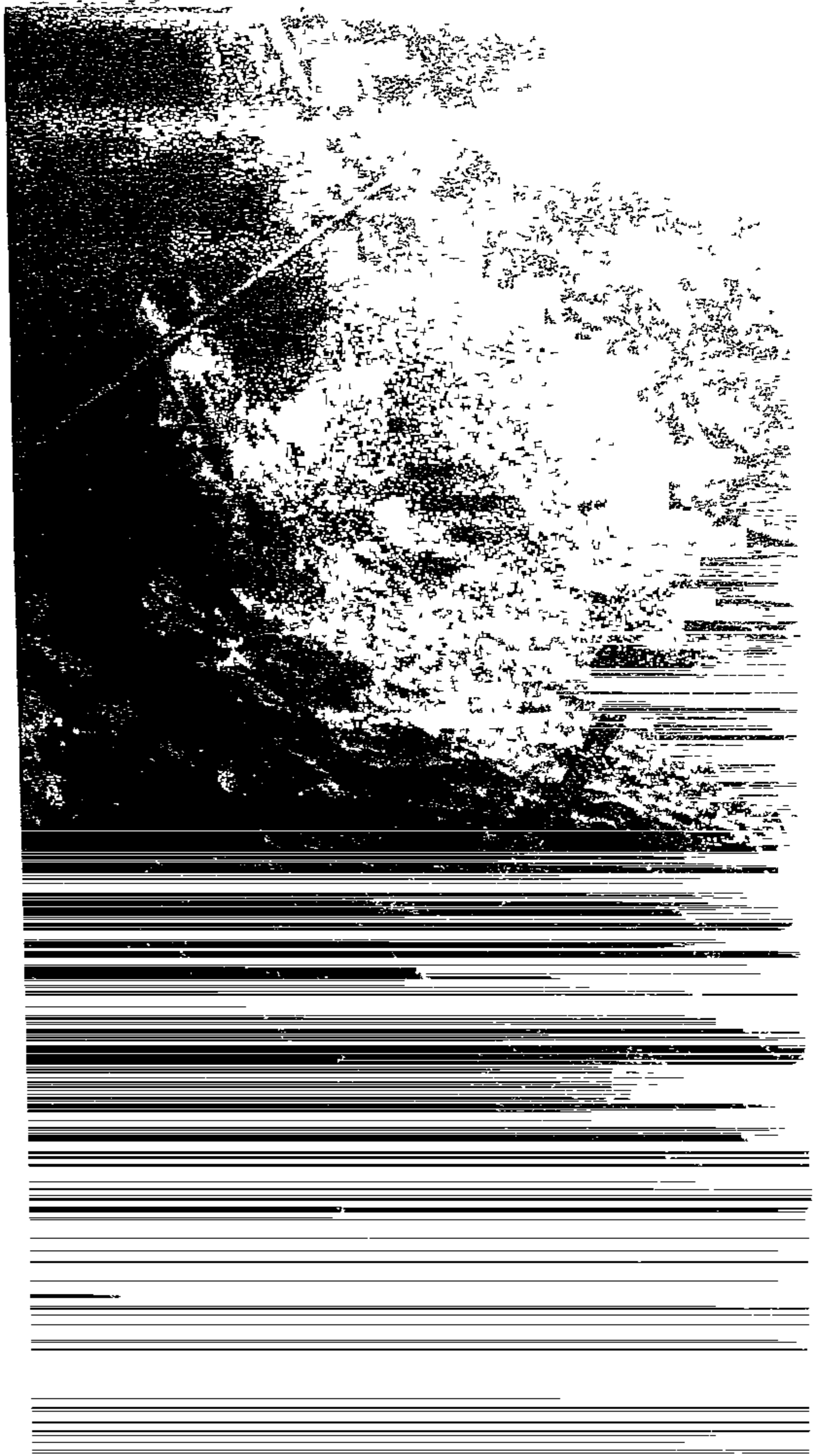
I said, is he conscious?

He's, he's, unconscious. He's breathing, but he's not conscious. There's foam coming out of his mouth.

Is there blood by his mouth?

No, sir. Just foam. There's a little blood by his nose.

George Smith shut the door and Jannie Coetzee said "There are more hazards in shaft-sinking. I suppose you could say when you look at it, the safety records aren't that bad. Because there are a hell of a lot of hazards."



TAKING A

◀ **George Smith**
... "We're a special breed. We're human, but we're special"

Story: GUS SILBER

Pictures: ANDRZEJ SAWA

On the surface, it's a bone-dry winter's day. In the middle of the earth, it's raining. All day and all night. And water isn't the worst of it for the men behind South Africa's most dangerous and most vital mining occupation — shaft-sinking



SHOWER IN HELL

(212) ~~(212)~~ ~~(214)~~ 3 times 10/7/83

THE orange headgear of No 4 ventilation shaft, Kloof Gold Mine, Westonaria, stood out like fire against the white-water winter sky Today four months, 329m down Dammit How much longer would it take? You could never tell. In the end, the shaft would be sunk That's all You'd pack everything away and the miners would take over and you'd go on to the next stretch of open veld, wherever that was And the whole business would start all over again

And, in the end, you'd win again Because you just had to

The wind pushed Jannie Coetzee's sports jacket open and wrapped itself around the legs of his trousers as he stepped outside the site manager's hut and walked to the prefab change-room

The business Sink the shaft Move hulle in, check hom uit, kry die storey, blast hom, pomp hom, sink hom Twenty-four hours a day, including Sundays Jy sink hom ses dae en die Sondag doen jy die res No blasting on

Sundays Die hele storie Maktik ne? Nee, boet

Things go wrong Not always — it's, look, it's actually one of the safest aspects of mining, shaft sinking, if you look at the circumstances But you have to face up to it and just make sure it doesn't happen to you, or anyone else That's important. Things go wrong

Like this morning This boy with the rock through his helmet Only one way to check out the story We're going down A shaft of hot air from the ventilation

MEN AT WORK

(212) (214)
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fan by the window would hit you as soon as you walked in to the change-room. You could probably have yourself a shower and get dry at the same time.

The wire lockers were filled with denim jeans and fluffy jerseys and lump socks and tartan underpants and family-size bottles of Colgate anti-dandruff shampoo and jars of hand-cream.

Water dripped from the outside holes of a shower head, and the drops were almost swallowed by the hot air before they reached the criss-cross bath mats.

We took off our clothes and put on blue boiler-suits and Wellington boots and white waterproof jackets. Jannie Coetzee said they wouldn't help much. We put on hard hats and lamp-lights and slung power packs around our hips like gun-fighters. *Dis nie baie plesierig daar- onder nie manere. Ek hoop julle ver- staan dit goed.*

George Smith, who was working on the stage when it happened when the thing went wrong this morning said Ja, it's dangerous down there. That's why the sinker gets a 100 percent bonus. On a good month, you can get your full salary plus R1 800 if you're a master sinker. It depends where you work. On the stage, you get 70 percent of the bonus, and the engine driver gets 30 percent.

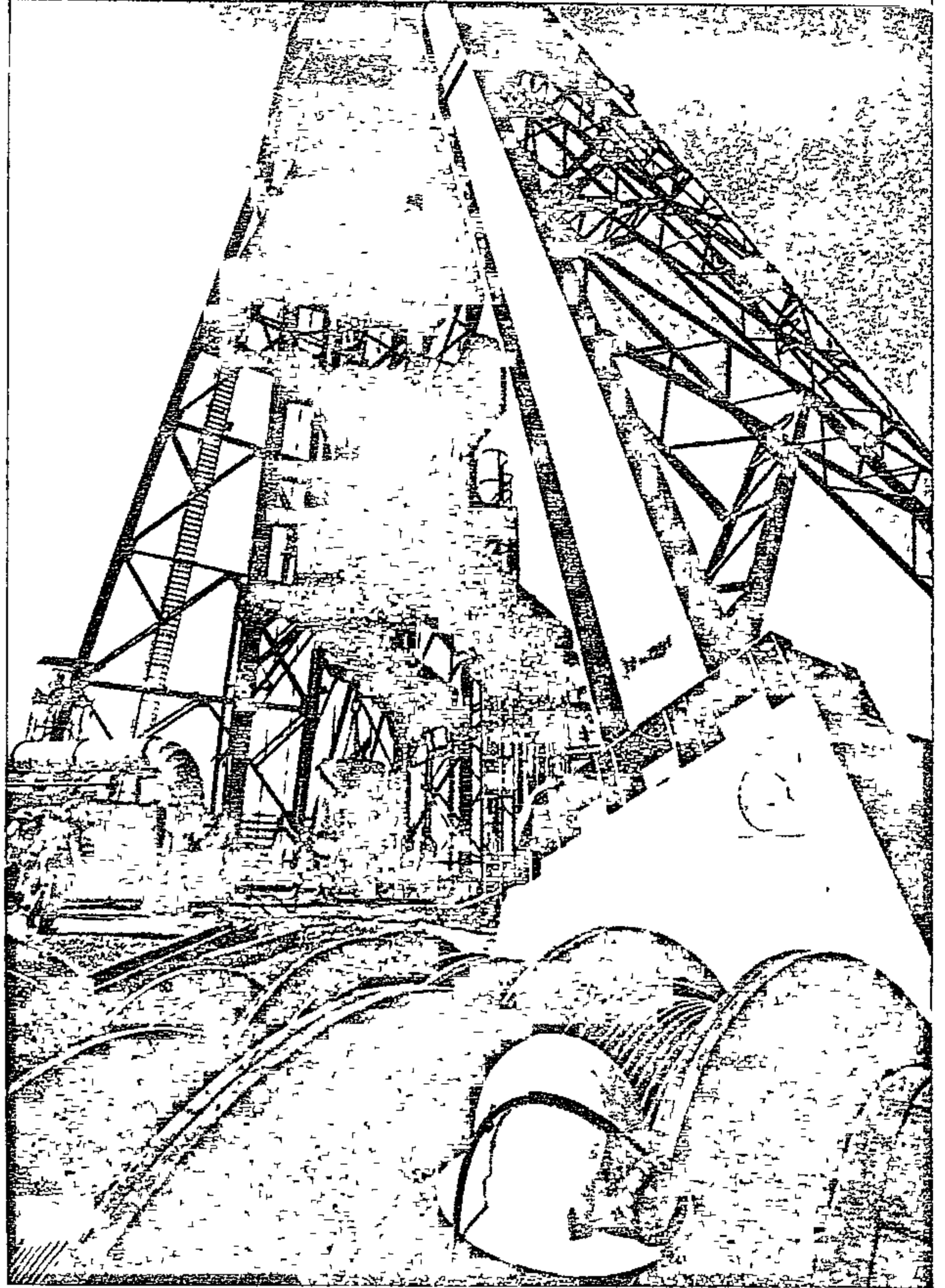
George sniffed and pinched his nose and said the snags this morning, the accident and the Press visit, were going to cost him time and a bit of graft. Let's say five kibble-loads of rock that could have been tipped, so far. For argument's sake. Now, of course, safety is the main thing, but these delays always add up. The contract says you earn your bonus if you advance 6m in 24 hours, that includes the shaft bottom, the concrete lining and the pipe-work.

The way it was going, this wasn't going to be a good month.

The manne were going to have to pull finger. They were going to have to pull their weight. Kyk, manne, motivate! George Smith was the charge-hand, and that was his job. *Motivate!* But you always get some oke who's going to cause slack down there. It's not just the money. It's the job.

Look, you've got 10 to 12 boys working down there on the Jumbo drilling rig. You've got the two kibbles going up and down, and you've got the cactus grab lashing at the rock face. How can you say

it's like boxing in a small room, boxing in the pantry. You box outside, in the open air, and you can run away from a



Reaching up, reaching down: No 4 ventilation shaft, Kloof Gold Mine, Westonaria

punch. Down there, you must know what to do when the punch comes. Because you can't run away.

But you know how it is. The boys fight for the job. The money's good.

The dry wind was playing a dragon's waltz with the aquamarine boiler suits on the washing line. There was a kind of veldfire choke in the air, and if you ran a finger down the side of your face, even now, on the way to the shaft, you'd get a fine coating of cement powder on your finger-tip.

Like the guys in the movie ads, you were supposed to stand there squinting up at the headgear platform, sweat and grit on your eyebrows, looking down for a second to light up an American cigarette, and the camera would zoom in on the brand label and pull back to show your mouth crack just a little. You were supposed to be a Man's Man. But no-one really thought of it that way. There was too much damn work to do.

There were men wearing angling overalls made of tough, white tarpaulin,

so that drops of dirty water would slide down the folds and just skate off the sides again, like slivers of mercury. Resisting the elements. Under the overalls, you would explode with sweat.

The men were wearing firemen's helmets with rubber sheeting around the edges. They looked like hellfighters from the Foreign Legion. We switched on the lamps on our hard-hats.

A torrent of grey water rushed out of a bucket on the platform, and hundreds of small stones slid with a kershlunk on to a pile of black bilge down below. A bell rang twice. Shrill and hollow. The wind was trying to lift our hard hats from underneath, and we had to take them off and tighten the head-bands. And for a moment, outside shaft number four, our heads were as vulnerable as the membrane under an eggshell.

Daar was 'n gat in sy hoed.

There were six of us in the kibble. We stood on bits of soaked plank and lumps of cement. It was everywhere. The shaft sinkers fought water with cement. And

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MEN AT WORK

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then they fought cement with water. In the end, most of the time, cement won. But you could never tell. Sometimes you would get 40 000 litres of water rushing out of a blast hole every hour. Then you still had to deal with pressure bursts and misfires and rockfalls. Like George Smith said, that's why the sinker gets a 100 percent bonus.

Jannie Coetzee told us to keep our hands on the inside. The bells rang sharply again, two hydraulically-operated trapdoors yawned and the kibble sank.

The shaft was about 6m in diameter. The concrete lining on the walls was dry near the top and thick and wet and grey further down, and our lamp-lights danced and swayed and merged.

We passed the suspended work stage halfway down the shaft and our lights defined thick, black hoses and shovels and the hard, hewn faces of the men who take showers in hell. The men were wearing safety belts. There was a deafening rush of thunder and a hiss and a metallic shriek. We looked up and there were heavy silver threads of underground rain falling from two yellow spotlights.

We climbed out of the kibble 329m down. There was a pool of water in a terrain of slick, black rock. Jannie Coetzee waded in up to his ankles. He stood with his arms on his hips and he looked at the puddles. He reached into the pool and picked up a rock, and he put the rock under the water again and washed it. Then he threw the rock back into the water. It was a big rock, but you couldn't hear the splash.

The men stood around watching. Coetzee pointed at the water and looked across at a man whose eyes turned vixen-red in the beam of his lamp. The man nodded. He faced his palms together to show the site manager the size of the rock. The men stared at each other for a moment. A fistful of black stones slid into the water.

The men stood around with rivulets of sweat and cement and water running down their black faces. One of them was smoking a brown paper *zol*. You could see a thin curl of smoke rising from under his nose. He shielded the *zol* with one hand, but a leaden droplet squeezed through his fingers and stung out the glow. He narrowed his eyes and carried on smoking.

We climbed back into the kibble. The bells rang and the lights flashed on Francois Labuschagne's control desk in the cockpit of the corrugated-iron engine room on the surface. He hoisted up the kibble and asked George Smith "Wat het gebeur?"

And George Smith said "Klup"

George sat on a table in the foreman's hut and lit up a smoke.

"Ag, it's not that dangerous. I mean,



The landscape of the shaft sinker: a subterranean labyrinth of black rock, serpentine hoses, constant rain and heavy machinery

you get people who are scared. You can take a bloke down and he'll wet himself halfway. That's in himself. Look at me.

I'm not scared of depths. But don't tell me to climb up the Hillbrow Tower and get in a chair dangling on the outside. I mean, that's not for me.

"But I can go down and work on the stage with all the noise and the ammonia. I can take the risks. Any time I want to. It's like smoking a cigarette. It's easy, and you enjoy it, but you take a risk at the same time.

"Okay, let's also be honest. You won't want to go down if you haven't got the guts and the know-how and the go in you. We're a special breed, you see. We're human, but we're special."

George Smith is 37. If all goes well, he's going to be a shaftie when he's 70 as well. Like his old toppie — 70 and a shaftie, and he just won't retire, because he loves the graft and he's been through it all. The whole Shaft Sinkers' set-up.

Of course, the toppie's only a carpenter now. He can't take the hammering

and the speed underground any more, but he says he's going to be with Sinkers till the day he dies.

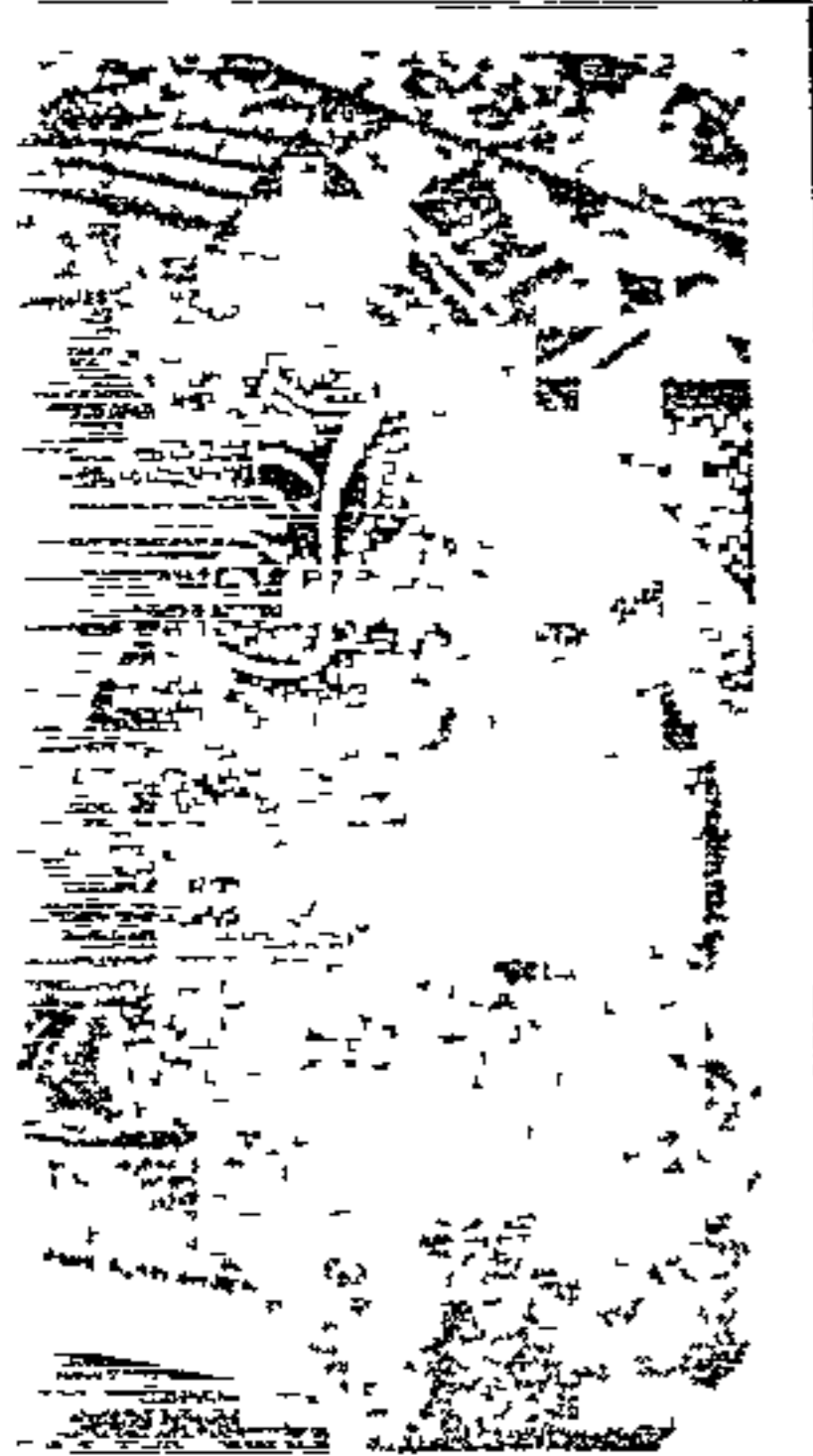
Well, sometimes George thinks a little differently. He's got all his tickets. He could go back to the mine tomorrow if he wanted. He could even be a shift boss, man. He's thought it over once or twice before, you know, sometimes you feel maybe what you really need is to open your own business or something.

But then I drive past a shaft being sunk, and I idle the engine and I watch the okes working there for a while. And I get this like tingle in my blood. And I know I could never leave. Because I, I love my work. It makes me proud. And, how can I say it, I know the okes respect me. And I moan and I groan, and I say to myself, hell, is it really worth the bucks? And sometimes I wonder. But, like I said, it gets in your blood. You're a sinker, you're the cream of the crop. When you think about it, it's Number 1. I just can't see it any other way. ●

a cultural agreement which would allow all aspects of the Afrikaner culture to come to its full rights including the Afrikaans language

"We won't be satisfied with some lucrative agreements of some or other small aspects

"We are being swamped by the electronic media. There are seven broadcasting stations at present on our borders," Prof Senekal said



Pretoria Press Club/Volkston can be tough as Mr. Senekal's remarks will be announced in Pretoria, tonight

Mail

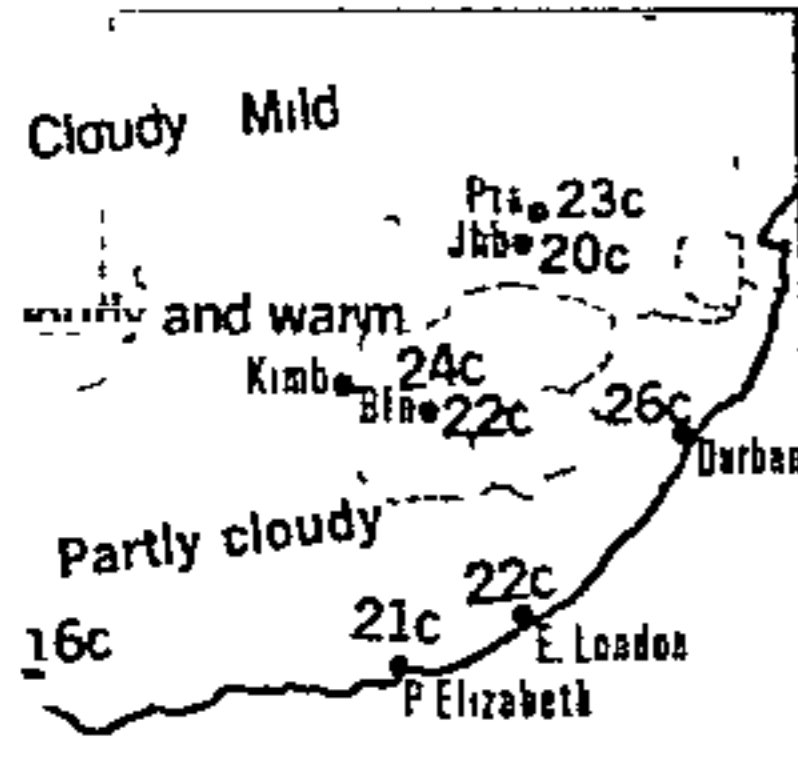
Today —
 Mild and mild but warm to hot over

the Orange — Fine and mild to west. It will however become

Fine to partly cloudy and mild to all over the west and south-west. The Cape south-west mountains and hot with bergwind conditions. Partly cloudy and warm but

and warm to hot — Sapa
 EXPECTED FOR EACH CITY

Mail
 Station



A YESTERDAY

at 14h00		°C	°C
20	Potchefstroom	24	24
30	Pretoria	24	24
24	Skukuza	32	32
22	Rustenburg	24	24
-11° in flats 33°C Coldest at 08h00			
-32°C Coldest at 08h00 Stander			

D YESTERDAY

Los Angeles	21	29	Clear
Madrid	17	35	Clear
Miami	28	31	Cloudy
Montreal	14	31	Clear
Moscow	20	27	Clear
New York	22	35	Clear
Paris	18	33	Clear
Rio de Janeiro	17	30	Cloudy
Rome	19	31	Clear
San Francisco	15	30	Clear
Stockholm	15	30	Rain
Tokyo	23	23	Clear
Toronto	20	32	Clear

111
 Mail Reporter

THE "bad" Afrikaans used in the Government's constitutional proposals came under fire at the annual meeting of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings in Pretoria yesterday

A delegate, Mr Nic van Rensburg, said that the way Afrikaans was used in the constitutional proposals was "bad" and "worrying"

"Irrespective of whether the constitutional proposals are accepted or not, it is difficult for me to see how some of our foremost legal advisers could have worked on the proposals," Mr Van Rensburg said

Professor J H Senekal, chairman of the language committee of the FAK, declined to comment on Mr Van Rensburg's speech

ties, a cheque for R25,000 by Sasol and the Branch, VOIKSA.

Mines Benefit Society to employ full-time doctors

By JOHAN BUYS 14/7/83
 THE Mines Benefit Society is to appoint two full-time doctors for its 1750 members in Boksburg to replace 11 panel doctors who resigned because of the "capitation fee system"

The panel doctors were leaving because they claimed the scheme did not cover overhead costs and was "no longer an economical proposition"

The mass resignations left the MBS with only three panel doctors

The doctors had given their patients three months notice of their intention to contract out of the scheme by the end of July

A doctor said yesterday "The capitation fee does not cover our costs and we still have to pay for increased rents, nurses salaries and other essentials"

The general manager of the Mines Benefit Society, Mr C Cook, said "We intend to appoint two full-time doctors to attend to our members from the beginning of August"

"They will be able to look after their needs adequately"

According to Mr Cook, a panel doctor was paid a monthly "capitation fee" for each MBS member regardless of whether the member visited him once, or 10 times a month

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23/7/83 (123)
RUSH
R250 000 donation
for disabled miners

MASERU — The South African Chamber of Mines has donated R250 000 to the Lesotho Government towards the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for disabled Basotho mine workers and other disabled people in the country

A cheque was presented to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Mr Desmond Sixishe, at a ceremony in Maseru on Thursday, reports Sapa

The donation was handed over by Mr J A P Fitzsimmons, manager in Lesotho of the Employment Bureau of Africa (Teba), which recruits Lesotho mineworkers for the

South African gold mines
MIKE PITSO

reports that Mr Fitzsimmons expressed appreciation for the good co-operation between the Lesotho Government and the mines and said this co-operation had lasted over the past 80 years, during which time over one-million Basotho had worked in the mines

The centre will also help mine workers who are paid disability in the South African mines

There are at present more than 140 000 Basotho working in South Africa, of which more than 80 000 work in the mines

SA miners resist job stress factors

Own Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — South African miners working in almost medical conditions do not show any more signs of stress on the job than workers in other industries.

This is the finding of a study of work conditions and health-care in the industry, presented in a paper at the South African Mental Health Foundation conference

on "Wellness at Work" by Dr D H White, a senior personnel adviser for the Anglo American group.

Further, underground and surface workers do not show significantly different stress patterns, even though the men are subjected to extreme hardships.

Dr White said considering the men were working under the constant possibility of acci-

dents or death, in extreme heat conditions, with water sluicing underfoot to keep dust down, and often in very cramped spaces, it was "amazing that any human being could work there at all".

● In another paper, Mr W L Baqwa, group industrial relations consultant to Barlow Rand Ltd, said that in order to begin to satisfy aspirations of black workers,

companies might have to advocate moves which "the government has not accommodated".

He said it was common knowledge that South African companies had started racially integrating their offices long before the government had thought of doing so and had, as a consequence, been prosecuted for employing blacks in certain senior positions in

"whites only" jobs. Mr Baqwa said employees generally found it difficult to address themselves to certain issues for fear of victimization.

In comparison with an analysis of the demands made on employers by trade union organized workers in other countries, South African workers were only in a position to demand six of the 16 conditions

man counterparts were in a position to demand additional and more sophisticated conditions in the following areas: Greater social security, more co-determination of how the job should be handled, the fundamental right to work, independent media, greater old age security, improvement of taxation and finance policy, social tenancy and land laws and environment protection.

which German workers believed were imperative to their welfare. In South Africa, workers were in the process of demanding improvements in the following areas: Higher wages, humane working conditions, shorter working hours, free collective bargaining, further development of service and labour laws and equal education opportunities.

By contrast, their Ger-

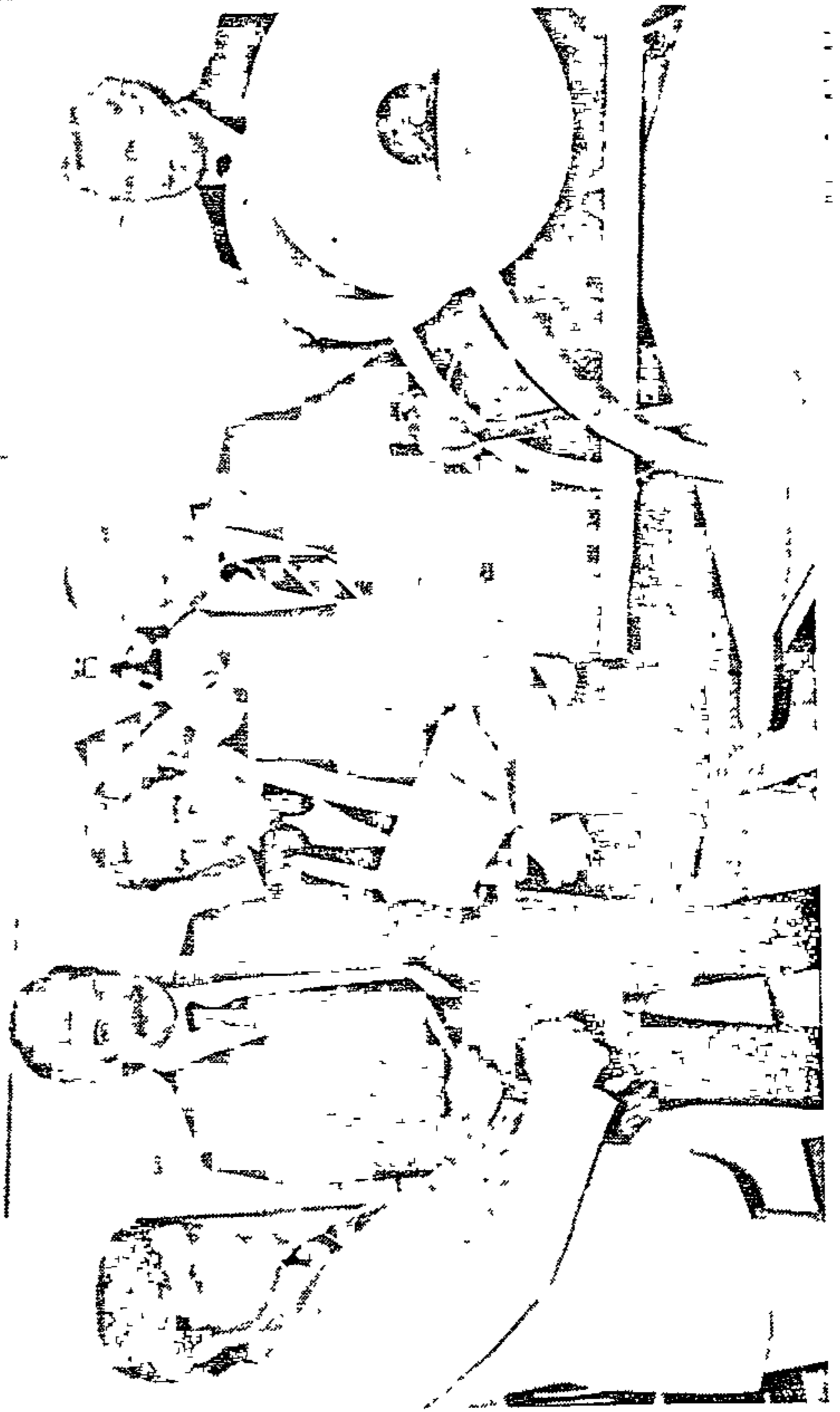


PHOTO BY ...

Six die in ^{1718/83} rockburst ²¹²

Mail Reporter *RM*

SIX mineworkers were killed in a rockburst at the Western Deep Gold Mine near Carletonville on Monday.

The accident occurred at 68 level of Number Two shaft of the mine shortly after the men had begun the morning shift.

An Anglo American spokesman said a proto team had recovered all the bodies shortly after the accident.

No one was injured in the rockfall and the names of the six dead have not been released as their next of kin have not been informed.

INSIDE MAIL

The human cost of mining the riches

Mail Reporter

A CHRONOLOGY of major mining disasters in South Africa

- January 21, 1960 — 437 miners were buried alive at the Coalbrook North Colliery, near Sasolburg
- January 26, 1971 — 13 miners died and 14 were injured after a fire in the No 1 Shaft of the Zandpan Mine, 16km from Klerksdorp
- February 27, 1971 — 22 miners died and 24 were injured after a methane gas explosion rocked an Anglovaal mine at Virginia in the Free State
- December 7, 1971 — 28 miners died and 15 were injured in a gas explosion at the Zunguin Colliery, about 20km north-east of Vryheid
- January 29, 1972 — 15 miners died of suffocation when a fire broke out at West Driefontein, on the West Rand
- February 7, 1973 — 26 miners died after a fire broke out at the West Driefontein mine
- June 29, 1973 — 16 miners were killed in a lift cage accident at Buffelsfontein Mine
- December 19, 1973 — 18 miners died after a rockfall at the Vaal Reefs Gold mine near Orkney
- January 3, 1974 — 13 coal miners were killed and 95 were taken to hospital after an underground explosion at Albion Collieries, south of Wilbank
- December 1, 1974 — 41 miners were trapped and died after a fire broke out
- June 26, 1975 — 17 miners died after a pressure burst at the East Driefontein mine, near Carletonville
- November 20, 1975 — 12 miners were killed and four injured in a methane gas explosion at the Kloof Gold Mine near Westonaria
- September 2, 1977 — eight miners died and 30 were trapped underground in two Western Transvaal mines — Blyvooruitzicht and Hartbeesfontein — which were rocked by the same earth tremor
- October 1977 — 13 men were killed after a kibble — a giant ore-carrying bucket — plunged more than 50m to the bottom of the shaft at Saaiplaas gold Mine in the Free State
- April 1978 — 18 miners were killed in the Buffelsfontein gold mine disaster at Shilfontein
- April 6, 1979 — 10 miners were killed and 37 injured when an earth tremor shook the number two shaft of the Vaal Reefs mine, near Orkney
- March 27, 1980 — 31 miners plunged to death when the cage taking them underground at Vaal Reefs Number 2 Shaft, near Klerksdorp, plummeted 2 000 metres
- February 18, 1981 — four miners were killed and 17 others were trapped for several hours after a rockfall at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine, near Orkney
- February 19, 1981 — twelve miners were killed when a runaway trailer jumped the tracks more than 1 700 metres underground and crushed them at the Winkelbaak mine in Evander, Eastern Transvaal
- June 18, 1981 — seven miners died and about 20 were injured in a rockfall at the Kloof Gold Mine near Westonaria
- October 30, 1981 — 16 miners died when a cage plummeted 150m to the bottom of a shaft at the Western Deep Levels gold mine, near Carletonville
- April 13, 1982 — four miners died following the earth tremor that shook the Geduld mine near Welkom, trapping 7 000 miners below ground
- June 27, 1982 — nine people were killed and eleven were injured in an explosion at the No 4 shaft of Grootvlei Proprietary Mines near Springs
- September 4, 1982 — toxic smoke from a fire in a disused section of the Buffelsfontein gold mine near Klerksdorp killed 12 miners
- November 12, 1982 — 11 miners were killed and 11 were seriously injured in an underground explosion at the Ermelo Coal Mine. And 14 men were killed and two seriously injured after a rock burst on the Vaal Reefs gold mine at Klerksdorp
- April 8, 1983 — 16 miners died and 50 were injured when the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom was rocked by a methane explosion

Including yesterday's casualties, 165 people have died in mining accidents in South Africa so far this year

Military 'copters' to the rescue

By EMMELIA JAROSCHEK

FOUR severely burned miners were last night flown from the Hlopane Colliery near Vryheid, Natal, by military helicopter to be offloaded for immediate emergency treatment at the Rand Mutual Hospital in Eloff Street Extension

A team of surgeons and anaesthetists who were on standby before the helicopter arrived, went into immediate action

The helicopter landed on the roof helipad of the ultra-modern hospital at 5:45pm by light of the setting sun

Swathed in bandages and attached to intravenous drips, the men were carried

from the Puma helicopter and put on stretchers to be wheeled away at a running pace by nurses

The injured workmen, in spite of their severe burns, were silent as nursing staff gently loaded them onto stretchers and then ran as they wheeled them into the ultra-modern hospital

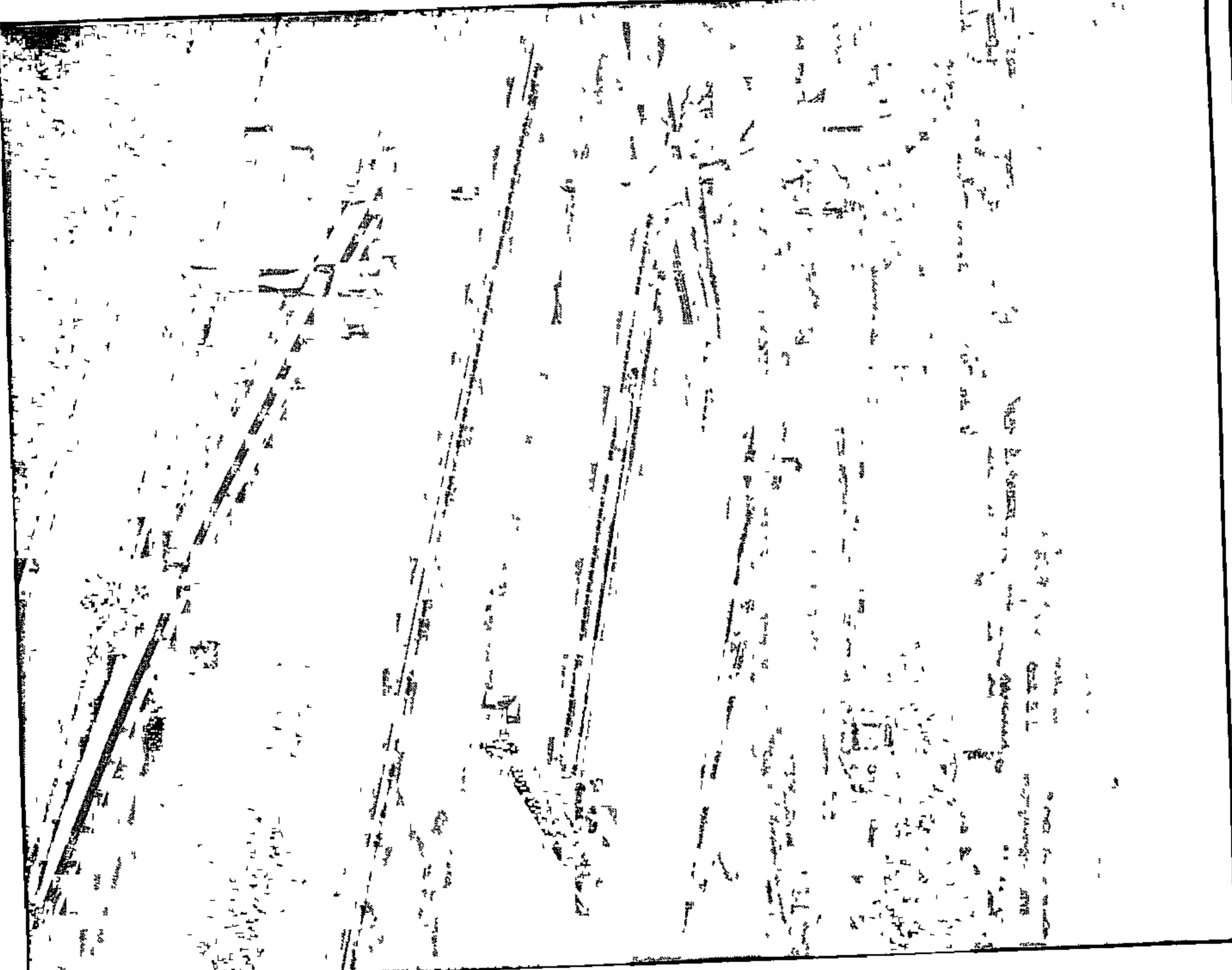
The hospital's full complement of nursing staff were told to be on standby for the arrival of the critically injured men

Bandages covered most of

the wounds except severe chest and leg burns

A spokesman for the hospital said that the names of the injured could not be disclosed until their next of kin were notified

A further six critically injured patients were flown from the mine to arrive at the Rand Airport near Germiston at 6:46pm. They were taken to the same hospital for emergency treatment



Scene of the disaster . . . Vryheid's Hlopane coal mine

Methane gas — the coalminer's worst nightmare

By MARGARETHA GOUSEN

METHANE is the coalminer's nightmare — when it combines with oxygen, this gas can cause a devastating explosion. Yesterday it claimed the lives of 63 men

It is a perennial problem which cannot be eliminated — and a tremendous hazard, according to Mr. Michael Martinson, senior lecturer in the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand

Mr. Martinson, a specialist on mine hazards, said yesterday that certain quantities of methane gas could explode when mixed with air

"The methane gas explosion is in itself not big, but it usually sparks off a series of massive coal dust explosions

In 1942 in Manchuria, China, 1 500 people died in such an explosion

The second biggest methane blast disaster occurred at Wankie, Zimbabwe, in June 1972, when between 426 and 430 people died

Methane gas is present in coal itself, and in the rock above and below a coal seam. It seeps constantly into the shaft

Pure methane gas is not explosive. But, in concentrations of between 5% and 15% and mixed with air, it can explode when ignited by a flame, spark or heat

By throwing dust from the floor and the walls of a mine it can fuel a far bigger explosion of coal dust

Stringent measures are taken in South African coal mines to abate these hazards

Mine regulations require supervisors to test for methane before each shift starts and during the shift — methane levels are tested every few hours

There must be less than 1,25% methane in the air. At that level the shaft must be evacuated and the air "swapped" — cleaned — before work can proceed. The British evacuate at 1%

Mr. Martinson said most white miners and black team leaders would know testing procedures — and these are vital because the gas is non-toxic, odourless, colourless, and lighter than air (and therefore floats at the roof of the shaft)

The test is conducted with a flame safety lamp or a methanometer. Methanometers can detect extremely low concentrations of the gas

The flame safety lamp is more commonly used here. Indications of methane are detected only by the trained eye, which would see a transparent cap — with a faintly luminous aura — on the flame

South African regulations require evacuation if the flame is capped

Coal mines rely on ventilation systems which circulate air through the mine, reaching almost throughout. But there are also dead ends which are not serviced — these rely on auxiliary fans and a system of ducts to keep methane concentrations down

Enough air to reduce the potentially explosive mixture of methane and air as much as possible is circulated through the mine. The mixture must be diluted to below 5%

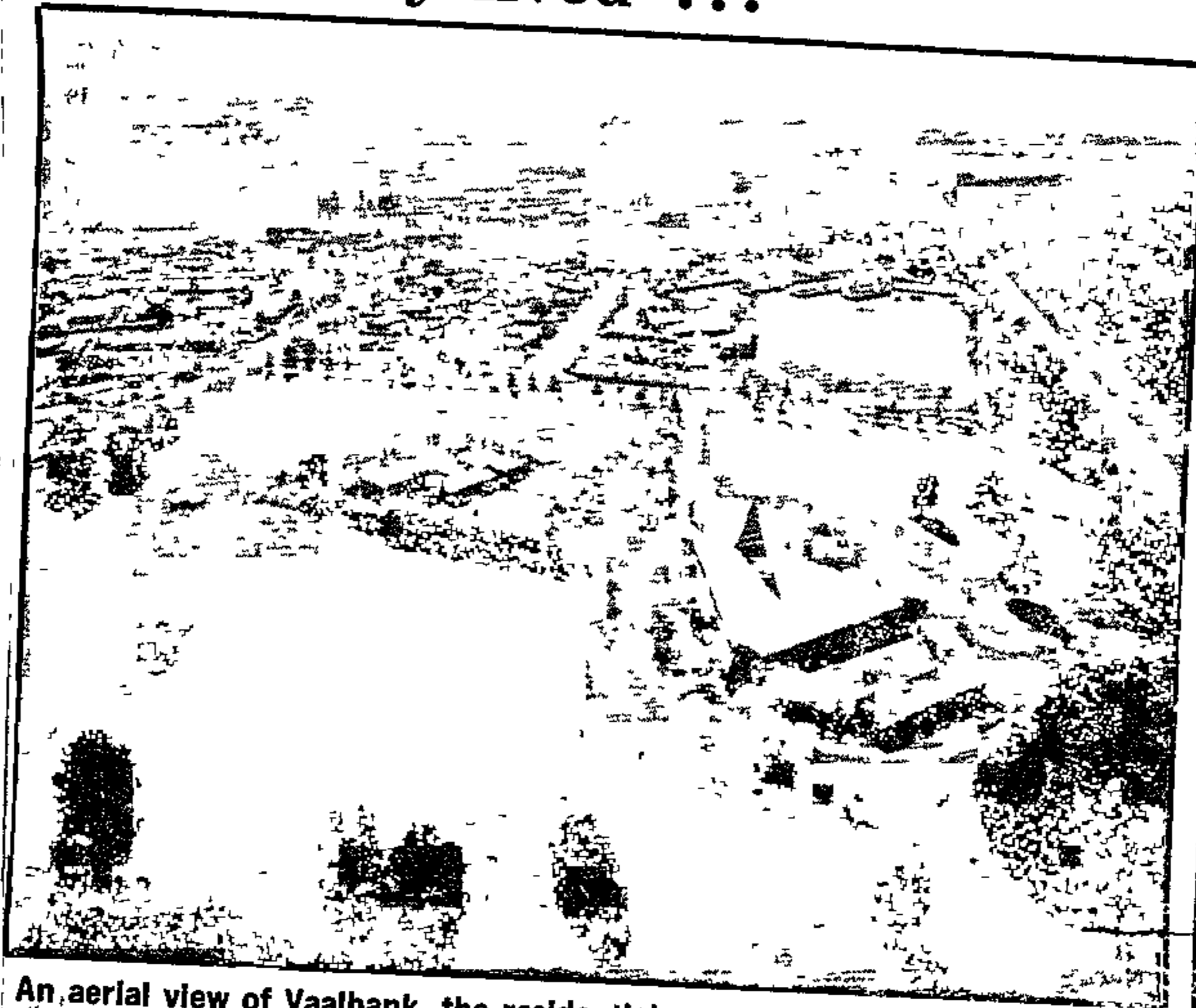
Methane gas is only explosive in concentrations of between 5% and 15%. Above and below these levels it is harmless

Coal dust is usually treated with inert stone dust to reduce the inflammability of methane

"And the inert dust hopefully makes the mixture of coal and stone dust also inert," Mr. Martinson said

"This is a very complex problem and a tremendous hazard. It cannot totally be eliminated — that would mean virtually no mining"

Where they lived ...



An aerial view of Vaalbank, the residential area near the mine.

Where they played ...



The club building and associated sports facilities at the mine.

63 die as methane gas explosion rips through Natal coal mine

MINING MOUNTAIN OF DEATH



A frantic dash for help as nursing staff jumped to action as the 63 miners were off-loaded on the Rand Mutual Hospital roof helipad. The men were flown from Vryheid to receive specialised emergency treatment at the hospital.

Picture: GARTH LUMLEY

Mail Correspondent
VRYHEID.

A METHANE gas explosion killed 63 people and injured several others in the Hlobane coal mine near Vryheid yesterday morning.

Four critically injured men were flown by a South African Air Force Puma helicopter to the Rand Mutual Hospital, belonging to the Chamber of Mines, in Eloff Street Extension, Johannesburg. They all suffered from first degree burns.

Six others were flown to Rand Airport near Germiston by fixed wing aircraft and transported to the same

SAAR helicopter in mercy dash to Joburg

Several others were treated for minor injuries at the Vryheid Hospital

Sixty of the dead men were black and three white

The injured men, swathed in bandages and attached to intravenous drips, were carried from the helicopter and laid on stretchers to be wheeled away at a running pace by nurses

A team of surgeons and anaesthetists, on standby before the helicopter arrived, went into immediate action

The helicopter landed on the roof helipad of the ultra-modern hospital at 5.45Pm by the light of the setting sun

Of the four critically injured miners, one is in a very serious condition

At the Rand Mutual Hospital two plastic surgeons, a specialist anaesthetist, three medical doctors, two other general surgeons, and other personnel are attending to the 10 injured men

The disaster occurred shortly before 8am when the explosion, followed by a blazing fire, ripped underground at the sections five and 10 of the mine

A spokesman for Iscor said 83 workers were underground at the time of the explosion

Rescue teams from mines

● The human cost of mining SA's riches — Page 9

in the area were on the scene within minutes and assisted in removing the victims. By last night everything was under control at the mine

The names of the dead and injured have not yet been released

The explosion apparently occurred when methane gas seeped from the coal seam or the bedrock and ignited, Mr Jurie Blom, coal buying manager for the Hlobane Colliery, told Sapa

The mine employs about 1 000 workers. Hlobane is

about 27km east of Vryheid

"The situation is back to normal. We've just got the last report in that the only missing man has been found alive," Mr Blom said in a telephone interview

He said the blast occurred about an hour after the crew had begun the first shift after the weekend. He said methane gas may have leaked spontaneously from the coal seam during the weekend and been ignited by the mining equipment

He said extensive ventilat-

tion systems in the mine shafts were designed to prevent methane buildups.

"Over the weekend, one sometimes finds that the ventilation system hasn't cleared the air as it should," Mr Blom said

Mine managers were below ground assessing the damage and no estimate of losses was immediately available

The victims, mostly single black men who lived in hostels at the mine, included drill operators, blasters, and other specialists involved in every facet of coal mining. Mr Blom said

The shaft is one of several

that cut horizontally from the surface into a mountain rich with coal deposits, reaching 5km to 6km from the surface

Mr Blom said the rescue operation was completed by 3pm yesterday and that production was back to normal last night

Sections of the mine were still being cleared of the poisonous gases with fans, although the largest area had been cleared. Heavy smoke and flames-trapped workers underground and many died from the accumulation of toxic fumes

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Shocked miners



tell of pit blast inferno

Staff Reporters

Injured survivors of yesterday's methane gas explosion in a northern Natal mine today spoke of the terrifying blast and fire in which 63 of their colleagues died.

"I just heard a huge blast, was thrown to the ground and woke up in hospital 11 hours later," said one

Speaking from a Chamber of Mines hospital bed, Mr Vuyisile Aletta (32) of Mondlo in kwazulu told of the death blast in which 63 people died and 10 were injured at the Hlobane coal mine in Vryheid

Swathed in bandages, his badly scarred face covered in anti-bacterial cream and his badly burnt eyes covered with cotton wool, Mr Aletta said

"I was working with my colleagues when we heard a big blast

"The impact threw me to the ground and I remember nothing after that"

Mr Aletta, who had extreme difficulty speaking today, is suffering from 50 percent burns and other injuries

Another survivor, a Mr Markham, who was admitted to hospital in Natal last night with severe gassing, described the pandemonium when the fire broke out

"It was terrifying. I was in the gus searn when the smoke started coming. It was so heavy and thick, you couldn't see a thing. I only hope nothing like that ever happens again."

Among those identified at the Rand Mutual Hospital in Johannesburg were Mr Dennis Buthelezi, Mr Mbuseni Mpompo and Mr Aletta

About 1500 miners were underground at the mine at the time of the enormous explosion — but 83 people were exposed to the full force of the blast of which only 10 escaped unscathed. Proto teams began retrieving the dead and injured almost immediately.

The 10 injured were airlifted to Johannesburg by a Puma helicopter and a Dakota aircraft supplied by the South African Air Force.

Matron Vanessa Wade, who was on standby to receive the patients at the Rand Mutual Hospital, told today of the drama as the helicopter landed on the pad behind the hospital.

The pithead of the Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid. This picture shows (from left) the main pithead, mine workshops and a smaller pithead. This complex is high above the shaft in which 63 miners died yesterday in a methane gas explosion



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injuries were selected to come in the first flight and arrived at the hospital at about 5,45 pm.

"One of the men had extensive burns from his head to his ankles.

"Three of the patients have been placed in the intensive care unit suffering with 80 percent burns," Matron Wade told The Star

In the septic ward today, doctors and nurses were treating the badly burnt patients.

Three of the dead miners have been identified as Mr J P "Ed" Venter (28) of Hlobane, who leaves a pregnant wife and child, Mr T J Bezuidenhout (23) of Vryheid and Mr Harvey Cronje (28), also of Vryheid

Emergency teams from the mine were still battling today to identify the 60 black miners who were killed

Weeping relatives

Own Correspondent

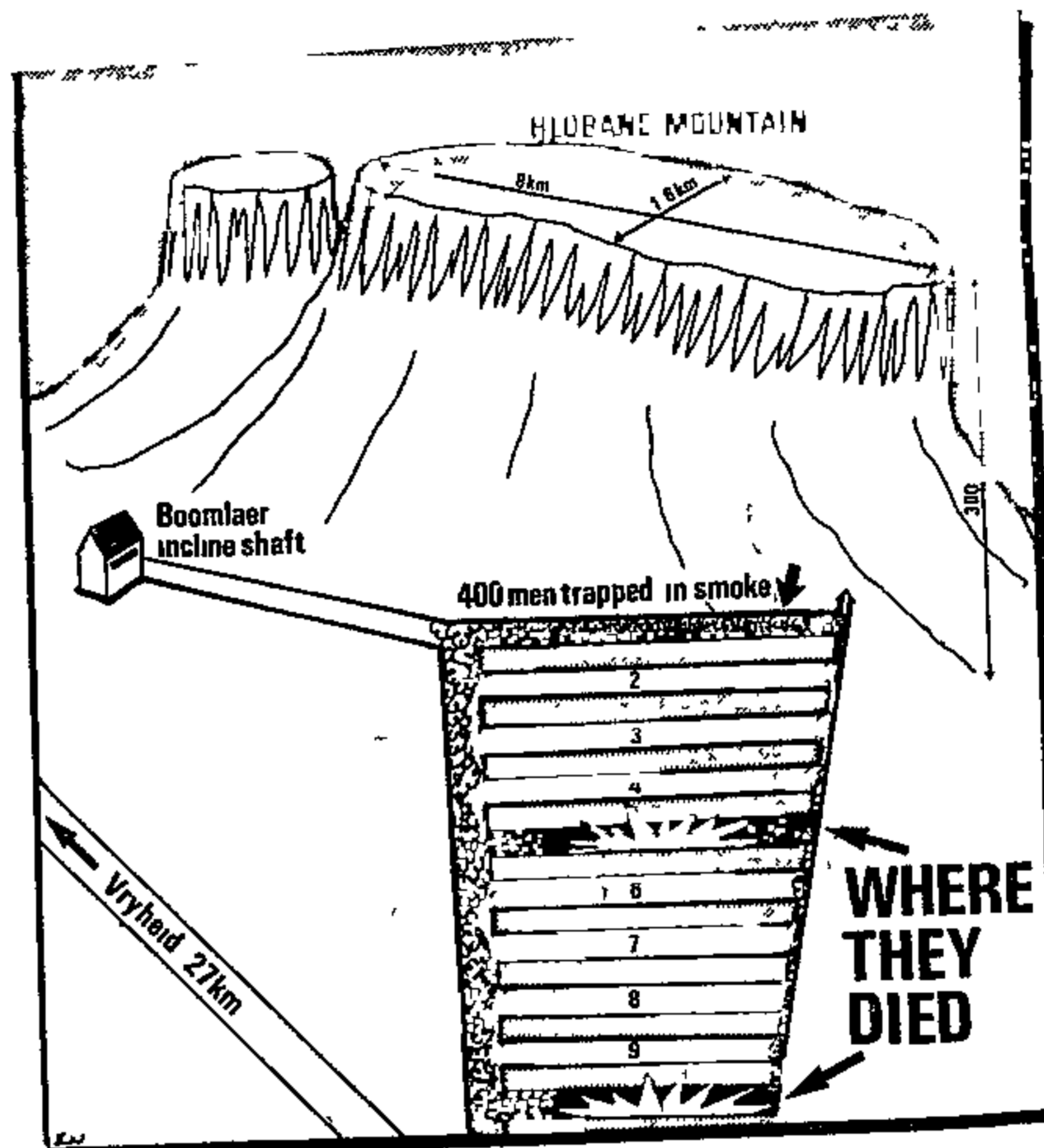
VRYHEID — Hundreds of bereaved families and relatives — many of them crying — began gathering at Hlobane Colliery today

When a reporter visited the mine hospital, 18 bodies were lying on the floor of a big room set up temporarily as a mortuary. Still dressed in their boots and overalls, several were beyond identification.

Scores of friends, relatives and fellow-miners squeezed into the room in an effort to identify some of the dead men

The hospital superintendent, Mr Fame Venter, said most of the dead men were from homelands such as Transkei, Ciskei, kwaZulu and Lesotho, but he did not know when the bodies would be released to their families

Dead and injured men were fully covered by insurance



Over 8 000 died in mining accidents in last 10 years

By Zenaide Vendeiro and Colleen Ryan

A staggering 8 209 people have died and more than 230 000 have been injured in mining accidents in South Africa in the last decade.

These are some of the worst accidents:

- September 2 1977 — 32 men die following earth tremors in two Western Transvaal mines, Blyvooruitzicht and Hartbeesfontein
- October 7 1977 — 13 men are killed at Saaiplaas gold mine in Free State when a giant bucket carrying nine tons of rock plunges to the bottom of a shaft.
- April 26 1978 — 18 miners die after a rockburst at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine at Stilfontein
- December 1 1978 — 41 miners are trapped 2 km underground after a fire breaks out at the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine near Ork-

ney

- April 6 1979 — A rockfall at Vaal Reefs kills 10, injures 37.
- March 27 1980 — 31 miners in a lift cage plunge to their death at the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine near Orkney. Another 30 miners die the same year in two mine cage plunges at the Balmoral gold mine outside Germiston and at the Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville.
- October 30 1981 — 16 miners die at the Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville when a cage plummets to the bottom of a shaft
- November 12 1982 — 25 men killed in an underground explosion at the Ermelo Coal Mine and a rock burst on the Vaal Reefs gold mine at Klerksdorp
- April 8 1983 — 16 miners die when the Beisa uranium mine near Welkom is rocked by a methane explosion

● See Page 3, World section

63 killed in Natal mine gas holocaust

(212) Mercury
13/9/83

VRYHEID—A massive underground explosion of methane gas instantly incinerated 63 miners and injured 10 others yesterday on the lower level of the Boomlaer Pit of the Hlobane coal mine in Northern Natal.

By **GEHRI STRAUSS**

The cause of the explosion has not yet been established

Three of the men who perished in what has been described as one of South Africa's worst coal mine disasters were whites

Two from Vryheid were Mr Harvey Cronje, 28, married and a father of three, and Mr J P Venter, 26, who leaves a pregnant wife and one child, and a single man, Mr P J Bezuidenhout, of Hlobane

The South African Air Force evacuated the 10 injured to the Chamber of Mines' Wenela Hospital in Johannesburg

Four, suffering from the severest burns, were airlifted in a Puma helicopter and six others were flown in a Dakota air ambulance after being treated for burns at the Vryheid Hospital

About 400 miners, trapped by smoke and fumes on an upper level, were rescued and brought to the surface by proto teams

Scenes of horror met the teams in sections five and 10 on the lower level, about 3 km away from the shaft

A proto team rescuer told me that burned and mutilated bodies were strewn all over two tunnels

Some had been decapitated and were limbless. Others had split open in the immense heat of the combination of exploding gas and the coal dust which was simultaneously ignited

All the bodies were burned black and the whites could be identified only when their clothing had been removed

Disaster struck at 7 45 a.m., less than two hours after the day shift had gone underground, when smoke was reported coming up the mine shaft

There were nearly 1 000 miners underground at the time. Most were working in other sections away

from the blast area

Mine officials who went below were driven back by smoke and fumes

Two of the mine's own proto teams of eight men with respirators went underground. They were joined soon after by others sent from the Vryheid Coronation Mine

On the upper level they found 400 miners trapped at the end of a tunnel by smoke and fumes

Searing

The information was relayed to the surface and the mine's ventilation system was altered to clear the smoke

These miners were then led to safety and brought to the surface. Some suffered from the effects of smoke and fumes but all soon recovered after treatment

On the lower level about 40 men, including the three whites, had been working in two 200 m long tunnels.

It was here that the explosions occurred, filling both tunnels with an immense sheet of searing fire.

One of four severely burned miners is taken from a military helicopter for immediate emergency treatment at the Rand Mutual Hospital in Eloff Street Extension, Johannesburg. Swathed in bandages and attached to intravenous drips, the men were carried from the Puma helicopter on the hospital roof.

Miraculously, 10 miners emerged from the holocaust alive, but four of them critically burned

Some blacks refused to go underground yesterday afternoon after the mine had been declared safe

Mr Jurie Blom, manager of Coal Buying and Hlobane, said at a Press conference at the mine offices last night that the mine management had considered shutting down, but it was thought better for morale to get everybody back to work

The names of the dead black miners will not be released until their next-of-kin have been informed

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Star 13/9/83

Methane gas constant threat

By Colleen Ryan

Methane — the killer gas which claimed 63 lives yesterday — is a permanent threat to men who work in coalmines

Wherever coal is mined methane is present and, when combined with air, it can cause a massive explosion, said Mr Michael Martinson, senior lecturer in the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand

"Methane gas is only explosive in concentra-

tions of from five to 15 percent but, when it is in this form, the heat from a cigarette is enough to cause an explosion," he explained

Methane-gas explosions were usually not big but they often triggered larger, coaldust blasts, he said

"It is difficult to give the exact cause of yesterday's accident, but it is possible that the methane explosion sparked off explosions of coaldust," said Mr Martinson

Mines have strict safe-

ty regulations to minimise the risk of gas accidents, he said

The supervisor is required to conduct a series of tests to determine the quantity of methane in the air at the start of each shift

"If he finds an accumulation of methane he must withdraw his workers immediately," Mr Martinson said "The gas must then be swept out with air from the ventilation system"

The only way of moving the methane out is to

dilute it with air This could be dangerous because it meant going through the explosive stage when the methane concentration was from five to 15 percent

Two measures which reduced the hazard were

- Workers were required to dilute the methane gas as quickly as possible

- Any agent, such as an open flame or a spark, which could cause an explosion had to be removed

Das 14/9/83

(212) (134)

'Explosion' miners still very ill

Staff Reporters

The condition of the 10 miners, airlifted to the Rand Mutual Hospital after being burnt during Monday's methane gas explosion at Hlobane Colliery in northern Natal, had still not improved early today.

Matron Vanessa Wade said "There's been no change in the men's condition. Even the three in the intensive care have remained the same."

The three miners in intensive care are "very critically ill".

Iscor's managing director said his firm would do everything possible to meet the needs of the next of kin of the 63 miners who died.

Mr F P Kotzee said they would get all insurance benefits as well as the funds by which they were covered.

An investigation was being done into the explosion

and the findings would be announced as soon as they were available.

Mr Kotzee also expressed his condolences to the next of kin of the dead and injured.

The Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs has assured the relatives of the dead miners that more steps will be taken once the government mining engineer has made a full report.

Mr P T C du Plessis said in Pretoria yesterday that he wished to convey his condolences and those of the Government to the relatives of the 63 who died in one of South Africa's worst mining accidents.

"Our sympathy is also conveyed to the injured and it is hoped that they will soon recover," Mr du Plessis said.

He thanked the rescue teams for their prompt action after the disaster.

Black voice needed for mine safety — unionist

By Colleen Ryan

The National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) has expressed shock at the Hlobane coal mine disaster and has called on the Government Mining Engineer to allow workers more say on safety issues.

The tragedy highlighted the need for better communication on mine safety, said Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, secretary of the union.

"Black workers have no representation on the Government-appointed Mine Safety Committee."

"Our union applied in April to join the committee, but the Government Mining Engineer rejected our application on the grounds that we are unregistered and unrepresentative," he said.

Mr Ramaphosa, who claims his union has the support of 40 000 members, said the Mines and Works Act did not stipulate that employee representatives on the safety committee had to come from registered unions.

Safety measures at the Hlobane mine appeared to be wanting and the NUM called on the Government Mining Engineer to institute an inquiry with worker participation.

Government engineers have already started to investigate the accident, said Mr Floors Koetzee, managing director of Iscor, the group which controls the mine.

Speculation on the cause of the blast was inappropriate before the investigation was completed, he said.

The Government Mining Engineer, Mr G P Badenhorst, was not available for comment today. A spokesman for his office confirmed that only unions with white members were represented on the safety committee.

"The black unions have been established for less than a year and it is difficult to pinpoint the true representatives at this stage," he said. "Legislation will have to be changed eventually to accommodate these groups but the unions first have to settle down and work from a secure base," he said.

Handwritten signature or initials.

149/83

SOWETAN/Wed-

4 blast survivors

are still critical

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

FOUR of the 17 workers who survived when methane gas exploded in a Natal mine, killing 63 others were still in a "critical condition" at the Rand Mutual Hospital, Johannesburg yesterday.

Ten workers were flown from Natal to Johannesburg where they were admitted, four to the intensive care unit, according to the president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr C T Fenton

Some of those admitted are Mr Garnet Maduna, Mr Moyem Dlamini, Mr Khayna Nkosi and a man known as Elvis. The names of the others have not been released because the next-of-kin have not yet been informed

One of the injured miners said "We heard a big noise and were trapped. It was a horrible sound. We were not prepared to die."

Mr Garnet Maduna said "I was very angry when you bench good players like Khuse, Zero Mogale and "Lastborn" Makrothi. You want Tomado to struggle first before he scores. I feel very angry when you bench good players like Khuse, Zero Mogale and "Lastborn" Makrothi. You want Tomado to struggle first before he scores. I feel very angry when you bench good players like Khuse, Zero Mogale and "Lastborn" Makrothi.



MR GARNET MADUNA Victim of the coal mine gas explosion

Tutu and. W none role can wins

THE SABC was still negotiating yesterday for television coverage of the September 23 world heavyweight title fight in Cleveland, Ohio, between South Africa's Gerrie Coetzee, and American Michael Dokes.

"We are expecting an answer in the next day or two about coverage," said corporation spokesman Mr Eric van der Merwe last night.

But going on past performances by the SABC, I think there is very little chance that the corporation will be screening the fight live.

Live coverage via satellite is very expensive, and, should there be a knock-out in the first round then the corpora-

Coetzee to box on box?

tion would get immediate coverage almost for free for its news programme.

The longer the SABC delays in screening, then the less it will cost it.

Sticking my neck out now — I say that (unless there is a first round knock-out) — the earliest viewers can expect to see coverage of this Friday fight will be the next afternoon in "Sport '83".

3 mine victims 'critical'

By MARGARETHA GOOSEN
THE condition of three of the mine workers involved in the methane gas explosion at the Hlobane Colliery, which killed 63 miners yesterday, was yesterday described as "very critical".

They were still unconscious yesterday. Their burns varied from 60 to 95%, a Rand Mutual Hospital spokesman said.

Five other men also received major burns and their condition could be described as "serious", the hospital superintendent, Dr D Visser, said yesterday.

Only two of the workers flown to the hospital on Monday afternoon received minor burns.

One man has a fractured skull and burns on his eyes and the other has a fractured tibia, said the nursing superintendent, Mrs Vanessa Ward.

The hospital was yesterday still waiting for an Hlobane Colliery official to arrive to identify some of the men as some of them were unable to give their names.

The names that are known may not be made public as it is not known if their relatives have been informed yet.

The Pretoria Bureau reports that the managing director of Iscor, Mr F P Kotzee, said last night relatives would receive all the benefits payable by the insurance and other funds under which they had been covered.

He said "Unnecessary speculation would be inappropriate before the facts are known."

"I should also like to thank the news media for the manner in which the matter has been handled up to now."

Mr Kotzee said that he had full confidence in the mine management and the way in which it was handling the matter.

Sapa reports that an Iscor spokesman said the mine management at the colliery was continuing the task of identifying those killed in the blast, which occurred 5 or 6km underground.

However, Iscor has identified more than half of the men so far, and it is hoped that a full list of names will be released later, he said.

Plastic surgeons and other specialists have been called in to help in the battle to save the lives of the men, he said.

Some of the workers at the Hlobane colliery were reluctant to go underground yesterday and agreed to start work only after receiving assurances that all was safe, he said.

The personnel manager of the mine was at the shaft head for the 6am shift yesterday morning to persuade the miners to go to work underground and about 1 200 agreed then to begin work, he said.

In a statement yesterday, the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr Pietie du Plessis said officials of his department were already at the mine.



set for yesterday's memorial service for the former State

Snake eats on the double

MIAMI — A two-headed water snake has become the reigning reptile at the Miami Serpentarium, munching six goldfish at a time with both heads.

The reptile, the product of a birth defect, was found in West Virginia and is named Hatfield and McCoy after

two families from the area famous for their violent feud.

The serpentarium bought the striped "Siamese snake" for R55 from a teenager who found it when it was a 15cm wriggler three years ago.

Now, say reptile keepers, Hatfield and McCoy catches food with both mouths and is almost 1m long — Sapa-AP.

resident

which he gave his name. Slowly the coffin was lowered into the grave as Ds Heyns recited the creed and then the hundreds of mourners filed past to strew flowers and pay their final respects to the man who had been Prime Minister of South Africa for 12 years.

In Pretoria's Groot Kerk, the aged former Minister of Transport and close colleague of Mr Vorster, Mr Ben Schoeman was led to a seat at the front of the church.

Asiatas
 WAISMOKING DOES
 YOUR HOME

Dead miner had wanted the day off

14/9/83
212 Mercury

By Gehri Strauss

ONE of three white miners who died in the Boomlager coal mine explosion at Hlobane, near Vryheid, on Monday had asked for the day off, saying he did not feel good about going underground.

Another had recently given up a banking career to enter mining because he felt there was more money in it.

Mrs Cindy Venter, 20-year-old wife of Mr Ed Venter, 26, of Hlobane, was too overcome with grief and shock to speak yesterday.

But a family friend said Ed should not have been working on the lower level sections where the blast had taken place.

Day off

'He and my husband always work in another underground section a long way from where the explosion happened.'

'But on Monday when Ed and my husband were walking to the pithead Ed said he didn't want to go underground that day.'

'He said he didn't feel good about it and when they arrived at the mine he asked if he could take the day off. He was told that a shift boss on sections 5 and 10 had reported sick with earache, and could not work that day.'

'Ed was asked to stand in for the shift boss. He agreed to do it. It cost him his life,' she said.

The Venters, both former Rhodesians, settled on the mine a year ago with their three-year-old daughter, Sherri-Lee.

Accidents

Only last week Mrs Venter learned that she was pregnant with a second child.



Mr Andre Cronje



Mr Ed Venter



Sherri-Lee Venter in the arms of a neighbour, Mrs Belinda Caulkett.

the Boomlager mine and three months ago qualified as a miner.

His uncle, Mr H S Kohrs, chief storeman at the Vryheid Coronation Colliery, said yesterday that when the call for help came for proto rescue teams to be sent from the colliery to go to Boomlager pithead, he became worried about Tinus but could get no confirmation whether he had been involved.

'There were two Bezuidenhouts on that mine and it was not until 4 o'clock that one of the charred bodies had been identified as Tinus.'

'It is an awful truth that there is a thin line between life and death and we never know when or how we will cross it.'

Little Nellie Cronje, youngest daughter of the third white victim, Mr Andre Cronje, 28, will be two years old on Sunday, but this year she will celebrate her birthday without her father.

He will be buried tomorrow at noon after a service in the Vryheid Full Gospel Church.

He leaves his wife and two other daughters — Zonica, 6, and Jacqueline, 4.

● See also Page 2

A neighbour said her maid had told her in the morning that there had been a bad accident at the mine, but she paid scant attention to it.

'It was only when a mine official came to Mrs Venter's house to tell her of the tragedy at 3.30 p.m. that the full impact of the disaster hit us all,' the neighbour said.

Mr Venter will be buried at Dannhauser later this week.

Bachelor Tinus Bezuidenhout, 23, gave up a promising banking career and went into coal mining because he said there was more money in it.

He began working at

Coal mine disaster

By Gehri Strauss

METHANE gas, which killed 64 miners in an explosion at Natal's Boomlager mine at Hlobane on Monday, could occur at any time in a coal mine

The gas, odourless and harmless if inhaled, formed in pockets in the coal beds and was released when a hole was drilled into the pocket during mining operations.

This was said at Hlobane mine headquarters yesterday by Mr Jurie Blom, operations manager of Hlobane Colliery

'In spite of modern detecting devices such as the Davey safety lamp which was in regular use in the Boomlager mine, gas can accumulate very quickly in a working tunnel,' he said.

'It is harmless in itself

How harmless methane gas turns into a killer

212
Mercury
14/9/83

but its danger lies in its extremely high explosion potential in contact with a naked flame or a spark

'For this reason matches and lighters are forbidden underground

'We still don't know what caused the explosion but already teams of experts are underground taking samples in the blast area

'They include representatives from the Department of Mineral and En-

ergy Affairs, the Chief Inspector of Explosives, the Government Mining Engineer, the local Chief Inspector of Mines and experts from the Field Research Institute'

Mr Blom added that preliminary inspections indicated that the explosion had not been as severe as was first thought

'It appears now that it was a methane gas explosion only and that the coal dust in the tunnels

did not ignite in the flash fire

'One of the standard safety precautions underground is to spray a substance on the floors and walls to prevent coal dust from igniting in a gas explosion

'Present indications are that the men were killed only by the methane gas igniting,' he said

Mr Blom said a combination of gas and coal dust explosion would

have done far greater physical damage in the blast area. There had not been any cave-ins

'The disaster will be thoroughly investigated and a full report of the findings will be made to us as soon as possible'

Mr Blom added that all the dead miners were fully insured by the Chamber of Mines and that their families would be compensated

He said that funeral arrangements for the 61 black miners would be made in accordance with the wishes of their next-of-kin

The Hlobane group of mines has won several annual 'Colliery Millionaire Awards' for 1 000 000 underground fatality-free shifts, and only three weeks ago qualified for another 'millionaire' award



Former Miss World, Mrs Anneline Kriel-Kerzner, managed a smile for the camera as she left the Milpark Hospital, Johannesburg, last night after visiting her husband, hotel magnate Mr Sol Kerzner

Picture GREG ENGLISH

Kerzner has heart attack

By GEOFFREY ALLEN
HOTEL and casino tycoon Sol Kerzner was in hospital yesterday after suffering coronary thrombosis. According to Dr G Cassell of the Milpark Hospital in Johannesburg, 48-year-old Mr Kerzner was "doing well" and "everything is fine at the moment". Dr Cassell said that Mr Kerzner had suffered a "slight coronary". The attack took place at Mr Kerzner's home in Sandton early yesterday morning. In recent weeks Mr

Kerzner has been under incredible business pressure. He has been busy putting together a massive re-organisation of casino and hotel interests in the country, which culminated in the union of part of the Southern Sun group of hotels, with the Holiday Inn chain owned by Rennie's, and the forming a company now known as "Newco". At a Press conference a fortnight ago Mr Kerzner appeared physically tired but in an ebullient mood as he an-

nounced the new casino deal. At Southern Sun headquarters in Sandton the staff were shaken by Mr Kerzner's illness — but said they were determined to keep everything running smoothly — in the absence of their boss. Leaving the Milpark Hospital last night, Kerzner's wife, former Miss World, Miss Anneline Kriel, who had arrived at the hospital in the morning to be near her husband, said she had been with Sol when the attack occurred but added that his present condition was "fine".

Two killer dogs are put down after horror attack

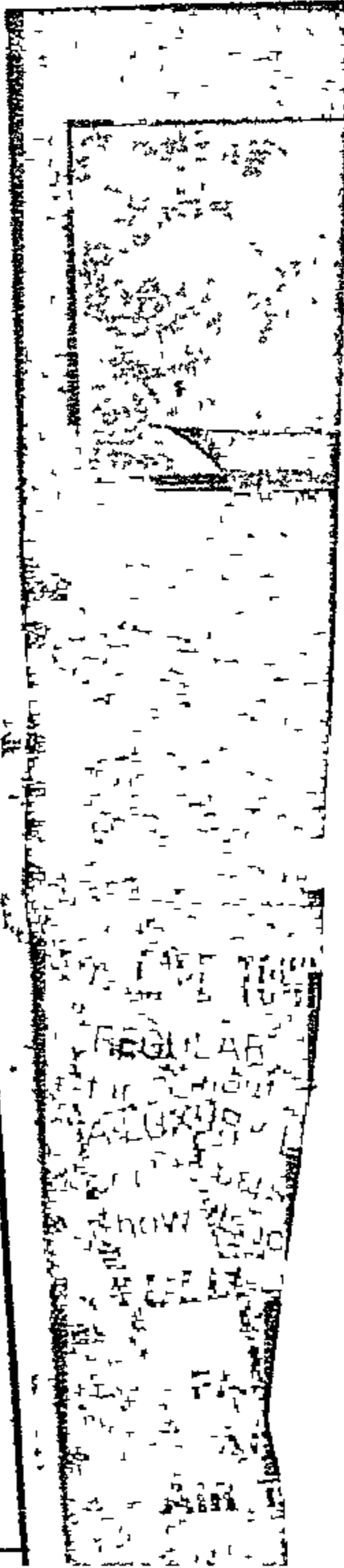
By CHRIS OLCKERS
BOTH killer dogs which savaged a young domestic worker in Bergbron, Roodepoort, were put down yesterday. The male dog was shot earlier in the day, and the female was put down last night. The crossbreed Staffordshire bullterrier and bullmastiff dogs attacked a 21-year-old domestic servant — known to her employers only as Gladys and to colleagues as Julia — and ripped her apart after breaking free of their chains in the yard. Yesterday morning, the dogs' owner, former journalist, Mr Ernst Oelofse, signed papers at the Roodepoort SPCA and the male dog, Bullet, was put to death but the bitch, Lungi, which also took

handed to the SPCA at that time. Meanwhile, Mrs Billie Greyvenstein, manageress of the SPCA, said she was shocked when several whites called her yesterday and asked if they could buy the killer dog. "I told them they were bloody mad because this dog could easily kill again," she said. Neighbours reacted angrily at the news that the bitch had been allowed to live. "The dogs are killers. Both should have been put to death. Other people could still be injured," one neighbour said. Another woman, who lives nearby, said there would have been no question of putting both dogs to sleep if a white person had been killed. "The remaining dog must

be killed. I have dogs of my own but killers cannot be allowed in the neighbourhood where there are children," she said. The Divisional CID Chief for the West Rand, Colonel Martin "Cowboy" Saunders, said yesterday the dead woman had not yet been identified. He said police investigations were continuing and that at this stage no charges would be laid until the inquest. Other domestic workers in the area said yesterday the woman came from Natal but they did not know where she lived or if she had any relatives. "She worked as a part-timer and we all knew her as Julia, and we knew very little about her," Miss Liesbeth Motaung said yesterday.

Two miners worsening

212 RNM
15/9/83 Mail Reporter
TWO of the critically injured survivors of Monday's methane blast at the Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid in which 63 people were killed, were said to have regressed yesterday. The men, who suffered from extensive burns, were being treated in the intensive care unit. The third critically ill patient's condition was stable and the five other blast patients in the hospital — three had major burns and two had fractures and minor burns — were progressing. Twenty-one Basothos were among the 63 who died. There are more than 110 000 Basotho mine workers working in South African mines.



HLOBANE:

Star 15/9/83 (212)

WHY THEY HAD NO CHANCE

Dundas seam of the Boomlager workings

Miners working at furthest point from entrance

The 64 miners killed in the Hlobane Coal Mine disaster on Monday, when methane gas exploded, did not stand a chance

About 1500 miners were working in the mine at the time

Eighty-three were working on three sections of the Dundas seam of the Boomlager workings and were exposed to the full force of the blast in a 250 m wide section of the mine 185 m below surface

Those who were not killed immediately suffocated in a pocket of deadly carbon monoxide gas

The 10 who survived and the 10 who were seriously injured (one subsequently died) were three kilometres from the entrance of the mine the furthest point from help

The rescue operation was launched by the only means available — through a tractor conveyer service which took at least 20 minutes to reach the stranded miners and another 20 minutes to get them to fresh air

Ironically, a second entrance to the Boomlager workings which was much closer, presently allows for the conveying of coal only and is still in the process of being converted to a worker entrance

About 300 people were trapped for over three hours by smoke and poisonous fumes seeping up from the lower Dundas

SCENE OF DISASTER, 3 KM FROM ENTRANCE

Tractor conveyance service for miners (a 20 minutes minimum journey)

INTAKE AIR

Coal conveyor belt entrance (cannot be used by humans)

Rescue teams entered here and had to take tractor conveyance to disaster scene

HLOBANE MOUNTAIN

Another 300 miners trapped here

185m

Gus seam

Dundas seam

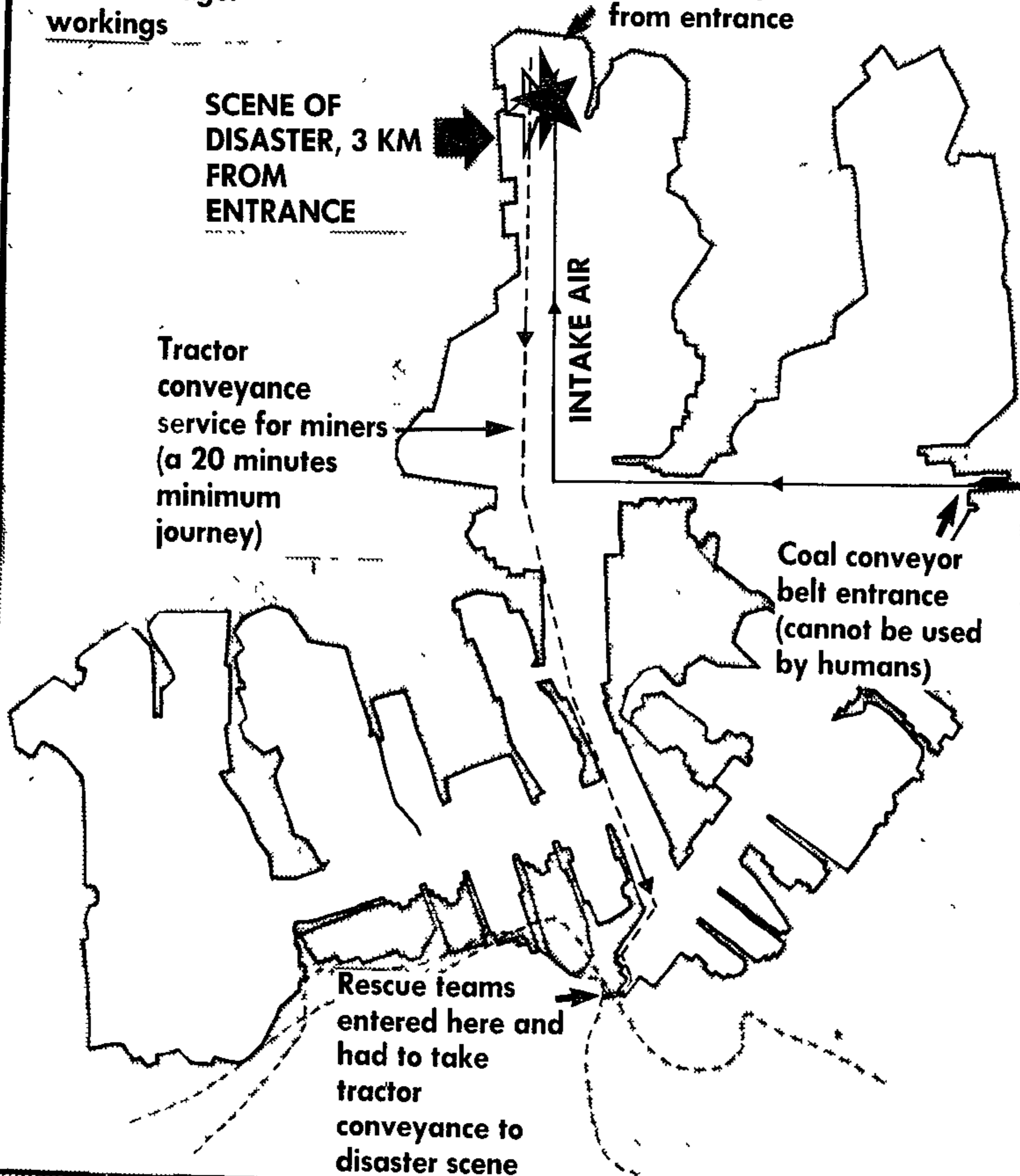
Boomlager entrance

Plant office

Source: Iscor

Graphic: LIZ WARDER

© Star Info-Pak



Two miners
worsening

212 R.A.M.

19/9/83 Mail Reporter

TWO of the critically injured survivors of Monday's methane blast at the Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid in which 63 people were killed, were said to have regressed yesterday.

The men, who suffered from extensive burns, were being treated in the intensive care unit.

The third critically ill patient's condition was stable and the five other blast patients in the hospital — three had major burns and two had fractures and minor burns — were progressing.

Twenty-one Basothos were among the 63 who died.

There are more than 110 000 Basotho mine workers working in South African mines.

No tests made for methane gas'

Miners in shock claim on disaster

212 ~~113~~

ROM 16/9/83

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

A NUMBER of "irregularities" appeared to have caused Monday's disaster at Hlobane coal mine, the black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) charged in a shock statement yesterday.

The disaster, caused by a methane gas explosion, claimed the lives of 63 miners.

The 40 000-member union claimed certain of its members had alleged that, on the morning of the blast, methane gas had not been tested for, as mining laws require,

Two gas blast survivors struggle for their lives

Mail Reporter

TWO of the survivors of Monday's killer methane blast at the Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid, are battling for their lives in the Intensive Care Unit of the Rand Mutual Hospital, Dr D Visser, the superintendent, said yesterday.

According to Dr Visser, the third blast patient in the ICU was still in a very critical condition

The condition of three other miners — five men with major burns are being treated in the septic ward at the hospital — was critical

Only four of the miners were progressing, he said.

and that the mine still used flame safety lamps which are no longer used in countries such as the United States "because they tend to be faulty"

The NUM said it had made these charges after interviewing union members injured in the blast and added that it was considering taking "solidarity action"

Mr Roelf Naude, a spokesman for Iscor which owns Hlobane, yesterday disputed the union's claims

He said the safety lamps used at the mine were "in, my opinion, the most foolproof available" He added it would not be possible to establish whether methane had been tested for until the inquiry into the disaster was complete

The NUM made its charges in a statement in which it demanded that a miners' bill of rights — dealing with safety issues — be established by law.

It also called on the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs to institute a commission of inquiry into safety on the mines "in view of the appalling safety conditions in South African mines".

According to the general secretary of the NUM, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, the union yesterday contacted members who had been injured at Hlobane

The NUM statement said "From statements we have obtained from (them), they inform us that, on the morning of the tragic incident, methane gas was not tested for as provided for in the Act"

The flame safety lamps used to detect methane gas, it added, were no longer used in countries such as the US because "they do not reveal the precise methane level"

Mr Naude said, however, the safety lamps used at Hlobane were still in use in the US They were also used with success in some of South Africa's most fiery mines, he added

"The alternative is to use electronic lamps which have key drawbacks I believe the flame lamp is the most foolproof in unskilled hands"

He added it was "impossible at this stage" to establish whether methane had been tested for

"How can anyone make such a statement? How can they be sure the tests were not carried out when they were not present? This is for the inquiry to decide," he said, adding it was normal practice for tests to be carried out

In its statement, the NUM also spelled out details of the bill of rights it wants enacted These include

- That miners have the right to have their own safety representatives,
- That they have the right to refuse to work under "conditions or practices believed to be unsafe, unhealthy or illegal",
- The right to demand special inspections of suspected safety violations,
- The right to review Government inspectors' "failure to conduct inspections into safety"
- The right to accompany inspectors during inspections without loss of pay;
- The right to take part in developing mining procedure plans and to additional health and safety training

2/11

ed to have had to many enjoy the company of the of family of breaking the law

No

Strike looms

212
~~182~~
~~183~~
~~211~~

Sowetan 16/9/83

THE DEADLINE for the Minister of Manpower to appoint a Conciliation Board to resolve the dispute between the National Union of Mine-workers (Num) and the Chamber of Commerce expires today and with the union not having heard from the Minister the possibility of a legal strike seems like becoming a reality.

The general-secretary of the union, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa yesterday lent credence to this view when he said "It is

all systems go. There is no turning back." Mr Ramaphosa said they have not had any indication from the Minister about appointing a Conciliation Board.

Mr Ramaphosa said they had received word that management was threatening workers with dismissal if they vote for a legal strike. "We are going to send word to all our members that we will do anything lawful to prevent other workers from breaking the strike," he said.

P 7 0 .

17/9/83 (212) NUM 17/9/83

NUM to give evidence at Hlobane probe

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

THE National Union of Mineworkers will give evidence to the inquiry into the Hlobane mine disaster and has also asked to be present at official investigations and inspections at the mine, the union's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said yesterday.

The investigation and inquiry will be carried out by an official of the Department of Mineral and Energy

Affairs

By law, the union cannot be prevented from being present at the inquiry and giving evidence to it

The NUM, which has called for an inquiry in which black workers will have direct representation on the body carrying out the investigation, has made serious charges about safety at Hlobane, including an allegation that methane gas was not tested for on the morning of the blast which has claimed

64 workers' lives.

Mr Ramaphosa said yesterday the union had learned investigations were already under way at the site of the Hlobane disaster

He said he had contacted the Government Mining Engineer's office and asked that the union be present at these investigations

"An identified official told us he would have to discuss it with the Government Mining Engineer but that he thought it unlikely that we be would

be allowed to be there"

But Mr Ramaphosa said the union intended to send representatives to Hlobane at the weekend and would seek to take part in the investigation there

It would also take an active part in presenting evidence to the inquiry

According to the law, no interested parties can be prevented from taking part in the inquiry and the inspections which form part of it

CALL FOR MINERS'

BILL OF RIGHTS

~~212~~ ~~212~~ 212 City Press

18/9/83

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has demanded that a miners' Bill of Rights be provided for in law.

The NUM call follows this week's tragic disaster at Hlobane Colliery where 63 miners died

The NUM Bill of Rights includes the following demands

Miners must have the right to

- 1) Their own safety representatives,
- 2) Refuse to work under conditions or practices believed to be unsafe, unhealthy or illegal,
- 3) Demand a Government inspection of suspected violations of safety regulations,
- 4) Review Government inspectors' failure to conduct inspections into safety,
- 5) Exercise rights on behalf of others' safety and health,
- 6) Institute and testify in proceedings without interference of victimisation,
- 7) Accompany Government inspectors during inspections without loss of pay,
- 8) Participate in the development of mining procedure plans,
- 9) Adequate health and

safety training,
10) Protection from discrimination for exercising statutory rights.

Meanwhile scores of people are expected to attend today's (Friday) lunchtime memorial service for the Hlobane miners

The service, organised by the SA Council of Churches and the National Union of Mineworkers, starts at 1,15pm at Khotso House

And in Witbank tomorrow, another commemoration service will also be held

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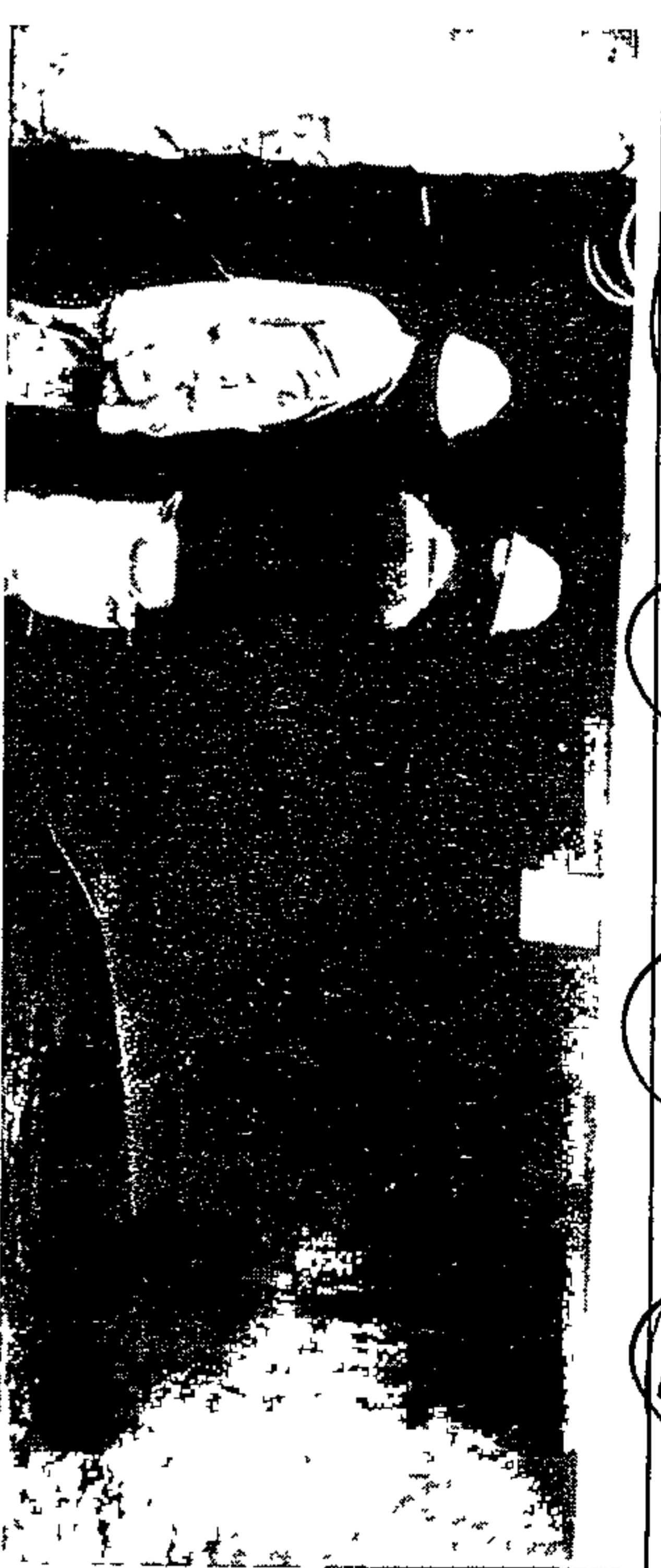
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18/9/83

SUNDAY TIMES, S

Horror miners'

medics of mercy



Tunnel of death ... 64 miners went 3km down this pit, never to resurface alive again

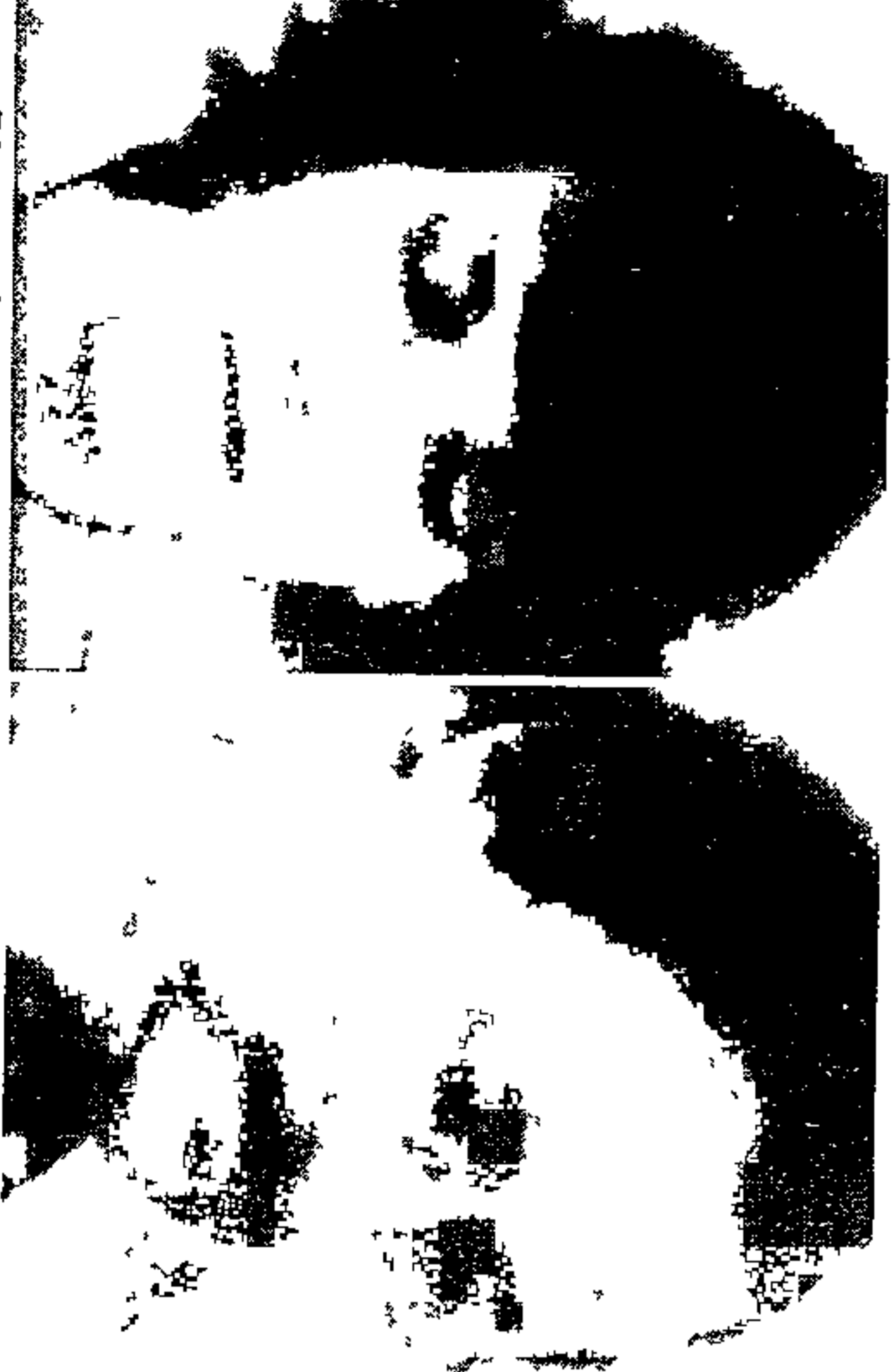
By SHAUN HARRIS
A MINE hospital's two medical staff emerged this week as the heroes of Hlobane, the ill-fated colliery where 65 have died after a methane gas explosion.

Hlobane mine hospital superintendent Fanie Venter and Sister Louisa van Rooyen treated the scores of injured men as they were brought to the surface

They worked solidly for 36 hours on Monday and Tuesday as hundreds of miners injured in the blast — three kilometres inside the Boomlangler shaft — arrived at the hospital

Afterwards, the medical staff told of the horror of seeing broken bodies, burned beyond recognition, and of the grim procession of miners who filed through the hospital on Monday night to try to identify their dead workmates

Besides giving initial treatment to the men flown to Johannesburg, Mr Venter and Sister van Rooyen admitted more than 15 of the injured to the mine hospital with less serious burns and



Disaster hero ... mine hospital superintendent Fanie Venter

Hospital

heroism

Disaster hero ... Hlobane's Sister Louisa van Rooyen

Disaster hero ... mine hospital superintendent Fanie Venter

were burning or carbon monoxide poisoning," Mr Venter said

Hospital staff also treated several miners for fractures, some who had been thrown several metres by the blast

"I think the worst part of the disaster was on Monday night when the first of those killed had to be identified

"Some of the men were buried beyond recognition, it was difficult even to tell what race they were," Sister van Rooyen said

Miners who thought they might be able to help with identification filed to the hospital throughout the night, where a ward had been set aside for the dead

The bodies were later taken to mortuaries in Vryheid and Newcastle

Sister van Rooyen said if one thing could be learned from the disaster it was how well people could work together in an emergency

"Miners I had never seen before arrived at the hospital and offered to help

"They cleaned up, manned the phones and checked the oxygen tanks — we couldn't have asked for more help," she said

Mr Venter said first aid was given to men inside the shaft by the rescue teams

Burns

"When they arrived at the surface we took over. Our main job was giving men oxygen and pain-killers before they were taken to the hospital"

When the Sunday Times arrived at the mine hospital four men were in the wards with first degree burns — minor cases had already been discharged

Mine authorities allowed the victims to be photographed, but their names could not be used

When methane gas exploded in Hlobane, three-year-old Sherril Lee Venter lost her father, Mr J P Venter

With her is a neighbour Mrs Belinda Caukett

When they arrived at the surface we took over. Our main job was giving men oxygen and pain-killers before they were taken to the hospital"

When the Sunday Times arrived at the mine hospital four men were in the wards with first degree burns — minor cases had already been discharged

Mine authorities allowed the victims to be photographed, but their names could not be used

Mine authorities allowed the victims to be photographed, but their names could not be used



222

8 Times 18/19/88

for suspected gassing and headaches.

Theirs was the success story of the disaster — they can proudly claim that not one patient died in their hospital during the rescue operation. "This is the biggest disaster in which I have ever been involved," Sister van Rooyen said later this week when the hospital had returned to its normal routine of treating minor medical cases

After disaster



Mr J P VENTER
Blast victim

had between 90 to 100 percent burns as well as fractured arms, legs and skulls," he said

When the severity and extent of the fatal explosion was realised medical help was summoned from neighbouring mines and nearby Vryheid

Emergency

"I had been seeing to the injured for several hours when the dead began to arrive at the hospital

"The bodies of people I had known were carried past me "Luckily I was so busy that I didn't have time to think about them"

Sister van Rooyen said that at one stage there were hundreds of miners waiting on the lawn outside the hospital to be treated for suspect-

ed carbon monoxide poisoning and headaches caused by the blast's concussion

Mr Venter was notified of the emergency shortly after 8am on Monday and went straight to the shaft head "I arrived as the first vic-

Stabilise

"The assistance we received was terrific. Within half an hour doctors had arrived from Vryheid and medical personnel from other mines

"The defence force was alerted and stood by to transport serious cases to Johannesburg," Mr Venter said

Ten victims were later flown to Johannesburg's Rand Mutual Hospital, six of whom were first treated at the mine hospital

"We had to stabilise their conditions before moving

A sad birthday for a miner's daughter

TODAY, Neelie Cronje turns two, but her birthday won't be a happy celebration.

Her father, Awie Cronje, was one of the 65 men killed in the methane gas explosion which ripped through the Hlobane coal mine this week

Neelie's mother, Judy Cronje, 26, spoke this week of the tragedy which had shattered her life.

She last saw her husband André, whom she calls Awie, on Monday when he left home for the early shift at the Hlobane mine, near Vryheid in Northern Natal.



MRS JUDY CRONJE

lived — in Vryheid and met Awie here," she said.

Typical of the compassion between mineworkers at Hlobane mine and their families was Mrs Belinda Caulkett

She and her husband, also a miner, were friends of Mr Ed Venter, killed in the blast, when they lived in Rhodesia

Soon after the disaster Mrs Caulkett helped look after three-year-old Sherri-Lee

Mrs Cindy Venter, who is pregnant, was too distraught to talk to the Press this week. Her husband Ed was one of the miners killed in the explosion.

Dangers

His last words were "Goodbye — I'll see you this afternoon"

"I never saw him again, and learned of his death when one of the mine managers and a minister came to visit me in the afternoon with the news."

Mr Cronje had three daughters, Zonica, 6, Jaco-

lene, 4, and Neelie

A deeply upset Mrs Cronje said her husband had sometimes spoken of the dangers of mining

"He was scared of going underground — I think every miner is — but he didn't speak about it much"

Mrs Cronje said her husband had worked at the Hlobane mine since 1975

"We married in 1976 I was born — and have always

Identified

Mr P J Bezuidenhout also died in the explosion

By late this week the names of the other 62 men killed in the fire and explosion had not been released

Hlobane's mine manager, Mr David Watson, said the names would only be released when all the bodies had been identified and next of kin traced

Union angers govt

THE National Union of Mineworkers (Num) proved their credibility and also earned the wrath of the government and mine managements when they became directly involved in the Hlobane mine tragedy which claimed 65 lives

A day after the tragedy occurred the union's secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa issued a statement which, among other things questioned the safety precautions taken at the mine. They called for an immediate investigation by the government mining engineer and asked to represent the workers. Late in the

212
 By PHIL
 MTIMKULU

week they issued a miner's Bill of Rights with heavy emphasis on safety

The union was however, rebuffed and informed that there were certain pre-requisites before a union can serve on the Mine Safety Committee. One of the requirements, they were told, was that a union should be registered and must be clearly represented

STATEMENT

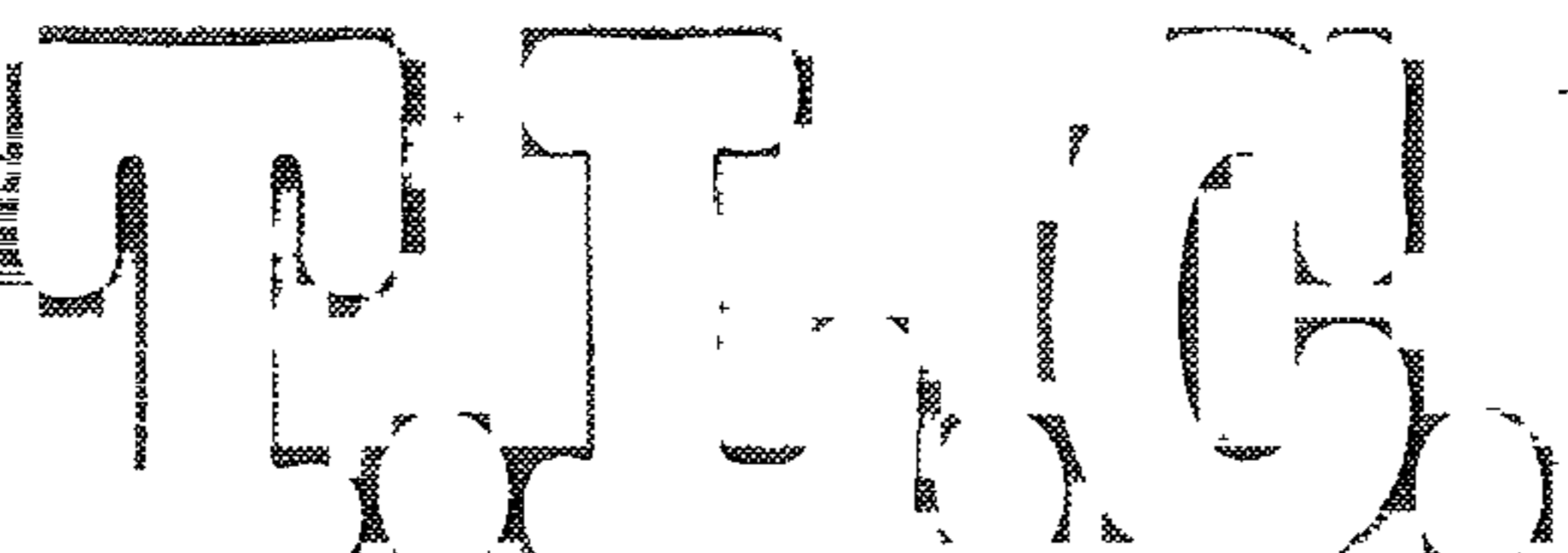
But it was on Thursday and Saturday that

the union raised the ire of management. The union released a statement after visiting the survivors in hospital in which allegations of gross negligence were made against Hlobane mine

And on Saturday at the memorial service for the dead miners Mr Ramaphosa said the mining industry would know no industrial peace unless a commission of inquiry was instituted to look into the safety of the mines

Mr Ramaphosa's speech at the memorial service earned the union a sharp rebuke from the Chamber of Mines


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Two miners 'critical' 212

2004 Mail Reporter 19/7/83

TWO of the miners who survived the methane blast which last week killed 65 people at the Hlobane colliery, near Vryheid, are in a critical condition, a Rand Mutual Hospital spokesman said yesterday.

The chief surgeon, Mr R Hyslop, said the miners had extensive injuries.

He said two of the miners who were in the intensive care unit had died and another two were "very ill".

There were eight survivors in a "fairly stable" condition, he added.

The patients were likely to remain in a critical condition for a long time as their injuries had affected a number of organs.

"These organs are liable to different complications at different stages," another hospital spokesman said.

He added that the critically ill miners had deep burns over more than 50% of their bodies.

"The recovery period varies up to as long as one month depending on the extent of the regional burns," he said.

(212) (212) ROM 21/9/83

NUM to probe mine blast

Labour Correspondent

THE National Union of Mineworkers is to visit the site of the Hlobane mine disaster later this week, with two engineers chosen by the union, to investigate the causes of the recent methane gas explosion

This was revealed yesterday by the union's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, who said the visit was taking place with the knowledge and approval of the Government Mining Engineer

The NUM has made serious allegations about the causes of the blast — which have been rejected by the mines — and originally demanded an inquiry in which

worker representatives played a full part

It has announced that it plans to give evidence to the official inquiry investigating the blast

Last week Mr Ramaphosa revealed that the union had attempted to be present at investigations at the mine prior to the inquiry

According to the law, any person or organisation with an interest in the matter is entitled to take part in inquiries into mine accidents

Yesterday, Mr Ramaphosa said the NUM had sent a representative to Hlobane over the weekend. He attempted to take part in investigations, but had been "barred" from doing so, Mr Ramaphosa

added

As a result, the union had contacted the Government Mining Engineer to protest against its exclusion from the investigations

"He then agreed that we could be present at Hlobane with our own engineer and that the investigation would be halted until then," Mr Ramaphosa said.

He said the union would be assisted at Hlobane by a member of a technical assistance group, set up to assist unions in safety and other issues, and by another engineer the union had approached for help

The union was collecting information from members injured in the blast

'Mourn mine dead on Monday

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

IN a dramatic move yesterday, the black National Union of Mineworkers called for a half-hour work stoppage throughout the mining industry from 9am on Monday to mourn the victims of the Hlobane mine disaster

The union called on all mine workers and employers in the industry to support the stoppage, and sent letters to the Chamber of Mines and all mining houses asking them to observe Monday as a "day of mourning".

The Chamber's president, Mr Colin Fenton, said the mines had already expressed their sympathy with the victims but added that mine managements would not stand in the way of workers who wanted to observe a "private moment of silence" at some time between 9 and 9.30

And, in another development highlighting growing mine worker action on safety issues, between 40 and 60 workers at the West Driefontein mine have refused to begin work on the mine's 14 level because they believe it is unsafe

The Gold Fields group, which owns the mine, says the work area is safe, that some men have agreed to begin work already and that those who don't agree to work there face dismissal today

But the NUM's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, says the union will take industrial court action if the men are fired.

17 nervous miners fired for refusing to go underground

23/9/83 E. Post
212

JOHANNESBURG — The West Driefontein gold mine near Carletonville yesterday fired 17 of the 40 workers who refused to go underground on Wednesday because they were afraid of a rockburst

The management of the Gold Fields mine met representatives of the National Union of Mineworkers, but the talks proved fruitless. Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said the union's general secretary

A spokesman for the mine confirmed that the Chief Inspector of Mines had inspected level 14 and could find nothing unsafe

"This was communicated to the 40 men in the morning, but 17 still refused to go underground. They are regarded as having terminated their contract," he said

Mr Ramaphosa said that the union was consulting its attorneys about the dismissal of the 17 workers in an effort to seek their reinstatement

The 40 mineworkers refused to go underground after claiming they had

heard rumblings in the rock. The mine management said it was impossible to technically determine in advance whether a rockburst would occur

The Minister of Mines, Mr Pietie du Plessis, said in Pretoria yesterday allegations that tests for gas were not made at the Hlobane colliery prior to the methane gas explosion that killed 63 miners last Monday would be thoroughly investigated during the pending joint inquest and inquiry

He said in a statement the inquest and inquiry would be held by a magistrate, with a member of the Government Mining Engineer's staff as assessor, and that the case should not be discussed as it was *sub judice* until the legal proceedings were finalised

Mr Du Plessis also reacted to recent Press reports that safety conditions and the safety norms in South African mines were unsatisfactory

He said South African mining regulations were generally accepted as be-

ing among the best in the world and were much wider in scope and more detailed than those recommended by the International Labour Organisation

This did not mean they were perfect and the regulations were constantly being reviewed

"In this connection, the Government Mining Engineer would welcome any positive and motivated suggestions for the improvement of the regulations"

● The Chamber of Mines has refused to display a National Union of Mineworkers notice calling for a moment of silence to be observed between 9am and 9 30am on Monday for the miners who died

In a letter to Mr Ramaphosa, Mr Peter Bosman, general manager of the Chamber of Mines, said the English part of the notice calls on employees to observe a moment's silence between 9am and 9 30am, but the Sotho and Zulu/Xhosa versions urge employees to participate in a half-hour work stoppage — Sapa

(212) ROM 23/9/82

No apartheid in mine safety'

CUSA backs NUM call

NOTHING prevented blacks carrying out methane tests if it was felt white miners were not doing their work properly, the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr Pietie du Plessis, said in Pretoria yesterday

He was reacting to allegations that prescribed safety measures had not been adhered to at the Hlobane Coal Mine in Natal, where 66 miners died after a methane blast on September 12

Allegations by the National Union of Mineworkers that the maximum permissible quantity of methane and the frequency of tests were not specified, and that flame safety lamps had been faulty, were "extremely misleading"

South African mining regulations were among the best in the world and detailed precisely when, where and how often tests should be carried out

"If any black worker should feel that any white miner is not doing his job

properly, there is nothing to prevent him from asking one of the black operators of electrically driven machinery to carry out a test," he said

"These operators have the necessary knowledge and equipment to carry out a test"

He said a number of Hlobane officials had methane meters as well

"There are no racial discriminations as far as safety in mines is concerned."

Allegations that tests for gas were not made at the Hlobane mine before the explosion would be thoroughly investigated during the joint inquest and magisterial inquiry, in which a member of the Government mining engineer's staff would act as an assessor, Mr Du Plessis said

"It is wrong to allege that mines are only interested in profits," he said

Apart from humanitarian reasons, accidents cost money and it was sound financial policy to prevent them.

THE influential Council of Unions of SA (CUSA) yesterday endorsed a call by the National Union of Mineworkers for a half-hour work stoppage in the mining industry on Monday to mourn the victims of the Hlobane mine explosion

On Wednesday, the NUM said work should stop from 9am to 9 30am and called on all mine workers and employers to support the stoppage.

CUSA said it fully supported the NUM's struggle for safe working conditions on the mines

A

Clash looms over NUM call to mourning

By Carolyn Dempster
Labour Reporter

A confrontation is looming between the National Union of Mineworkers and the Chamber of Mines over the union's call for its 40 000 members to mourn Hlobane's 65 dead between 9 and 9 30 am on Monday.

The Chamber of Mines president, Mr Colin Fenton, yesterday agreed to NUM's request for mineworkers to observe a "private moment of silence" within the half hour.

But now it seems likely that NUM's nationwide membership will heed the call literally and, to maintain silence underground, will down tools for the half hour specified by the union.

The union has requested representatives on the mines to display notices in Sotho, Zulu and English calling on the miners to observe September 26 as a day of mourning.

Yesterday the Chamber refused to allow the notices to be put up because the Sotho and Zulu translations called for a work stoppage whereas the English version merely asked for a moment of silence.

"This action is an entirely different matter from what the president agreed to as the disruption of operations of the mining industry ... could only be construed as an action against management, such a concerted work stoppage would be a contravention of the Labour Relations Act," said the Chamber's general manager.

"The Chamber has agreed to our request and has stated specifically that the mine managements will not interfere should workers take part in this action," said Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the union.

"As far as we are concerned the moment of silence constitutes a work stoppage because the workers will have to stop the machines to obtain the silence." He added that should individual mine managements gainsay the Chamber's agreement the result could be "very ugly indeed".

The Council of Unions of South Africa has issued a statement supporting the miners and urging all workers to support the cause of the mineworkers on Monday.

NUM to mourn mine victims

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

THE National Union of Mineworkers is to go ahead with plans for a half-hour work stoppage on Monday to mourn the miners who died in the Hlobane blast — whether mine managements allow it or not.

This was revealed by the union's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, yesterday, who added that mine managements were telling workers that they could observe a one minute stoppage, rather than half an hour.

The union's decision could lead to conflict on various mines which could test its recently-established bargaining relationship with the Chamber of Mines

And, in another development, Mr Ramaphosa was due to meet the chamber's president, Mr Colin Fenton, late yesterday to discuss the stoppage. The meeting was requested by Mr Fenton.

Earlier this week, the NUM called on all workers and employers on the mines to observe a half-hour stoppage to mourn the Hlobane dead.

It sent letters to the chamber and all mining houses asking them to support the call and observe Monday as a day of mourning

The stoppage is planned to begin at 9am to coincide with the day and time of the Hlobane blast

Mr Fenton reacted to the call in a letter to Mr Ramaphosa, saying that the industry had already publicly expressed its grief at the Hlobane disaster

He added, however, that mine managements would not stand in the way of workers who wanted to observe a "private moment of silence" between 9am and 9 30am on Monday

Mr Ramaphosa said yesterday that Mr Fenton's letter, as well as the reaction of mine managements, had been discussed by union members who felt that plans for a half-hour stoppage should continue

"They say that we do not need the permission of mine managements to mourn our dead," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Ramaphosa met NUM's lawyers yesterday afternoon to discuss the possibility of legal action against the West Driefontein mine, which this week fired 17 miners who refused to work in an area of the mine they said was unsafe

He said lawyers had already said they believed the union had "a good case" with which to press for the men's reinstatement.

If NUM goes ahead with the case, it will prompt a key court test on whether workers are entitled to refuse to work in an area they believe is not safe.

212 #57
Lesotho has
service for
mine dead 24/9/83

Mall Africa Bureau

MASERU — An inter-denominational church service was held in Maseru yesterday for 21 Basotho mine workers who died in Natal's Hlobane Coal Mine this month following a methane blast which so far has claimed 66 lives.

King Moshoeshoe II, Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan, Cabinet ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps and the public were present at the service.

King Moshoeshoe and Prime Minister Jonathan have sent messages of condolence to the bereaved families.

The King said the accident had been a great loss to both the victims' families and to Lesotho.

Chamber anti-stoppage

THE Chamber of Mines has refused to put up notices calling on mineworkers to observe a 30-minute work stoppage in honour of the 65 miners who died at the Hlobane coal mine.

The work stoppage has been called by the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) as a mark of respect to the miners who died in the methane gas disaster.

The union has urged

By **ZWELAKHE
SISULU**

the country's 470 000 miners to observe the stoppage between 9 am and 9 30 am today.

In a letter to the general secretary of the Num, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, the general manager of the Chamber of Mines, Mr Peter Bosman said the English version of the notices differed from

the Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho versions.

The notice in English called on workers to observe a moment of silence, whereas the notices in the other languages called for a work stoppage, said Mr Bosman.

Meanwhile the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) has come out in support of Num's demands for safe working conditions for miners.

Miners ^{Star} (212) mourn dead workers ^{27/9/83} (143)

The National Union of Mineworkers claimed that at least 32 000 miners observed a half-hour work stoppage yesterday in mourning for the 66 men who died at the Hlobane Colliery this month

The claim was not supported by the Chamber of Mines, which said it had received no reports of a substantial break in work at any of its members' mines

The union last night named nine mines from which it had received reports that the full 30 minute break had been observed without any clash with management. It also said the final number of participants in the stoppage was still being calculated as reports from underground workers were late in coming in.

A NUM spokesman said at two collieries, Rietspruit and Matla, 750 and 1 000 men respectively had observed the symbolic mourning.

A Chamber spokesman said "It is our impression there was no stoppage at all", although it was possible reports had not yet reached him.

Sharp differences over the stoppage developed last week. The Chamber said it had agreed to no more than "a moment of silence" which would not affect production. However NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa called for a full half-hour break, not only from its 40 000 members but from other miners too.

Miners' body recovered

29/9/83 *(2) Sawetan*
THE BODY of a sixth black mineworker killed in this week's accident at the Grass Valley chrome mine near Potgietersrus was brought to the surface this morning.

The wall of a shaft collapsed on top of nine black miners, but rescue

workers were able to reach three of the men. The names of those killed have not been released.

Five months ago, the mine received a five star award for safety from the Chamber of Mines — Sapa

Sacked miners claim area was unsafe

Key mine test case on refusal to work

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

THE National Union of Mine-workers yesterday served papers on the Gold Fields (SA) West Driefontein mine, thus instituting a key industrial court test case on whether workers can refuse to work in an area they consider unsafe

The papers contain shock allegations about an incident this month in which 17 NUM members at the mine were fired for refusing to work in an area because they believed it to be unsafe

The mine said the area was safe but the NUM says a rockfall injured a worker in the area in question two days after its members were fired for refusing to work in it. It says a miner was injured when the roof caved in on him

It also alleges workers who refused to work in the area were subjected to racial abuse by mine officials and that, at one point, an official threatened to shoot two of the workers

A Gold Fields spokesman said yesterday the company planned to contest the

action. But it could not respond in detail to the union's allegations yet as it had referred these to its legal advisers

The NUM has asked the court to order the temporary reinstatement of the 17 men who were fired for refusing to work in the area while its dispute with the mine over the sackings is resolved

The union also announced in a statement yesterday it had applied to the Government Mining Engineer for an urgent inquiry and inspection at the area where the men refused to work

This is the first time the court will have to decide whether workers are entitled to refuse to work in an area they consider unsafe

The action has been brought by the NUM and the 17 dismissed workers. In papers before the court, they allege the workers refused to work in the area for several reasons

- The roof of the area was hanging dangerously;
- They had heard rumblings there — "an indication of a possible rock burst";
- The roof had "abnormally wide" cracks,

● The roof supports were tilted at an angle, and,

● "Rocks kept falling when touched slightly by workmen's helmets"

It claims that another gang had been working in the area concerned, but had been moved after a white and three black miners had been "seriously injured". Two of the three black workers are still in hospital, it charges

The papers allege that, when the men reached the area — 14 level — they heard a team leader say it was unsafe. The signs were such that "even a novice would recognise the danger of a rockfall" and they refused to work there

When team leaders went to see the shift boss that evening, he allegedly called the workers "dogs" and insulted them racially

On another occasion a shift boss is alleged to have said he did not care if black miners died in the area as the mine "could easily buy other k...s and dogs to work in their place"

The mine said its production manager had inspected the area and found it safe and that a Government inspector had done the same



NUM's Ramaphosa ... claims contested by the Chamber

cases that we know of in mines represented by the CM that the half-hour work stoppage was observed, although there may have been incidents where people observed a moment's silence"

Industry sources say that a moment of private silence was observed on a significant scale. A spokesman for Anglo American says that no work-stoppages were experienced either on the gold or coal mines but that the moment of private silence was observed in the spirit of an agreement with the CM

Ramaphosa counters that reports are still coming in indicating the extent of an actual work-stoppage, and that denials by the CM "are to be expected"

Ramaphosa claims "Work-stoppages were observed at two Witbank collieries — at Gencor's Matla coal mine and at Rand Mines' Rietspruit. In addition, there were also underground stoppages at Western Holdings, and President Brand"

He adds "From reports received to date, we're pleased with the response to NUM's call for a stoppage. Predictably, on mines where our organisation was not so intense, the response was not that good, but it's an organisational problem. On the mines where we're organised the response was good"

Injured survivors of the Hlobane disaster claim negligence, saying that methane gas-levels were not tested on the morning of the explosion. This has led to a call by NUM for a commission of inquiry into safety on the mines. Ramaphosa says that NUM now intends submitting a detailed memorandum to the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs calling for this.

According to Guy Stokes, manager of the CM's safety division "Until June 30 1983 the fatality figures for CM coal mining members was 0,53/1 000/year, which is as good as the best US figures. Britain has the lowest fatality rate in the world at 0,2/1 000"

But at present black workers have no representation on the government appointed Mine Safety Committee. Only unions with white membership are represented. Earlier this year government's mining engineer turned down NUM's application for representation on the grounds that it was unregistered and unrepresentative. Now, Ramaphosa tells the FM, NUM recently received a letter from the mining engineer stating that its application is being considered at Ministerial level

MINERS

Who did stop?

NUM CM
212

Mystery surrounds the scale of this week's work stoppage by black mineworkers, called to honour the 66 people who died in the recent Hlobane mining disaster. National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa maintains that solidarity ensured that over 30 000 workers participated in a half-hour work stoppage. But the Chamber of Mines (CM) industrial relations adviser, Johann Liebenberg, dismisses his claims as "absolute nonsense"

According to Liebenberg "There were no

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HOW SAFE ARE MINERS?

A potentially explosive row over mine safety continues to rumble in the wake of the Hlobane coal mine disaster which killed 67 people

GP-Reporters

Black mineworkers' unions and the Chamber of Mines have launched fierce verbal attacks on each other and the National Union of Mine-workers (NUM) is taking a mining company to court for hiring 17 workers after they refused to work in an area they considered unsafe.

Black unions have included a Chamber of Mines statement that South African mine safety measures are the best in the world.

The mining expert dismissed the Chamber's claim as 'bull

The unions point to figures which show that the death rate on South African coal mines is six times higher than on British coal mines and 50 percent higher than US coal mines.

But the Chamber says this is like comparing 'apples to pears.' Different conditions govern coal mining in Britain and South Africa, and the South African death rate equalled the American death rate in the first half of this year — before Hlobane — adds the Chamber.

Netolov-hodwe, regional organiser of the Black Allied Miners and Construction Workers' Union, said the Chamber's response was a "rationalisation".

"We cannot use methods which cause people to die in such numbers," he said.

Cyrl Ramaphosa of the NUM said that it was, generally speaking, fair

to compare British and South African coalmines the black unionists are demanding full participation on mine safety bodies, saying this is necessary for proper safety measures.

AV

UNDETERMINED?

Chamber of Mines spokesman told City Press this week they would not pressure the Government to grant black mineworkers' unions representation on the statutory Mine Safety Committee. But the Chamber would not oppose black union representation either.

The 10-member committee, whose members are approved by the

Government, has three people who are supposed to represent mine employees who are not officials.

But there is not a single representative of the 475 000 black miners.

AV

Ramaphosa said this attitude showed the Chamber "does not want us on the committee". The Chamber had enough clout with the government to ensure black representation, he said.

The Chamber says black miners are regularly consulted on all issues of safety.

Meanwhile the black unions have raised a number of other issues on safety.

Ramaphosa says mine workers want,

and need, a one hour break for lunch and rest during their eight to nine hour shifts. At present they work straight through.

AV

Chamber spokesmen told City Press this week that miners had no break because "this is how they like it".

But Ramaphosa says this "is just not true".

Nefolovhodwe said this showed the Chamber's determination to all push productivity at all cost.

The black unions and occupational health workers charge this lack of rest is a major factor in some accidents. But

the Chamber says no research had been done which would support this.

AV

The unions also charge that incentives paid to white mineworkers for few injuries on the shifts they oversee prompts them to put pressure on black miners not to report injuries.

But the Chamber says its investigations refute this allegation. In addition, every miner is physically checked for injuries at the end of each shift.

But Ramaphosa counters "We know injuries are being suppressed, and we are just waiting to prove this conclusively."

URGENT need for action on mine safety

URGENT need for action on mine safety

AV

floor — however many services it offers members

This may show that the union is too young to mount a widespread symbolic stoppage in defiance of employers now

HOW widespread was the stoppage by National Union of Mineworkers members to mourn those who died in the Hlobane blast?

The NUM called for a half-hour stoppage, the mines replied that a minute was adequate. The NUM then said many members would observe 30 minutes.

The NUM says about 30 000 members — mostly on the surface — ignored management and took 30 minutes. Employers insist that none did. The mines are insulated from newspapers, so it is impossible to say who is right.

But it does seem the one minute was widely observed, which may show that the NUM is making progress in mobilising members.

If half-hour stoppages did take place, it seems they occurred mostly on the surface and that most underground workers did not defy management.

Papers filed in the NUM's industrial court test case against Gold Fields West Driefontein mine — it is challenging the dismissal of 17 men who refused to work in an area they consider unsafe — contain startling charges.

These include claims that a rockfall occurred in the area the men refused to work in two days after they were fired and that the men were subjected to verbal abuse. Gold Fields will contest the action.

NUM 5/10/83

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Smoke, heat balks search for 5 bodies

Argus Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — Smoke and high temperatures are hampering rescue teams in their search for the bodies of five mine-workers believed to have died in a fire at a Western Transvaal gold mine.

A spokesman for Anglo American said today that temperatures and carbon monoxide levels at the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine at Orkney are now dropping

and Proto teams will try again today to get to the men who are presumed dead

The bodies of five men who died in the mine when a raging fire swept through the 64th level of the mine on Wednesday morning have been recovered

Their names have not been released

● A West Rand miner who told one of his sons that he would soon be an orphan was killed in a

dynamite blast at the Libanon Gold Mine yesterday

Police said Mr Rodney James Wilkinson, 49, of Cresswell Street, Westonaria went underground at about 3 30am yesterday and wandered away from fellow miners, who heard an explosion a few minutes later

They ran to the scene of the blast and found Mr Wilkinson's charred body. He had apparently blown himself up with dynamite

Transkeian killed in mine fire

212
7/10/83

JOHANNESBURG — Rescuers were yesterday hampered by high temperatures in their search for five missing mineworkers who are presumed dead after a fire swept through the 64th level of the Vaal Reefs gold mine, near Orkney, killing another five workers

Two of the dead men

are from Lesotho, two from Mozambique and one from Transkei. Three of the men who are missing are from Transkei, one from Mozambique and one from Lesotho

The flames had been dampened down on the level yesterday morning although the fire was

still smouldering

The blaze which started at 9 am on Wednesday in an intake airway at the number 4 shaft of the mine's west division, spread rapidly after being ignited because of the large amount of air being drawn in by the airway

It moved rapidly towards weight construc-

D. D. D. D. D.
tion workers who were attaching pipes to the timber sets on that level and another two men who were working on the cooling plant

Proto teams were sent down immediately and worked on a rotation basis to put out the fire and attempt rescuing the men

The teams found the bodies of the cooling plant attendants and three of the construction workers including the team leader

The proto teams of six men each yesterday afternoon were making slow progress in their search for the missing five men who are presumed dead — DDC

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10 miners presumed dead in underground fire

BLAZE HORROR

(212)
 Some ten

7/10/83

FIVE mineworkers died and another five are presumed to have perished in a fire at the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine near Orkney on Wednesday.

Anglo-American said in a statement yesterday that the fire, which started on the 64th level at about 9 am on Wednesday, had been extinguished by yesterday morning.

The bodies of the five dead workers were recovered but rockfalls

caused by the fire and gas circulating in the shaft made it difficult to enter the area to search for the missing men.

Anglo said the fire started in an intake airway near the number 4 shaft because of a large volume of air being drawn in.

The blaze spread downwind towards a gang of eight construction workers and

SA PRESS ASSOCIATION

another two men working at a cooling plant.

Proto teams were sent in as soon as the fire was detected.

They found the bodies of the two cooling plant attendants and three of the eight members of the construction gang, including the team leader.

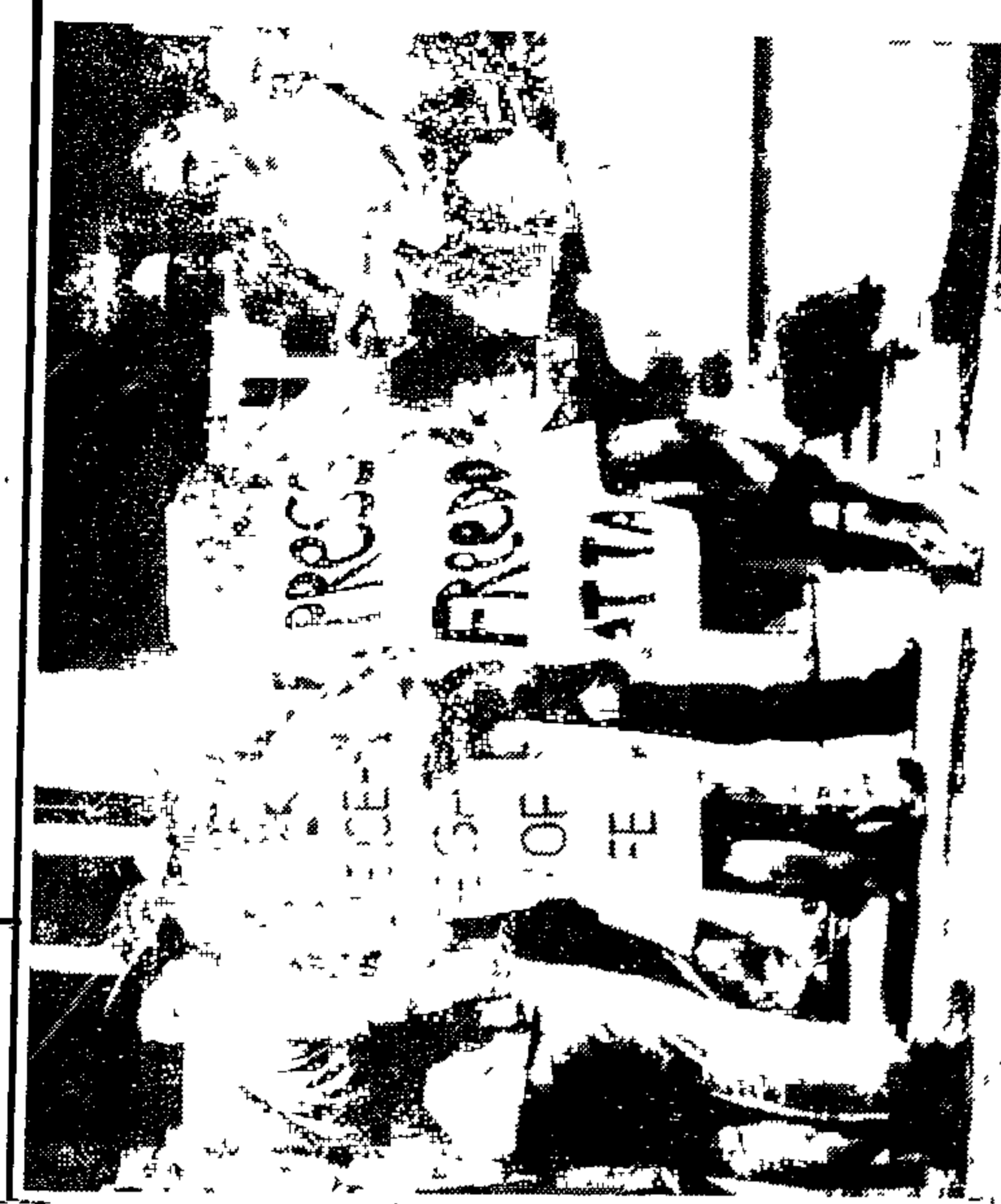
• Meanwhile a miner was killed in an underground blasting

accident at the Libanon Gold Mine near Westonaria early yesterday morning, the holding company said.

Gold Fields of South Africa said Mr Rodney Wilkinson (49) of Westonaria, died in the explosion between 1 am and 2 am.

An inquiry was underway and a government Inspector of Mines was at the scene, the company said.

No further details were available — Sapa



PICKET: A group of bystanders look on as police approach Mr Mantini, shortly before he was arrested

(SRG)

nal and informal



Gabebah Abrahams works in a building site d Parade where she is convinced she has the base of one of the four bastions of Van eck's original earth-walled fort

Cape Times 7/10/83
Five perish in gold mine fire
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JOHANNESBURG — at a cooling plant
 Five mineworkers died and another five are presumed to have perished in a fire at the Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney on Wednesday.
 Anglo American said in a statement yesterday that the fire, which started on the 64th level about 9am had been extinguished by yesterday morning.
 The bodies of the five dead workers were recovered but rockfalls caused by the fire, and gas circulating in the shaft, made it difficult to enter the area to search for the missing men.
 The fire started in an intake airway near the No 4 shaft because of a large volume of air being drawn in.
 The blaze spread downwind towards a gang of eight construction workers and another two men working

Proto teams were sent in as soon as the fire was detected and have been working on a rotating basis ever since.
 They found the bodies of the two cooling plant attendants and three of eight members of the construction gang, including the team leader.
 The other five men were missing but presumed dead. Four of the workers in the shaft when the fire broke out were from Transkei, three from Lesotho and three from Mozambique.
 Anglo American said it had not yet considered whether the fire would affect production as it was more concerned with finding the remaining men.
 It said an official inquiry would take place to determine the cause of the fire, which occurred in the western division of the mine — Sapa

Police seek witness to prison killing

Crime Reporter
 RETREAT police would like to contact a former convict they believe witnessed a cell murder at Pollsmoor Prison on August 14, 1978.
 Mr Gerald Martin, alias Gerald Engelbrecht, alias Gerome Engelbrecht, has since been released from Pollsmoor and is required to give evidence for the State in the murder case.
 All attempts by the police to trace Mr Martin have failed.
 Anyone who may be able to assist is asked to contact Detective-Warrant Officer R J Sowden, ☎75 3420, or ☎75 2517, after hours.
 ●Hout Bay police are trying to establish the identity of a black male pedestrian who died after being knocked down near the Mount Rhodes Drive turn-off on August 20.
 The man was taken to Groote Schuur Hospital where he was treated in the intensive care unit. He died later.
 He is described as being about 25-years-old, 1,70m tall, and has a black moustache and a short chin-beard. He has a dark brown complexion and is of medium build. The man's body is at the State Mortuary in Salt River.
 Anyone with information should contact Warrant-Officer H W Botes, ☎70 8110, or ☎70 8868 after hours.

Barnard's iff set aside

she applied to the court to review and set aside the ruling.
 The judge said that when the appeal hearing before the local stewards started, Mrs Barnard demanded that Mr R S Napier recuse himself because he was a partner in the legal firm representing the Jockey Club at the proceedings.
 Mr Justice Gordon held that Mr Napier had had a pecuniary interest, however small, and that the review should succeed on this point.
 "I should add that Mr Napier's integrity has in no way been impugned by this finding."
 The judge said the court would be unjustified in interfering with the decision on the merits, as there was no evidence that the Board had failed to apply its mind to the relevant issues in accordance with the rules and tenets of natural justice — Sapa

Six killed in family massacre

BEAUVAIS, France. — Six members of a family were stabbed to death and a seventh severely wounded in a small French village early yesterday, police said.
 They added that a neighbour who found the bodies died of a heart attack.
 The police are questioning a 23-year-old pork butcher whose engagement to a daughter of the family was recently broken off.
 Those killed were a Mr and Mrs Labrousse, their two children, Caroline, 20, and Fabrice, 11, and in a nearby house, their in-laws, a Mr and Mrs Becket.
 Another child, Jean-Yves Labrousse, 16, survived the stabbings and is in Beauvais hospital.
 The identity of the neighbour who died of a heart attack is not known.

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Discounts of 20%, 25%, 30% & 40%
 Sale commences Saturday, 1st October for one month at

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Rescue teams search for five more

Star
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Five miners die in underground inferno

Staff Reporters

Five mineworkers died and five others are presumed dead after a fire raged through the fourth level of the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine at Orkney in the Western Transvaal yesterday.

Proto teams entered the shaft shortly after the fire was discovered and recovered the bodies of five miners. But rockfalls caused by the fire, and gas circulating in the shaft have hampered rescue teams in their attempt to find the missing men

The fire broke out at 9 am yesterday and had been extinguished by this morning.

A spokesman for the Anglo American Corporation said in Johannesburg today that the fire started in an intake airway near the number four shaft due to a large volume of air being drawn in.

The blaze spread downwind to a gang of eight construction workers and another two men working in a fridge plant

Proto teams recovered the bodies of the two fridge plant workers and three of the eight construction workers. Their names have not yet been released.

Four of the workers in the shaft when the fire broke out were from the Transkei, three were from Lesotho and three from Mozambique.

More concerned

As the search for the missing men continued today, Anglo American said it was not clear at this stage whether the fire would hamper production at the mine.

There was more concern over the fate of the missing men, the spokesman said.

Attempts by The Star to get further information on the fire and the search from mine management were unsuccessful. No further details could be obtained from the Anglo American public relations department.

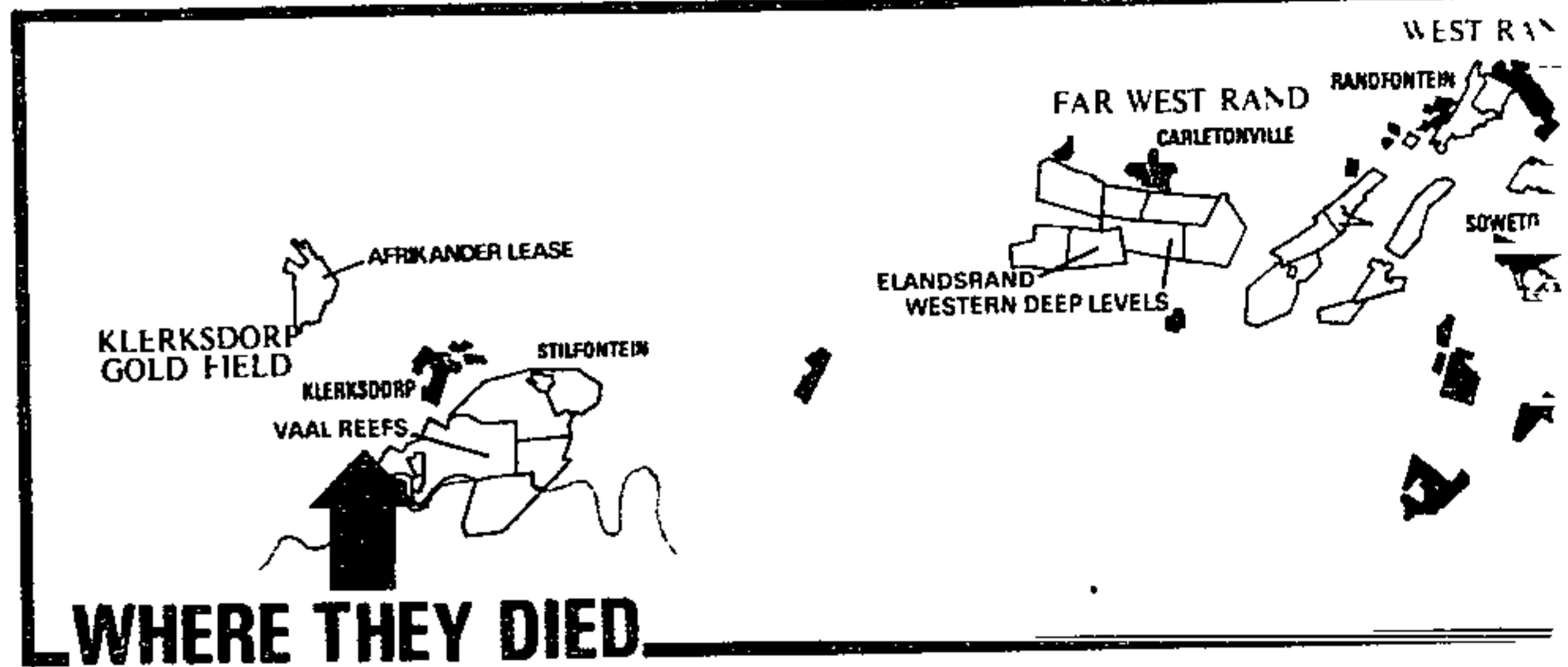
An official inquiry is to be held to determine the cause of the fire which started in the western division of the massive mine

Vaal-Reefs is one of the world's great mining complexes and top South African producer in the Anglo group (called the Klerksdorp supermine).

On November 7 last year 16 miners died in a rockburst at the mine.

In 1981, 18 miners died in underground fires and, in 1982, 12 died in fires under the surface.

At the time of going to press, the five missing miners had still not been found



MINING is less dangerous than ordinary, everyday life, an authority of mine safety claims

He says reports on mine accidents — such as the recent methane gas blast at Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid — create the impression that mining is an extremely risky and dangerous occupation

This causes a lot of anguish for the families involved and also scares off the "better people" who are seriously needed on the mines

Mining, says Mr Tom Grant, is the biggest single source of revenue for South Africa, the biggest South African mine pays more tax than the whole of Pretoria and handles more revenue than the city of Johannesburg

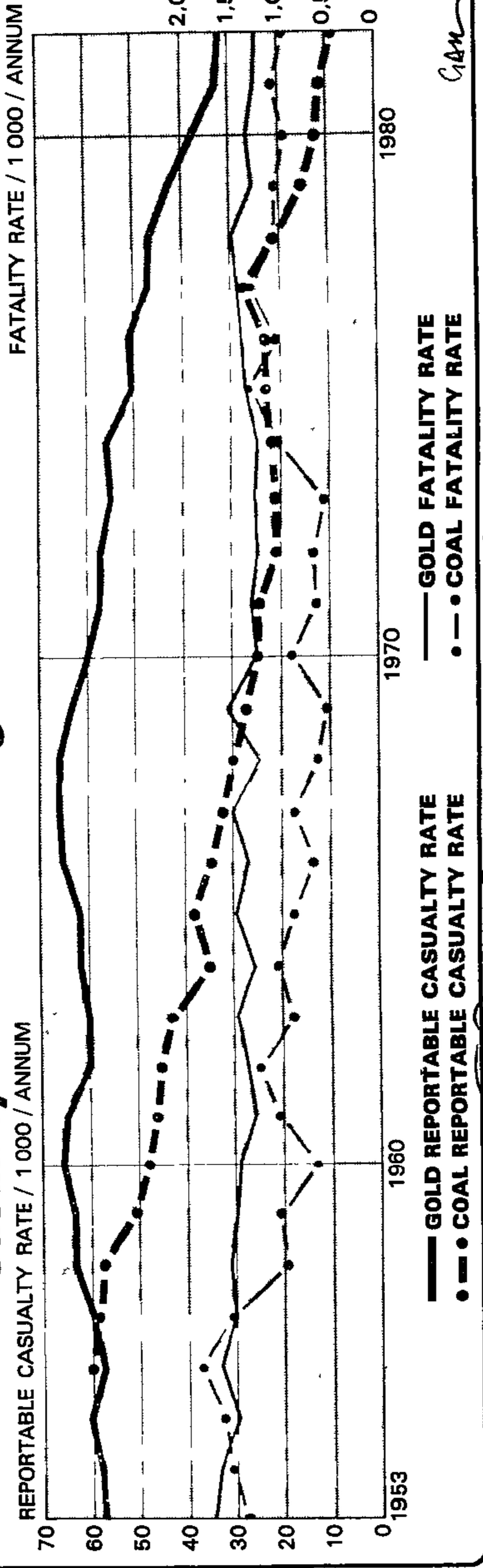
And South Africa can just not afford the negative aspects to dominate the industry's image "The sensationalism that we see is not the reflection of a very safe industry," contends Mr Grant, who comes from a mining family and who was a miner for many years

He has for the last 13 years been a labour consultant on the mines

He justifies his claim with the reportable injury rate (by definition, an injury that affects a person for at least two weeks) and fatality rate of his own family of five people

More than 630 000 people work on South African gold, coal and other mineral mines. Each worker spends an

Casualty accidents on gold and coal mines



It can be safe down below

By MARGARETHA GOOSEN

monthly average of 216 hours working. In 1982 the fatality rate on the South African gold (which are more prone to accidents because they are very deep and the corridors very shallow) and coal mines, respectively, were 1,25 and 0,99 per 1 000

The reportable injury rate per 1 000 was 32,00 and 8,66 respectively. His family, over the past 27 years and compared to last year's figures for the mines, has a much worse accident history — resulting from sporting injuries and car smashers, in which they were

not the responsible parties. To date their reportable injury rate is 156,82 and the fatality rate 9,8. Being part of everyday life, he contends, has therefore been more dangerous for his family than his involvement in mining — or that of his son — in

According to Mr Grant it is imperative not the forget what the mining industry offers its workers

A rough, uneducated person is transformed into a highly specialised individual. The industry looks after its people well and creates quality in their lives. Workers earn a good to very excellent salary, get more than ample food, have cheap accommodation (black workers are still separated from their families, but the problem is receiving attention) and have access to excellent sporting and health facilities.

White miners also have excellent opportunities for promotion (black workers are still restricted for they cannot get blasting licences, but the establishment of black unions will possibly change this). All mine workers receive an intensive training, which includes courses in accident prevention and first aid.

the International Mine Safety Rate, a rather complex and involved system which, to a great extent, focuses on management and its responsibilities.

The other system — patented in South Africa — is a very simple and more personal system which involves every mine worker every day. Its object is to totally abate absenteeism (accidents can happen as a result of a worker doing a job that he is not used to doing) and keep the worker constantly aware of the need to prevent accidents.

While excellent results have already been achieved on the mines, Mr Grant believes that the latter system holds the answer.

It fights egoism (it not only involves management but each and every worker) and can therefore reduce injuries and fatalities to an even bigger extent.

The tremendous amount of training workers receive needs constant reinforcement.

It can be achieved by simply giving each worker, who does his bit, recognition. This acknowledgement should not only involve a cash reward, because money alone does not let workers feel that their efforts are being appreciated.

Every worker should be treated as a special person to make him want to participate, to be involved.

This system does not take up much time, but it succeeds because it is personal, practical, precise and profitable. And that, Mr Grant believes, is what the industry cannot do without.

Mr Wharrie Nelson, public relations officer for the Chamber of Mines, endorsed Mr Grant's views.

There are an enormous amount of miners who survive their underground years because they are good miners, he said.

He compared mine accidents to air disasters. "These things are very sad, but they

At the mines, Mr Grant says, every possible precaution is taken to prevent accidents. South Africa has a perfect safety system forced down by numerous laws and the fatality and injury rates on the mines compare very favourably with the best records in the world.

- But, mainly because of human error, accidents do occur.
- The main causes of death and injury on the mines are:
 - Seismic events
 - Pressure builds up underground and results in rock falls
 - Scientists try to predict these dangerous incidents, but it is very difficult.
 - Miners describe them as "acts of God".
 - Methane gas explosions in coal mines. It can be controlled and is caused mainly by misjudgement.
 - Underground fires. All mines have extensive and sophisticated fire prevention

systems to alleviate the problem,

● Lift cage accidents While most buildings check the conditions of their lifts once in three or six months, lift cages used on the mines are tested every week. The tests are very extensive — the ropes are even X-rayed for internal flaws.

There are two basic accident prevention systems on South African mines. Both systems achieved a lot, Mr Grant says.

The one — mainly used by the Chamber of Mines — is

According to Mr Nelson, the Chamber made a survey as to the causes of death at the Chamber of Mines Training College from 1972 to 1982. In 10 years, 47 of the trainees died — but only five because of mine accidents, 32 died of road accidents and 10 died of an illness or other causes not related to mining, he said.

Mr Nelson said the personal safety system used on the mines had a very significant effect and helped to reduce injuries and fatalities dramatically.

MINE BLAZE KILLS FIVE

212
city pen
9/10/83

FIVE MINEWORKERS have died and another five are presumed dead in a fire at the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine near Orkney

gas circulating in the shaft made it difficult to enter the area to search for the missing men.

Anglo American spokesmen say the fire started on the 64th level at about 9am on Wednesday and raged until yesterday.

Proto teams were sent in as soon as the fire was detected and have been working on a rotating basis ever since

The bodies of the five dead workers were recovered, but rockfalls caused by the fire and

They found the bodies of the two cooling plant attendants and three of the eight construction workers

MKHIZE DELAY

THE trial of the white policeman charged with the murder of Drietontein community leader Saul Mkhize has been held up because the policeman has been unable to engage an advocate.

Sources said the case should have started yesterday at Volksrus magistrate's court

The State has to appoint an advocate to defend the young policeman, because he was a State employee when the offence was committed, and still is

Dark cloud over SA asbestos

CAPE TIMES 10/10/83 (127) (302) (212)

A DARK cloud hangs over the South African asbestos industry

Overseas, alarm over the deadly asbestos fibres — which have been proved to cause asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer — has led to a steady tightening of controls to protect people who work with the substance

Sweden and Norway have banned asbestos-based production. In Britain this year, the Health and Safety Commission found that "no medical doubt exists that workplace controls on asbestos should be as tight as possible"

A serious challenge to the South African asbestos industry was issued seven weeks ago by Mr Barry Castleman, a visiting American expert on occupational health

Death hazard

He charged that thousands of South African workers faced death and many might already have died as a result of contact with asbestos

In the United States, he said, between 8 500 and 10 000 people were expected to die in the next 30 years as a result of contact with the substance

While some scientific controversy still surrounds the safety of the asbestos industry, even spokesmen for the industry agree that asbestos is a potentially hazardous substance

The difference of opinion is between those who believe there is no safe level and those who believe there can be acceptably-safe

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

levels if controls are applied

Professor A M Coetzee, head of the Department of Community Medicine at the University of Pretoria and a consultant to an asbestos company, wrote to a Johannesburg newspaper

"I am convinced that due to stringent precautionary measures instituted by the mines and the asbestos cement industry, the likelihood of workers contracting diseases today is minimal"

This is countered by experts such as Mr Castleman who have found that even marginal exposures to blue asbestos can cause mesothelioma, a rare type of cancer of the lung, and that there is no safety limit for lung cancer. And lung cancer is not a recompensable disease in terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act

Clearly, South Africa is lagging behind the standards of the developed world

UK import ban

The British Commission's recommendations on asbestos, to be enforced next year, include a ban on the importation and manufacture of blue and brown asbestos

Workplace limits for brown asbestos are to be reduced from 0,5 fibre to 0,2 per ml of air for brown asbestos and from 1,0 fibre to 0,5 per ml for white asbestos. The blue asbestos limit

is to remain at 0,2 per ml of air

In South Africa, a change in the job-safety laws from early next year will limit the permissible level of all fibres to 2,0 per ml of air — 10 times higher than the current UK standard for blue asbestos, regarded as the most dangerous fibre

Mr Castleman believes that large corporations are exporting industrial hazards to countries where there are few or no regulations or controls

Factory transfer

When West Germany announced in 1980 that they would be phasing out asbestos, the machinery and equipment of an asbestos textile factory was dismantled and moved to Cape Town, where a new factory, Kapsit Asbestos, was set up

A spokesman for Everite, which has the largest share of the domestic asbestos cement market, said that though they had consistently improved on control standards since the early sixties, they were searching for alternative fibres to replace asbestos

This was because they recognized that fine asbestos dust was a danger and wanted to eliminate it "where humanly possible", the control mechanisms were costly in economic terms, it was very demanding for management and workers to conform to the control procedures and, finally, asbestos reserves in the ground would not last forever

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Startling claim in gold mine dispute

Worker hurt after fears of danger

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

Just two days after 17 mineworkers at West Driefontein Gold Mine were fired for refusing to go underground because of fears that the 14th Level was unsafe, a miner was injured in a rockfall on the same level

Mr Lekebe Myeni was hitting a wedge into position at the 14th Level on the morning of Saturday September 24 when part of the roof caved in above him

The falling rock cut into his shoulder, buttock and hip and he was treated for minor injuries.

By his own admission Mr Myeni was scared of working in the area and frightened of the conditions of the squares

UNEASINESS

He was one of the original group which refused to go underground on Tuesday September 20 because the miners were uneasy about Level 14

But, under threat of losing his job, Mr Myeni resumed work on September 22.

This is one of the startling claims contained in papers before the Industrial Court in the dispute recently declared between the National Union of Mineworkers and Gold Fields (Pty) Ltd

The NUM is challenging Gold Fields, as the owners of West Driefontein, over the dismissal of its 17 union members, alleging an unfair labour practice

On September 20 the gang of about 40 mineworkers refused to go underground and the union was informed that the men had been threatened with dismissal as a result

On September 22, 17 mineworkers were fired after they repeated that they were willing to work — but only after they had been assured the level was safe

FIRST TIME

It will be the first time that the Industrial Court decides whether workers are entitled to refuse to work in an area they consider unsafe

Up until last week, claims made concerning two separate incidents in which miners were injured at Level 14 were unsubstantiated

However, Gold Fields has now conceded that the accidents did occur

In response to the legal papers served by NUM, Gold Fields admits that three mineworkers were injured in rockfalls at the 14th Level, but emphasises that both incidents should be seen in their proper context.

"Mining, by its very nature, is inherently dangerous and regrettably injuries are continually sustained by workmen underground. The three injuries referred to do not reveal anything out of the ordinary and do not justify the conclusion that the relevant area was more dangerous than other areas in the mine."

'JUST CAUSE'

However, in the papers before the court, NUM alleges that the mineworkers had just cause to believe it was unsafe to work on that level

● On September 12 two mineworkers were injured in a rockfall in one of the gulleys in the area

● On September 14 the gang working on the 14th Level was swapped with a gang working on Level 26. The incoming gang was told by the departing gang that Level 14 was unsafe

● On September 16 there were problems concerning the "hand-over" of the new work site

● Over the following two days an inspection of the area by the shift boss and then the gang revealed fissures in the rock as wide as a man's fist, many supports were tilted at an angle, faint rumblings were heard in the rock, and rocks and stones were easily dislodged if the mineworkers bumped their helmets against the "tafel"

Mine deaths toll for past week ⁽²¹²⁾ now stands at 15

825 13/10/83
By Trevor Jones

At least 15 miners have died in underground accidents in the Western Transvaal over the past week. And another is feared dead after an accident at the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine near Klerksdorp yesterday in which two men were killed.

A spokesman for Gencor said today the two men died and six others were injured in a rockfall caused by a "seismic event" 2 000 m underground at the mine's Pioneer Shaft at about 10 am yesterday.

One mineworker is still missing and is feared dead. Attempts to find him are continuing.

The injured, one of whom is in a critical condition, were taken to the Duff Scott Hospital.

At the Libanon Gold Mine yesterday a man who recently returned to work after recuperating from an underground accident was one of three men killed in an accident there.

According to a statement by the holding company, Gold Fields, the three men were killed and two others injured when a conveyance fell from its rigging in a rock pass at 1 900 m below the surface.

Gold Fields has identified two of the dead men as Mr Willem Groenewald (54), a boilermaker, and Mr N K Upton (26), an apprentice fitter.

Mr K Kruger and Mr J Ngxalaba were injured in the accident. The name of the third dead man will be released when his family has been informed.

The company said first investigations had shown that the conveyance had become stuck. When it was freed a sudden jolt had dislodged it from its rigging and it fell.

Mr Groenewald was injured in another accident more than a year ago when a cocopan hit him.

A fire which raged through the fourth level of the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine at Orkney killed 10 people last week.

**Three killed in
gold mine accident**

ARGUS 15/10/83 (212)

Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Three men have been killed in an accident at the Libanon Gold Mine near Carletonville

The holding company, Gold Fields, said they were killed in a rock pass 1900m below the surface

Two of the dead were Mr Willem Groenewald, 54, a boiler-maker, and Mr N K Upton, 26, an apprentice fitter Mr K Kruger and Mr J Ngxalaba were injured

Editor of Wits last year
by Anton Harber 171 Main Street

Sapa
(Report by Ivor Crews Old Mutual Building
Harrison Street, Johannesburg)

Mr Botna said there was a need for the effective co-ordination to be used to improve commu-

Sales tax in SWA is set to rise

Africa Bureau
WINDHOEK — General Sales Tax in South West Africa has been increased to 7% to help meet spiralling government debts, and it was said yesterday that a further 1% rise would be introduced in February next year.

The statement announcing the increase, which will be implemented on November 1, was released by the Administrator General, Dr Willie van Niekerk's office, yesterday.

It said "For quite a while now the public in South West Africa has been aware that the government is going through difficult times as a result of a shortage of State funds combined with rising government expenditure."

The drought and the worldwide recession in mineral prices had contributed to the financial crisis, and because South Africa was also affected SWA could no longer look to Pretoria for large loans.

Dr Van Niekerk said tough steps would be taken against tax-dodgers and to enforce government economy.

MATTER OF FACT

TO CORRECT specific errors of fact, write to the Editor at P O Box 1138, Johannesburg, or telephone the Editor's secretary at 710-9111 between 9am and 5pm on weekdays.

If you have broader complaints about the Rand Daily Mail these can be taken up with the Mail Ombudsman, James McClurg, c/o the Editor's secretary.

POLITICAL comment in this issue by R A Gibson Benjamin Pogrand Peter Bunkell newsbits by Michael Stent, headlines and sub-editing by Reg Rumney cartoons by David Anderson all of 171 Main Street Johannesburg

Mine accident rate rises

HARARE — Laziness and disobedience amongst workers and poor supervision by overseers were mainly responsible for accidents which have affected Zimbabwe's mineral production, according to a report published yesterday.

The report was compiled in July by safety experts for members of Zimbabwe's Chamber of Mines and made public in the Herald newspaper.

Accidents causing a worker to be absent for a day or more rose by 206 to 2 280 in 1982/83, compared with 1981/82, while the industry's workforce had fallen by 2 424 to 56 862, the report said.

Thirty-four people had died, 10 more than in 1981/82.

It blamed lack of discipline, falling standards of supervision and failure to observe safety regulations.

The Herald quoted the chief executive of the Chamber of Mines, Mr Ken Vanderplank, as saying laziness was also a factor and the four reasons together accounted for 90% of all accidents.

The report said production time lost due to accidents had risen by nearly 50% in the past year, but a Chamber spokesman said 30 471 shifts had been lost 871 more than last year.

No figures were available for the loss in terms of actual production or value.

The Chamber said in April that Zimbabwe's mining output had fallen for the second successive year in 1982, declining 2.7% in value to about R438-million. It blamed soaring costs — mostly due to wage rises under government policy to improve workers' terms of employment — for cuts in capital spending by mining companies.

Demand had also slumped for Zimbabwe's main non-gold mineral exports of ferrochrome, asbestos, nickel, copper, tin coal and coke — Sapa-Reuter.

Machel heads for Yugoslavia

LISBON — President Samora Machel of Mozambique yesterday headed for Yugoslavia after his first visit to Portugal.

He said before boarding his flight to Belgrade "We came (to Portugal) with great expectations and optimism, and we are leaving with a fraternal embrace between the Mozambican and Portuguese peoples."

Capping the success of the highly-publicised visit, President Machel and Portuguese President Antonio Ramalho

Eanes signed a broad co-operation agreement that included judicial clauses allowing the repatriation of prisoners from each country.

Widespread fears of violent protest against the visit by President Machel, and extremely tight security arrangements for the visiting party, proved unnecessary, with police detaining only two protestors briefly in Lisbon.

Underlining greatly improved relations between the two countries since Mozam-

bique's independence, President Machel said "Portugal and Mozambique have overcome the stitches left by an unjust war imposed on both peoples."

President Machel began his European tour two weeks ago with visits to Belgium, where he met EEC leaders interested in expanded trade with Mozambique, and Holland.

He is to visit France and Britain after Yugoslavia — Sapa-AP.

Halley's Comet spotted

MOSCOW — Soviet astronomers have spotted Halley's Comet as it approaches earth on its 76-year elliptical orbital path, the official Soviet news agency, Tass, said yesterday.

It said the astronomers, working at Zelenchuk observatory in the Caucasus mountains, used the world's largest mirror telescope to observe the comet 1 400-million kilometres from Earth in the Gemini constellation. Tass said the comet ap-

peared as a "luminous spot of unclear outline".

Named after the British astronomer, Edmond Halley, who first discovered it, the comet follows an elliptical path and passes relatively near the solar system about every 76 years.

The last time it was seen from Earth was in 1910 after being visible for some two years. Scientists have calculated the comet will next be seen directly from Earth between 1985 and 1986.

Tass said the Soviet as-

tronomers were the first to record the approaching path of the comet using an "optical" telescope. It said up to now only radio telescopes had been used.

With a mirror 6m across, the telescope could detect candlelight from 25 000km, it said.

West European, US and Soviet space experts have been planning joint efforts for probes to track the spectacular tail of the comet, reputed to herald disasters on its return — Sapa-Reuter.

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Miners'

union

seeks

talks

on fire

Labour Correspondent

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the biggest black union on the mines, is seeking a meeting with Anglo American's Vaal Reefs mine to discuss a recent fire at the mine which claimed the lives of 10 miners

According to a union spokesman, NUM officials at the mine have claimed that the fire was not brought under control early because the mine employee responsible for controlling it "panicked and ran away"

However, this claim conflicts sharply with the account of the accident released by Anglo at the time it occurred.

According to the union spokesman, NUM's organiser at the mine, who is a union shop steward, an employee, who workers identified as either a boiler-maker's artisan aide or a shift overseer, had been responsible for attempting to fight the fire, but had fled instead

He said he had been trying to arrange a meeting with mine management to discuss this claim, but had been unsuccessful. He was due to travel to the mine today to continue attempts to arrange a meeting

Official Anglo comment was not available yesterday

But a statement issued after the fire said a mine employee in charge of a construction team attempted to fight the fire by using a fire extinguisher

He had been able to do this, it said, because he was upwind from the fire and therefore narrowly escaped falling victim to it

It said that, when he had failed to extinguish the fire, he immediately called a mine proto team to the area to fight it

To call the proto team, he would have been forced to leave the area of the fire

● Anglo's statement released after the fire said five miners had died and that five were "missing, presumed dead" According to NUM, miners claim to have seen the bodies of the missing five but say the heat in the area where the fire occurred is still too great to allow the bodies to be retrieved.

NUM (212)
wants in (V)
on inquiry
into deaths

By JOSHUA
RABOROKO

*14/10/83
Sander*

THE 30 000-strong National Union of Mineworkers has demanded to be party to the commission of inquiry into the deaths of 10 miners who were killed when a fire raged through Vaal Reefs Gold Mine in Orkney last week.

Five miners died and five others were presumed dead after an inferno raged through the fourth floor of the western Transvaal mine, the union's acting secretary, Mr Mokheseng Maloka, said yesterday

Mr Maloka said that mineworkers at the plant had divulged certain information to the union concerning the deaths.

Proto teams entered the shaft after the fire was discovered and recovered five bodies, but rockfalls caused by the fire and gas circulating in the shaft hampered the rescue team in their attempt to find the other missing men

Mr Maloka said that the miners had alleged that they had seen the corpses of the workers presumed to be dead and had since threatened to go on strike unless the mine authorities did something

"It is on these grounds that we feel we must be part of the inquiry to determine the cause of the fire and what to do about the remaining bodies. The workers feel there was negligence somewhere

A public relations officer for Anglo American said that if the union wanted to participate in the inquiry they would have to make arrangements with the inspector of mines. The inquiry will be conducted by the government

Portugal slams SA's Namibian policy

— and boosts relations with Angola

Star 18/10/83

212 (18) (134)

LISBON — Portugal's relations with its former colony of Angola look set to improve substantially after years in the doldrums, with some blunt talking on Southern Africa by the new Portuguese government providing the booster

During a visit to Lisbon last week, Angolan Foreign Minister Mr Paulo Jorge welcomed the return to power of Portuguese Socialist leader Mr Mario Soares with a big majority last June

He praised what he called the clear position on Southern Africa of the new Socialist-Social Democratic coalition Government

During talks here, Portuguese Foreign Minister Mr Jaime Gama told Mr Jorge that Lisbon attached great importance to strengthening co-operation and solidarity with African countries, particularly Angola

Mr Gama emphasised the need to bring Namibia, ruled by South Africa in defiance of United Nations resolutions, to independence as soon as possible.

He branded South African control of Namibia, over which South African forces are fighting a 17-year-old bush war against Namibian guerillas based in Angola, illegal occupation

No real change

Mr Gama also condemned Pretoria's system of apartheid, or separate racial development.

This marks no real change in Portuguese foreign policy since the 1974 revolution which ended nearly half a century of right-wing dictatorship

But it has not recently been stated so bluntly. Successive governments since 1974 have been guarded in their criticism of South Africa, apparently in order to protect the interests of some 600 000 Portuguese living in that country

Mr Jorge told reporters in Lisbon that the frequent changes of government here — 15 since the revolution — had hampered ties between Portugal and Angola

Now, he added, "a new page may have been turned in the history of our relations"

Mr Jorge said he hoped that Portugal could play an important role in Angola's drive for national reconstruction. He admitted that his country — potentially rich in oil, diamonds and minerals and once the brightest jewel in Portugal's ancient empire — was in difficult straits.

But he blamed most of its problems on what he called the undeclared war by South Africa, and said much of Angola's human and financial resources had been mobilised against South African attacks

Mr Jorge repeated Angola's rejection of any link between Namibian independence and the withdrawal from Angola of an estimated 20 000 to 30 000 Cuban troops, stationed in his country since the 1975-76 civil war from which the ruling Marxist popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) emerged victorious over other nationalist groups

South Africa and the United States say a Cuban withdrawal must be part of a Namibian independence settlement, but Angola says the two issues are separate

Mr Jorge said there was no chance of reconciliation between the MPLA and the pro-Western rebels of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNita) led by Mr Jonas Savimbi

The Angolan Minister said Unita, which claims to control large areas of southern and eastern Angola, acted almost always with the support of regular South African troops or foreign mercenaries

Mr Jorge criticised Unita's propaganda activity in Portugal as "a grain of sand in the works" of Angolan-Portuguese relations. Unita regularly issues communiques here listing claims of victories over MPLA forces

He said he could not understand why Portugal permitted such activities, adding that Portuguese living in Angola were often victims of Unita attacks

Embarrassed governments

Embarrassed Portuguese governments have discouraged Unita's operations here. But officials point out that, in a Western democracy like Portugal, it is impossible to stop such activities without restrictive police measures

Mr Jorge echoed the words of the Angolan ambassador to France, Mr Luis de Almeida, who told a news conference in London recently "With the Government of Mr Mario Soares, Portugal's position towards Angola took a more positive direction"

Presenting a Government white paper accusing South Africa of aggression, Mr de Almeida, a leading MPLA strategist, said Portuguese President Antonio Ramalho Eanes was a friend of Angola

Mr Jorge told newsmen that the Namibian independence issue was now entirely in the hands of the United Nations Security Council and UN Secretary General Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar

He said he knew nothing of any possible Portuguese participation in the Western "contact group" on Namibia, composed of the United States, Britain, France, West Germany and Canada, which has been striving since 1978 to speed a solution

But he added that the UN Secretary General could call on the help of any UN member if he so wished — Reuter

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DEVELOPMENT STUDIES RESEARCH GROUP (DSRG)

157 143 211 (212)
NUM 22/10/83
**Chamber in bid
to avert strike**

Labour Correspondent

THE Chamber of Mines has made members of the National Union of Mineworkers at Germiston's Rand refinery a new offer in a last attempt to avert a legal strike early next week

Union members at the refinery, all of whom have voted for a legal strike on Tuesday, are to consider the offer on Monday afternoon

The NUM's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said yesterday that union leaders would not recommend acceptance or rejection of the offer

He said union leaders could not predict how workers would react to the new offer

A statement released by the chamber yesterday said the two sides had held further talks yesterday in an attempt to resolve the dispute at the refinery

It said the chamber had "restructured" its offer to the union and added that the new

offer would be considered on Monday

The NUM has demanded a 40% wage increase and the chamber's last offer was 9%

However, the union says that workers would be prepared to sharply modify their wage demands if the chamber was willing to meet worker demands on service increments, the other issue on which the two sides have deadlocked

The union wants workers to receive 0,5% of their pay for every year they have worked, while the chamber's last offer was R1,20 a year with the proviso that no worker receive more than a R30 increment

It is understood that yesterday's restructured chamber offer dealt principally with the service increment issue, although no further details were available

About 250 black workers work at the refinery, which refines all gold mined by chamber mines

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Disaster probe is continuing

5/11/83
212 Mail Reporter RAM

THE investigation into the Hlobane coal mine disaster earlier this year near Vryheid in Natal, in which more than 70 mineworkers were killed, is continuing

A spokesman at the office of the Inspector of Mines in Johannesburg said the inquiry had not been completed. He did not indicate when the commission, set up to find the cause of the accident, would reveal its findings.

70/11/83

Mine safety probe — at union's request

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK
AN INQUIRY into safety conditions — the first requested by an emerging union under a seldom-used section of the Mines and Works Act — began at the West Driefontein mine near Carletonville yesterday

The inquiry was requested by the National Union of Mineworkers after the refusal of a number of workers to go underground at the mine in September because they believed working conditions were unsafe

They claimed that the roof was hanging down, had abnormally high cracks, that its supports were tilted, and that they had heard rumblings indicating a possible rock burst

The incident is also the subject of a pending industrial court case in which the NUM is contesting the dismissal of 17 workers

At yesterday's inquiry the chief inspector for mines in the Carletonville district, Mr E Vorster, said that on September 21, following the refusal of the workers to go underground, he had investigated the area in the mine at the request of management.

He had found conditions to be acceptably safe "on the whole" except for two places which could constitute a danger if people worked there. Asked by Mr M Brassey,

for the NUM, whether he was aware of three recent accidents of varying degrees of seriousness at the mine, he said "People get injured underground every day. There is nothing abnormal about that. That's mining."

The presiding officer, Mr D Bakke, ruled out an 'in loco' inspection of the mine on the grounds that it would not materially affect the inquiry as conditions underground changed all the time

Management had agreed to allow the NUM's lawyers to undertake an inspection underground but had refused to allow Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM, to attend as well

A spokesman for the NUM said the West Driefontein case was only the first in what could be more requests for inquiries under Section 5 (4) of the Mines and Works Act

This section permits an organisation of workers, when they believe there is danger to people's safety or health at a mine, to request an investigation by the Government Mining Engineer, who may then call an official inquiry

The section — which became law in 1956, long before the current generation of unions came into being — does not specify whether the workers' organisation should be registered or recognised

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RDM
44/11/83

THE National Union of Mineworkers growing concern for safety issues prompted a unique Government enquiry at West Driefontein mine last week.

Government inquiries into mine accidents are routinely held where lives are lost. But a little-known section of the Mines and Works Act also gives any "employee organisation" the right to demand an inquiry where it believes there is a danger to workers' safety on a mine.

No union has ever used it — until the NUM demanded an inquiry into the recent incident at West Drie when union members were sacked for refusing to work in an area they considered unsafe.

This first-ever enquiry was held last week. Although it found against NUM, the union has vowed to continue using this clause.

This may give it a significant lever to keep up pressure on safety issues.

So it has taken the arrival of an emerging union on the scene to begin enforcing a right mine unions have had for years.

NUM's key industrial court action against West Drie — over the issue which prompted the inquiry — begins today.

NUM
**'Miners
lied on
safety'** 5/11/83

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

SEVENTEEN mineworkers who refused to go underground at the West Driefontein mine in September, believing the conditions to be unsafe, were accused at an industrial court hearing yesterday of "lying"

In reply, Mr M Brassey, for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), alleged the Goldfields of SA-owned mine management had been dishonest and had behaved in a "Victorian" manner towards their workers

They had expected the workers to merely obey instructions and accept management's word for safety in the area

The action was brought by the NUM against Goldfields for firing the 17 workers. The NUM has alleged the dismissal was an unfair labour practice and has called for their reinstatement

A Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs inquiry last week found the area had been safe at the time

Mr C Plewman, SC, for Goldfields, questioned the workers' bona fides alleging they had been lying about mine conditions

6 miners killed in accident

By Joao Santa Rita

Six black miners were killed in an accident at Western Deep Levels near Carletonville last night, an Anglo American Corporation spokesman said today

He said the miners had been killed when they were operating 3 500 m underground in the Number Three shaft. Last week, a fire brought mining operations to a stand still there

"The matter is being investigated and at the moment no more details are available," he said.

However, the previous fire did not seem to have been the cause of last night's accident.

An underground fire had been burning at the Kloof Gold Mining Company since last Friday but it was under control, a mine spokesman said.

The fire was detected at 2 200 m below the surface during the off shift and there were no casualties

90 days to resolve ^{Stat} mine row

24/11/83
~~Labour Reporter~~
12

The dispute between the National Union of Mineworkers and Goldfields West Driefontein over the dismissal of 17 miners will have to be resolved by a conciliation board within the next 90 days or the case will go back to the Industrial Court

A temporary order was handed down by the Industrial Court yesterday afternoon ordering the reinstatement of the miners, dismissed on September 22 for refusing to go underground because they considered the area unsafe

Labour lawyers have hailed the court's decision as a key to determining future disputes over workers' safety rights

However, a spokesman for Goldfields refused to comment on the implications of the decision, other than pointing out that the order is only a temporary one

"An interim order like this is usually decided on the balance of convenience," said the spokesman "All it will mean is the miners will be given back pay until a substantive hearing decides on the merits of the case"

MINE SAFETY NUM's victory

The Industrial Court has ordered Gold Fields' West Driefontein mine to reinstate 17 miners dismissed earlier this year for refusing to work in what they considered to be unsafe conditions. It is a decision which has major implications for the issue of safety on the mines and industry in general.

The men, members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), were dismissed on September 22 when they refused to work on the mine's 14th level. This incident was followed by an inquiry on November 9 and 10 in terms of the Mines and Works Act, presided over by the assistant inspector of mines for the Carletonville area. It found that it could not be determined that the area was technically unsafe at the time

are obviously excited," NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told the FM. "Our members have been watching the progress of this case closely. This should be a message to all mine managements that if they do commit an unfair labour practice, our union will take them up either in the Industrial Court or through industrial action."



NUM's Ramaphosa ... a message to managements

However, at the Industrial Court hearing on November 14, the NUM's legal representatives argued that whether or not the area was objectively considered to be safe, management had a duty to take proper steps to allay the workers' reasonable apprehensions. They said this applied particularly to the mining industry where over 800 people die underground in accidents each year.

In reply, management contended that it had taken adequate steps. It argued that since it has far greater expertise than workers to determine the safety of an area, the workers should have accepted their assurances.

The reinstatement order is retrospective to the day the workers were dismissed. It is, however, only temporary. The issue still has to be thrashed out between the union and the company at a conciliation board. If negotiation at the board deadlocks, the matter could be referred back to the Industrial Court for a final determination.

Although the reasons for the court's decision were not available at the time the FM went to press, some labour lawyers say its significance is that workers now have grounds to be entitled to refuse to work if they have reasonable fears about the safety of their working environment.

"This is our first court victory and we

Stress affects black mineworkers most

By Malcolm Fothergill

A research project has found significant differences in the way English-speaking mineworkers and Afrikaans-speaking mineworkers react to the perils of their job

It found that black mineworkers suffer more stress than their white colleague, but that underground workers suffer no more stress than surface workers

The research was carried out for a doctoral thesis by Mr David White, an Anglo-American divisional personnel director, and is quoted in the latest Chamber of Mines newsletter

Mr White analysed stress in terms of four major variables: job satisfaction, overall life satisfaction, anxiety and job-related tension

Some 720 mineworkers, 240 of them white and the remainder split equally between Shangaans, South Sothos, Tswana and Xhosas, took part in the study

Half were supervisors and the rest were in non-supervisory positions, half were experienced and half inexperienced, half were from low-stress mines (those popular with migrant workers and with low accident rates) and half from high-stress mines

The first of Mr White's five hypotheses, that underground workers suffer higher levels of stress than their colleagues on the surface, was disproved — surprisingly, in view of the hazards underground

The second hypothesis, that blacks

suffer more stress than whites, found more support

Blacks were found to be more alienated than whites, to have higher anxiety levels and to drink for escapist reasons significantly more frequently

The third hypothesis, that stress was related to job level, was not confirmed

"Among whites the only significant difference is in satisfaction scores, with shift bosses being significantly more satisfied with their jobs than artisans"

The fourth hypothesis, that men working on high-stress mines would suffer higher levels of stress than men on low-stress mines, was by and large confirmed

Language proved an interesting qualifier

"Workers on high-stress mines do report more health problems than workers on low-stress mines, but among whites it is only the English-speaking employees who are in better health on a low-stress mine

"Similarly it is only the English-speaking employees who experience higher anxiety levels on high-stress mines

"The Afrikaans-speaking employees appear to have been unaffected by employment on a high-stress mine — it did not make any difference to them what type of mine they worked on"

Mr White's fifth hypothesis, that experience in a job reduced the amount of stress associated with it, was confirmed

Spec 25/11/83

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Court rules in favour of miners

By Carolyn Dempster
Labour Reporter

In a critical finding which has vast implications for the mining industry and all other "hazardous" industries, the Industrial Court today ordered the reinstatement of 17 miners sacked by West Driefontein gold mine on September 22.

The miners, all members of the National Union of Mineworkers, refused to go underground because they claimed the area was unsafe and they feared a rockfall.

The order, handed down in favour of the union by the court this afternoon, means that in future, employers

- Cannot dismiss employees on the basis that they refuse to work because they consider an area unsafe
- Have to take reasonable precautions to ensure that the employees are satisfied that their workplace is safe if there is a bona fide apprehension among the workers

The court ruling is regarded as highly significant by labour experts in view of the impact it will have on disputes over safety issues in the workplace

Another facet of the finding is that it does not matter if the workplace is examined and found to be objectively safe. The workers' feelings still have to be taken into account

According to a spokesman for the union, the 17 mineworkers are to receive back pay to September 22.

Mines keeping up relentless drive to improve safety

212
8/25/81

By Melanie Sergeant

Fatality rates on South African mines have shown a downward trend in recent years because of various methods introduced by the Mine Safety Division of the Chamber of Mines, but mining continues to take its toll

"However, there can be cautious optimism regarding the outlook for the 1980s", Mr Lynne van den Bosch told delegates to the annual meeting of the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies of SA last week

"As outgoing president of the societies, Mr van den Bosch in his speech covered 70 years of safety loss control in the mining industry. He said the breakneck speed of technological progress brought with it a host of hazards and challenging problems.

"It is not logical to slow down the technological advance. It is, however, up to those in control to harness the new technology for the benefit of all, and by integrating it into research and development programmes many of the potential risks can be eliminated."

The safety movement started with the emphasis on guarding machinery and controlling the hazards at source, but had had to shift to education and training of workers, since guards could easily be removed by uninformed and uninvolved workers.

"There is evidence showing that when accidents are avoided or minimised, the cost of production goes down and productivity rises — which results in the safety movement proliferating"

The basic concept behind Loss Control Management, which was brought into South African awareness in 1976, is recognition of any potential threat before it has the opportunity to cause harm

But this technique covers a broader base of operation than injury prevention. It implies the control not only of accidents causing personal injury but also of all incidents that damage material and equipment and cause losses

Initially there was some resistance to loss control, as many sincerely believed that the objectives should be the elimination of accident injury and

death and should not be concerned with non-humanitarian areas.

"Loss control is concerned with identifying risks and creating management controls to ensure work is carried out to predetermined standards"

Then, in 1978, the International Mine Safety Rating programme was developed

It identifies and sets standards for work that has to be done to control accidents to persons, damage to property and unplanned interruption of operations. This is all measured by internal and external audits

"This scheme recognises that safety and the control of loss is part of efficient production and is the responsibility of line management"

According to the audits, mines may be awarded from one to five stars. For a five-star award, mines must achieve at least 90 percent compliance in all 22 areas of the rating scheme, and have a frequency rate for fatalities and reportable injuries of about 25 percent below the average for its class of mine

As there is a continuing reduction in frequency rates, mines are constantly having to achieve better results to keep their status

"The response of mine managements to the programme and their quick acceptance exceeded expectations"

The first audit was at President Steyn Gold Mine in September 1978. There are now 18 mines with five stars on the advanced level, and seven on the standard level, 19 mines have four stars on the advanced level, and two on the standard level.

"There is no doubt that loss control management introduced after 1975 has played a prominent role in reducing accidents"

There has been a downward trend in fatality rates in recent years, and reportable injury rates have fallen even more dramatically. At the end of last year, the accident fatality rate was 1,16 per 1 000 employees, and the reportable injury rate 26,22 per 1 000 for the year. These are the lowest figures yet recorded in South African mining

Advice to miners ^{SOWETAN}

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has advised thousands of members on the mines to refuse to work in areas which they consider unsafe.

This advice was given by NUM's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, who said the workers should urge mines to sign safety agreements with it to avoid court action.

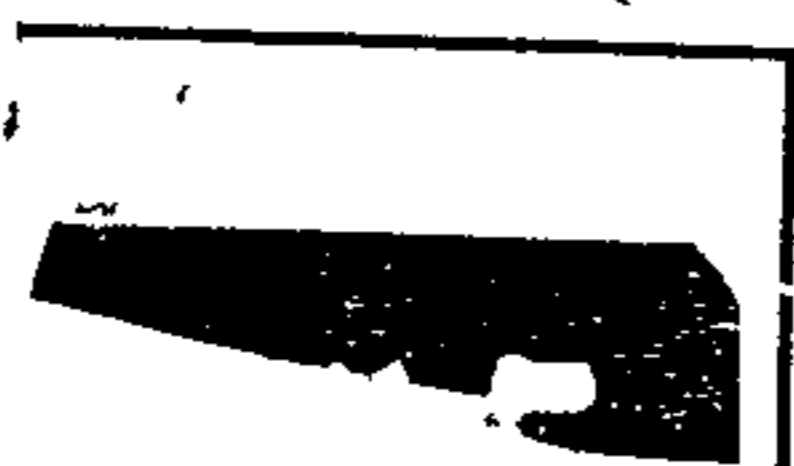
The advice comes in the wake of an Industrial Court's decision to grant temporary reinstatement to 17 mem-

bers of the union who were fired at West Driefontein gold mine.

They were dismissed after refusing to work underground in an area which they considered unsafe, although a Government inquiry had earlier found that the place was safe.

In another development, the gold mine has said that it will pay the workers for the period of the order — but will not allow them to work. This means that the workers could lose their right to live in the hostel of the mine.

• The enquiry into the Hlobane mine disaster which claimed the lives of about 67 miners, has been postponed from December 4 to January 24 next year.



ERIC LANG TO TESTIFY IN NAMIBIA MINING PROBE

Mining crusader plans to reveal figures

By DAVID PIETERS

WINDHOEK — Sensitive figures on Namibia's mineral production are due to be given to newsmen in Windhoek tomorrow morning

Namibia's crusader against mining corporate tax evasion, Mr Eric Lang, is scheduled to testify on alleged transfer pricing by the mining monopolies before the Thirion commission later in the morning

This sudden move follows an earlier rebuttal by commission chairman, Mr Justice P W Thirion, of the Windhoek millionaire's sensational claim last weekend that he was stopped by the authorities from making certain disclosures on tax-free mineral sales

So prior to appearing before the commission, Mr Lang intends landing a few punches

Speaking from Swakopmund yesterday, Mr Lang said he also would give newsmen copies of a "confidential" letter signed by Mr Justice Thirion

The letter, written to Mr Lang recently, concerns the commission's work involving the government control of the multi-million rand mining industry generating half of Namibia's gross domestic product

Mr Lang claims hundreds of millions of rand have been lost through cross-border transfer pricing

"Very recently I've had it confirmed from official sources that there have been years when we have lost up to R100-million," he said

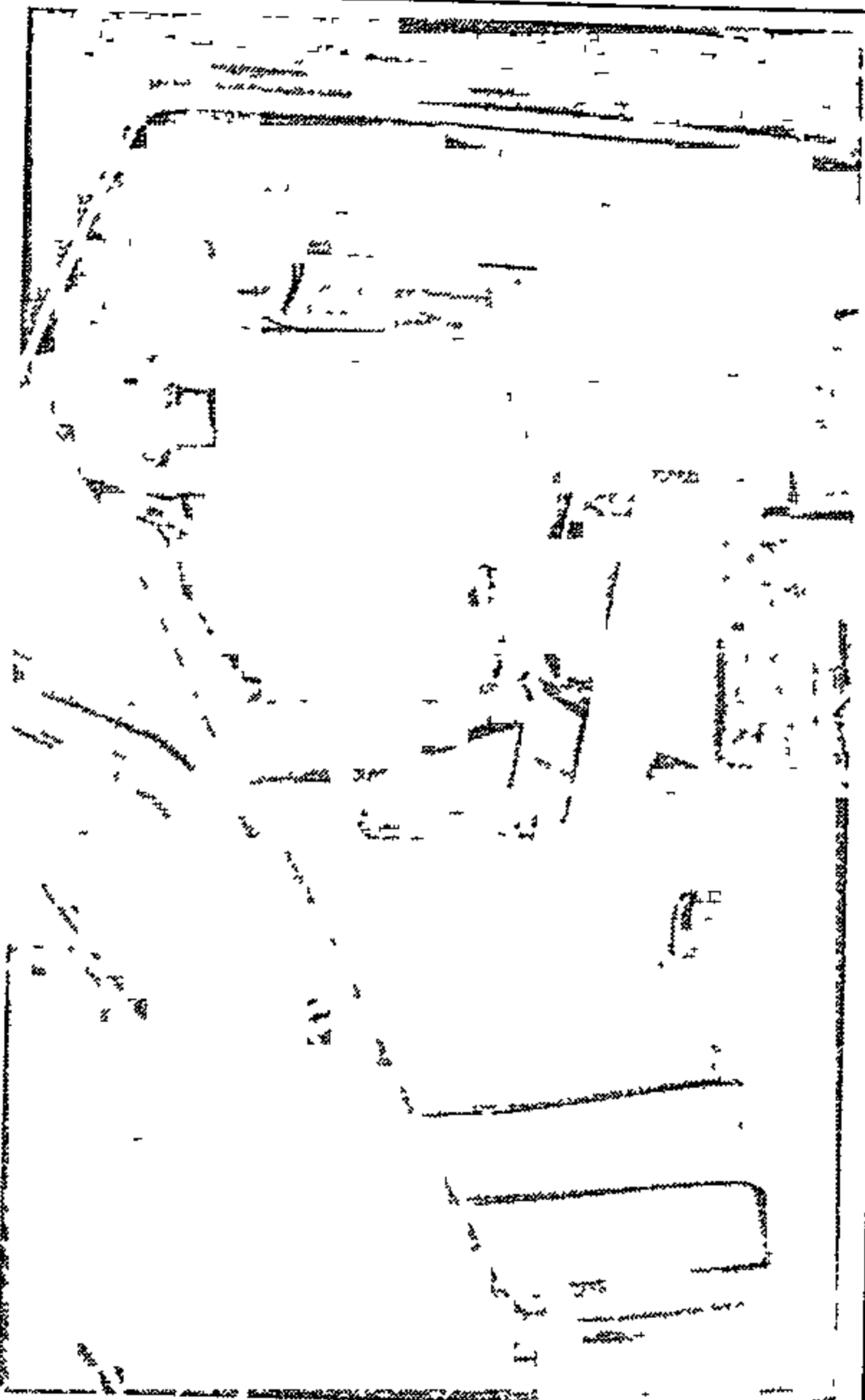
He repeated an earlier claim that in one recent year a mining company had declared R401-million more in production value to its board of directors than it had to the government for tax purposes

Mr Justice Thirion said in a statement this week he had told the Administrator-General, Dr Willie van Niekerk, the commission did not have evidence that Namibia's natural resources were being pillaged as alleged by Mr Lang

He had also said he was unaware of discussions between the AG and South African Cabinet members concerning the commission's work

It was reliably learnt this week that Mr Lang was said to have read "too much" into Mr Justice Thirion's letter, namely, that the commission was being hamstrung from above

Mr Lang in turn said "Mr Thirion's statement has been severely misinterpreted and I will be seeking clarity before the commission"



Watch box in the fast lane

FOR a mere R268 000 you can have a TV set that travels at 240km/h. That's the price tag and the maximum speed of the Aston Martin Lagonda which gleams sleekly on the showroom floor of a Rosebank, Johannesburg motor dealer Top. Mr Maurice Taylor watches TV in the hand-built Lagonda (above)

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A new age has dawned for black mineworkers

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

A GIANT in the mining industry has woken up

That was the warning sounded by the National Union of Mineworkers — the country's largest and fastest-growing black trade union — at their second annual congress on Saturday night

After little more than a year in existence, the union's membership has climbed to 55 000. That represents the first significant unionisation of black workers in South Africa's key economic sector in recent times

The formation of the NUM followed closely the strikes, riots and deaths on a number of mines in June last year — the worst unrest in the industry since 1946

The jarring effect of those strikes — which exposed the inadequate channels of communication between mine management and workers — belatedly propelled the mining industry into the country's new era of labour relations

On June 9 this year, the NUM became the first emerging union to be recognised by the Chamber of Mines and was granted wage bargaining rights on mines where it has majority support in specific work categories

To date the NUM is the only one. A year ago it was widely predicted that opening the mines up to black unionisation would result in the formation of a number of unions, all jockeying for worker support

While black miner's unions have since mushroomed in name, the NUM seems to be up front alone. The others have either fallen away or are yet to really emerge

The kingpin in the rise of the NUM has been its general secretary, 31-year-old Mr Cyril Ramaphosa

Before entering trade unionism in 1981 via the Cusa law unit, Mr Ramaphosa was detained without trial twice while studying at Turfloop University. In 1974 he was held for 11 months after being involved in a pro-Frelimo rally, and in 1976 he was held for six months during the Soweto unrest

"But I am not bitter," says Mr Ramaphosa, who adds that he was interrogated for four months solid in 1974. "I feel sorry for the people who did that to me. They won't ever stop the tide of black people fighting for their rights"

At Saturday's all-night congress, the thousand-odd delegates who packed the Philip Smith Community Hall in the Thobaung township outside Welkom expressed their admiration by

repeatedly breaking into song "Rama-Ramaphosa"

Directed by Mr Ramaphosa, the NUM stands out as the current trade union success story

But it still has a tough road ahead. Its 55 000 membership is only about a tenth of the black workforce in the mining industry. It also has to deal with what is probably the best-organised employer organisation in the country, the Chamber of Mines.

And the very fact that the NUM has mobilised so rapidly is a problem in itself

South African history is littered with unions whose spectacular rise ended in collapse when they grew too fast and were unable to consolidate their positions

According to Mr Ramaphosa, the union's main priority in the year ahead is precisely to consolidate its strength to develop organisation at the pit-face before expanding further

So far the NUM's major area of impact has not been in mobilising black worker muscle, but in fighting legal battles

In fact, the union has yet to engage in a major strike other than the half-hour work stoppage which followed the Hlobane coal mine disaster

But the legal strategy is having a real effect in one important area: safety conditions on the mines

Mining is a hazardous occupation and judging by the feelings of the mineworkers present on Saturday night, safety is closer to their hearts than any other aspect of their working lives

At the conference, there was a constant reminder of this. The front of the hall was filled with men in wheelchairs — miners with damaged spines and limbs — from the nearby Ernest Oppenheimer Hospital

In the past, reports of miners' deaths in rockfalls or gas explosions went by virtually unquestioned. The death of 67 miners in a methane blast at Hlobane in September changed that

Shortly after the disaster the NUM made serious allegations about the cause of the blast. For the first time an organisation acting specifically in the interests of black workers had challenged mine management and Government's accounts of such events

The NUM, armed with their own experts, are to give evidence at the Hlobane inquiry early next year

And next week they will be represented at the inquiry into the death of six miners at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels mine. Workers



A Section of the 1 000 delegates who attended the National Union of Mineworkers' annual congress on Saturday night.

have alleged that the six, who died from asphyxiation, were ordered to enter an area which had been sealed off because of a fire in the mine

The safety rights of miners were also highlighted at Gold Fields' West Driefontein mine, where 17 workers were fired after refusing to work in an area they considered unsafe

An inquiry — requested by the NUM in terms of an almost forgotten section of the Mines and Works Act — found the area to be safe

At a subsequent industrial court case the NUM's legal team argued that whether or not the area was safe, management — who was accused of behaving in a "Victorian" manner towards employees — had not taken adequate steps to prove to the workers it was safe

The court has temporarily reinstated the workers. On the basis of this judgement, the NUM has advised their members that they have the right to refuse to work when they consider conditions to be dangerous

The NUM has also called on the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs to establish a commission to investigate safety on the mines and has called on the Chamber of Mines to negotiate safety agreements

By setting up safety stewards in the mines, the union is moving the safety issue away from the courts back into the mines

The NUM's other important area of concern is wages — the issue which sparked the 1982 strikes. Here high demands are likely to be made at next year's round of negotiations.

Mr Ramaphosa points out that miners in other countries are among the highest paid workers. "Their working conditions are the harshest, so their remuneration ought



MR Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, addresses the union's second annual congress at Thobaung township outside Welkom on Saturday night.

to be a lot higher"

It is perhaps because of the tough working conditions that miners — whether in Poland, England or Australia — are among the most militant trade unionists

But how far, for the NUM, does this militance extend beyond issues such as working conditions and wages to opposing the Government politically from the vantage of such a strategic industry?

Mr Ramaphosa believes it is premature to talk of tackling the broader political issues until worker organisation in the mines has been developed and consolidated

Still, numerous political issues inevitably touch on the shopfloor. The NUM has taken a stand against job reservation, the last vestiges of which remain in the mining industry

And the conference made a call on the Government to change its "racist policies"

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Black miners call for safety inquiry

~~2/12/83~~ 2/12
2/12/83

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for the amalgamation of all unions organising black miners in the interests of union solidarity, and for a commission of inquiry to investigate mine safety

These were two of a number of controversial resolutions adopted at NUM's second national congress in Welkom at the weekend — attended by 1 000 representatives from the union's six regional branches

As the fastest-growing and largest union representing the interests of more than 50 000 black miners, NUM expressed its concern at the "mushrooming" of black miners' unions and warned against the divisive effect this was having. Any attempt in future to establish new black unions would be viewed as an act of betrayal of unity attempts, it was decided

Safety also proved a key issue with delegates highlighting the rate of unnecessary deaths and accidents in the mining industry

Resolutions taken were that

- NUM should demand a seat on all the safety committees at the Chamber of Mines
- The union should demand to be represented on the safety committee headed by the Government Mining Engineer
- The Minister of Energy and Mineral Affairs should be called upon to appoint a commission of inquiry to investigate safety on the mines
- A call should be made to the Chamber of Mines to negotiate safety agreements with the union, failing which, the union would inform all members to refuse to work in unsafe places.

It was further noted by congress that many of the accidents resulted from a breach of mine-safety regulations by mine managements who were concerned "only with production" and who paid "little attention to safety"

In a surprise move preconditions were also set for the 1984 wage negotiations with the Chamber of Mines

In view of the fact that the chamber did not bargain "in good faith" during the 1983 wage review by imposing an artificial time limit on the conclusion of negotiations, congress decided that the wage negotiations next year should begin in May and be concluded by June 1.

In the event of a deadlock, provision has been made for a special national congress where union representatives will canvass support from members to take industrial action, including strike action

Another two resolutions likely to cause ripples in the mining industry are the decisions by NUM to establish a black miners officials' association — with a potential membership of 18 000 — and to take action should the international boycott of South African coal result in pit closures and retrenchments

● See Page 11, World section.

SA expert explains ways to alleviate rockburst hazard

212 Stw 16/12/83

By John Hobbs

Globetrotting professor and foremost world authority on rockbursts, Dr Miklos Salamon, has just returned from Canada

There, at the request of the authorities, he advised on his speciality — rockbursts in mines — to enthusiastic audiences

Dr Salamon argues that the rockburst hazard may be alleviated by seeking "a reduction in the number of seismic events, a lessening of the kinetic energy content of those events, decreasing the proportion of seismic events manifesting themselves as rockbursts, and minimising the damaging effects of rockbursts when they occur"

The practical defence against rockbursts, which account for about two-thirds of all fatalities on the Reef, is "based on the combination of three concepts effective face support, good layout design and control of convergence volume", he says

"A disconcerting feature of rockbursts is that they defy conventional explanation

"Hazards arising from the explosion of gas, coal dust, or explosives, fires, water-inrushes, the use of mechanical or electrical equipment, and so on, are all



Dr Miklos Salamon

within the experience of modern man, but not so with rockbursts

"A man working underground in a rockburst-prone mine may feel exposed and defenceless. There appears to be nothing he can do to diminish the risk to which he is exposed

It is the duty of mining engineers, together with other experts and with the backing of mining companies to alleviate this state of affairs"

Dr Salamon says that quantitative analysis suggests "the significance of the following variables excavation size, abutment size, depth below surface, the pattern of dykes and faults, and increasing incline of stoping width"

A convincing argument has been put forward recently by one academic that there is no fundamental difference between

natural earthquakes and mining-related seismic events

Studies of the Klerksdorp goldfields indicate that tectonic forces — those inherent in the rock and developed over millions of years — play a major role

In many instances mining may only act as the trigger mechanism with most of the rock mass reacting as an elastic body — hence the rockburst — in which case seismic instruments provide a useful indicator of potential rockbursts after the event to improve our knowledge of the causes involved

Says Dr Salamon "A convenient control of the risk of seismic events might be based on the management of stress concentration at the faces which are to be mined"

Several powerful conclusions emerge in determining whether or not a particular seismic event becomes a rockburst

These include the kinetic energy content of the event, the distance from the focus of the event to the mining excavation, the state of stress around the excavation, the state of quality of the rock surrounding the excavation and the quality of the support in the excavation"

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(212) S. Times 18/12/83

Mine charges refuted

By Amrit Manga

THE Chamber of Mines has firmly rejected allegations by black mineworker representatives that accident rates on South African mines rank among the highest in the world

Miners at the second national congress of the National Union of Mineworkers adopted a resolution charging that breaches of mine safety regulations by management are largely responsible for alarming accident statistics

Black mining unions allege that the death rate on South African coal mines is six times higher than in Britain and 50% higher than in the US

After the Hlobane mine disaster in which 67 workers were killed, the Chamber of Mines has repeatedly insisted that its emphasis on mine safety is second to none

The NUM charged that mine managers were concerned primarily with production, thus relegating the issue of safety and the interest of workers

In a resolution adopted on safety by the NUM at the congress, workers expressed alarm at the accident and fatality rate in SA, saying it was unnecessary

But the Chamber of Mines claims that relevant

accident statistics on South African coal mines show that, except for a period of vast and rapid expansion of the industry during the later half of the Seventies, the safety performance of the mines is on a par with that of the US and West Germany

A combination of factors makes conditions on South African mines uniquely difficult and therefore not comparable with mining operations elsewhere, the chamber claims

The country's mines, some of which are approaching depths of 4km below surface, are the deepest in the world

This means that mines have to contend with the problem of heat and pressure

"Rockbursts are a characteristic of deep mines, which increases our accident rate," according to a chamber spokesman

The closest equivalent to South African gold mines would appear to be underground metal mines in the US, where the fatality rate for last year was 0,93 per 1 000. This compares with 1,25 for South African gold mines for the same period

If accidents related to rockbursts are excluded, South Africa's fatality rate drops to 0,95 per 1 000, which is marginally higher than that of metal mines in the US

The fatality rates on South African coal mines is currently at 0,53 per 1 000 a year

This compares favourably with the figure for West Germany, where available statistics show a fatality rate of 0,56 per 1 000

But the NUM alleges the accident rate could be considerably higher if the number of unreported cases were included in the official figures

Unions and occupational health workers claim that the system of cash incentives for white miners offered for impressive safety records discourages them from reporting accidents

But Guy Stokes of the chamber's safety division explains that a distinction must be made between accidents that are reportable and those that are not

Referring to statutory mining safety regulations, he points out that only accidents which could incapacitate a worker for 14 days or more were regarded as reportable

A further allegation suggests that black miners are under constant pressure to suppress the fact that they have been injured

The chamber says it has investigated the allegations and found them to be untrue, while worker representatives counter that they are waiting only for watertight cases to prove their claims.

(212) (105) RDM 20/12/83

2 key hearings on mine safety begin

Labour Correspondent

TWO KEY hearings on mine safety issues — the one a meeting of an official conciliation board and the other a Government inquiry — are to take place today and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) will play a major role in both

In Johannesburg, NUM and the West Driefontein mine are to meet with an official conciliation board to attempt to resolve their dispute over the firing of 17 workers who refused to work in an area they considered unsafe

In a key ruling, the industrial court recently ordered the temporary reinstatement of the 17 men

This does not end the dispute, however, and the two sides must still attempt to settle their differences at the conciliation board. If they

fail the matter is expected to be referred back to the Industrial Court for a final ruling

In Carletonville, NUM is to be represented at the official Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs inquiry into the death of six miners at Western Deep Levels mine recently

Although Government inquiries into mine accidents which result in deaths are routine, the NUM is the first mine union to make a practice of attending these and giving evidence on behalf of members

Recently the union also became the first to use a little-known clause in the law which allows it to demand inquiries into incidents where there is no loss of life

The union has already said it believes the Western Deep deaths were preventable, and it is certain to argue this at the hearing

APR 21/12/83

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Gas in 'unsafe' area killed miners

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Six black miners at Western Deep Levels mine one morning last month entered a work area which had been sealed off because it contained noxious gases, and were found dead in the area 12 hours later, an official inquiry heard yesterday

The inquiry also heard that the team-leader of the men, who died with them, had been due to undergo safety retraining the day before the incident because his superiors were unhappy with his handling of safety procedures

But because of an apparent error in the personnel department, he had not been sent on the course, and died in the accident on November 15

The inquiry, being held at the mine, outside Carltonville, is being chaired by a senior Inspector of Mines, Mr Dick Bakker

Although inquiries are routine where miners have died in accidents, they have acquired a new significance since the Black National Union of Mineworkers' (Num) decided to take part in them

The union is participating in all inquiries in which its members are af-

ected, and yesterday lawyers representing both a Num member and the mine attended the hearing, which continues today

Inquiries of this nature do not deliver a final verdict on an accident. The chairman compiles a report on the evidence and on the basis of this, the Attorney-General decides whether to prosecute any of those involved for breaking the Mines and Works Act safety regulations

A key safety dispute between Num and West Driefontein mine is to be referred to the industrial court for a final verdict after an official conciliation board had failed to settle the

dispute yesterday

The dispute arose after 17 Num members were fired by the mine in September after refusing to work in an area they considered unsafe

The union alleges the mine was guilty of an "unfair labour practice" but Gold Fields, which owns West Driefontein, disputes this

The industrial court recently ruled that the 17 men be temporarily reinstated

The mine has decided not to re-employ them at this stage, but to honour the ruling by paying them for the period since they were fired

Mine dispute persists

212
Labour Reporter

21/12/83
Star

A conciliation board meeting yesterday failed to resolve the dispute between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and West Driefontein Gold Mine over the reinstatement of 17 miners

power, Mr P du Plessis, that the dispute has not been resolved and the case will be referred back to the Industrial Court for a final finding

The Industrial Court passed down a preliminary ruling last month ordering the temporary reinstatement of the 17 mineworkers

At the end of the meeting NUM's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said West Driefontein had refused the union's offer to reinstate the miners dismissed in September for refusing to go underground into an area they considered unsafe

The conciliation board chairman will now report to the Minister of Man-

If the court follows this decision in its final ruling, it will have vast implications for safety in the mining industry. NUM is already recommending members to resist working in areas they feel are unsafe

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

A GOVERNMENT inquiry into the deaths of six black miners at Western Deep Levels mine, near Carletonville, ended yesterday after the hearing had heard evidence from mine shift bosses and black miners

The inquiry is the first into a mine accident in which a black trade union has taken part. Lawyers briefed by the National Union of Mineworkers appeared at the inquiry representing a NUM member and cross-examined witnesses

The mine, which is owned by Anglo American Corporation, also briefed a legal team, a move which is understood to be unusual

The chairman of the probe, Mr Dick Bakker, will now forward a report on the proceedings to the Attorney-General, who will decide whether any of those involved should be prosecuted for alleged breaches of safety regulations

It is understood his report is likely to be presented to the Attorney-General early next year

On Tuesday, the inquiry heard how six black miners had entered a work area, which had been sealed off because noxious gases were circulating, early on the morning of November 15 — and had been found dead 12 hours later

The area had been sealed by locking two steel doors at its entrance

Mine ²¹² tragedy probe ends

Much of yesterday's evidence centred around how the men had come to gain entry to the door as there were only two keys to it. One was in the possession of a ventilation official and the other had been given to a shift boss, Mr Hendrik Coetzee

A key witness was Mr Fuzile Pikan, a team leader and NUM member whom the union's legal team is representing

It emerged during yesterday's evidence that Mr Pikan had obtained the key to the door from Mr Coetzee and had admitted the men to the area

Evidence centred around whether Mr Coetzee had sent the team into the sealed-off area — which he denied — and on whether Mr Pikan had warned the men of the danger behind the door

He said he had and had also reported the incident to his superiors, but this was denied by his superiors who gave evidence

Black miners on safety body

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

In a breakthrough for black miners, individual trade unions are to be given representation on the Prevention of Accidents Committee of the Chamber of Mines, it was announced today.

This means that the two major unions representing the interests of black miners, the National Union of Mineworkers and the Federated Mining Union will, for the first time, have a say on safety issues on the chamber's mines.

Until now trade unions have been represented on the committee through other organisations.

The decision was taken at the annual review of representation on the committee by the executive committee of the Chamber of Mines, and invitations to nominate representatives to serve on the PAC have been sent to all unions recognised by the chamber.

CAMPAIGNS

The PAC works in concert with the Mine Safety Division of the Chamber of Mines, which conducts safety campaigns and educational courses and administers the International Mine Safety Rating Scheme.

Safety has become a priority of the NUM over the past year and at its second national congress the union called for a Commission of Inquiry into safety on mines, representation on all safety committees of the chamber and safety agreements with the chamber.

One major complaint of the union is that black miners have no say on safety issues, and the union attempts to gain representation on the Safety Committee headed by the Government Mining Engineer were thwarted when NUM was unregistered and unrepresentative and therefore would not be permitted to gain a seat on the committee. The situation is being reviewed by the Minister of Energy and Mineral Affairs.

Team leader ²¹² slept as 6 men were gassed ^{22/12/83 sfw}

By Terry Friend,
West Rand Bureau

At an inquiry into the underground gassing of six mine workers, the team leader admitted that although he knew the men must be dead, he went home to sleep without reporting the accident to anyone.

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs inquiry, chaired by senior inspector of mines Mr D Bakker, was held at Western Deep Levels Mine, Carletonville.

The tribunal was convened to investigate the death of six men from carbon monoxide poisoning at Western Deep on November 15.

The inquiry was the first involving black mine unions.

Mr Bakker heard evidence that the men were gassed in a return airway (RAW) when they went to strip pipes.

The shift boss, Mr H Coetzee, said he had been told by his mine overseer to lock the steel doors to the airway and keep a key, as there was a dangerous hole behind the doors.

He had entrusted the key to team leader, Mr Fuzile Pikani.

Mr R D Levin, for Anglo American Corporation "You regarded him as responsible?"

"Yes"
Mr Coetzee and an-

other shift boss, Mr DJ Herholdt and developers Mr T Oppermann and Mr B Bosomworth, all testified that they were given no instructions as to special safety precautions relating to the fire.

All denied knowledge of smoke behind the doors before the accident.

Mr G Marcus, for the National Union of Mineworkers, in cross-examining the shift boss of level 105, Mr Herholdt, said "You received no instructions about safety precautions in connection with the fire?"

"No"

"You had no reason to believe that there was a danger on your level?"

"No"

Mr Pikani said the deceased team leader, Mr Aaron Cebu, had insisted on entering the RAW with his crew. Later he went into the RAW and was choked by fumes.

PROBABLY DEAD

He ran out and although he realised that the team must still be inside, he closed the door, leaving it unlocked, and went to the hostel to sleep.

Mr Levin "You mean to say they were probably dead by that time and you did not report it to anyone?"

"I could not think clearly because of the fumes and my head was aching."

Mr Levin "I suggest that you allowed people into an area which you knew was unsafe and when you realised they must be dead you decided the best thing to do was not report the matter and see what happened."

Mr Bosomworth said he had not reported the absence of the team leader and his crew because he simply assumed they had stayed on the surface.

He admitted under cross-examination that this was the first time the whole team had failed to report and said when there were individual absentees he never made inquiries until "after about three days."

He testified that he was in charge of 46 men, but had only one construction crew. This was the one which never reported for duty.

Mr Marcus "You did not think they might have met with an accident?"

"No"

Mr Bakker will now submit a report and recommendations to the Attorney-General who will decide if any of those involved should be prosecuted for alleged breaches of safety.

New signs could ease city's car jams

By Colleen Ryan, Municipal Reporter
Traffic congestion in the city could be eased slightly if the Johannesburg City Council agrees to install 15 new signs allowing motorists to turn left at red traffic lights

Johannesburg's traffic chief, Mr John Pearce, said he was confident the plan would be approved. Five signs have already been installed which allow drivers to turn left at red traffic lights after they have stopped, provided the intersection is clear.

If approved, the signs will be placed at 10 new intersections and the five existing signs will be replaced with the new design.

EXPERIMENT

In June 1982 the first "left turn on red after stop" signs were introduced in Johannesburg as an experiment.

This year a study was conducted to determine the success of the plan and it was found that only half of the motorists used the signs correctly.

The City Engineer's Department has recommended Johannesburg adopt a new, simpler sign to assist motorists who do not understand the old sign.

Some Reef municipalities have introduced similar systems but there has been a lack of co-ordination between authorities, said Mr Pearce.

The National Institute for Transport and Road Research would attempt to standardise the projects next year, he said.

Maize prospects look rosy

By Hannes Ferguson, Farming Correspondent

Farmers in the maize triangle — Lichtenburg-Lydenburg-Ladybrand — had finished planting and prospects looked rosy, an Eastern Transvaal Co-op spokesman said.

He said sunshine was what the maize crop now needed most.

After good rains near Thabazimbi, the Limpopo was now in flood, swollen more by heavy downpours in northern Botswana.

Key Bushveld districts such as Koedoesrand and Ellisras were still dry and farmers had to feed their cattle maize rations. Hopes were high that Christmas rain would also bring relief there.

The Weather Bureau's Mr George Schulze said the global weather pattern favoured Southern Africa.

The seasonal hotting up of surface water in the western Pacific, known as the El Niño Effect, had been fading away for sometime.

In an intricate pattern, the El Niño was linked with barometric pressures in areas as distant from each other as Gough Island, south of Cape Town and Tahiti.

Mr Schulze said rises at the South African weather station on Gough and Marion islands during December could point to a further weakening of the Niño effect and a favourable weather constellation in the Indian Ocean might continue bringing moisture to inland regions here as a result.

Miners wary of new move

Labour Reporter

of Accidents Committee

general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said

involved on the shaft floor"

The National Union of Mineworkers has reacted warily to the news that individual unions will be represented on the Chamber of Mines Prevention

"Naturally we are pleased the chamber has given us this opportunity but it all depends on what the committee's aims and objectives are," NUM's

"It's all very well to be represented at industry level and at national level, but we need to have the shaft stewards

The union has responded to the chamber's invitation to nominate committee representatives by asking for more information about it.

Turpentine death at Cape

CAPE TOWN — One child has died and another is in the intensive care unit of the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town as a result of turpentine poisoning, the SABC reported.

A spokesman for the hospital said there had been a marked increase in turpentine poisonings among children in the last few days.

This was probably due to fathers being at home and doing painting jobs.

Children found the turpentine bottle and mistook it for water or a cool drink.

The spokesman said turpentine poisoning was particularly unpleasant and that parents must not induce vomiting.

Parents should give a child suspected of swallowing turpentine milk to drink and then take the child to hospital for treatment as quickly as possible — Sapa

"Our acceptance will, to a certain extent, be conditional on whether the committee includes input from the shaft floor all the way up. If the committee does not ensure that, we would see it as a hopelessly useless committee," Mr Ramaphosa said.

The Federated Mining Union's general secretary, Mr Johnny Pieterse, was not available to comment on the chamber move.

Teargas used to subdue 3 won

DURBAN — Teargas was used to subdue three women arrested at a police roadblock after they allegedly obstructed the police, it was said in the Amanzimtoti Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Constable Rosemary Hennesy was testifying at the trial of Mrs Sybil Mohlaka, manager of the kwaZulu Nursing Services, and Miss Sbhongile Ngcobo, who appeared before Mr DM Young charged with resisting arrest and obstructing the course of justice.

The women, who had pleaded not guilty, were acquitted after their defence counsel, Mr CJ Pammenter, asked for a discharge immediately after the State closed its case.

The charge against the third woman, Miss Jenny Conco, was withdrawn.

Constable Hennesy told the court she was on duty with three policemen at a roadblock near Adams Mission on September 24 when she stopped a car driven by Mrs Mohlaka.

When Constable Hennesy started to open

a bag in the boot told her not to put

She then asked herself, but she refused

Miss Jenny Conco basket from the boot and struck her with

She then warned was arresting them

They resisted by van and Miss Ngcobo the time, also held

CBD, say traders

2 miners die,
3 are missing

212 Star
27/12/83
Two men died and three are missing after a rockfall at the Doornfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal on Saturday

Gold Fields of South Africa said the body of one miner was found soon after the rockfall, caused by an earth tremor. Another body was found in later rescue operations.

Rescue bid for trapped miners

ARGUS 28/12/83 (212)
Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue operations are continuing for two miners trapped underground when major rockfalls hit two Transvaal gold mines on Saturday and yesterday morning

At least eight men died and 57 were injured in the two separate accidents at Doornfontein gold mine, in the western

Transvaal on Saturday, and at the West Driefontein gold mine, near Carletonville, yesterday morning

Gold Fields of South Africa, which owns both mines, said the West Driefontein accident occurred over an extensive area of the No 5 shaft at 10 am yesterday. The shaft is at a depth of 2 000 m below the surface

9 die, 1 still trapped, in mine dramas

212 Star
28/12/63

By Sol Makgabutlane

Rescue operations are continuing for a miner trapped underground when major rockfalls hit two Transvaal gold mines on Saturday and yesterday morning.

At least nine men died and 57 were injured in the two separate accidents at Doornfontein gold mine, in the Western Transvaal on Saturday, and at West Driefontein gold mine, near Carletonville, yesterday.

The ninth body was recovered at the Doornfontein mine at 12 30 this morning.

Gold Fields of South Africa, which owns both mines, said in a statement that the West Driefontein accident occurred over an extensive area of the Number Five sub-vertical shaft at 10 am yesterday. The shaft is at a depth of 2 000 m.

The identities of the four men who died and the miner who is still being sought could not be released before their families had been informed.

Fifty-seven workers were taken to hospital.

ROCKFALL

The Doornfontein accident occurred at Shaft Two, 2 663 m below surface, at 10 30 am on Saturday.

Four men died and one was reported missing after the rockfall, which was caused by an earth tremor, the holding company said in a statement.

The body of one miner was recovered shortly after the rockfall, while another was discovered later.

TERRY FRIEND, of The Star's West Rand Bureau, reports that buildings shook from a tremor measuring four on the Richter Scale which hit Carletonville at about 9 45 am yesterday.

The tremor came from the Number Three shaft area of Western Deep Levels mine, said a spokesman for the mine's seismic section.

"The cause was a rockburst about 1 km from the nearest point at which people were working."

A Western Deep Levels hospital spokesman said no casualties had been reported by the time of going to press.

MINING — ACCIDENTS

1984

JANUARY — DEC .

Winch-driver (212)
9/1/84
killed at mine Stan

A Transkeian winch-driver died and two mineworkers were injured in a fall of ground at the Western Holdings gold mine near Welkom on Saturday, the Anglo American Corporation announced today.

A statement said the incident occurred on the 20th level of the No 3 shaft at about 2 30 am.

The name of the deceased would be released once the next of kin had been notified, Anglo said — Sapa

(211) 212
800 miners
in sympathy
stoppage
RDM
14/1/84

Mail Reporter

ABOUT 800 coalminers at the Rietspruit mine near Witbank staged a two-hour work stoppage yesterday in sympathy with two of their colleagues who died in a mining accident on Monday

This is the second stoppage of its kind involving the National Union of Mineworkers. Thousands of mineworkers downed tools for half-an-hour in September after the death of 67 workers in the Hlobane disaster

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM, said the workers had gone to the homes of the dead men during the stoppage, which lasted from 10am to 12pm

The two men, Mr Alpheus Makhaya and Mr Abram Nkosi, died after falling while repairing a lift cable

The Mail was unable to get management comment yesterday

~~Refinery~~ ^{NUM}
~~fired~~ ^{2/1} 1 000
~~strikers~~ ^{16/1/84}

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

MORE than 1 000 striking Impala Platinum Refineries workers were fired this weekend, the company's managing director, Mr R C Bovell, said yesterday

He said the workers had been sacked because they had failed to heed a company instruction on Friday that they report for their next shift or face dismissal.

The workers, all members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), have been on strike since Thursday demanding the reinstatement of seven colleagues. The seven were fired for refusing to work after they had allegedly been assaulted and verbally abused by supervisors

Talks between the company and worker representatives broke down on Friday

Spokesmen for the NUM were yesterday unavailable for comment.

~~(212) Star~~
**Three miners
killed in fall**

17/1/84
An accident at the East Rand Proprietary Mine on Saturday resulted in the death of three miners, a spokesman said in Johannesburg yesterday

A fall of ground occurred in the southwest section near Germiston, at a depth of 2 765 m

An inquiry into the cause of the accident will be conducted. — Sapa

RDM 18.1.84
Colliery workers strike
over colleague's suspension

Mall Reporter

BETWEEN 500 and 800 workers at the Rietspruit colliery near Springs, most of them members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), walked off the job yesterday morning after disciplinary action was taken against a colleague

The worker was among those who took part in a pre-planned stoppage on Friday in sympathy with two workers who died in an accident at the mine last week

A NUM spokesman said the worker was suspended after being involved in a row with the production manager over the stoppage

The workers returned after it was agreed the case would be reconsidered

The suspended worker was subsequently reinstated, a spokesman for the company said

The stoppage took place during an inquiry into the deaths

● In a separate dispute, about 1 400 dismissed workers at Impala Platinum Refinery near Springs have been collecting their pay and returning home

The workers, all members of the NUM, were fired after striking in sympathy with seven dismissed colleagues

The company fired the workers in spite of a last-minute compromise by the union under which the workers would have returned while the cases of the seven were investigated

MINE SAFETY

Now a major issue

The issue of mine safety is set to become a major issue next week when the inquiry and inquest into last year's Hlobane colliery disaster begins. The methane gas explosion on September 12 killed 68 people and injured scores

The Chief Magistrate of Vryheid and Don Morris, Deputy Government Mining Engineer, will preside over the hearing. Appearing before them will be members of the Iscor colliery and representatives of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) who will be acting on behalf of some of those killed and injured. The hearing is expected to last for up to three weeks.

Interest in it is bound to be heightened by the evidence of three overseas mine safety experts whose services the NUM has obtained. They are Robert Vandolah, formerly research director of the Pittsburgh Mining and Safety Research Centre in the USA, Herbert Eisner, formerly director of the Explosion and Flame Laboratory of Britain's Health and Safety Executive, and Hans Meerbach, a mining explosives expert from the Dortmund Research Institute in West Germany.

Mine safety has become the focus of attention since Hlobane. Each time a person is killed on the mines, or involved in a reportable accident as defined in the regulations to the Mines and Works Act, an inspector of mines is obliged to hold an inquiry into the incident. The NUM has not been slow to become involved with these

Financial Mail February 3 1984

212 ~~212~~ 3/2/84
issues. Union representatives have attended several inquiries in the past months. They include the inquiries into an incident on the Doornfontein mine in which five miners died, the death of five others at the West Driefontein mine and an accident at the Libanon mine in which one miner was killed.

Mine safety has also been the cause of some recent labour disputes involving the NUM. On January 13 black workers at the Rietspruit mine staged a two hour work stoppage after an accident in which two mineworkers died. This was followed some days later by a one day strike by 800 workers who struck in sympathy with a union shaft steward who was suspended following an altercation with a production manager during the work stoppage.

An incident at the West Driefontein mine in which management suspended 17 miners after they refused to work in an area they considered to be unsafe is the subject of an as yet unresolved dispute between the union and Gold Fields.

Safety on most mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines is implemented and regulated by the chamber's Mine Safety Division in terms of its International Mine Safety Rating programme. The programme measures safety according to a set range management criteria. Star gradings, up to a maximum of five for each level, are awarded to individual mines. Regular audits are conducted by Mine Safety Division officials. The programme seems to be bearing fruit as accident and fatality rates have dropped over the last few years.

The programme was introduced in SA mines in 1978 and is based on a system devised by the USA-based International Loss Control Institute. The institute's director, Frank Bird, is a regular visitor to SA and was intimately involved in adapting the programme to suit SA mining conditions.

Last year the Mine Safety Division's budget was R3m. The chamber's Research Organisation is also involved in safety research. Its budget last year was R35m.

Unreported ⁽²¹²⁾ fault may have ^{5 far} caused blast ^{7/2/84}

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

VRYHEID — A short-circuit in the ventilation system which went unreported could have led to a build-up of deadly methane gas over the weekend before the explosion at the Hlobane Colliery on September 12 last year.

This evidence was heard in the magistrate's court here today as part of the inquest and inquiry into the methane gas explosion at Iscor Mine which killed 68 miners.

Mining manager Mr David S Watson stated that on the morning of Saturday September 10 a holing had occurred in section five of the Dundas seam.

The breakthrough from one working face to another was not discovered until after the explosion on Monday.

It was the responsibility of the mine overseer, Mr P Swanepoel, to report the holing to the underground manager, confirmed Mr Watson. In this case, it was a major holing — one which could substantially effect the ventilation system and therefore should have been bricked up as soon as reasonably possible, he said.

In response to questions from State Advocate Mr T Barnard, Mr Watson said the decrease in ventilation could have contributed to the fact that there was a lot of gas in the mine.

DAY OF EXPLOSION

On the evening of the day of the explosion, which it is estimated occurred at 7.45 am, Mr Watson conducted an investigation of sections five and 10.

He was unable to find any evidence of a report by the Section 5 miner, Mr T J Bezuidenhout, to indicate that the area had been examined before the shift started that morning. He did find the initials and date of Mr E Venter, the Section 10 miner, and stated he thought Mr Venter was completing his report when the explosion occurred.

Mr Watson told the court that the miner in charge of each section is required to examine his area for signs of gas and to ensure that it is safe to work in before the start of each shift.

During the rescue operation, the shift boss, Mr T Ball, found a match in the Dundas seam. Matches were not allowed to be taken into the mine, said Mr Watson.

Mr Denis Kuny SC, on behalf of five deceased black miners, asked Mr Watson whether, in his opinion, the mine was prone to sudden outbursts of gas. Although the mine is described as a fiery coalmine, Mr Watson said there had been no sudden outbursts of methane gas in the history of the mine that he was aware of.

Mr N J Reynders is on the Bench.

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Star

7/2/84

**By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter**

Fatalities in underground coalmines in South Africa are six times the British figure and 1,6 times those of the US

This is the finding of Dr H Eisner, a British expert on mining safety and former member of the EEC Committee of Government Experts on Health and Safety in Mines

He was invited to South Africa to attend the inquiry into the deaths of 68 miners at the Hlobane colliery in Natal in a methane gas explosion last year

Dr Eisner has highlighted what he sees as the inadequacy of South African accident statistics for coalmines.

Because of the way the statistics are compiled, and official comments

SA miners at far more risk — expert

based on them, the wrong impression is created, says Dr Eisner

“Published accident rates are misleadingly favourable,” he says

His critique is based on a study of accident statistics compiled by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs over a decade

These, unlike the differentiated statistics collated by European countries and the US, give the total accident rate for South African coalmines per 1 000 workers per annum

Dr Eisner describes the method as “long abandoned elsewhere and unrealistic”

The total coalmining labour force has almost doubled from 71 000 in 1974 to 130 000 in 1983 with double the coal output

Dr Eisner attributes this to the expansion in opencast mining He says this activity’s inclusion in the accident statistics makes the figure for underground accidents unreliable

He concludes that it is therefore extremely difficult to compare all

accidents — injuries and fatalities — in coalmines here with those in other countries

The average ratio of fatalities to injuries is usually calculated at 130 in Europe and the US

Coalmine explosion fatality rates in South Africa are significantly worse than Western Europe’s and, taking into account the Hlobane tragedy, are also worse than those in the US

“Explosions which cause fatalities are, on the

whole, larger and more indicative of a major defect in the mining system than mere gas ignitions which are notoriously under-reported,” states Dr Eisner

While the cause of nearly all the South African accidents — 98 percent — is “danger inherent to work or misadventure”, management is found responsible for only 1,5 percent of the accidents

Dr Eisner describes this as a curious and unique view In the United Kingdom similar statistics attribute a far higher portion of the blame to failure by men, management or both

“Is it really likely that the personal element in accident causation differs so widely between the two countries?” he asks

Ram 712184

Hlobane mine disaster inquiry begins

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Mali Reporter

THE inquiry and inquest into South Africa's worst coal-mining disaster in more than 20 years begins at Vryheid this morning

A methane gas explosion claimed the lives of 67 mineworkers at Iscor's Hlobane mine on September 12 last year the worst coal-mining accident since the Coalbrook disaster in 1960

The hearing which could take up to three weeks is to be presided over by Mr Don Morris, the Deputy Government Mining Engineer, and the Chief Magistrate of Vryheid

It takes place against heightened interest over mine safety issues brought about largely by the black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) which

has been systematically raising these issues over the past year

Last year the NUM made a number of serious allegations about the Hlobane explosion, which were denied by the company

The NUM, whose members died in the blast, will be present at the hearing and the union has brought three overseas experts to testify

They are Dr Herbert Eisner former director of the Explosion and Flame Laboratory of the British Health and Safety Executive, Dr Robert Vandolah, former research director at the Pittsburgh Mining and Safety Research Centre and Dr Hans Meerbach a mining explosives expert from the Dortmund Research Institute in West Germany

plan to scrap many uneconomical routes

Commuters who use buses at weekends and at night will be hardest hit

The transport department has estimated it will save R1.3 million by the changes, which it hopes to introduce by July

Spiralling costs and a lack of growth in bus patronage made drastic action necessary, said Mr Francois Oberholzer, chairman of the management committee

Most bus services after 7 pm will be withdrawn. The exceptions will be those to Johannesburg Hospital, Hillbrow, Be-

after drought and floods

According to the National Maize Producers Organisation, prospects are that last year's mini-crop of less than 4 million tons might not be exceeded this season

Phillips was friendly during tests — constable

Own Correspondent

MARITZBURG — Miss Charmaine Phillips had been friendly and talkative while she drank brandy and smoked dagga given to her during an electro-encephalograph test, a policewoman said here yesterday

Constable Desiree Coetsee was summoned as a witness by the court after the judge, Mr Justice Milne, said earlier that the court wished to clarify what he called "the large measure of discrepancy" between

Terror exercise plan for Vryheid

After the flood emergency, Vryheid residents face another "emergency" at month-end when the South African Defence Force will conduct a full-scale counter-insur-

A victory toast from Daytona winners Tony Martin (left), Saren van der Merwe and Graham Duxbury after their arrival back in Johannesburg in the United States

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Blast: only 1 lamp had gas detector

By designer WAS RECOVERING

By Carolyn Dempster, Labour Reporter

VRYHEID — Of the four flame-safety lamps found in the Hibane Coal Mine after the fatal explosion on September 12 last year, only one was fitted with an attachment to detect methane gas

This critical fact was brought to light today at the inquest and inquiry into the deaths of 68 miners after the gas explosion at the Iscor colliery

Three of the lamps submitted to the court as evidence this morning were intact. The fourth, issued to deceased miner Mr T J Bezuidenhout that morning, according to the records, was found in two parts.

His was one of the lamps without an attached gas aspirator

Mr Dennis Kury SC If Mr Bezuidenhout had tested for gas that morning, he did so without an aspirator?

Mine manager Mr David Watson That is correct

The magistrate, Mr N J Reynders, also heard how the section in which Mr Bezuidenhout was working, Section Five of the Boomlager workings, was elevated in the western area

Methane gas, being lighter than air, tends to rise to the ceiling

The aspirator, explained Mr Watson, would be used to test for methane gas at roof level and other parts difficult to reach

In his evidence before court yesterday, Mr Watson said he believed it was in Section 5 that the explosion occurred

He also stated "I can only conclude that if Mr Bezuidenhout had tested for gas that morning, he would have found the accumulation of gas there"

The Inspector of Mines, Mr R G Boswell, read his report to the court this morning, highlighting the findings of the official investigation into the explosion

Some of the key facts revealed in his report were

- The accident on Monday morning occurred at a time before sections were watered down completely. "Therefore, dry conditions are indicated which contributed to some coal dust being raised and ignited"
- Evidence by a witness, Mr Thomas Mthethwa, showed Section Five had had a water problem on the morning of September 12
- On a report by Mr Bezuidenhout — a week before the explosion — of the presence of four percent gas in the working area. "Mr Swanepoel, mine overseer told me that he had scored out the remarks and had tested for gas and found none. He said further that he had scored out the remark 'to avoid hassles with the Loss Control Department'"
- Mr Boswell said that he would need evidence that gas accumulated on the roof along the western area

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1998 1998 1998

Mine tragedy probe told of 'holing' error

VRVHEID — An inquest and inquiry in the Vryheid Magistrate's Court into the Hlobane Coal Mine disaster that claimed 68 lives on September 12 last year was told yesterday that a holing operation — driving a hole to connect two sections — in the mine had not been closed off as it should have been

Mr David Stewart Watson, a director and manager of the Vryheid Coal and Iron Company, said it was important that the holing operation in the Dasfene Section cut on September 10 should have been closed off afterwards with lattice doors, or by bricking

"It was important because the holing had cut into a return airway from the

gas workings," he said

Asked by Mr K T Barnard, who is leading evidence, whether the failure to close the holing could have led to a build-up of gas, Mr Watson said "I don't agree, as there would have been a total loss of ventilation"

It was established later that even with the holing open there was still circulation in the section

Mr Watson said it was the duty of the mine overseer of the section, Mr Piet Swanepoel, to report the holing operation to the underground manager, Mr J A Pottas

He said it was not necessarily normal for this not to have been reported immediately "It could have been done the same day or the next day"

It was possible that Mr Pottas was not aware of the holing

A used match was handed in to the court as an exhibit

Mr Watson identified it as having been found in the section where the explosion took place

Miners were not allowed to take matches into the mine and guards at entrances searched people for matches

Under cross-examination by Mr D Kuny, SC, Mr Watson said he had started as manager at the mine in July 1983

He said it was the first time he had worked on the Hlobane colliery

He had not done a complete inspection of the mine and had made no changes to production systems — Sapa

3 'partially' responsible for deaths of 6 miners

Labour Reporter

8/2/84

Fuzile Pikani, were also found to have contributed to the accident

A shift boss and two team leaders were partially responsible for the deaths of six miners at Western Deep Levels gold mine on November 15, the Chief Inspector of Mines for Carletonville has found.

Mr D Bakker's findings have been forwarded to the Attorney-General

In his finding, Mr Bakker said the accident was due to the contravention of regulations by team leader Mr Aaron Cebu who was one of those to die when they entered an area containing noxious fumes. He also "caused other persons to enter and remain" in the dangerous working area.

Shift boss Mr Hendrik Gerhardus Coetzee and another team leader, Mr

Mr Coetzee instructed Mr Cebu to "fetch pipes from an area which could only have been identified as the sealed-off portion of the air way"

Mr Pikani, in turn, "permitted Mr Cebu to enter and remain in a working area which contained harmful smoke, gas and fumes"

● In another matter, the Industrial Court has ordered the extension of the status quo order applicable to the 17 miners fired from West Driefontein gold mine last September 22.

They were fired after refusing to go underground to work in what they considered unsafe conditions.

The Industrial Court will hand down a final ruling on the dispute on March 5.

Star 2/2

Death ^{Mercury} 8/2/84 212

pit gas

report

'ignored'

VRYHEID—A week before a methane gas explosion killed 68 men at the Hlobane colliery a mine overseer scratched out a production report that dangerously explosive levels of methane had been detected in four areas of the mine, the inquiry into the disaster heard here yesterday.

The inquiry, which began at the Vryheid Magistrates Court, heard that because the report had been erased, no investigation into this sudden build-up of gas had been carried out.

Mr David Watson, manager of the Iscor-owned mine, told the Court he had been shocked when he had heard of the report after the blast which happened on Monday, September 12, last year.

Under cross examination by Mr Dennis Kuy, SC, who is appearing for the families of five of the victims, as well as three underground electricians employed at the mine, Mr Watson conceded a number of points.

Half-an-hour before the explosion the area of the blast had been cleared as safe to work in, he said.

The minimum safe detectable level of methane was 2 percent, while at least 5 percent must have been in the air to have triggered the blast.

Mr Watson agreed that

Mercury Correspondent

a breakthrough from one rockface to another — known as holing — had taken place in the mine on the Saturday morning two days before the disaster and had not been reported to the mine overseer.

Holing substantially affected the ventilation system which dispersed methane gas in coal mines.

Safety lamps

The holing, which Mr Watson said 'should have been bricked up in a reasonable time', had not been closed up, causing an imbalance in the ventilation system.

Mr Watson conceded that a scoop, which might have led to the blast by causing a flash in the methane-laden air, had been found not to have been flame-proof as it should have been according to regulations.

Barometric pressure in the mine, which causes

an increase in the methane gas level when it drops, had fallen substantially on the day of the blast.

Mr Watson said no official records of barometric pressure had been kept.

Only three flame safety lamps had been found in the two sections of the mine affected by the blast, though the regulations required there should have been eight.

Mr Watson said there had been seven, though four had not been traced.

Record books on the issue of safety lamps were 'outdated and inadequate'.

Mr Watson could not say whether all the lamps had a probe fitting which would have made the check for methane more adequate.

Under cross examination, by Mr D Barnard, for the State, Mr Watson said the failure of the team to close off the holing on the Saturday was likely to have led to a build up of gas.

'It resulted in a short-circuit of the ventilation current to a certain extent I don't agree there was a total loss of ventilation and we still met the minimum requirements of the Mines and Works Act'

On the morning of the accident it was the duty of the miners in charge to test for gas.

He had inspected all working places after the accident to look for the initials and date of examinations on the wall.

In Section 5 of the mine — one of those hit by the blast — he found no initials at all that day to indicate the area had been examined and found safe.

In Section 10 — the oth-

■ TURN TO PAGE 2

P. 10.

MINING DEATHS PROBE

TOLD OFF

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LOOPHOLE

A VRYHEID Magistrate's Court inquest and inquiry into the Hlobane coal mine disaster, which claimed 68 lives on September 12 last year, was told yesterday that a holing operation — driving a hole to connect two sections — in the mine had not been closed off as it should have been.

Mr David Stewart Watson, a director and manager of the Vryheid Coal and Iron Company, said that it was important that the holing operation in the das-fene section cut on Saturday September 10 should have been closed off with lattice doors or by bricking afterwards.

"It was important because the holing had cut into a return airway from the gas workings," said Mr Watson.

Asked by Mr K T Barnard, who is leading the evidence, whether the failure to close the holing could have led to a build-up of gas, Mr Watson replied: "I don't agree as there would have been a total loss of ventilation."

It was established later that even with the holing open there was still a degree of circulation in the section

Mr Watson said earlier that it was the mine overseer of the section, Mr Piet Swanepoel's duty to have reported the holing operation to the underground manager, Mr J A Pottas.

He said that it was not necessarily normal for this to have not been reported immediately. "It could have been done the same day or the next day."

It was quite possible that Mr Pottas was not aware of the holing.

It would have been normal practice for the underground manager to have been notified on the same day or on the Monday that the holing had gone through.

The case is being heard by Mr M J Rynders. With him on the bench is Mr D M Morris, acting for the inspector of mines.

Mr D Kuny, SC, is appearing for five of the killed miners and also in a watching capacity for the National Union of Mine Workers.

Mr D Strydom appears for the mining company, and Mr D C Heidmann appears for Mr J Z Zabicki, a mine electrician.

An apparently used match was handed in to the court as an exhibit
(Proceeding)

Overseer 'wanted to avoid hassles'

Mercury Correspondent

VRYHEID—A mine overseer who scored out a report that dangerous levels of methane had been detected in the Hlobane Colliery a week before a methane blast killed 68 people at the mine told a mine inspector he did it to 'avoid hassles with the loss control department'

This was heard by the inquest and inquiry into the disaster yesterday

Mr R G Boswell, inspector of mines at Dundee, told the inquest and inquiry at the Vryheid Magistrate's Court that the report — made by miner T J

Bezuidenhout on September 5 last year — had been scored out by Mr P Swanepoel, the mine overseer

Mr Swanepoel had explained to Mr Boswell that he had scratched out the remarks because Mr Bezuidenhout had put them in the wrong book and to avoid hassles with the loss-control department

Mr Boswell told the Court barometric readings indicated a drop on the night of September 5 when Mr Bezuidenhout's report was made and on the night of September 11, hours before the disaster

He said a drop in the barometric pressure coincided with a rise in the methane level if gas was present

If detectible quantities of gas were found after gas had not been detected for three months or more, it was so serious that the report had to go to the mine inspectors immediately

Mr Boswell said he believed, on the basis of his investigations, that a coal-dust explosion had been ignited by the methane explosion, and this was responsible for the extent of the blast

Earlier, the mine manager, Mr David Watson, produced four safety lamps which had been issued to check for methane levels on the morning of the blast

Three of them lacked probe attachments which would have increased the efficiency of the checks

Mr Watson said he was 'a bit disappointed' to discover the lamps lacked probes — which were important to check for methane levels on the ceiling

Shortage

Other points to emerge from yesterday's evidence were

Mr Boswell found that a shortage of water in the mine was reported on several occasions in the weeks before the blast. On the day of the blast it had been noticed that there was no water, even though work appeared to have started

'It is undesirable to work when there is no water and work is supposed to stop,' he said

The Chief Magistrate of Vryheid, Mr M J Reyn- ders, presided

Assisting him was Mr D Morris, the deputy Government Mining Engineer. Mr D Barnard appeared for the State, Mr D Kuny appeared for the families of five of the dead and three employees at the mine. Mr R Dunn appeared for four mining employees and Mr W Strydom appeared for

Assisting him was Mr D Morris, the deputy Government Mining Engineer. Mr D Barnard appeared for the State, Mr D Kuny appeared for the families of five of the dead and three employees at the mine, Mr R Dunn appeared for four mining employees and Mr W Strydom appeared for Iscor and Mr Watson. The hearing is proceeding.

Deleted report warned of gas level in mine

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

VRYHEID — A mine overseer who scored out a report that dangerous levels of methane gas had been detected in the Hlobane Colliery a week before the methane blast killed 68 people at the mine, told a mine inspector he did it to "avoid hassles with the Loss Control Department", the inquest and inquiry into the disaster heard yesterday.

Mr R G Boswell, inspector of mines at Dundee, told the inquest and inquiry in the Vryheid Magistrate's Court that he found the report — made by miner Mr T J Bezuidenhout on September 5 last year — had been scored out by Mr P Swanepoel, the mine overseer.

Mr Swanepoel had explained to Mr Boswell that he had scratched out the remarks because Mr Bezuidenhout had put them in the wrong book and "to avoid hassles with the Loss Control Department"

Mr Boswell told the court that barometric readings indicated a drop on the night of September 5, when Mr Bezuidenhout's report was made and on the night of September 11, hours before the disaster.

He said a drop in the barometric pressure coincides with a rise in the methane level if gas is present

Mr Boswell said he believed, on the basis of his investigations, that a coal-dust explosion

had been ignited by the methane explosion, and this was responsible for the extent of the blast

Earlier, Mr David Watson, manager of the mine, had produced four safety lamps which had been issued to check for methane level on the morning of the blast

Three of them lacked probe attachments which would have increased the efficiency of the checks

Mr Watson said he was "a bit disappointed" to discover the lamps lacked probes — which are important to check for methane levels on the ceiling

Other points to emerge from yesterday's evidence were

- Mr Boswell found that on the day of the blast it had been noticed there was no water, even though work appeared to have started "It is undesirable to work when there is no water and work is supposed to stop," he said

- Mr Watson said he "could come to no other conclusion" than that the miner in the probable centre of the blast, Mr Bezuidenhout, had not tested for methane on the day of the disaster.

- A coal drill found in the area of the blast was not flameproof Earlier Mr Watson said a non-flameproof scoop was probably responsible for the blast by causing a spark in the methane-laden air

Mr M J Reynders, the Chief Magistrate for Vryheid, presided

The inquest and inquiry is proceeding

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Star

9/2/84

Accident statistics system in SA coal mines defended

By Eugene Saldanha

Findings by a British mine safety expert that the death rate in underground coal mines in South Africa is six times the British figure and 1,6 times that of the United States have been described as "inaccurate" by a senior Chamber of Mines official

The manager of the chamber's mine safety division, Mr Guy Stokes, was reacting to the findings of Dr Herbert Eisner, a former director of the Explosion and Flame Laboratory of the British Health and Safety Executive, who is in South Africa to attend the inquiry into the Hlobane methane gas explosion last year which claimed 68 lives

Dr Eisner and two other overseas mine safety experts have been brought to South Africa by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to

Findings by safety expert challenged

attend the inquiry, which began in Vryheid yesterday

NUM is an affiliate of the Council of Unions of South Africa

Dr Eisner's critique, based on a report of accident statistics compiled by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, concludes that the statistics and comments published by the department are "misleadingly favourable"

Among his findings were

● The total accident rate for South African coal mines is given as for every 1 000 workers a year — a method which he says is "long abandoned elsewhere and to-

tally unrealistic" Most other countries give the fatality rate as a percentage of the number of man hours worked

● South Africa needs to separate underground mining accidents from surface accidents Since underground work is more dangerous, the inclusion of surface workers makes the rate misleadingly favourable

● Coal mine explosion fatality rates in South Africa are much higher than in Western Europe, but about level with the US If the Hlobane explosion is included in the last decade, the rates become much higher than those of the other countries

● The Government Min-

ing Engineer needs to reconsider some of the attitudes expressed in his annual reports towards accident statistics, and the personal element in accident causation While the cause of nearly all South African accidents — 98 percent — is "danger inherent to work or misadventure", management is found responsible for only 1,5 percent of accidents Overseas, most accidents are attributed to human failures

According to Mr Stokes, Britain's National Coal Board (NCB) uses a frequency rate for accidents which is similar to South Africa's "The NCB uses an accident frequency rate based on 100 000

man shifts a year, which does not state specifically how many hours are worked

"In Britain it was also discovered that giving the fatality rate as a percentage of the number of man hours worked was not necessarily accurate Our method also provides us with an excellent basis for comparison with past years," he said

In South Africa there were just over 4 300 workers employed in surface mining, which is a "drop in the ocean" when compared to other countries

"According to our own reports, fatality rates in the US — included in the figure are office workers — for the first six months in 1983 exceed those of South Africa In the UK, the fatality rate was 0,61 for every 1 000 workers a year, while here it was 0,53 for every 1 000 workers," Mr Stokes pointed out

"Moreover, the coal mining in Britain is different from that in South Africa In the UK, most of the mining is done with the longwalling method — which involves the use of conveyor belts — but because of the low depths here greater use is made of vehicles and other heavy machinery, which easily constitute hazards

"The claim that we neglect the role of human failure in causing accidents is outdated It is the chamber's philosophy that accidents are the result of lack of efficient management control"

THE SABC yesterday released a full list of TV and radio nominees for its Artes Awards next month — one of whom received a nomination for news of the ANC — PAGE 4

Business Day

Bank profit zooms

TRUST BANK interim profits have risen to R19m to push reserves to R121m — PAGE 1

Exchange control

EXCHANGE controls make investment in SA difficult and should be diminished, advises a top UK investment company director. — PAGE 2

T&I profit slump

BAD debts dragged down Trade and Industry's interim pre-tax profit by 55% compared with the same period last year. — PAGE 3

R3m deal

FEDERALE Volksbelegings has bought Sanlam's interest in Acoustical Fibreglass Insulation (AFI) for R3m — PAGE 6

Quality of life

BLACK communities depended on the quality of life and not on laws passed by Parliament, the official Opposition's chief spokesman on black affairs, Mrs Helen Suzman, warned yesterday. — PAGE 4

Muggers slash babies

MUGGERS in London have a new way of forcing their victims to hand over their cash. Recently they have taken to slashing children in the presence of their mothers — PAGE 5

New hope on SWA

BRITAIN'S Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Ewen Ferguson, believes that a pro...

14 unsafe machines in area where miners died

New shocks at

10/2/84

FTTObearne inquest

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

VRVHEID.

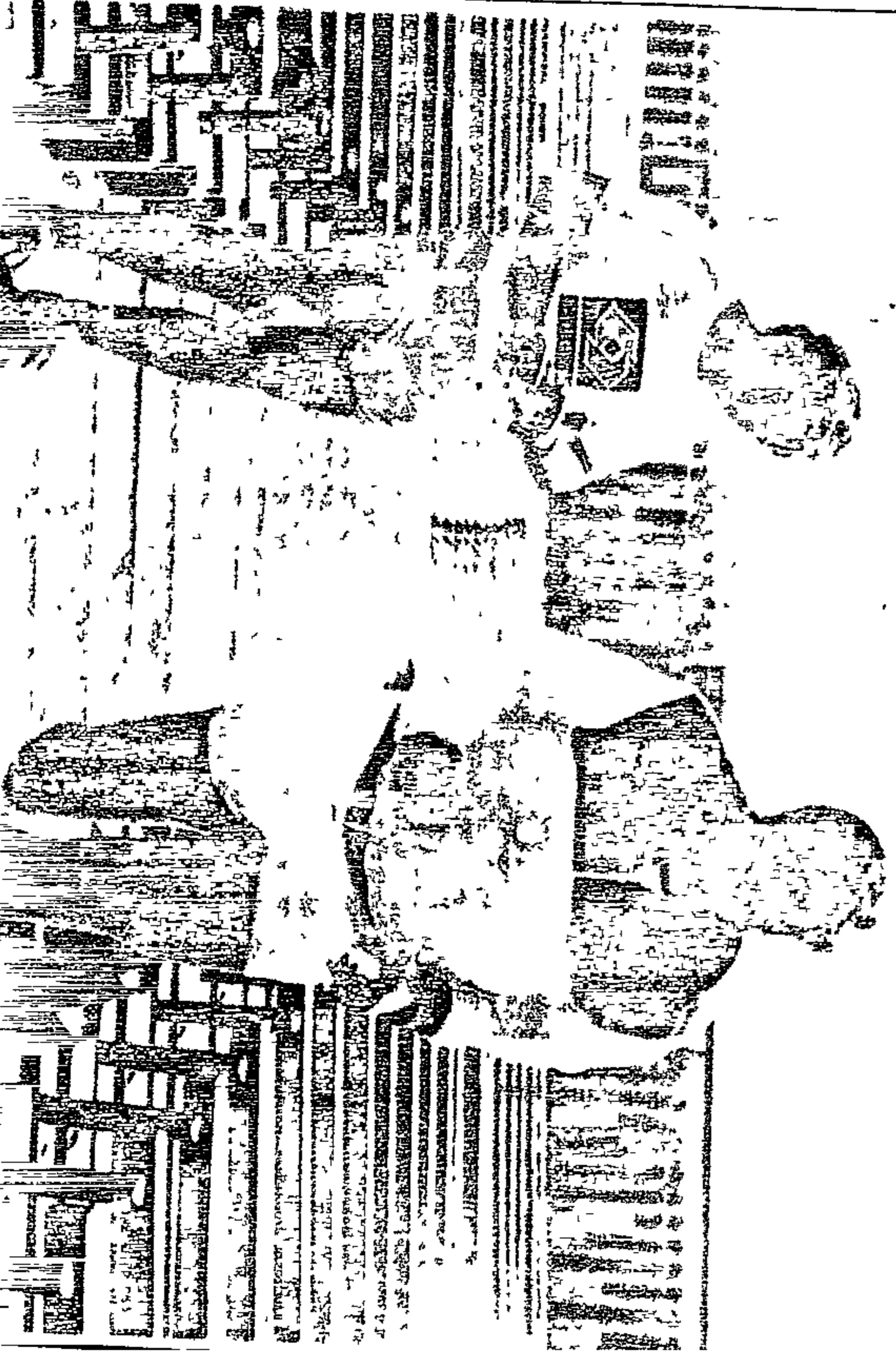
FOURTEEN electrical machines in the sections of the Holbane Colliery hit by the gas blast which killed 68 mine workers in September last year were not flame-proof and could potentially have ignited the explosion.

Mr Jacobus Klynsmith, a Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs Inspector of machinery, told the inquiry and inquest into the disaster at the Vryheid Magistrate's Court yesterday that one of the machines — a mechanical mine vehicle known as a scoop — probably ignited the blast.

Under cross-examination by Mr Denis Kuny, SC, Mr Klynsmith agreed that any one of the 14 machines, all of which did not meet the flameproofing regulations, could have sparked the explosion.

According to a list he produced in court, 12 of the machines examined after the September 5 blast had other shortcomings.

Mr R Boswell, a mine inspector for Dundee, earlier told the court that based on an examination of the direction of the blast, in his opinion the scoop ignited the initial blast. This caused a chain of events leading to the area of the main blast where there was the highest concentration of met...



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This caused a chain of events leading to the area of the main blast where there was the highest concentration of methane gas.

Mr Klynsmith said the scoop was not flameproof because a bolt on its panel was missing. A cable had been caught where the bolt was missing, leaving a 10mm gap in the cover of the machine, 20 times the regulation maximum.

It was through this gap that a spark from the machinery inside the cover could have ignited the explosive level of methane gas present in the air.

Mr Klynsmith said three quarters of the faults in the machines would not have been detected in a normal visual inspection.

He said the Iscor-owned Hlobane Mine was generally a "very good mine" as far as machine safety went and had a four-star safety rating from the Chamber of Mines.

He said the people primarily responsible for the upkeep and standard of the machinery were Mr G P Myburgh, the resident engineer, Mr J E Fourie, the section engineer, and Mr P Venter, senior foreman.

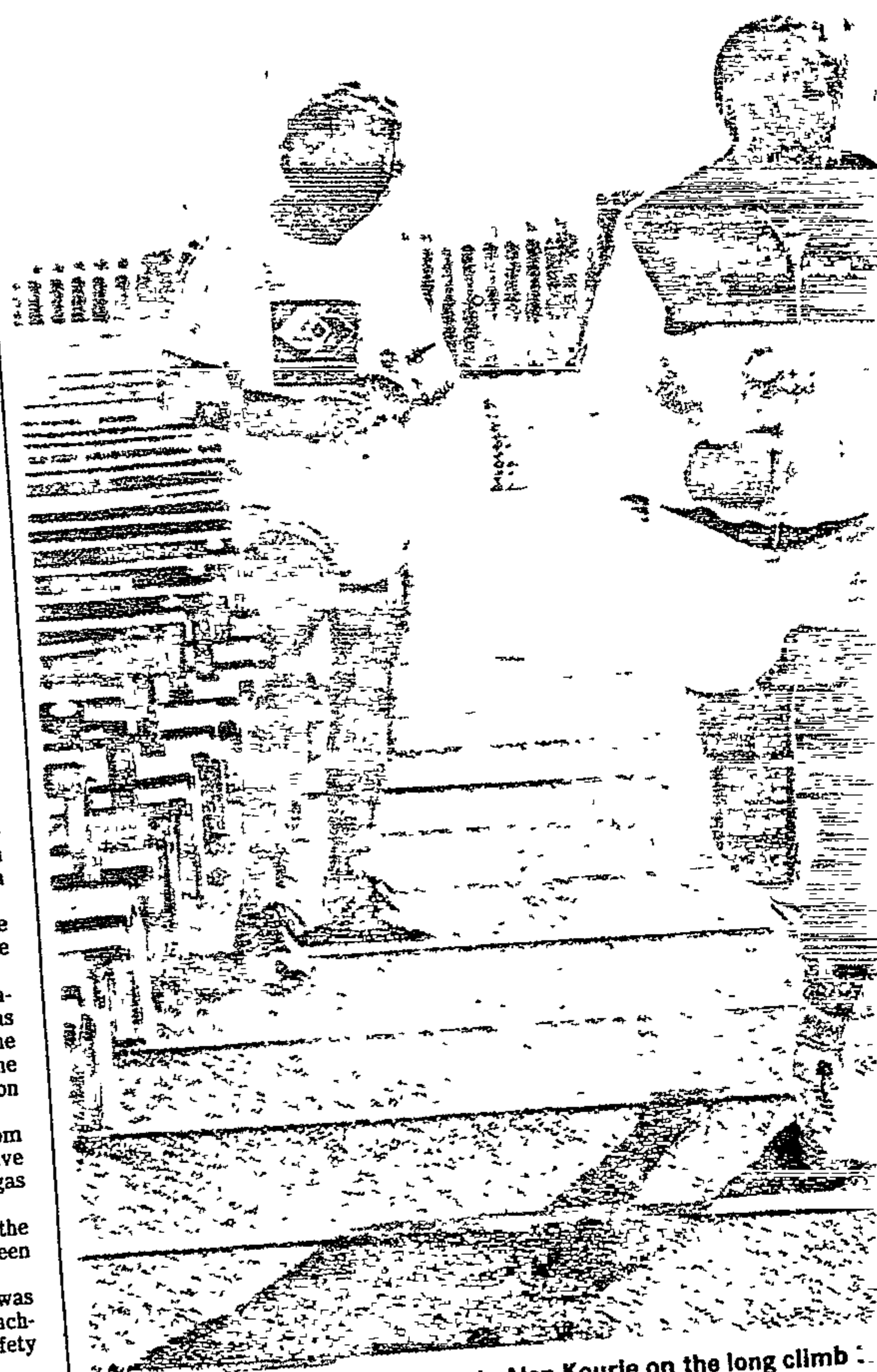
On Wednesday Mr David Watson, manager of the mine, outlined the elaborate safety procedures and safety training at Hlobane.

The mine had twice won the Chamber of Mines "Million Shift" competition for going a million shifts without an accident. The target was reached for a second time weeks before the disaster.

Mr Boswell told the court that there had been several methane explosions in the history of Hlobane, the most recent being in 1944 when 57 people were killed.

Mr M J Reynders, the presiding magistrate is assisted by Mr D Morris, Deputy Government Mining Engineer, Mr D Barnard is appearing for the State, Mr D Kuny is appearing for the families of five of the deceased, Mr P W Strydom is appearing for Iscor and Mr Watson, and Mr R Dunn is appearing for four mine employees.

The inquest and inquiry is proceeding.



From spinner to slimmer ... Burly Alan Kourie on the long climb ... another training session at the Wanderers yesterday. Trainer/ton...

R300 000 stolen from SAI

Political Staff

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY — Defence Force personnel, from paymasters to corporals and clerks, managed to steal more than R300 000 from the Government in 1982-83.

Most of the "fiddles" involved falsifying payslips, order forms and other Government documents.

Those responsible range from a paymaster who stole R107 000 to two pay clerks who used the chief paymaster's computer to credit R4 000 to their own accounts.

The thefts are detailed in the Auditor-General's report for 1982-83, tabled in Parliament yesterday. The report says most were fa-

cilitated by weak internal control measures.

The cases of theft or suspected theft mentioned are:

- R107 774 stolen by a former paymaster of 8 SA Armoured Division through the falsification of subsistence and transport claims, advances and pay sheets.

- An estimated R78 858 fraudulently obtained by a corporal at the pay office of the Chief of Staff Logistics.

- An estimated R34 250 stolen by five staff members of North Western Command pay office.

- R33 528 stolen by a staff sergeant and two corporals at Witwatersrand Command pay office.

- A further loss of from the fraudulent warrant vouchers, is gated.

- An estimated Northern Transvaal signal unit.

- R27 414 misappropriated by Atlas Aircraft.

- R11 004 in respect of subsistence and transport which could not be by the pay office Staff Intelligence.

- Pay credits ...
- In addition, the says weak internal control of South African Services caused another R32 000

Air-filled coat saves wet widow

LONDON — Mrs Peggy Woollands, a 67-year-old widow, is recovering in hospital to-

Breakfast Quip



Satu Mail

REMINDERS

MINE SAFETY

A burning issue

(212) FM 10/2/84

Safety has become a major labour issue on South African mines. It has also developed into a point of friction between the mining industry, and both the black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the various white and mixed unions.

The NUM, in particular, has focused on safety as having strong appeal to its members — and it's an area in which it believes the mining industry is vulnerable. First target seems to be the coal mining sector — largely because of last year's Hlobane disaster, which is currently the subject of an inquiry and inquest in the Vryheid magistrate's court. It is expected, however, that the union will also focus more attention on gold mine safety standards in the near future.

The judgment of the Hlobane inquiry cannot be anticipated. However, some disturbing evidence has been led about the observance of safety regulations on that particular mine.

Statistics

Meanwhile, a British safety expert hired by the NUM, Herbert Eisner, has launched a wide-ranging attack on the way SA coal mine accident statistics are assembled and reported. He categorises them as "highly misleading" and as based on a method that has been abandoned as "unrealistic" in other countries. Eisner also accuses the Government Mining Engineer of "a disquieting lack of appreciation of the basis of accident statistics."

The Chamber of Mines takes exception to Eisner's allegations. Guy Stokes, manager of the chamber's Mine Safety Division, points out that Eisner based his report on undifferentiated figures published annually by the Government Mining Engineer. Some of the figures used, he admits, he had never seen before, but adds that they are not the only ones available. He charges that Eisner neither approached the Government Mining Engineer to interpret the figures, nor asked the chamber for its own safety statistics.

Referring to Eisner's criticism that SA coal mining accident statistics lump together underground workers and surface workers, thus giving an unrealistically low overall accident rate, Stokes says the statistics for underground workers alone were readily available — had Eisner cared to ask for them.

He adds that the mining industry is never satisfied with its safety record. It is profoundly aware that every fatality involves a person — not just a statistic.

But Stokes feels it is not fair to compare SA coal mining accidents with those in the United Kingdom, since geological conditions and the depths of the mines are very different. A more realistic comparison is with the United States, Stokes argues. Fig-

eliminate the long-established migrant labour system. Suggestions that the Chamber of Mines, or the mining industry as a whole, are indifferent to the safety of miners are obviously wide of the mark. But the interest in safety shown by the NUM is to be welcomed — however irritating the chamber may some-

cepted worldwide," he says, "that a really good safety record depends on a stable labour force. That, in SA's particular circumstances, we do not have." As is so often the case in SA, difficulties result from socio-political circumstances which only government can resolve. And even government would not find it easy to

ures show that in 1983, until the Hlobane disaster, the accident rate in the SA industry was lower than in the US. Stokes, however, puts his finger on a major weakness in SA mine safety — the labour system. The mines are forced to use. Unfortunately, it is a weakness that is outside the control of the industry. "It is ac-

times find it

It is certainly true that many workers are killed and injured on SA mines every year, and the chamber does not claim its safety system is perfect. A vigilant, if carpentering, critic constantly on hand may help to improve safety standards — and make black miners more safety conscious.

Blast mine motors 'not flameproof'

Mercury Correspondent (212) 10/2/84

VRYHEID—Fourteen electrical machines in the sections of the Hlobane Colliery hit by the gas blast which killed 68 mine workers in September last year were not flameproof and could potentially have ignited the explosion

Mr Jacobus Klynsmith, a Department of Minerals and Energy Affairs inspector of machinery, told the inquiry and inquest into the disaster at the Vryheid Magistrate's Court yesterday that one of the machines — a mechanical mine vehicle known as a scoop — probably ignited the blast.

Under cross-examination by Advocate Denis Kuny, SC, Mr Klynsmith agreed that any one of the 14 machines, none of which met the flameproofing requirements, could have sparked the explosion

Missing

According to a list he produced in court 12 of the machines examined after the September 5 blast had other shortcomings

Mr R Boswell, a mine inspector for Dundee, earlier told the Court that based on an examination of the direction of the blast, in his opinion the scoop ignited the initial blast

This caused a chain of events leading to the area of the main blast where there was the highest concentration of methane gas

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scoop was not flameproof because a bolt on its panel was missing. A cable had been caught where the bolt should have been, leaving a 10 mm gap in the cover of the machine, 20 times the regulation maximum

It was through this gap that a spark from the machinery inside the cover could have ignited the explosive level of methane gas present in the air

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'Good mine'

He said the Iscor-owned Hlobane Mine was generally a 'very good mine' as far as machine safety went and had a four star safety rating by the Chamber of Mines.

He said the people primarily responsible for the upkeep and standard of the machinery were Mr G P Myburgh, the resident engineer, Mr J E Fourie, the section engineer, and Mr P Venter, senior foreman

On Wednesday Mr David Watson, manager of the mine, outlined the elaborate safety procedures and safety training at Hlobane

The mine had twice won the Chamber of Mines 'Million Shift' competition for going a million shifts without an accident. The target was reached for a second time weeks before the disaster

Mr Boswell told the Court that there had been several methane explosions in the history of Hlobane, the most recent being in 1944 when 57 people were killed

Mr M J Reynders was the presiding Magistrate. He was assisted by Mr D Morris, Deputy Government Mining Engineer, Advocate D Barnard appeared for the State, Mr D Kuny appeared for the families of five of the deceased, Mr P W Strydom appeared for Iscor and Mr Watson. Mr R Dunn appeared for four mine employees

The inquest and inquiry is proceeding

Miner tells of fatal flaw

VRYHEID — The chief ventilation officer of the Hlobane colliery did not know that holing, which significantly affected air current in the mine, had taken place two days before the methane gas explosion which killed 68 miners in September last year.

Mr Peter Shand yesterday told the inquest and inquiry into the disaster at the Vryheid Magistrate's Court he had had no knowledge of the holing.

RDM 11/2/84

● Report — Page 4

12,85
24
335
600
105

Ventilation officer not aware of 'holing' in mine

RDM
11/2/84

(212)

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

VRYHEID — The chief ventilation officer of the Hlobane colliery did not know that holing, which significantly affected the air current in the mine, had taken place two days before the methane gas explosion which killed 68 miners in September last year.

Earlier evidence was led that the holing — a breakthrough between two faces — had significantly affected the ventilation system which disperses any potential methane gas.

Mr Peter Shand, the mine's Chief Ventilation Officer, told the inquest and enquiry into the disaster at the Vryheid Magistrate's Court yesterday he had had no knowledge of the holing.

Nor had he had any knowledge that there had been workings approaching a dike in the mine — which could have led to emissions of methane gas.

Mr Shand could not recollect whether he had been on duty on the weekend before the blast which took place on Monday morning, September 12. The holing took place on the Saturday morning.

He said if he had known that the holing had not been sealed off he would have instructed that it be bricked up immediately.

Mr Shand said that since the explosion, the type of brattice cloth — which is hung in the mine to prevent disturbance to the ventilation system — had been changed.

It had been found to be too light, thus allowing leakage if not properly installed.

He said his responsibility was to take ventilation readings in all sections of the mine and submit monthly reports to management.

He was not informed of production going on at the mine on a daily basis. Overall responsi-

bility for walling after the holing operation lay with the shift boss.

Mr Jurek Zubicki, an underground electrician told the court he had made repairs to a scoop (which both a mine inspector and a machine inspector have concluded sparked the blast) on the Friday evening before the blast.

The scoop — which had been found not to be flameproof as a bolt was missing — had been taken to a workshop on the surface and returned underground on Monday September 12, the morning of the explosion.

Mr Zubicki said he had never been instructed to check scoops returning underground from surface workshops. It was only after the explosion that he had become aware that there was no system of checking machinery to establish whether it was in perfect working order before being used underground.

Mr Zubicki, who came to South Africa in 1982 from Poland where he had extensive training and experience in coal mines, said that in Poland if a machine compartment was not properly locked and flameproof it could not be switched on.

In Poland, all methane mines were controlled electrically. Detectors in the mine would pick up gas immediately, surface officers would be informed immediately and everything in the mine would be automatically disconnected.

Mr Bernard Dlamini, Mr Zubicki's aide told the court he and a fellow worker had closed a panel on the scoop on the Friday night when Mr Zubicki had finished working on the machine. He said he was certain he had screwed all the bolts in

Hlobane ventilation 'below standard'

212 By Carolyn Dempster, Labour Reporter *Star 13/2/84*

VRYHEID — There was evidence today at the inquest and inquiry into the Hlobane Coal Mine disaster that people were working underground in ventilation conditions below the statutory requirements

In reply to questions by Mr Dennis Kuny SC, the mine's ventilation officer, Mr Peter Shand, admitted that the requisite quantity of air was not being channelled to the working faces in the section where the explosion occurred

The court also heard that for a year before the explosion on September 12 — when 68 miners died — there had been no recordings of reportable quantities of methane gas. Yet between September 12 and February 7 1984, 39 findings had been recorded

"I am surprised that, because we never had that amount of methane gas before," said Mr Shand

Mr Kuny also said that before the explosion the mine had 138 flame safety lamps and five methanometres. But in November there were 235 flame safety lamps and seven methanometres

"Suddenly, after the explosion, there was almost a doubling of flame safety lamps?" queried Mr Kuny

"Yes," replied Mr Shand

Earlier the court heard that the bratticing used to regulate the ventilation flow did not comply with laid-down specifications. Mr Francois Joubert, of the National Institute for Fuel Research, said that brattice, a polymer fabric, ignited and burnt easily

Samples, which had vapourised partially in the explosion, were tested — to see if they complied with the minimum volatile content. Not only did they not comply, but the tests also showed they had been exposed to temperatures of 800 deg C — at which point the fabric would begin to smoulder, he said

Material at mine 'did not meet SABS specifications'

ARGUS 13/2/84

212

Argus Correspondent

VRYHEID — The brattice used at the Hlobane coal mine to regulate the ventilation flow did not comply with specifications laid down by either the South African Bureau of Standards or the National Coal Board in Britain, the inquest court was told here today

Mr Francois Joubert from the National Institute for Fuel Research in Pretoria was giving evidence before the chief magistrate, Mr N J Reynders, at the inquest and inquiry into the Hlobane coal mine disaster in which 68 miners were

killed on September 12 last year

He told the court that brattice, a polymer fabric, ignited easily and burned easily

EXPOSED

Samples of the fabric which had partially vapourised in the explosion on September 12 last year were taken to the SABS and the British board for testing to determine whether it complied with the minimum volatile content specified

Not only did it not comply, but the tests also showed it had been exposed to temperatures of 800 deg C — the point at which Mr Joubert said

the fabric would begin to smoulder

In evidence submitted last week, the court heard that burning brattice gives off noxious gases

The general secretary of the Mineworkers' Union, Mr Arrie Paulus, has taken a personal interest in the case and arrived in Vryheid today to attend the hearing as an observer for the remainder of the week

He said the three members of the Mineworkers' Union who were at the mine at the time of the explosion would be represented by Mr A Lynch

(Proceeding)

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217

Perfectly safe machines 'an ideal'

Argus Correspondent

VRVHEID — The inquest and inquiry into the Hlobane Coal Mine disaster was told today that Mines and Works Act regulations governing the flame-proofing of machinery was "the ideal"

In practice it was virtually impossible to safe-proof machinery 100 per cent, the engineer at Hlobane, Mr G P Myburgh, told the court this morning

The inquest and inquiry is being held to determine the cause of the explosion on September 12 last year which claimed the lives of 68 miners at the northern Natal colliery

Mr Myburgh made this comment after reviewing the list of 14 machines which were identified as not being flame-proofed after the explosion by the inspector for machinery for Natal, Mr J H Klynsmith

Mr Myburgh said that according to the South African Bureau of Standards test, the Government regulations were based on maximum and not minimum standards

DISAGREED

He therefore disagreed with Mr Klynsmith that in practice the machines were not flame-proofed

The court heard that Mr Myburgh was responsible for all the machinery on the mine

Under cross-examination, Mr Myburgh testified that responsibility for checking items such as coalscoops before they returned underground lay with the machine operator who had received a course in flame-proofing

There was no comprehensive inspection or checks of the machinery after it had been repaired at the surface workshop before being returned underground, he said

The inquest is proceeding.

Hlobane ventilation 'often inadequate'

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK VRYHEID — Sufficient air ventilation to disperse methane gas often did not reach the working faces inside the Hlobane Colliery

This was said yesterday by Mr Peter Shand, chief ventilation officer at the colliery, when the inquiry and inquest continued yesterday into the death of 68 mineworkers in a methane explosion at the mine last year

Mr Shand told the Vryheid Magistrate's Court that it was not "humanly possible" to disperse methane gas in a coal mine according to the regulations all the time

He conceded that the main

object of the ventilation system was to provide an air current to the working faces, where there was a danger of methane gas being released

According to Mr Shand's quarterly ventilation reports handed into the court, only three out of 14 "worst" readings in December last year were above the legal minimum. Only three out of 11 in September 1983 were above the legal minimum

In some cases even the "best" readings did not meet the Mines and Works Act regulations

Mr Shand said the "human factor" made it impossible to get the correct volumes of air to the working surfaces to disperse methane. He said an improved system was busy

being devised

Mr Shand conceded, under cross-examination by Mr Denis Kuny, SC, that a ventilation test done on August 26 — about 18 days before the blast — had shown a "grossly inadequate" amount of air getting to the working faces

Mr Kuny is appearing for the families of five of the deceased

Leakages had reduced the air flow to the working surfaces. He had recommended that the leakings be repaired, he told the court

Under cross-examination by Mr D Barnard, for the State, he said he had not subsequently checked to see whether all the leaks had been repaired

Mr Shand admitted to Mr

Kuny that a test done in October to reconstruct ventilation conditions at the time of the blast had been done under more favourable circumstances

This was because four brick stopings had been put in subsequent to the blast, the type of brattice cloth being used was more effective and there were no workings in the sections at the time of the reconstruction

The readings were only given for the entire district and not at the working faces, where methane was more likely to be present and which had a different minimum

The inquest and inquiry is proceeding

14 Hlobane machines weren't flame-proofed

By Carolyn Dempster

VRYHEID — The inquest and inquiry into the Hlobane coalmine disaster was told today that the Mines and Works Act regulations governing the flame-proofing of machinery were "the ideal".

In practice it was almost impossible to safeproof machinery 100 percent, the engineer at Hlobane, Mr G P Myburgh, told the court this morning.

The inquest and inquiry are being held to determine the cause of the explosion on September 12 last year which claimed the lives of 68 miners at the Natal colliery.

Mr Myburgh made this comment after seeing the list of 14 machines identified as not being flame-proofed after the blast by the Inspector for Machinery for Natal, Mr J H Klynsmith.

Mr Myburgh agreed that, according to "the strict letter of the law", the machines were not flame-proof. However, "in practice" it was a different matter.

According to the South African Bureau of Standards test, the Government regulations were based on maximum and not minimum standards. He therefore stated that he disagreed with Mr Klynsmith that in practice the machines were not flame-proofed. The court heard that Mr Myburgh is responsible for all machinery on the mine.

Under cross-questioning, Mr Myburgh testified that responsibility for checking items such as coal-scoops before they returned underground lay with the machine operator who had received a course in flame-proofing.

There was no comprehensive inspection or checks of the machinery after it had been repaired and returned underground, he said.

Giving evidence, Mr R J Morgan, miner in charge of Section 10 of the Boomlager working on the morning of last September 10, said he had made the holing which was found later to have caused a short circuit in the ventilation system.

After he had made the breakthrough from one working face to an air passage, he informed the shift boss, who told him to close off the roadway with a fabric known as brattice as soon as possible.

He told the court that he had explained to the shift boss he was short of labour that morning and could not put up the brattice before the end of the shift. He received no further instructions and never reported to anyone that he had not installed the brattice.

Earlier in evidence it was heard that the affects of the holing was to cause a significant drop in ventilation to the sections of the mine where the explosion later occurred.

The inquest is proceeding.

Free State Geduld Gold Mine near Welkom has joined an exclusive group of South African mines which have won the coveted Millionaire Shield eight times or more

According to a statement released by Anglo American Corporation yesterday, only seven mines in South Africa have been awarded the shield that many times.

The shield is presented by the mine safety division of the Chamber of Mines when a million fatality-free manshifts are achieved.

COMPLIMENTS

The statement said Free State Geduld (FSG) was the first mine to be awarded the shield in 1984. Yesterday was the eighth occasion it had received it. The mine employs 27 000 people.

At a presentation ceremony at the mine, Mr. Gordon Grange, vice-chairman of the mine safety division,

212 Jaw 16/2/80

Geduld leads in mine safety

complimented FSG on its safety figures for 1983 which, at 0,71 deaths per 1 000, was well below the average for the industry.

"Free State Geduld is one of the largest mines in the industry. The sheer size of it, and the number of people exposed to risk, mean that some problems will be encountered. But with its past record of determination and achievement, I have no doubt that 1984 will prove to be one of the most successful years in its history."

Mr Grange said he hoped the mine would go on to record two million fatality-free shifts during the year.

— Sapa

Safety lamps at blast inadequate — expert

Own Correspondent

DURBAN — The chances of detecting methane gas would have been improved if the number of safety lamps had been sufficient and their design adequate at the time of last September's explosion at the Hlobane mine, according to evidence given in Vryheid today

At the magistrate's court inquest and inquiry, the chief magistrate, Mr M J Reynders, accepted affidavits from mining experts Mr Herbert Eisner and Mr Hans Meerbach, while rejecting one by American expert Mr Robert van Dolah

The court will hear argument later today on the admissibility of the affidavits by Mr Eisner and Mr Meerbach

In his report, Mr Eisner said the design of three flame safety lamps recovered after the explosion was inadequate,

as they were not fitted with probe attachments which could test for gas in inaccessible areas and in the air layers immediately below the roof

"The quantities of methane which could go undetected in roof layers when there is low ventilation can be sufficient to produce a serious gas explosion," he said.

Mr Eisner added that had the required number of flame safety lamps been in use, the chances of detecting methane would have been improved

He also criticised the absence of methanometers which could detect possible methane build-ups before they reached dangerous proportions.

In his report, Mr Meerbach found that coal dust must have contributed to the explosion and that the gas which ignited did not emanate from a sudden emission, but accumulated because of a failure of the ventilation system before the explosion

212
16/2/84

Staw

... of five ...

Gold mines fight to reduce fire hazard

RDM 17/2/84

212

By **BRENDAN RYAN**
Mining Editor

UNDERGROUND fires remain an ever-present hazard for gold mines, as December quarterly results show.

These reported three fires, one of which was serious, at Free State Geduld mine, a major fire at Western Deep Levels and a fire at Kloof Mine

Since the release of the quarterlies, another fire has been reported at Venterspost mine

Some mining houses carry insurance to cover loss of profits caused by fires, but the cost of damage to the mines can be considerable

Western Deep Levels has so far provided R3,1m for repairing damage to the mine by the December quarter fire

Add to this the massive disruption of underground operations involved in fire-fighting and setting up mining operations in new areas and the effect on working costs can be drastic

Research work by the mining houses and the Chamber of Mines has greatly reduced the effects of underground fires through systems for quicker detection and methods to retard their spread

A long-term solution to the incidence of fires may also be in sight through the use of backfilling for the support of working areas underground

Backfilling with a solidifying slurry drastically cuts down the amount of timber used for roof support, which is the major fuel for underground fires

Until backfilling is widely used, the risk of fire remains. Causes are largely a result of negligence

Mr Tom Burger, GFSA's group firemaster, says "The majority of all fires are the result of human error. Whatever technical reason is given for the fire it is nearly always the result of poor mining practice and human error"

Records for GFSA's mines reveal the major cause of fire incidents — any event which caused or could have caused a fire — is associated with electrical equipment

This includes malfunction of electrical equipment, shorting of cables, damage to electrical cables by scraper winches or water penetrating electrical cable insulation

The next major cause of fires is

"The majority of all fires are the result of human error. Whatever technical reason is given for the fire, it is nearly always the result of poor mining practice and human error." — Mr Tom Burger, GFSA's group firemaster.

from the use of cutting torches. The third major category is the "cause unknown" fire

Other less frequent causes are friction from scraper winch ropes rubbing against timber, arson, miners smoking underground, igniter cord accidents and mudblasts

The "unknown" category is the worrying one for fire controllers as it invariably includes the big fires which cause major damage underground

Mr Gordon Grange, the technical adviser to the Chamber of Mines, says "A major fire generally destroys the evidence of how it started

"It may be months before you can get back into the area where the fire started. By that time the roof could have collapsed completely as all the supports have burnt out."

He says a large number of fires are caused by workers not adhering to the mining regulations

Fires underground often start in worked-out areas which have been abandoned, but with the wood support packs left in place

The origin of fires starting in these areas is generally unknown. One theory put forward by Mr Burger is negligent handling of explosives.

Explosives issued must be used within 48 hours after which they must be stored in special containers and destroyed in a manner approved by the mine manager

Mr Burger says "Some miners cannot be bothered to do this and simply dump the old explosives into the worked-out areas

"There the ageing explosive becomes unstable and can be set off by sparks from falls of rock from the hanging (roof). The explosion could then start the fire"

Mudblasts were once another common cause of fire, but have now been eradicated in GFSA's mines, says Mr Burger

Mudblasts involved breaking up a large rock by placing explosive on top of it and packing it in place with mud. This method has been replaced by the safer one of

drilling and popping the rock with a small explosive charge

A major research effort has been put into slowing down the spread of fire through timber roof supports

Recent important developments include a process for chemically treating the timber which cuts down the burning rate to about 15% that of untreated timber

Another method pioneered by Mr Burger and now being put into operation on some of GFSA's mines involves caulking the timber support packs

Underground fires spread by the flow of gases, given off at temperatures between 600°C and 800°C by a burning timber pack. These flow along the hanging wall to nearby packs and ignite them

Caulking involves the use of a powder, ASL Filtak, which when mixed with water forms a putty and is used to seal the pack, thereby preventing the flow of air through it which could set the inner timber alight

A number of sealing methods have been used previously, but the major advantage of the putty is that it does not crack under the tremendous pressures which slowly crush the wooden supports thousands of metres underground

Sealants which do crack expose the untreated wood to any fire that may start

Once under way, successful control of the fire depends on how fast teams can get to it. The Beacon fire detection system developed by Anglo American's electronics laboratory, and accepted industry-wide, has played a crucial role in the swift detection of fires

"If the fire-fighting team can surround the fire, then they can put it out. If not, you have two choices. You can either seal the fire off and let it burn out, or you can chase it

"This involves speeding it up by forcing air into the fire area and attempting to burn it out faster than it would normally"

Labour MPs demand probe of mining in SA

212 ~~87~~ The Star Bureau ^{Star} 17/2/84

LONDON — A significant group of Labour Members of Parliament is campaigning for a major inquiry into the health and safety policies of British mining companies operating in South Africa.

On February 29, Mr Dave Nellist, the young Labour Party MP for Coventry, will question Mr Norman Tebbit, the Minister of Trade and Industry, on the issue

Mr Nellist said yesterday that he would demand an inquiry.

This is the latest development in what is clearly a carefully orchestrated campaign.

Last week 57 Labour MPs, including Mr Jim Callaghan, a former Prime Minister, and Mr Michael Foot, Labour leader until last October, signed an early day motion calling for an urgent investigation into the health, safety and wage policies of British companies and their subsidiaries in the South African mining industry.

Early day motions are generally not voted on and serve only as an indication of MPs' feelings on specific issues.

RDM 17/2/84
Scoop
212
blamed
for pit
blast

VRYHEID — The State today called for a finding of culpable responsibility on the part of the mining company for the deaths of 68 mineworkers at the Hlobane mine on September 12 last year.

Mr K T Barnard, who led evidence during the inquest and inquiry, told the Chief Magistrate Mr M. J. Rynders that if officials were negligent in the course of their duties, then the company — in this case the Vryheid (Natal) Railway Coal and Iron Company — was responsible.

Mr Barnard said the organisation of flame safety lamps at the mine was chaotic in that there were not enough lamps to test for gas, and this contributed to the circumstances of the explosion.

He said it was clear that "Scoop 56" had ignited the explosion.

Mr Barnard asked the court to find that the report of a gas find by a miner Mr P J Bezuidenhout on September 5 was true.

He pointed to contradictions in the evidence given by a mine overseer Mr Petrus Swanepoel, a shift boss Mr Petrus Claassens, and an acting shift boss Mr W Roos.

With regard to the evidence of the underground manager, Mr J H Pottas, that at the time of a conversation with a mines inspector Mr Ralph Boswell he was aware of Mr Bezuidenhout's September 5 gas find report, but not of its "scoring out", Mr Barnard said it was clear Mr Pottas did not tell the whole truth to the court.

The magistrate, Mr Rynders, accepted affidavits from two mining experts Mr Herbert Sigmund Eisner and Mr Hans Joachim Kurt Meerbach.

In his report, Mr Eisner said the design of the three flame safety lamps recovered after the explosion was inadequate, as they were not fitted with probe attachments which could test for gas in inaccessible areas and in the air layers immediately below the roof.

Mr Meerbach reported that coal dust must have contributed to the explosion.

He said the gas which ignited did not emanate from a sudden emission, but accumulated because of a failure of the ventilation system before the explosion.

The hearing continues —
Sapa

State blames ⁽²¹²⁾ mining ^{Star} company ^{17/2/84} for disaster

Own Correspondent

VRYHEID — The State yesterday called for a finding of culpable responsibility on the part of the mining company for the deaths of 68 mineworkers at the Hlobane Mine on September 12 last year.

Mr K T Barnard, who led evidence during the inquest and inquiry here, told chief magistrate Mr M J Reynders that if officials were negligent in the course of their duties then the company, in this case the Vryheid (Natal) Railway Coal and Iron Company Ltd, was responsible.

Mr Barnard said that the organisation of flame safety lamps at the mine was "chaotic" and "contributed to the circumstances of the explosion, where there were not enough lamps to test for gas".

Mr Barnard asked the court to find that miner Mr P J Bezuidenhout's report of a

gas find on September 5 was true.

He pointed to contradictions in the evidence given by mine overseer, Mr Petrus Swanepoel, shift boss Mr Petrus Claassens and acting shift boss, Mr W Roos.

He said Mr Swanepoel had told the court that Mr Roos and Mr Bezuidenhout must have seen each other on the morning of September 6, but Mr Roos had said Mr Bezuidenhout was not at the office.

With regard to the evidence of the underground manager, Mr J H Pottas, that at the time of a conversation with mines inspector Mr Ralph Boswell he was aware of Mr Bezuidenhout's gas-find report but not of its deletion, Mr Barnard said Mr Pottas did not tell the whole truth to the court.

Mr Barnard asked the court to find that miner Mr Robert Morgan was negligent.

He said that shift boss Mr Claassens

should also be found negligent as it was his responsibility to see that the holing was closed off before he left the mine on September 10.

In argument today, Mr P W A Strydom, who appears for the Iron and Steel Corporation and the mine management, asked the court to find that the alleged gas find reported a week before the explosion was not true.

"If Mr Bezuidenhout had in fact found gas, he would have run like a hare," he said.

Mr Strydom also asked the court to find that if there was any negligence in the failure to close off the holing operation which caused a drop in ventilation, the blame should be placed on Mr Morgan and that Mr Claassens and Mr Swanepoel should be exonerated.

The case continues.

Mine deaths: Isco blamed

Own Correspondent

VRYHEID — Iscor, owners of the Hlobane coal mine, should be held criminally responsible for the death of 68 mineworkers in a methane blast on September 12 last year, the magistrate presiding over the joint inquiry and inquest on the disaster has found

Delivering his findings in the Vryheid Magistrate's Court yesterday, Mr M J Reynders said the explosion was due to the negligence of miner Mr T J Bezuidenhout — also killed in the disaster — who had failed to test for gas properly on the morning of the blast

Mr Reynders said that from interpreting the Criminal Procedures Act widely, the company should be held liable for Mr Bezuidenhout's negligence and for the disaster

He said his finding was being forwarded to the Attorney-General of Natal, who would then decide whether or not to prosecute the mine, which was owned by Iscor

Mr Donald Morris, the Deputy Government Mining Engineer, who assisted Mr Reynders, agreed with the finding

He said he would also be sending a report to the Attorney-General on contraventions of the Mines and Works Act regulations at the mine which were not directly related to the explosion

Explosive

Earlier, Mr Denis Kuy, SC, representing the relatives of five of the dead, submitted a list of 21 regulations which, according to evidence, had been contravened at Hlobane. Some of them had been contravened up to 14 times

Mr Reynders said the explosion had come about because there was methane gas present in explosive quantities and some source had ignited the gas. In addition coal dust had played a role

There had been a lot of evidence that an earlier holing operation had created a significant opening which should have been sealed. It was the fault of Mr Petrus Claasens, the shift boss, and Mr Robert Morgan, the miner, that it had not been sealed

The mine captain, Mr P Swanepoel, was not criminally responsible in this regard

Mr Reynders found that Mr Claasens and Mr Morgan had been negligent but their negligence was too remote to be a direct cause

Stress affects black mineworkers most

Spec 25/11/83 212

By Malcolm Fothergill

A research project has found significant differences in the way English-speaking mineworkers and Afrikaans-speaking mineworkers react to the perils of their job

It found that black mineworkers suffer more stress than their white colleague, but that underground workers suffer more stress than surface workers

The research was carried out for a doctoral thesis by Mr David White, an Anglo-American divisional personnel director, and is quoted in the latest Chamber of Mines newsletter

Mr White analysed stress in terms of four major variables: job satisfaction, overall life satisfaction, anxiety and job-related tension

Some 720 mineworkers, 240 of them white and the remainder split equally between Shangaans, South Sothos, Tswanas and Xhosas, took part in the study

Half were supervisors and the rest were in non-supervisory positions, half were experienced and half inexperienced, half were from low-stress mines (those popular with migrant workers and with low accident rates) and half from high-stress mines

The first of Mr White's five hypotheses, that underground workers suffered higher levels of stress than their colleagues on the surface, was disproved — surprisingly, in view of the hazards underground

The second hypothesis, that blacks

suffer more stress than whites, found more support

Blacks were found to be more alienated than whites, to have higher anxiety levels and to drink for escapist reasons significantly more frequently

The third hypothesis, that stress was related to job level, was not confirmed

"Among whites the only significant difference is in satisfaction scores, with shift bosses being significantly more satisfied with their jobs than artisans"

The fourth hypothesis, that men working on high-stress mines would suffer higher levels of stress than men on low-stress mines, was by and large confirmed

Language proved an interesting qualifier

"Workers on high-stress mines do report more health problems than workers on low-stress mines, but among whites it is only the English-speaking employees who are in better health on a low-stress mine

"Similarly it is only the English-speaking employees who experience higher anxiety levels on high-stress mines

"The Afrikaans-speaking employees appear to have been unaffected by employment on a high-stress mine — it did not make any difference to them what type of mine they worked on"

Mr White's fifth hypothesis, that experience in a job reduced the amount of stress associated with it, was confirmed

Coal company responsible for deaths of 68 mineworkers

(212) Star 18/2/84

VRYHEID — The Vryheid Railway Coal and Iron Company was yesterday found responsible for the deaths of 68 mineworkers at the Hlobane mine on September 12, in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act

In making his finding, Chief Magistrate Mr M J Reynders said that negligence by Mr T J Bezuidenhout, a miner, was the last link in the chain which led to the explosion

Mr Bezuidenhout was killed in the blast

Mr Reynders found that no living person was responsible for the deaths, but Mr Bezuidenhout was the last person involved and he was a servant of the company, which was accordingly responsible

GUILTY OF NEGLIGENCE

Mr Reynders said that miner Mr Robert Morgan and shift boss Mr Petrus Claassens were guilty of negligence in that both had been in a position to close off the holing which had caused a drop in ventilation prior to the blast, but had not done so

However, Mr Morgan and Mr Claassens had been too far from the explosion to be held responsible for the deaths, he said

Mr Reynders cleared mine overseer Mr Petrus Swanepoel as his duties were not of such a nature that he was responsible and no blame could be attached to him

Mr Reynders said he could not make a definite finding on whether electrician Mr Jurek Zabicki and his two assistants had been negligent when they worked on the scoop which he found had ignited the explosion

Njonjo helped SA visitors obtain visas, inquiry told

The Star's Foreign News Service

NAIROBI — Suspended Cabinet Minister Mr Charles Njonjo told a committee of South African parliamentarians yesterday that he had helped South African visitors obtain visas in Kenya.

Former immigration chief testified yesterday that he had helped South African visitors obtain visas in Kenya.

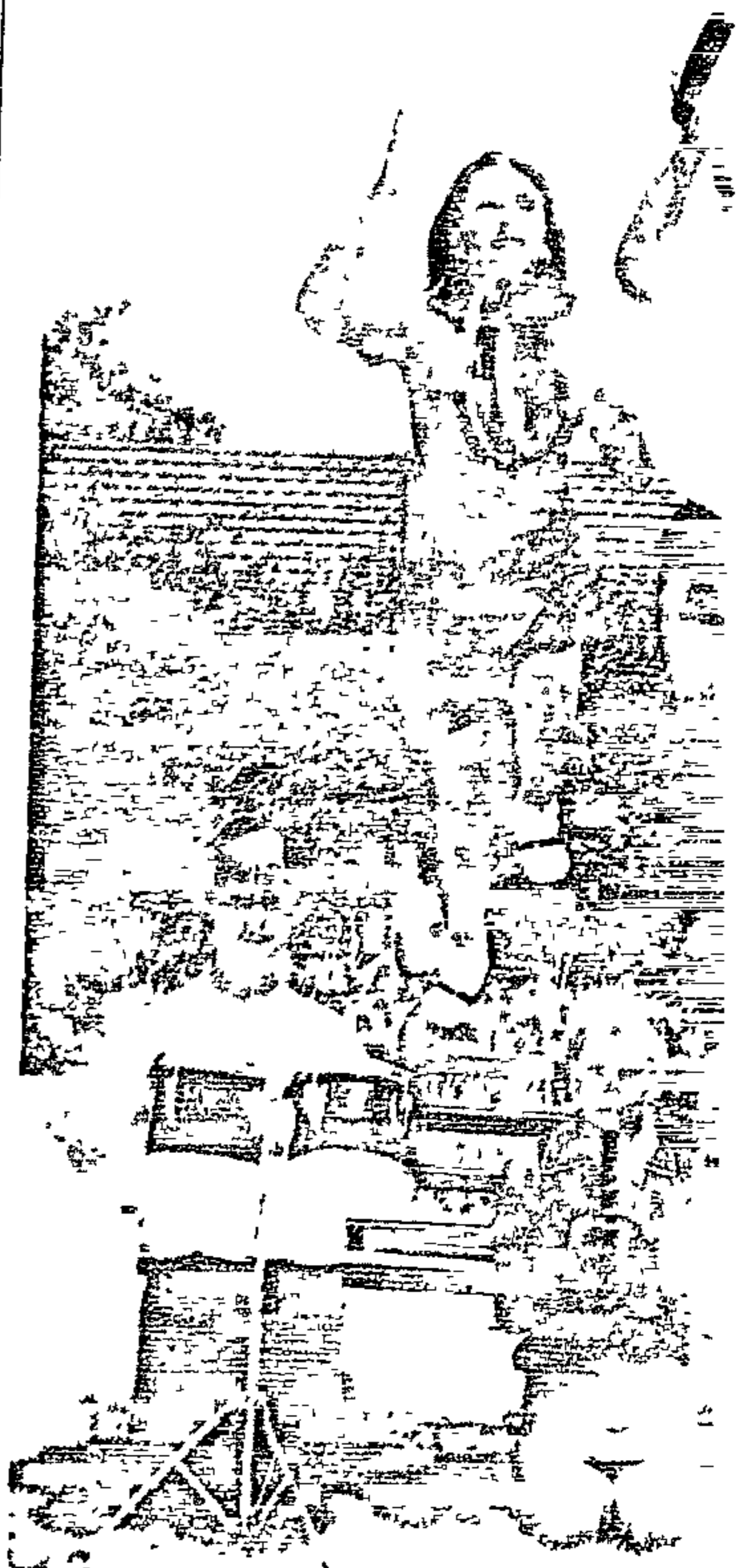
Mr Mutua read from a file of letters sent by Mr Njonjo or his personal secretary Mrs Penny Hill which requested Mr Mutua's assistance in arranging visas for South African visitors.

The letters, which were written between 1974 and 1975, were read in the letter.

Mr Mutua said that a committee of South African parliamentarians had been set up to investigate the matter.

Who calls t

Music lessons were never like this' But nowadays it's not only pupils at Parkview Primary School in Johannesburg who are jumping for joy when the timetable says "Music". Many schools are discovering the benefits of the Carl Orff method of teaching — where everyone can play ... everyone does ... and children learn from early the benefit of working in groups, as opposed to being in continuous competition with one another. As the Carl Orff concept also embraces movement, music teacher Sandy Warner often sends small groups out to compose a piece for the class. The children f



Gazankulu

(117) Star

By Anthony Dufur

Gazankulu was in dire straits because of a civil war which raged over the last few years. The homeland's Chief Minister Professor Huddo Nkomo said that the government had to take steps to help the people.

Union emerges from blast as mine safety watchdog

RDM 20/2/84 (212) #15

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

THE death of 68 mineworkers in the Hlobane methane gas explosion on September 12 last year has proved to be a turning point for the South African mining industry.

It was Hlobane — the country's worst coalmining disaster since Coalbrook in 1960 — that forced the black National Union of Mineworkers, then little more than a year old, to take up mine safety as a top priority issue.

It is again Hlobane that is sending ripples through the industry as the result of disturbing evidence which emerged at the two-week joint inquest and inquiry into the accident, which ended on Friday in the Vryheid Magistrate's Court.

Since the disaster, the NUM has attended numerous inquiries into accidents in both coal and gold mines and has tackled the industry as a whole on the issue of safety.

The union's vigilant position is a new element in the mining industry. For the first time such a challenge has been launched by an organisation representing black mineworkers — most often the victims of mining accidents but who have lacked a voice of their own until the emergence of the NUM.

The Chamber of Mines has not been slow to defend the industry's safety record, which, it says, it is constantly striving to improve.

The central question posed by the NUM is whether mining accidents are "acts of God" or whether, with more expenditure on better equipment, training and safety methods, and receptiveness to advances in safety overseas, many accidents could be avoided and many lives saved each year.

In this regard, the Hlobane hearing has raised serious questions at least as far as the coal mining industry goes. How normal are the conditions at Hlobane which came to light in last week's inquest-inquiry for South African coal mines in general?

At the time of the accident the mine had a four-star safety rating, awarded by the Chamber of Mines in terms of an "international" rating

programme. And two Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs inspectors told the court that Hlobane was "not a bad mine" — presumably meaning some mines were a lot worse.

Yet this is the evidence which emerged at the inquest-inquiry.

● A total of 14 electrical machines out of 29 found in the areas hit by the blast, sections 5 and 10, were not flameproof according to regulations. Mr J Klynsmith, an inspector of machinery, said all 14 could potentially have ignited an explosion.

The court found that the blast was ignited by a flash from a scoop, one of the 14 non-flameproof machines.

● Legally prescribed quantities of air regularly did not reach the working faces, the mine's chief ventilation officer, Mr Peter Shand, told the court.

In a coal mine, ventilation is provided not only for people working in the mine, but to disperse any possible methane gas which could be released from coal at the working faces.

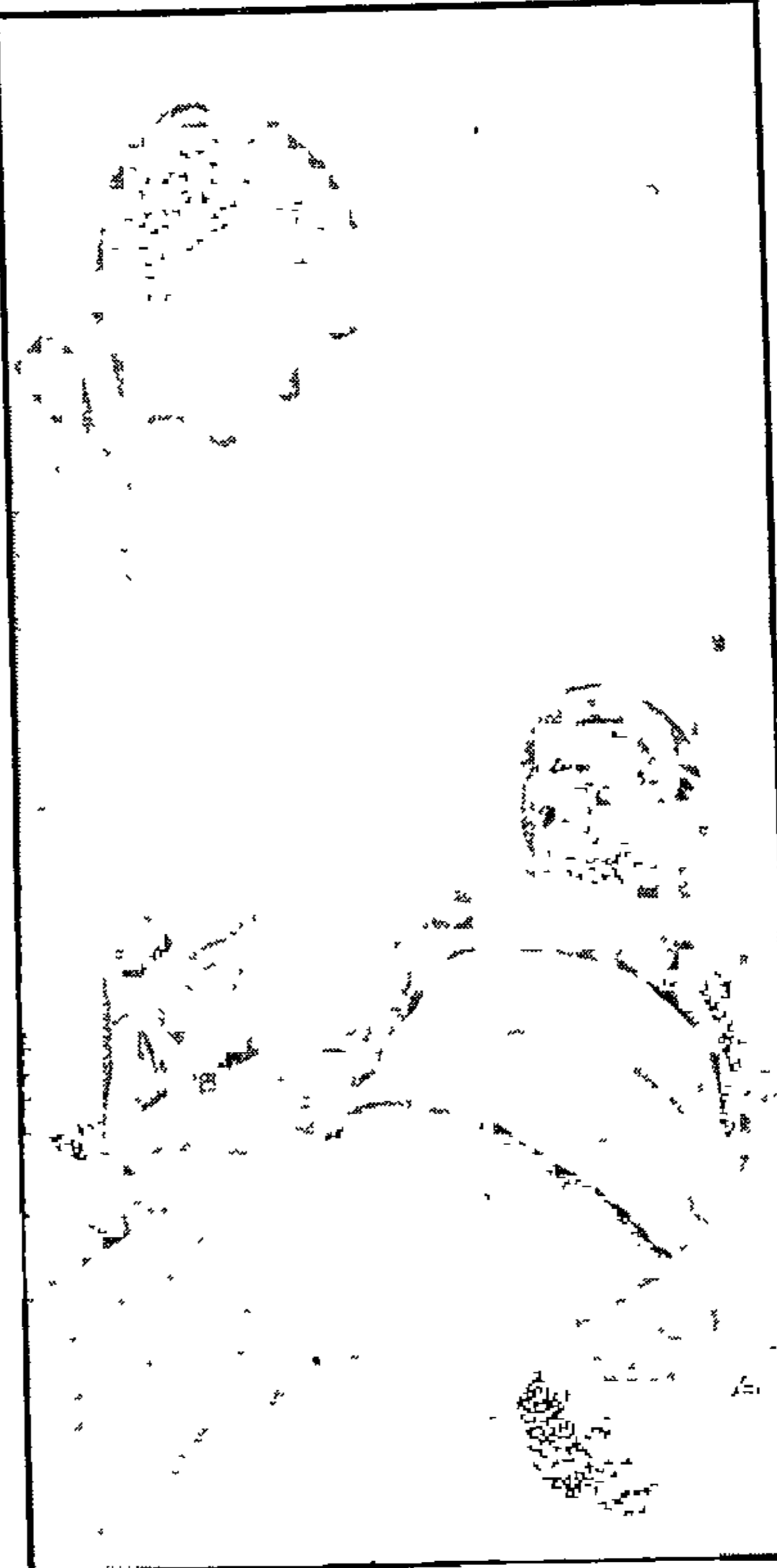
Mr Shand said that in 11 years as a ventilation officer for the Chamber of Mines, he had come across no coal mine in Natal able to provide the correct amount of air current to the working faces all the time.

Mr Denis Kuny, SC, appearing for the relatives of five of five of those who died, said machines should not be in use underground if they could not be flameproofed according to regulations, and people should not be working at faces if it was impossible to supply them with the right quantity of air.

● Two days before the explosion a major holing operation was undertaken, short-circuiting the ventilation system in sections 5 and 10. The holing had not been sealed off and the ventilation system was thus unable to disperse any build-up of methane gas.

● A week before the explosion a report by a miner, Mr T J Bezuidenhout, that he had found methane gas in section 5 was scored out by the mine captain. This was the first reported find of gas in the mine in a long time.

Mine officials said they had decided to ignore the report because they believed Mr Bezuidenhout was lying



A nurse attends to a badly burnt survivor of the Hlobane Colliery blast in the Rand Mutual Hospital.

to cover up poor production. According to Mr R Boswell, an inspector of mines, he would have investigated the situation thoroughly had the report been passed on.

● While no methane gas had been detected for years before the explosion, a number of gas finds had occurred since September 12 in various sections of the mine.

The prosecutor, Mr K Barnard, said he found this "extraordinary".

● Records of the issuing of flame safety lamps at the mine were in a "chaotic" state and only four of the required number of 10 lamps were found in sections 5 and 10 after the blast.

Though it was not required by law, only one of the four

lamps used for testing for gas had a probe attachment enabling it to test for methane layers on the ceiling of the mine.

A dyke in section 5, a phenomenon which is known to release methane gas when penetrated, was penetrated twice a few days before the blast. No steps were taken to prevent a sudden build-up of gas from the dyke.

● Mr Kuny handed in a list of 21 Mines and Works Act regulations which, according to the evidence, had been contravened — some a number of times.

Mr Donald Morris, deputy Government mining engineer, said he would supply a report of these contraventions to the Attorney-General

of Natal and prosecutions could follow.

The magistrate Mr M J Reynders found that only the negligence of the miner Mr T J Bezuidenhout, who could not have properly tested for gas on the morning of the explosion, was a direct cause of the blast. Mr Bezuidenhout died in the blast.

Mr Reynders found the mine company, the Vryheid (Natal) Railway and Coal company, bought by Iscor from Gencor two-and-a-half months before the disaster, should be found criminally responsible for the deaths because of the negligence of Mr Bezuidenhout.

Mr Kuny and Mr Barnard had called on the magistrate to find the company criminally responsible on the basis of the negligence of a number of officials on the mine.

Mr Kuny headed a team which included another advocate, two instructing attorneys and four mine safety experts, three of them from overseas. Apart from representing the families of those who died, they held a watching brief for the NUM.

The team added a dimension to the inquiry-inquest which would probably have been lacking had the disaster happened a year earlier. However, the case they built up — that management was to blame for the disaster in that they had failed to fulfil their responsibilities in a number of crucial areas — was not accepted by the magistrate.

The broader impact remains. Since the disaster, the court heard, there had been an all-round tightening-up at Hlobane. Similarly, one could expect that a disaster of such a scale would lead to other mines taking a closer look at themselves.

And the inspectorate of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs could well take a tougher line in future on contraventions of Mines and Works Act regulations, which Hlobane seemed to have been routinely getting away with.

The enduring effect of Hlobane is that it has more than highlighted the question of mine safety.

It has raised the consciousness of black mineworkers over the issue of mine safety and, in the form of the NUM, has created a safety ombudsman in the industry.

SA 'can become the ^(2,2) safest ^{Star} mining nation in the ^{24/2/84} world'

By Stan Kennedy

Despite some safety deficiencies in South African mines, the groundwork was being laid that would make South Africa the safest mining nation in the world, according to a US expert on total loss control systems

Mr Frank Bird, originator of the International Mine Safety Rating programme, said in an interview this week that safety and work stability went hand in hand

"Your workforce is generally more unsophisticated and unstable than in any other mining nation, yet you have done a job that no other nation could do with a comparable labour force"

Until the rating programme was introduced eight years ago, South Africa, like other mining nations, tended to push people who could not hold management jobs into safety departments, which became a place for old-

timers to end their careers

The result was an unsystematic approach to safety

Under the rating system, the work necessary to control loss is identified, and standards set, in 22 different elements of management. Performances are monitored, results evaluated and deficiencies corrected

Audits are done by the Chamber of Mines' Safety Division at least once a year. Broad control of the system is in the hands of the International Safety Rating Council, chaired by Mr Bird

The aim is to achieve 90 per cent in all 22 elements, when the mine is awarded five stars

Mr Bird said that eight years ago South African mines placed safety between sixth and ninth in its list of priorities of management

There had been a progressive move upwards. Safety was now second, after production. This was the highest in the world,

and would ensure that South Africa would be the safest mining nation in the world

"Good management requires that people have the knowledge of, and are motivated to do, the job. In your programme, you not only have good procedures, you also have a positive approach

You are teaching motivational concepts and inter-personal, psychological communication skills that are vital for the kind of labour force you have"

Manager of the Chamber's Mine Safety Division Mr Guy Stokes said more than 4 000 top management people had attended courses on loss control management, conducted by Mr Bird, in the past eight years

Of the 113 mines the Chamber services, 100 were participating in the system

"It is this willingness to become involved in safety that has made the scheme so successful," he said



THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is to claim increased compensation for the dependants of the 68 mineworkers killed and those injured in the Hlobane methane gas explosion last September.

The union's assistant secretary, Mr Mokhe-seng Maloka, told The SOWETAN yesterday that they were also considering instituting a civil action, which might run into thousands of rands for the families, against Iscor-owned Vryheid Railway Coal and Iron Company. He explained that the increased compensation

Miners warned to avoid unsafe places

HLOBANE: UNION TO CLAIM MORE

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

would be claimed from the Workmen's Compensation Fund to which mineworkers contribute.

A spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said

that every miner contributes 45 cents of every R100 he earns towards the Workmen's Compensation Fund.

Mineworkers' dependents receive a lump sum of money equal to two years wages when a

miner dies in an accident. In addition, the dependents receive 75 percent of his monthly income for life, the spokesman said.

"We are going to ask for increased compensation because the com-

pany was found by the court to be responsible for the death and injury of the miners," Mr Maloka said.

The Vryheid magistrate last week found that the explosion had been caused by the neg-

ligence of a miner, Mr T J Bezuidenhout, who had failed to properly test for gas on the day of the blast.

Mr Maloka could not say how much the claim for compensation would be, but it was estimated that it would be for thousands of rands.

The union has also warned members to refuse to work at places which they regarded as unsafe.

"We have to make sure that our members are protected whenever on duty because their health is important to their families and to the community as a whole," Mr Maloka said

Sonja as he was electrocuted

LOST

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KIDS

IN

Derick after the nightmare: He was lost but not scared

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S. Times

MINE

4/3/84

HORROR



TWO terrified children stumbled about the dark, labyrinthine tunnels of a coal mine as their father lay dead nearby — electrocuted while carrying out repairs.

An underground "geography lesson" — quite illegal, but conducted by a devoted dad, Mr Fred van Vuuren — turned into an unimaginable underground nightmare for the children.

This week, Sonja, 11, described the horror of seeing her father die as he clutched a live cable and the panic which followed as she and her brother became hopelessly lost in their frantic search for help in the subterranean twilight

It came only after they spotted the dim light on a miner's bobbing helmet

The drama took place in the workings of the Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid, Northern Natal, last Sunday

Yesterday Sonja and her

By MICHAEL JOHNSON

Picture by GUY WATSON

scream, and next thing I remember was saying 'Dad, dad, don't die', and pulling him off the wires

"He fell on me and rolled over," she said

"My dad was still alive and I wanted to drag him onto the battery-powered mine buggy which was parked nearby

"But I could only remember how to drive it forwards, so we ran for help," she said

Sonja and Derick, 10, then told how they plunged deeper

to buy the young son he loved so much a carrolate in return for having to stay at home," she said

For little Henk, his father's disappearance is still a mystery

"He still wakes up in the morning asking for his daddy"

Mrs van Vuuren said her husband had left the family adequately provided for with insurance policies

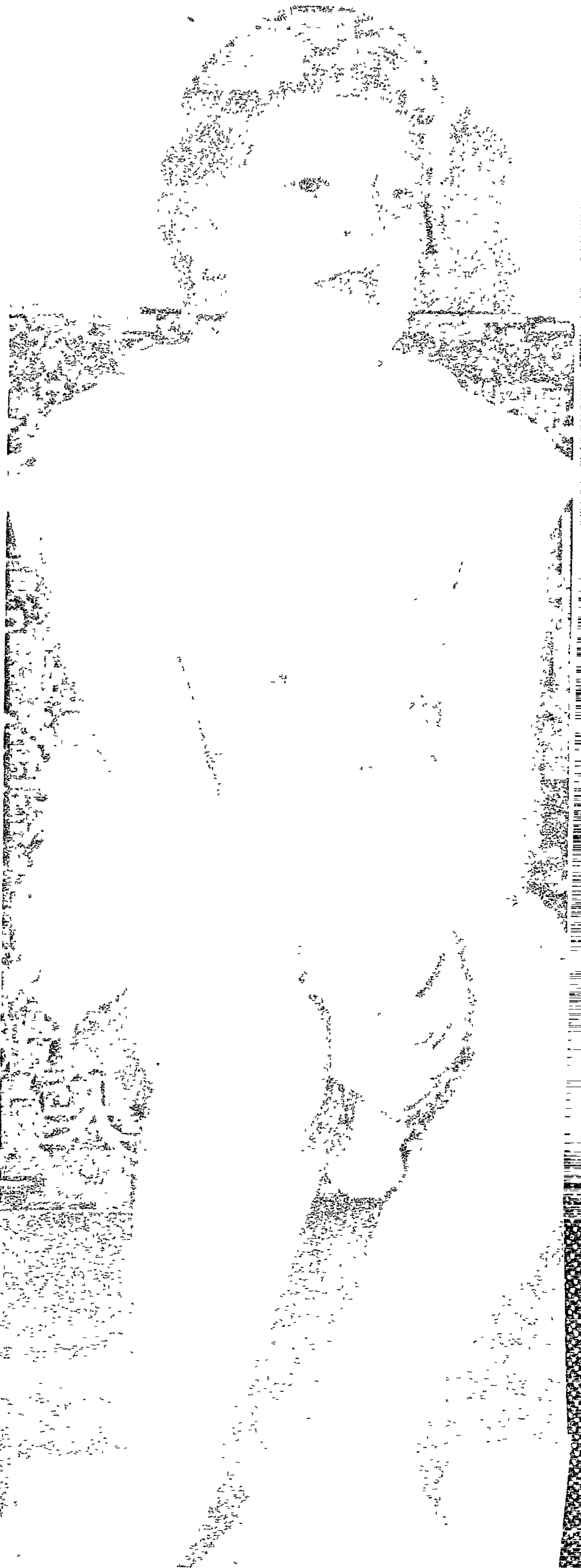
"The mine has been good to me and has stood us in our time of need. They have even said we can stay in the house," she said

"He was a hard worker and the best electrician the mine had. There was about 500 people at his funeral"

Iscor PRO Mr P M Du Plessis was unavailable for comment

An inquiry into the incident will be held this week

Don't die dad, cried little



Sonja after the nightmare My dad is dead, she said

Stines

4/3/84

212

mother, Mrs. Juliana van Vuuren, spoke about the terrifying events which are now under investigation.

Sonja told the Sunday Times how she had tried to pull her electrician father away from the cables before fleeing for help with her brother.

"I grabbed him and cried 'Don't die dad, don't die,' said the little girl.

"His whole body was shaking as he held the cable.

"He fell on me, rolled off, and then clawed the ground crying 'Help me, help me'."

The Hlobane Colliery was the scene of a methane gas explosion on September 12 last year that claimed 68 lives.

"Fred was on standby and said he would take the children on a call-out as they were going to learn about mining in geography at school," said a tearful Mrs van Vuuren.

"He was such a lovely husband, he has cared so well for us," said the attractive, but careworn woman in the comfortable, but now fatherless, Vryheid mine house, where sympathy cards and flowers stood atop the TV set.

and deeper into the dimly-lit mine in search of help.

"We became completely lost and I was frightened," said Sonja.

Derick said he wasn't scared and only thought of helping his father.

Sonja said they spotted the light on a miner's helmet bobbing in the twilight of a tunnel after about 15 minutes.

"But he was a black man and couldn't understand me," she said.

"We were almost at the surface when I said in English 'My dad is dead', and then he understood me.

Mrs van Vuuren continued the story.

"A rescue party was organised, but when they got to Fred he

was already dead. Mine officials took the children straight to the hospital for treatment for shock and so they wouldn't have to see their dead father.

"Thirty minutes after Fred had died, a colleague arrived at my door. He was so white, I knew something was wrong.

"I said: 'What's wrong, are they dead?'"

"He said: 'No, not your children, but your husband is dead'."

"Fred was such a considerate man to his children. He spent so much time away from them while working overtime shifts, that he felt he owed it to them to take them down the mine," she said.

"Henk, who is only four and too small to go down the mine, had to stay behind."

"But among Fred's personal effects was a white envelope with 80c in it — money



A MOURNING WIDOW

He was so good to us



FRED VAN VUUREN

Electrocuted

Scream

This is how Sonja described their ordeal on their first trip underground. "When dad was called out on Sunday to fix some wiring, he said he would take us with him.

"We went down on the battery car to where dad was working.

"He first worked on the lighting generator.

"A little later he said he was almost finished, and then went to work on the lights.

"Suddenly we heard him

Services

- BENONI FIRST CHURCH, 94 Woburn Avenue
- BOKSBURG FIRST CHURCH, 125 Commissioner Street
- GERMISTON FIRST CHURCH, 2A Human Street
- KRUGERSDORP FIRST CHURCH, 66 Human Street
- RANDBURG FIRST CHURCH, Vine Street Ext Harley Street
- ROODEPOORT FIRST CHURCH, 25 Church Street Florida
- SANDTON FIRST CHURCH, Rivonia Hall
- PRETORIA FIRST CHURCH, 395 Du Toit Street
- PRETORIA SECOND CHURCH, 1149 South Street Hatfield

For church service announcements and all religious meetings see page 2 of the R.D.M every Saturday

FOR MORE DETAILS KINDLY CONTACT at 710-2710

LABOUR NEWS

Rosebank strike settled

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

A STRIKE by the entire black workforce of Thrupp's in Rosebank was settled yesterday after talks between the management and worker representatives.

The staff went on strike on Wednesday, demanding a R20 a week wage increase and calling on management to settle a list of grievances.

After negotiations with representatives of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa), the company agreed to pay an increase of R10 a week, shifting from its offer of R7,50 a week.

In addition, it was agreed that Ccawusa

would be recognised, no worker would be victimised for going on strike and workers would be paid for the time they were out on strike.

The company also agreed to look into a set of grievances involving working conditions.

Mr R Keene, the managing director of Thrupp's, said, "The so-called strike has been settled to our satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the workers. We are happy that the workers have returned."

A union spokesman said they were pleased with the outcome of the dispute, especially since small companies often tended to act negatively towards unions.

Unrest, strikes continue

PINETOWN — Strikes and labour unrest continued to disrupt production at two large Pinetown factories yesterday.

At Smith and Nephew most of the 600-strong labour force downed tools on Tuesday over a pay dispute.

A company spokesman said the workers went to the factory each morning and assembled in an orderly fashion on the recreation field inside the factory premises.

At Ninian and Lester 120 of the 1 000 workers in the circular knitting and warping department stopped work because of objections to the shift system.

They were fired for refusing to return to their jobs and were told to collect their pay later yesterday.

A group of about 40 allegedly attempted to intimidate staff still working at the factory yesterday morning — Sapa

Cripples' cash missing

Mail Reporter

A REHABILITATION officer at the Anglo American Corporation's Ernest Oppenheimer Hospital in Welkom has left the hospital following allegations that he was embezzling the money of crippled mineworkers.

The man worked at the Ithusing Rehabilitation Centre attached to the hospital, which houses between 70 and 90 paraplegics who have been

crippled in mining accidents.

It is alleged that, as crippled workers were unable to go to a bank themselves, they entrusted their banking to hospital officials.

An organiser for the National Union of Mineworkers in the Welkom area said the paraplegics had raised the issue of money going missing with the hospital authorities after an R852 cheque belonging to a patient

was found to be missing.

A spokesman for Anglo American said the rehabilitation officer had "left our employ following an investigation into allegations of embezzlement."

The spokesman said the matter had been referred to the Welkom police and that all the missing money had been recovered. This included a cheque of R850 and cash of R177,44.



Only semi-conscious, Jenna Mostert is comforted by her mother, Mrs Caroline M...

SOUTH AFRICA and Mozambique stood on the verge of peace last night after agreement was reached at historic talks in Cape Town on the main details of a non-aggression treaty.

The scene now seems set for a meeting between the Prime Minister, Mr P W Botha, and President Samora Machel of Mozambique to sign the accord.

There was strong speculation in some circles last night that the signing will take place either in Swaziland or Botswana with the latter being the more favoured.

At a Press conference after the talks yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr P W Botha, said in a statement issued jointly with the Mozambicans "The final text of the agreement will be ready for signature in the very near future. The date and venue for the signing will be announced as soon as possible."

The statement said the thrust of the agreement was that it would ensure that neither country would serve as the base for acts of aggression or violence against the other and that both countries would undertake not to use the territory of a third state for that purpose.

The four senior members of the Mozambican delegation, which was headed by the Minister for Economic Affairs in the President's Cabinet Ministers in the South African team — Mr P W Botha, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, and the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan — met Mr P W Botha for an hour during the afternoon.

During the meeting the teams "reviewed progress made in the security negotiations and other matters relating to bilateral relations between the two countries."

African delegations between the two countries.

'Electrician did not have attack'

Mercy
5/3/84
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Pietermaritzburg
Bureau

NORTHERN Natal mine electrician Fred van Vuuren, 40, who died while working underground at the Hlobane Colliery last weekend, definitely was electrocuted and did not die from a heart attack, his distraught widow, Mrs Juliana van Vuuren, said yesterday

'When I saw his body, part of his hands had been burned and his face was blue

'Two months ago, when he had a medical check up to take out an insurance policy, there was nothing wrong with him,' she said

The public relations officer of the mine, Mr P M du Plessis, said the possibility of a heart attack had not been ruled out

'The exact cause of death will be clear after the results of the post-mortem are known,' he said

Mr van Vuuren was called out on Sunday, February 26, to fix some wiring underground

He took two of his children, Sonja, 11, and

Derick, 10, down the shaft with him while Henk, 4, stayed behind

'The children became very insistent about going underground after they had heard that they would be studying coal mines at school and Fred thought it would help their education,' Mrs van Vuuren said

Mr van Vuuren was working on some lights when the children heard him suddenly scream

Sonja, earthed with gum boots, tugged at her father's overall and pulled him off a live wire he had been holding

She said her father had been breathing while she had tried to put him on to a battery-powered underground mine buggy

But neither of the bewildered children could remember how to operate the vehicle

About 15 minutes later they hailed a passing miner whose helmet light they had spotted in the distance and who led them to the surface

An inquiry into the death of Mr van Vuuren will be conducted this week

Mine death probe ends

RDM
8/3/84

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Mail Reporter

AN INQUIRY into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Fred van Vuuren, who was electrocuted while underground in the Hlobane Colliery, near Vryheid, is to be completed today.

The investigations of the accident which occurred on February 26, have been completed and the results will be out today, a Public relations officer for ISCOR, Mr P M du Plessis said yesterday.

Mr Van Vuuren died while his two children shouted for help after he clutched a live cable in an underground cavern. He had been called out to fix some wiring on a Sunday.

Two of his children, Sonja, 11, and Derek, 10, accompanied him as they were going to learn about mining in geography at school.

Mr Van Vuuren is survived by his widow Juliana and three children, Sonja, Derek and Henk.

Miners get 102-bed hospital

RAM
14/3/84

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Mining Editor

RAND MINES yesterday officially opened an R8m hospital near Witbank for its growing black labour force on coal mines in the area.

It has 102 beds, is well equipped and can be expanded. It can handle general medical, surgical, maternity and infectious disease cases. There are out-patient and dentistry facilities.

The hospital will serve miners and their families from Rietspruit, Duvha, Middelburg, Khutala, Douglas, Wolvekrans and Vandyk's Drift sections of Douglas Colliery.

Rand Mines employs more than 7 000 black workers in the Witbank area.

The Khutala colliery is still being developed but at full output the mines to be served by the hospital will employ a total of some 12 300 workers.

About 2 700 families will be housed on these Rand Mines' collieries and the hospital will cater for the needs of about 1 260 of these families.

The hospital has two operating theatres and an X-ray department.

Its 60 staff includes three full-time doctors and 20 nurses who are housed in bungalow quarters.

Construction of the hospital was started in March 1982 and completed in September 1983.

Rand Mines' chairman, Mr Bill Lawrence, said it was the duty of private enterprise to provide the most comprehensive medical facilities possible for employees.

"The provision of medical facilities for our far-flung population is a task which the State is tackling with enthusiasm and dedication but, regrettably, with financial resources which do not always measure up to demands."

The economy under Swapo

(212)

Even Pretoria now seems to accept that Swapo would win the first election in an independent Namibia. The crucial question for the territory's future is which of the organisation's public faces is the real one? Is it a radical Marxist Soviet puppet or a largely Lutheran pragmatic nationalist organisation?

The answer seems to be that there are elements of both approaches in Swapo's top leadership. What remains to be seen is which faction will gain the upper hand. This is particularly pertinent in the economic sphere where, possibly to avoid conflict between its factions, Swapo's policy is far from clear.

On paper the organisation is almost pure Marxist. Its only official statement of policy is the "political programme" adopted by the central committee in 1976.

The preamble reads "Swapo has resolved to unite all Namibian people, particularly the working class, the peasantry and progressive intellectuals into a vanguard party capable of safeguarding national independence and of building a classless, non-exploitive society based on the ideals and principles of scientific socialism."

The type of government preferred is glossed over in the catch-all phrase —

"a democratic people's government"

Swapo's economic policies remain vague. The political programme describes them this way: "The economic reconstruction in a free, democratic and united Namibia will have, as its motive force, the establishment of a classless society. Social justice and progress for all is the governing idea behind every Swapo policy decision."

"The government of a truly liberated Namibia will, therefore, be called upon to take the following measures:

- Wage the struggle towards the abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man and the destructive spirit of individualism and aggrandisement of wealth and power by individuals, groups or classes.
- Ensure that all the major means of production and exchange of the country are in the ownership of the people.
- Strive for the creation of an integrated, national economy in which there is a proper balance between agricultural and industrial developments along the following lines: the establishment of a processing industry, a comprehensive agrarian transformation aimed at giving land to the tiller, the establishment of peasants' co-operatives or collectives, and the establishment of State-owned

ranching and crop-farms aimed at making Namibia an agriculturally self-sufficient nation."

That is the stated policy. It is long on jargon and rhetoric but short on specifics. Certainly it does seem the basis for a militantly radical, and almost certainly disastrous, economic approach.

What Swapo actually does in a governing situation could be very different. Whatever the real intentions of the leadership, it will have a complex and difficult reality with which to deal.

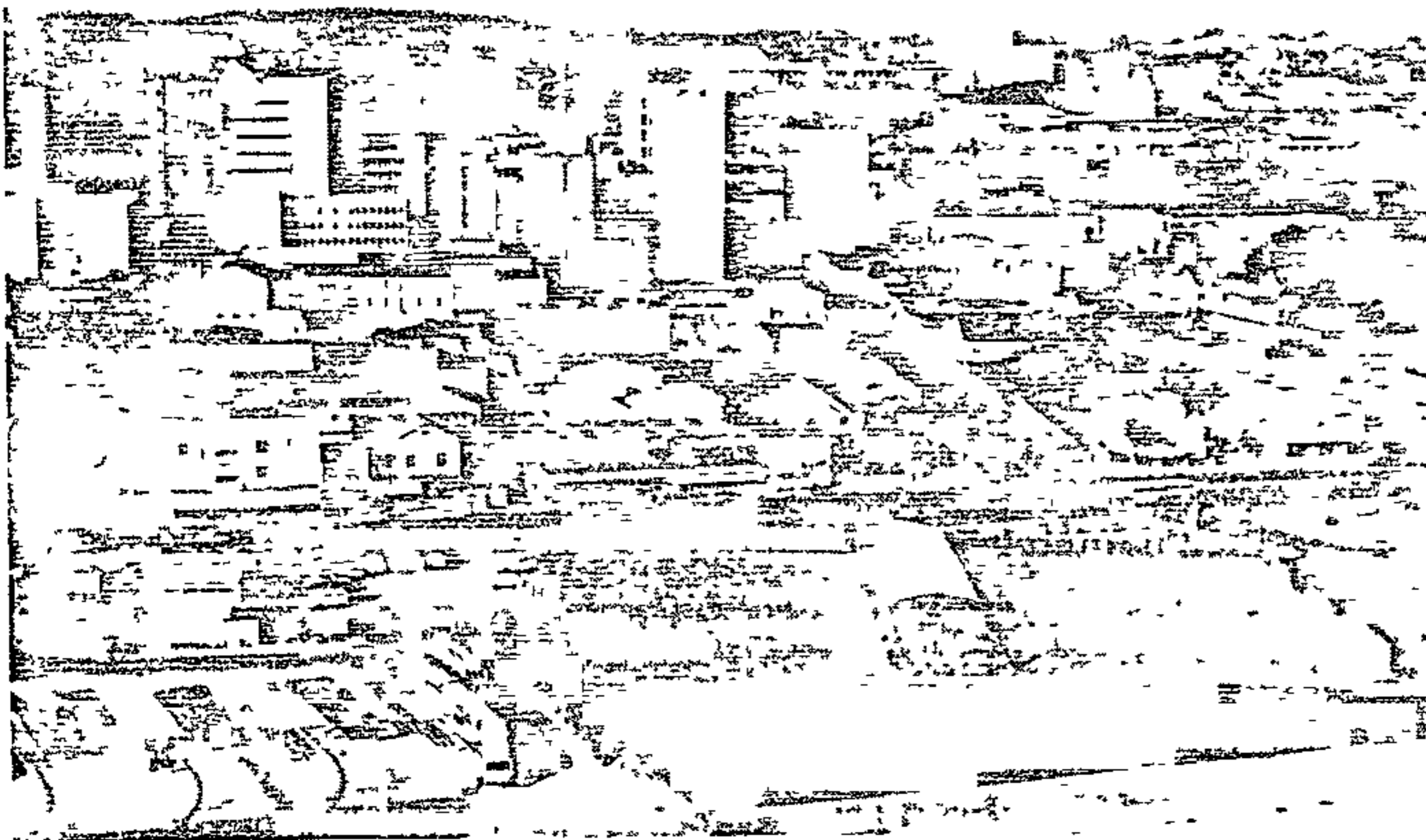
One of the most important factors could be the influence of the churches — particularly the Lutherans. Namibia's population is a highly Christian one, and the Evangelical Lutheran Owambo Kavango church (Eloc), represents the overwhelming majority of the people in northern Namibia — Swapo's stronghold.

The executive of the Namibia Council of Churches, and that of the internal wing of Swapo, overlap almost completely. Eloc is an ardent campaigner for democracy and human rights — and can be expected to maintain this attitude after independence. The church is likely to insist that an independent Namibia should be non-aligned and will strongly oppose the entry of foreign troops, like the Cubans.

Basic post-independence economic realities, particularly Namibia's dependence on SA, should also have a sobering effect. The fact that Namibia will be the last African country to become independent means that it will have had the greatest opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others.

Mozambique's experience carries the hardest lesson. President Samora Machel said at his country's independence that it marked "the first day of the longer and harder struggle for economic independence." The economic disasters that followed from Maputo's Marxist approach can hardly have been lost on the Swapo leadership.

Most of the Swapo leaders have during long years of exile, seen at first hand the bread queues in socialist countries and the relatively greater affluence of lands that followed a free enterprise approach.



Windhoek CBD ... can it do business with Swapo?

2. As stated in Stott's case, intention at the date of acquisition is important unless some factor has intervened to indicate a change of intention.

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It is true, however, that most of the brighter thinkers in the organisation, particularly those trained in the West, are largely excluded from the leadership clique. Swapo's secretary for economic affairs, Ben Amathila, does not rank among the top four leaders and he has radical socialist advisers, like Reginald Green of Sussex University, at his elbow.

Economic statements by Swapo leaders tend to be contradictory. However, a recent Swapo publication, *To Be Born a Nation*, does indicate that a more pragmatic approach is in the making.

It acknowledges the importance — based on capital, expertise and technology — of the transnational corporations, if in somewhat bitter terms: "Because transnationals have huge financial resources, managerial expertise and a monopoly of mining technology, they can often blackmail governments into favourable deals by threatening to close down the mines."

The book claims, however, that several transnationals have already held "exploratory talks" with Swapo.

Intriguingly, it takes a considerably less hostile view of the De Beers subsidiary, Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM), than of some other transnationals, and indicates that a post-independence Swapo/CDM deal could be on the cards.

Thus it says "CDM has tried to take some precautions to ensure its survival after liberation. It has ostentatiously refused to back the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) and has allowed Swapo to organise amongst its workforce. No doubt it will readily enter into a deal with a people's government, as it has already done in Botswana, which allows the State to take a large share of the profits and ownership."

The publication says it is expected that most farmers and many Afrikaners and Germans in commerce will "follow their bank accounts" back to their homelands. "Only the artisans and technicians, supervisors and managers, administrators and scientists, largely employed in the factories and mines, are likely to stay on." It acknowledges that



Namibia ... marxist fences or an open economy?

"whether they do so, will depend a great deal on the policy decisions of the people's government and the level of support it gets from international agencies and friendly governments."

There are other influences that could curb Swapo's socialist tendencies. Namibia is going to need a great deal of aid and assistance — and this is not likely to come from the Soviet bloc, but from the West, and it is only likely to be available if reasonable economic policies are followed. An exodus of white farmers, especially from the arid and fragile south, would be disastrous for the economy — something which any government, whatever its political hue, will have to recognise.

A Swapo government, however, will face the classic dilemma of trying to reconcile economic reality and the expectations of its followers — especially the 10 000 or so members of the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia, which does the actual fighting.

There will be hardline ideologues who will have to be controlled. Many doubt that Swapo leader Sam Nujoma has the strength or the intellect for the job. Herman Toivo ja Toivo, recently released from Robben Island, might be able to do it. But if he has aspirations for the top position he will probably wait until after independence to make his move.

NUJOMA'S 'RETURN'

Swapo leader Sam Nujoma this week met the "father of Namibian nationalism," Herman Toivo ja Toivo, for the first time. Reports of the meeting linked it to the "fact" that Nujoma himself has never been in jail — or back to Namibia since 1960. But this seems not to be true — Nujoma's return and detention is one of Africa's less publicised happenings.

At the World Court in 1966 SA claimed that exiled Namibian leaders could come and go in Namibia as they liked. Nujoma decided to test the claim.

On March 20 1966 he flew from Lusaka by charter plane and landed at Windhoek's J G Strijdom airport. A flabbergasted air traffic controller, on learning who the visitor was, phoned the

security police (SP).

Nujoma was bundled off into a police cell. A policeman then phoned SP headquarters in Pretoria with the news. The then-PM, Hendrik Verwoerd, was told of the situation — and is said to have ordered the SP to get Nujoma out of the country as quietly as possible.

Nujoma was duly bundled back into his plane in the early hours of March 21 — complaining bitterly that a black Namibian "does not even have the right to be detained in his own country."

As a propaganda ploy his effort was a failure. Even some of his colleagues thought that he had stopped over for the night somewhere in Zambia — and then fabricated the story.

476 miners hit by food poisoning

Σ Post 17/3/84

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JOHANNESBURG — Officials at the huge Vaal Reefs gold mining complex are investigating an outbreak of food poisoning which put more than 138 mineworkers in hospital

Since the food poisoning first became evident on Thursday, 476 workers have become ill at the complex in the Western Transvaal, the biggest in the world

It was not clear how many were still in hospital this afternoon

"In all, 476 workers are known to have been affected since the food poisoning first came to light at 1am on Thursday, when 116 miners from No 2 shaft were immediately taken to hospital. Another 22 were hospitalised later," said a spokesman

"Officials at the mining are still trying to establish the source of the poisoning

"None of those in hospital is in a serious condition

"Workers started to have stomach upsets soon after supper on Wednesday night

"During the night it became apparent that the men were suffering from food poisoning and steps were taken to have them treated"

The complex employs about 42 000 people — Sapa

RDM 28/3/84 (212) (S)

Concern over mine health probe

Mail Correspondent

CAPE TOWN — A trade unionist yesterday expressed "disquiet" at the findings of a commission of inquiry on the monitoring of the health of black miners by certain mining companies

Addressing a symposium on trade unions and occupational health, Mr C F Roets, executive council member of the South African Boilermakers' Society, said the report of the Nieuwenhuizen Commission had "much to say" about the way companies were monitoring the health of black workers

"The fact that the commission found that monitoring services were insufficient in certain cases, and that little attention was given to results, is disqui-

eting," he told the symposium, which was held by the Society of Occupational Health Nurses, in the Nico Malan complex yesterday

Mr Roets said the country was standing on the threshold of a sophisticated set of laws providing for the safety and health of workers

But he questioned whether these would be accepted by such employers "with more respect" than previous legislation, which also provided for black mineworkers' safety

Earlier, Mr Roets said unions had paid "far too little attention" to industrial health and safety through the years.

This was partly due to ignorance, and

there were even workers who resented restrictions affecting the amount of money they could earn

Mr Roets claimed he knew of cases where unions and managements "connived to allow deadly conditions to develop, where higher production meant greater profits and higher wages for workers"

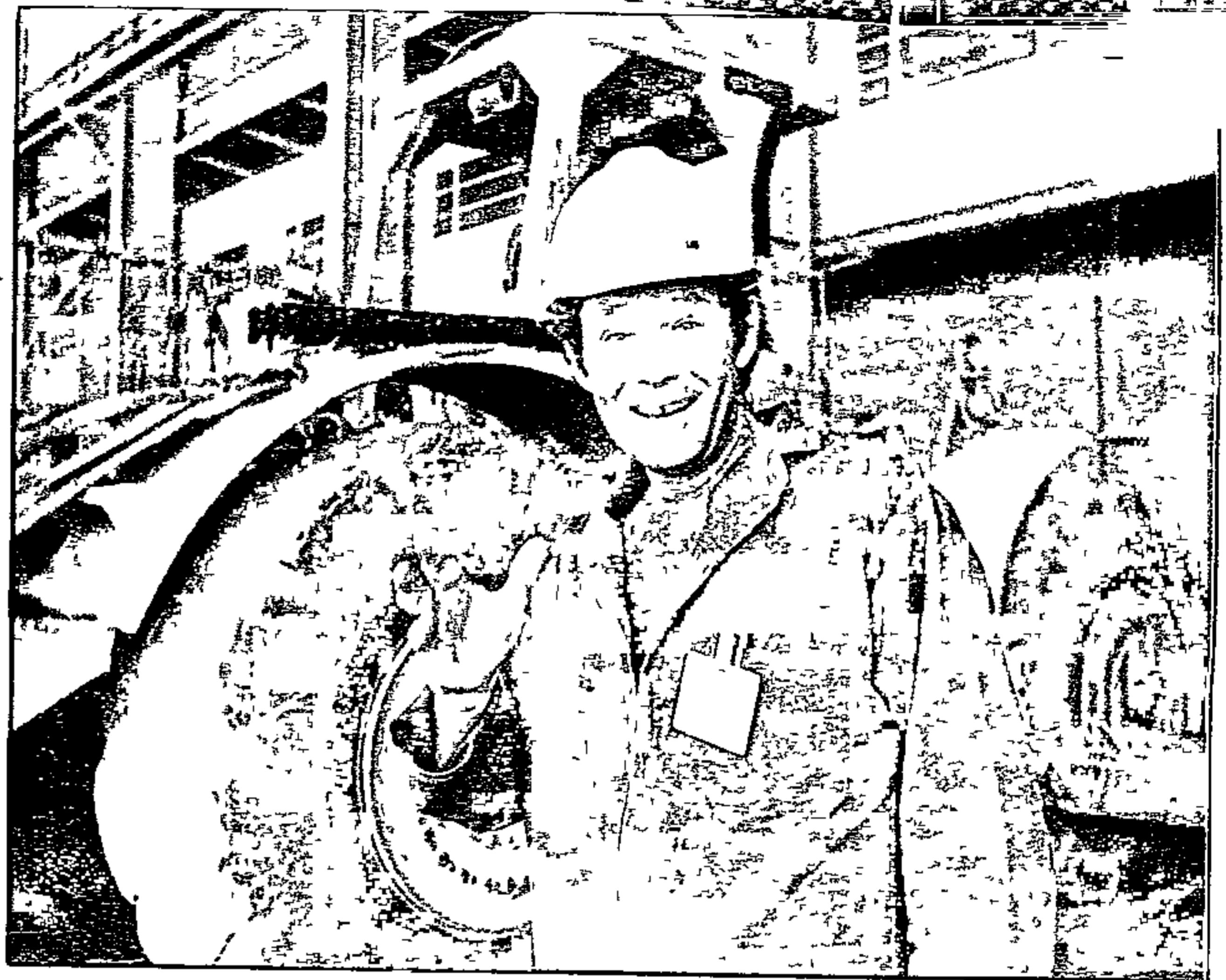
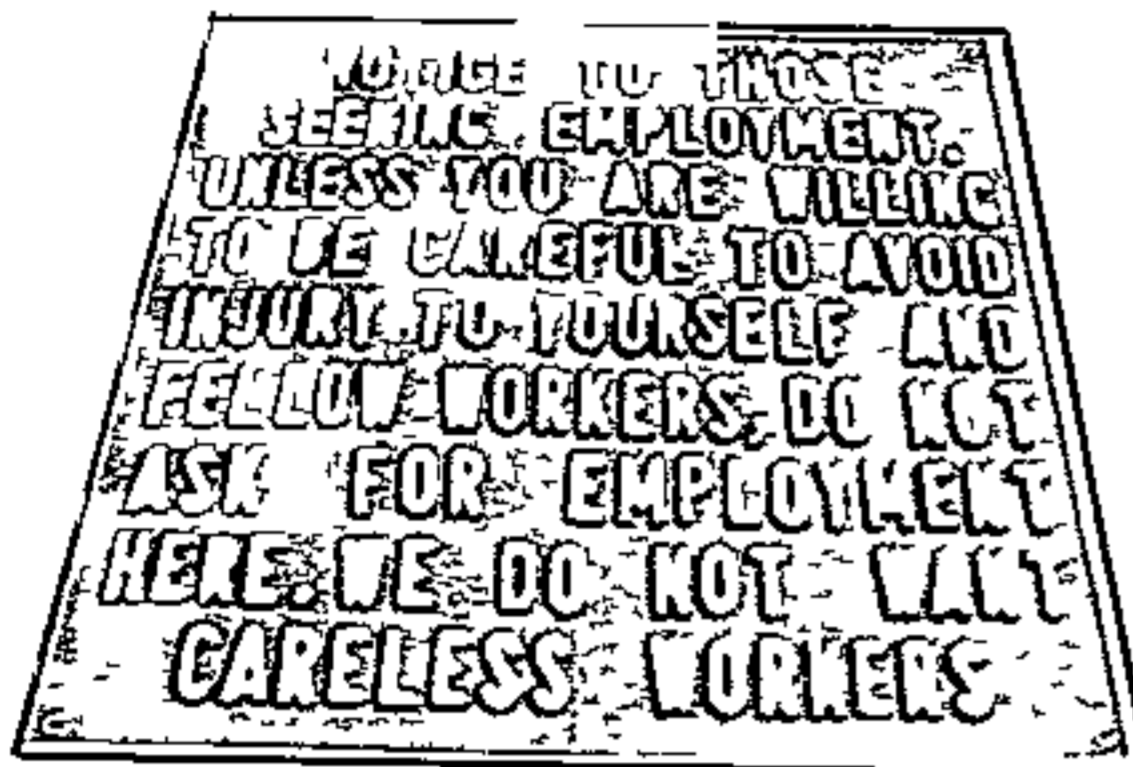
He noted that mining employers "vigorously resisted" the introduction of safer working processes in the past

Mining eventually became a leader in occupational safety in South Africa and abroad — but this did not come without "resistance from both employers and employees", he added

MEN AT WORK

Kas Taljaard, the welder who lost three toes in an accident that ended Foskor's record-breaking run

Getting the message across . . . a typical Foskor safety notice



A PLACE OF SAFETY

Miners always live with danger, but the men at Foskor have an unusual kind of job security — a world safety award.

GUS SILBER went digging for the reason why so few get hurt

Proud safety committee member Philip Ramaila shows off his section's safety achievements



The first thing you notice about the Foskor phosphate mine outside Phalaborwa is that it does not look like a mine at all. It looks more like a Norwegian kitchen.

Every neatly-demarcated working area hums with stainless steel diligence and efficiency. The fact that there is not even a crushed stompie on the ground bears overwhelming testimony to team spirit and worker pride.

Then there are the giant white tyres along the roadside, crammed with red flowers, and the polished workshop floors, and the lengths of chain and black hose arranged with military parade precision, and the

Actually, the first thing you notice is an enormous sign in front of the mine's security gate.

It says "YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE WORLD'S SAFEST MINE"

The boast is not idle, as it turns out

Foskor is the country's chief producer of phosphate, a vital ingredient of agricultural fertiliser and detergents and fizzy cool-drinks, but the real source of pride at the mine is the manner in which the mineral is produced safely. Very safely.

The mine holds the world safety record for opencast mines — 20,64-million man-hours without disabling injury.

To the outsider, such an achievement would probably merit no greater reaction than a mild shrug. What are 20,64-million man-hours, anyway? What is a disabling injury? What is an opencast mine?

All these questions are answered by Foskor's chief safety officer Boet de Lange, a big man with a friendly scowl and a dry sense of humour that does little to disguise his bursting professional pride.

As we stand in the sweltering Northern Transvaal heat, watching a giant electric shovel scoop loads of black bilge from an Aztec-sloped mountain of ore, De Lange explains that an opencast mine is one with no underground operations.

The ore goes from here to a massive mobile crusher (the largest in the world) and from there to other crushers and mills and recovery plants and pneumatic classifiers . . . but wait. You'll see.

Of course, the process is not without its hazards, both chemical and physical. De Lange calls a worker over. "This is Amos Mnisi," he shouts above the raucous drone. "Vertel hulle jou storie."

Amos Mnisi's story is that he had worked on Foskor for 16 years when he caught his hand on the latch door of an electric shovel one day. The door

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S. Times 1/4/84



Spick and span as a hospital ward . . . the gleaming corridor of a stores area

closed suddenly, and he lost two fingers

"I thought the mine would chase me away," he says "I was only worried about my wife and children "

Foskor did not chase Amos away He advanced sufficiently to be promoted to safety supervisor, and the latch doors were modified to prevent similar accidents

Now Mnsi stands at the ore site with a clipboard in his hands and a hard-hat on his head. And safety on his mind All the time

There are 3 600 employees at Foskor, and the total of 20,64-million man-hours represents the time worked in all sections without a disabling injury, one that would prevent a man from working his full shift

The record was "broken" in July 1982 when Kas Taljaard, a welder and

boilermaker, lost three toes in a workshop accident involving crane machinery He returned to work after six months of rehabilitation, although the accident put paid to a promising future as a marathon runner

"The human factor is the most important aspect of safety," explains De Lange "Only 10 percent of accidents are caused by physical conditions The answer is to create an atmosphere of total commitment to the ideal of safety

"It's not enough being totally involved You must be committed Each man must be his own safety officer "

The philosophy is impossible to ignore, even on the briefest tour of Foskor For a start, there are the visual reminders *WERK .VEILIG — OM KREUPEL TE WEES IS HEL, NIP DAAR-DIE STOMPIE!*, I BRING SICKNESS, DEGRADATION AND DEATH, YET FEW

SEEK TO AVOID ME, I AM YOUR WORST ENEMY — I AM CARELESSNESS!

There is also a pictogram showing a big-busted blonde and a man with hollow eyes *NOW HE CAN'T SEE THIS — PROTECT YOUR EYES!*

Each working section at Foskor prominently displays its own safety figures, along with a "Chamber of Horrors" exhibit of tools and safety equipment damaged during accidents and the ubiquitous trophies and shields from the National Occupational Safety Association (NOSA)

At the electrical workshop, which is about as spick and span as a hospital ward there is a display of flashing lights and toy dump trucks and cranes and a sign which says three years have passed without an accident Philip Ramaila, a member of the electrical section's safety committee tells us there is a little competition going to make sure it stays that way

Anyone caught breaking a safety rule is sentenced to buy the meat for the section's regular weekend braai And it is a big section

Yes, adds Boet de Lange, the spirit of competition is strong But there are no real material incentives

"Of course we get little awards from NOSA, a nice pocket knife or what-have-you, but the only real incentive is your life, and your friend's life Also the little word '*dankie*', 'thank you', that works wonders when objectives are achieved We work quite contrary to the idea of hammering a bloke

"The black workers — they come up and greet me with the hands, because I respect them and I say 'thank you' That goes very far, you know "

De Lange adds that black and white workers share the same safety standards and ideals, although the mine's safety committees remain segregated He says this is necessary because the two groups have very different vocabularies

"It's senseless mixing these things at different levels You just get confusion Let me tell you, I can get up at a black workers' meeting and say 'Listen, we have too many little accidents here, and one of you is going to die before the year is out, because the accident is like a snake, a mamba "

"It's something real to them But if I say that to the whites, they'll bladdy laugh at me! Also, I can't get up at a black meeting and say 'You bladdy bastards ' But the white okes will take it on the right level "

De Lange says the accident frequency rate among whites is higher at Foskor This is because whites take too many short-cuts Most black accidents are caused by highly-trained black workers who have decided to risk similar short-cuts

Foskor believes in the long route to occupational safety And this time, says Boet de Lange, it's going to take a lot longer than 20,64-million man-hours to get there ●

Miner dies of poisoning

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A MINE worker died yesterday in the West Vaal Hospital following the outbreak of food poisoning at a mine hostel on March 15

the man's death had yet to be determined

Nine patients are still being treated in hospital. Four of them were admitted at the weekend, suffering from secondary infections — Sapa

In a statement, a spokesman for Anglo American said, however, that the cause of

Sapa 28/3/84

RDM 2/4/84 212

Natal colliery comes out best

ONE of the outstanding achievements in the history of South African mine safety was recorded at the weekend when Kilbarchan Colliery in Northern Natal was awarded the C S McLean Shield, the mining industry's premier safety award for a record fifth time in a row

Presenting the award to the mine manager Mr F P J Snyman, the president of the Chamber of Mines Mr Colin Fenton said the mine's improvement in its safety programme since 1979 had been phenomenal. Kilbarchan's casualty rate (fatalities and reportable injuries combined) had steadily been reduced from 8,91 casualties per 1 000 people in service in 1979, the first year it won the award, to one per 1 000 last year

Mr Fenton said just how exceptional Kilbarchan's achievement was could be judged by the fact that the second-placed mine, Longridge Colliery, had a rate of 6,99 and third placed Vryheid Coronation a rate of 10 per 1 000

"Kilbarchan's safety record stands out like a beacon in what is otherwise a rather gloomy picture," Mr Fenton said.

"Generally 1983 was not a good year for safety in the coal mining industry. The fatality rate for collieries, members of the chamber, rose from 0,99 in 1982 to 1,49 last year — largely as a result of the Hlobane tragedy of course

"But the reportable injury rate also rose, from 8,66 to 8,97 last year. The casualty rate, being a combination of the two, was naturally higher at 10,45, compared with 9,65 in 1982", he said

Echoing recent statements by other spokesmen in the mining industry, Mr Fenton said it was imperative that safety standards and procedures be reassessed and that weaknesses be identified and corrective action be taken. — Sapa

(212) Star
13/4/82
**2 killed at
gold mine**

Two miners have died and four are missing after a pressure burst 2400 m underground at the ERPM gold mine in Boksburg yesterday.

Rand Mines said in a statement today that a further seven miners were injured in the accident, which occurred at about 1 pm in the 58 West Main Reef stope at the mine's south-west vertical shaft.

The statement said full-scale rescue operations started immediately after the rock burst, and are continuing — Sapa.

RDM 16/4/84
Mine death

toll now 7

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Mail Reporter

THE death toll in Boksburg's ERPM gold mine disaster rose to seven early yesterday when rescue teams recovered the bodies of four mine workers

Three miners died instantly, seven were injured and four were missing after a pressure burst 2 400m underground at 1pm on Thursday

A Rand Mines spokesman said yesterday the injured miners were all in a satisfactory condition

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Six bathers are rescued

Own Correspondent
DURBAN -- Six people were rescued in difficult surf conditions at Addington Beach in Durban today
The beach manager, Mr Ian McNaughton, said an inflatable rescue boat was used to rescue four bathers
Lifesavers using torpedo buoys rescued the other two -- Sapa

Miner is still trapped

One miner was still trapped underground after yesterday's rockburst, an Anglo American spokesman for the Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville said today
Two men who were trapped underground had been rescued, the spokesman said
Three miners were killed in the rockburst yesterday
First reports after the rockburst stated that three men were dead, one was trapped and another missing Since then another man was found to be missing
A number of miners suffered minor injuries, the spokesman said
The names of the victims will not be released until their families have been informed

Scream routs three robbers

Vereeniging Bureau
Minutes after assaulting and robbing an elderly Daleside shopowner, Mr R F Perkins, of cash and a pistol yesterday, three robbers ran to the man's home nearby and tried to rob his wife too
However, Mrs M E Perkins screamed so loudly when the men grabbed her that they immediately fled

The R23 000 bull that never heifer

Pretoria Correspondent

A farming partnership has been awarded damages by the Pretoria Supreme Court for a bull that turned out to be indifferent to cows

"It is clear that McKellar Negro did not have the ability to cover cows and was therefore not able to father calves," Mr Justice Weyers said when giving judgment in the hearing that lasted nine days

The two farmers, Mr J H Coetzee and Mr J J de Jager, bought the bull from Dr D J Claassen in September 1980 and were under the impression that it was a good breeding animal

But McKellar Negro was not interested in cows, the two farmers told the court

Not that there was anything wrong with the cows because, after McKellar Negro was withdrawn from the herd, Cherokee Vernon was, the judge said, "beautifully successful".

In addition to the sum they paid for the bull, the farmers claimed an amount of R250 000 for losses they allegedly suffered when McKellar Negro failed to produce any calves But Mr Justice Weyers said they had failed to prove properly how many calves he ought to have fathered and, due to Cherokee Vernon's success, he found they had not suffered any damages in that respect

Dr Claassen was ordered to pay them R23 000 for the cost of the bull and its food as well as the costs of the action

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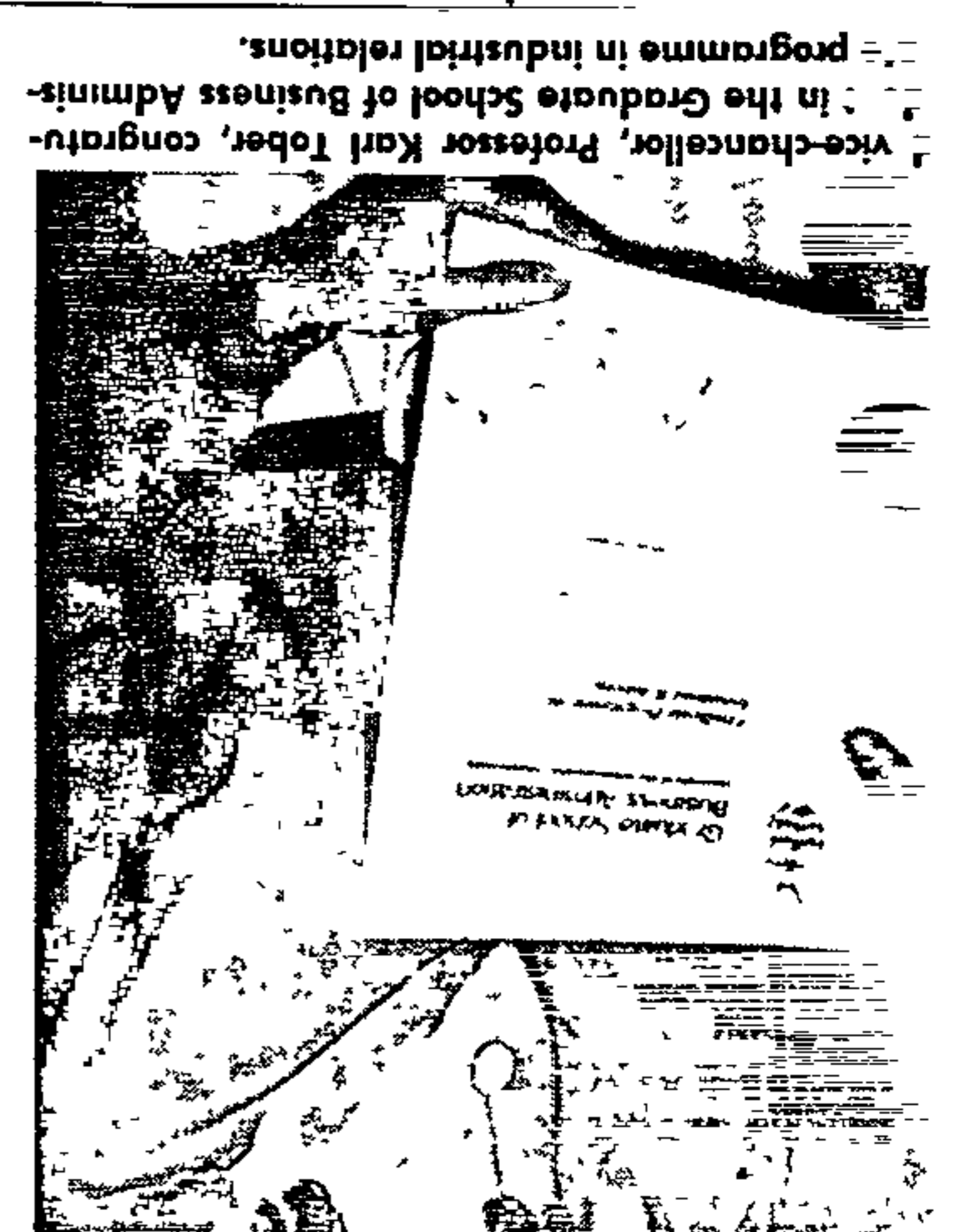
PFP will not contest
Rosettenville seat
By David Braun,
Political Reporter
The Progressive Federal Party will not contest the Rosettenville provincial by-election in June, the PFP leader in the Transvaal Provincial Council, Mr Douglas Gibson, said today.
Mr Gibson, who is also the chairman of the party's Southern Transvaal region candidates committee, said it was extremely fortunate to take part in the

Local race
ace scores
first points
South Africa's Mario Rademeyer scored his first Grand Prix points in the 250 world motorcycle championship when he finished eighth in the Italian Grand Prix

Police
id kill
OWNER
id never come out

It is the second year running that the school has staged the part-time eight-month certificate programme in industrial relations Successful participants included personnel and industrial relations managers and trade unionists
Top student in the programme was Mrs Felicity Wright, information officer at the Institute of Industrial Relations
Joint second place went to Mr John Harker, personnel manager at Hebox Textiles in Natal, and Miss Anne Sacks, a journalist with the Financial Mail.
The United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Programme (Ussa-lep), in conjunction with the school, awarded travel grants to the two management and union students who distinguished themselves in the programme
The recipients were Mr Harker and Mr Sipho Radebe, a general organiser for the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa)

He was the guest speaker at the graduation ceremony for the Certificate Programme in Industrial Relations, run by the University of the Witwatersrand's Graduate School of Business Administration
Speaking on "Management Prerogative - the Sacred Cow", Professor van der Merwe tackled an issue "which is occupying the minds of South African managers very much at the moment".
In an appraisal of current labour trends in this area in South Africa, Prof van der Merwe said it was time employers realised that management prerogative was an ideological stance and not a basic truth
"Those embattled managers need to realise that there is a range of strategic decisions which can be taken Pragmatic adaptation is an alternative."
The problem was compounded by the fact that the average South African



vice-chancellor, Professor Karl Tober, congratulated the graduates in the Graduate School of Business Administration programme in industrial relations.

(212) Star 18/4/84

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN MINES UNDER FIRE

DEATH AND REPORTABLE INJURY RATES PER 1 000 A YEAR, 1974-1983

Year	Death rates per 1 000 a year				Reportable injury rates per 1 000 a year			
	Gold	Coal	Other mines	All members	Gold	Coal	Other mines	All members
1974	1,22	1,07	1,20	1,21	56,12	21,33	30,16	50,04
1975	1,33	1,31	0,77	1,26	51,12	22,75	26,22	44,29
1976	1,38	1,06	0,82	1,27	51,89	22,72	21,65	44,29
1977	1,41	1,32	0,73	1,32	47,56	23,59	21,19	41,04
1978	1,48	1,08	0,56	1,32	47,47	21,64	20,28	40,80
1979	1,25	1,11	0,67	1,16	42,66	14,98	17,62	35,94
1980	1,32	0,94	0,47	1,17	37,66	12,46	12,80	31,39
1981	1,26	1,05	0,60	1,16	32,42	11,61	11,54	27,21
1982	1,25	0,99	0,65	1,15	32,00	8,66	8,33	26,22
1983	1,30	1,49	0,37	1,24	29,93	8,97	9,79	25,37

NOTE: (1) Rustenburg Platinum does not provide information.
 (2) Coal mine figures for 1974 are for Transvaal and OFS only From 1975 coal mine figures include Natal collieries.

Noise leads to widespread deafness

Noise-induced deafness is just one of the occupational hazards miners face

After years of research and a number of comprehensive reports, the South African mining industry still has not come up with any practicable solution to the problem of underground noise

An investigation done by the Chamber of Mines human research labora-

tory in 1980/1 found that among white supervisory staff up to 70 percent of the miners suffered from hearing loss

The noise-induced loss occurs after exposure to high levels of noise (in excess of 85 decibels) over a long period of time It is irreversible

Among black mine-workers up to 40 percent at a time were found to be suffering from hearing

loss The combined total means more than 50 000 mineworkers are suffering from varying degrees of deafness

"Pneumatic drills in the mines are set at 100 decibels, so it is quite conceivable that a couple of years' exposure will lead to hearing loss," said Mr James Fisher, ergonomist and lecturer in the department of psychology at Witwatersrand Uni-

versity A committee of the Chamber of Mines is addressing the problem and hopes to have solutions before the year's end

Professor MDG Salamon, head of the Chamber of Mines Research Organisation, said the mines were already occupied with a long-term project aimed at reducing noise levels as much as possible

"But we haven't yet designed the drill with sound suppressed so we have to fall back on protective gear With the intense heat, earmuffs are not comfortable to wear and produce allergic rashes

"The industrial hygiene branch is preoccupied with trials to evolve acceptable methods of noise reduction"

Mines' medical care 'of the best'

Health factors such as heat, dust and noise on South Africa's mines are aggravated by two unique features — a massive labour force which is largely illiterate, and the deepest gold mines in the world

Stringent measures, to curb dust levels from 1930 onwards have considerably reduced the incidence of occupational respiratory diseases in the gold mining industry

Research estimates calculate that of 100 white miners who are employed for 25 years on a gold mine, about 12 percent contract pneumoconiosis

Heat still remains a problem — even in shallow mines where there is greater mechanisation The Erasmus Commis-

sion lauded the mining industry for its endeavours in the health and safety arena, and South African mines have some of the best medical services in the country today

Regular medical checks are carried out to check for signs of silicosis, tuberculosis, obstructive airways disease or malignant diseases.

Without a "red ticket", which in effect is a health-check pass, the miner cannot be employed on the mines.

But with the high turnover of black miners, accurate records are not always kept of those who have worked on the mines.

And those who become ill after leaving the mines cannot claim compensation.

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Star

18/F/84

pany of loss control management developed by the International Loss Control Institute in Atlanta.

On the mines, the system depends as much on the controls implemented by senior management as it does on line management to put them into effect.

Internal audits are supposed to be conducted regularly and once a year auditors from the Mine Safety Division will conduct an external audit. The mines are then graded.

This does not necessarily mean that the mine will maintain the same safety awareness throughout the next year, points out Mr Gill.

If the system is operat-

representation in the mine safety system.

Almost as a direct response to union pressures, the chamber accorded independent unions a position on the Prevention of Accidents Committee for the first time this year.

Formed in 1913, the PAC acts in an advisory capacity to the Mine Safety Division and comprises representatives from industry, government and union bodies.

But there is no guarantee the NUM will be satisfied with what they consider a chamber sop

Once the major obstacles of organising and consolidating have been overcome, mine safety is almost certain to be taken up at shaft level.

"I felt a strong, hot gust coming down the roadway which swept me off my feet. I was thrown against the roof and landed in a pool of water caused by burst pipes. I crawled out of the water on to the left side of the tunnel. It was very difficult to breathe. I heard the cries of two people from further up the tunnel crying that they were dying. Their voices seemed to choke and die out."

"I tried to walk down the tunnel, but twice fell on my face. I proceeded to crawl. The dust had settled and the inside of the mine looked like a mist" (Laurence Mngomezulu, aged 26, survivor of the Hlobane coalmine disaster)

The death rate on South African coal mines during 1983 was the highest in a decade. The death rate for all mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines was higher last year than in the preceding four years.

The "culprit" was Hlobane — "a disaster waiting to happen", in the words of a senior mine official.

EXPLOSION

The disaster did happen — on the morning of September 12 last year when a methane and coal dust explosion ripped through two sections of the colliery, killing 68 mineworkers.

At the joint inquiry and inquest into the causes of the explosion in February, it was not only the mine that came under scrutiny but mine safety as well.

Evidence heard revealed unsafe machinery, lack of management control and a disregard for mine safety regulations at the colliery.

Yet in spite of all this, the mine had a four-star rating (obtained on September 17 1982) under the Chamber's International Mine Safety Rating Programme and was "quite a good mine" in the opinion of the Natal Inspector of Mines, Mr G Boswell.

In previous years, the disaster might have done no more than cast a shadow over the industry's safety record, but the two-year-old and rapidly

Health and safety on the mines have become major labour issues in South Africa. For the first time in the history of the mining industry, a black union, the National Union of Mineworkers, has fastened on to mine safety as a priority, and the 1983 Hlobane coalmine disaster raised the question of the adequacy of mine health and safety safeguards. In the second part of the series on occupational health and safety in South Africa, Labour Reporter CAROLYN DEMPSTER examines management and union views and takes a look at the current system governing mine safety.



Hlobane horror raises questions

(212) Star 18/4/84

growing National Union of Mineworkers has taken a keen interest in health and safety issues and has made it clear that it is not prepared to let the case lie.

The question that still remains, and has been raised in public by the vice-president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr G Y Nisbet, is whether the conditions found at Hlobane are common to other collieries and at other mines.

QUESTIONS

With increasing pressure being applied by NUM, the questions are mounting up. Does the IMSR system work and if not, why not? Are mine managements doing all they can to minimise occupational diseases — deafness, heat afflictions, respiratory ailments? Do productivity and profit come before safety?

Safety on the mines is governed both by the legal constraints of regulations in the Mines and Works Act, and by the standards laid down by mine management and measured by the Chamber of Mines' Mine Safety Division, which implements the IMSR system.

The Chamber of Mines' official policy on safety states that no phase of operation or administration is of greater impor-

tance than accident prevention.

However, The Star has determined that certain mines, which appear to be instituting rigorous safety standards, do not necessarily follow these through at the face.

According to an underground mine official at one of South Africa's largest gold mines "The IMSR scheme presents an image to the public of safe practices on the mines. Back on the front line where the accidents take place there is a second set of standards — and that is production at all costs."

"Should anyone report an incident which may lead to a loss, the forms will promptly get lost, no feedback or action will be taken and the originator branded as a troublemaker or inciter." (The official wished to remain anonymous because of his position)

A report of high levels of deadly methane gas a week before the Hlobane explosion was scored out of the report book and the official concerned told the Inspector of Mines he had been a party to the erasure because "I didn't want any hassles with the loss control department."

The Government Mining Engineer, Mr G P Badenhorst, addressing col-

liery managers in October 1983, said explosions in mines during the year had resulted in more than 100 fatalities.

During investigations by the mines inspectorate a number of "disturbing facts" had come to light.

"In recent times we have found faulty electrical installations, faulty flameproof enclosures, untamped shot holes, blocked spray nozzles and a host of other potential igniting sources."

"All these things point to one thing and one thing only: poor front line supervision."

Mr Anthony Gill, the new head of the chamber's Mine Safety Division, is the first to admit that any system can be beaten and human beings have their frailties.

GUIDELINES

But he believes that if mine managements are committed to the system and adhere to IMSR guidelines, the system will be effective.

He points to the steady decline in fatality and injury rates on South African mines since 1974 as an example of the constant striving for improvement.

The IMSR system was first introduced to South

ing properly, there should be fewer injury-causing accidents leading to a reduction in losses and hence greater productivity, he says.

However, the onus ultimately rests on mine managements to ensure training is given, directions are carried out and the regulations are followed.

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the rapidly growing National Union of Mineworkers, sees the union playing a dual role.

On the one hand, NUM members are advised not to work underground if they feel an area is unsafe.

In the event of an accident resulting in injury or death, the union has pushed for representation at official inquiries.

Mr Ramaphosa claims that the "production at all costs" attitude is often the underlying cause of accidents.

BONUSES

He states that white miners receive safety bonuses for injury and fatality-free shifts, but they receive greater bonuses if productivity targets are reached. "This gives white miners greater incentives to avoid reporting minor accidents."

Owambo govt offices rocked by explosions

WINDHOEK — Two bomb explosions damaged government offices in northern Namibia today, five days after a blast in the area killed two US diplomats, the authorities have said

There were no casualties in the 3 30 am explosion at Oshakati, 40 km south of the Angolan border, said Mr Frans Viljoen, secretary of the Local Government Administration Board.

A government spokesman said a second bomb went off in a tribal office in Ondangwa, 30 km south-east of Oshakati, but no other details were available.

Nobody has yet claimed responsibility for either blast.

Commenting on the Oshakati blast, Mr Viljoen said damage of about R60 000 had been caused

There had been no casualties as the buildings had been deserted at the time.

Last Sunday, a powerful bomb at the Okatana Service Station in the town killed two US diplomats, Mr Dennis Keogh and Lieutenant-Colonel Ken Crabtree, and an Owambo civilian, Mr Thomas Najambonde — Sapa.

● See Pages 3 and 7,
World section.

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**13 injured miners
still in hospital**

Star 24/4/84
Thirteen mineworkers are still in hospital after a methane gas explosion, in which three black miners were killed, at Beisa Mine, near Welkom, in the Orange Free State

The cause of the explosion, which occurred at 10 30 pm on Sunday, is unknown. The names of the dead and injured are being withheld

ADM 25/4/84 212

Key hearing on miners' rights

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

THE final hearing of a crucial dispute between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Gold Fields of South Africa is to be heard by the industrial court today.

The case could test the right of workers to refuse to work if they believe their working conditions to be unsafe.

It is the culmination of eight months of legal wrangling between the two parties which began when 17 mineworkers were fired from the West Driefontein mine near Carletonville in September last year.

The workers had refused to go underground

because they believed conditions in the mine to be unsafe.

The NUM has charged that Gold Fields, owners of mine, has committed an unfair labour practice by firing them.

A special inquiry held by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs found the mine to be safe but the industrial court ordered that the workers be temporarily reinstated.

Gold Fields has refused to rehire the workers though it has paid their wages and made it clear it intends to recover the money if it wins the case. A conciliation board failed to settle the dispute earlier this year.

RAM 26/4/84 (212) ~~212~~

'Insults' claim in mine safety case

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK
A MINEWORKER who was fired with 16 others for refusing to work, because they believed conditions to be unsafe, alleged yesterday that a white shift boss had called him and the others "dogs" and threatened to replace them with the "many other dogs from the mine school".

Mr M Lebea told the industrial court which is hearing a dispute between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Gold Fields of South Africa that the workers had been verbally and physically abused by the shift boss, Mr Alfred Bickford, when they refused to work

The hearing is the culmination of a legal battle between Gold Fields and the NUM. This began in September last year when the 17 workers were fired by the West Driefontein mine for re-

fusing to work because they regarded conditions in the mine as unsafe

A Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs inquiry last year cleared as safe the area on the 14th level of the mine where the workers had refused to work

Gold Fields has claimed that over the period that the workers refused to go underground, they were repeatedly assured that it was safe

Mr Lebea told the court that almost a week after they had refused to work they had been informed by the mine manager, Mr Keith Spencer, of an inspector's report that the area was safe.

After this they had still refused to work and had been discharged

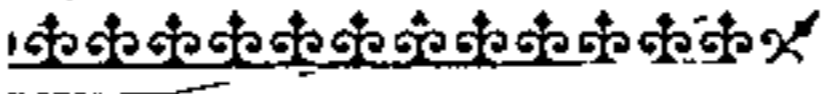
He said if the inspector himself had addressed them and assured them that the area was safe, he would have returned to work

Mine claims

(212) *Star. 26/4/84*
two civilians

WINDHOEK — Two civilians were killed and five injured in a landmine blast yesterday 20 km north-east of Oshigambo in northern Namibia, the South West African Territory Force said in a statement.

Five civilians have now died in incidents during the past week. — Sapa



Write to PO Box 61682 Marshalltown 2107

Mine safety — no cause for comfort

217 Star 30/4/84

Carolyn Dempster is to be congratulated on her article, "Occupational health and safety in South African mines" (The Star, April 18).

Less worthy of congratulation is the response of Mr Anthony Gill, the new head of the Chamber of Mines Safety Division, who points to the steady decline in fatality and injury rates on South African mines since 1974 as an example of the constant striving for improvement". Mr Gill's statement is only true in part

The statement in respect of "reportable injury rates" is true, in respect of "fatalities" it is untrue; as the tabulation below shows. (The Star, April 18.)

● More efficient equipment and techniques in emergency and intensive care wards

● Improved physio-therapeutical treatment

Regrettably, these advances are of little help in reducing "fatalities", since, in the vast majority of cases, death occurs at the scene of the accident

There is little, or nothing, in the safety situation in South African mines to give comfort to anyone

Jack Curtis

Norwood

will decide this. But its ruling in the workers' earlier application may give some indication of its approach.

The court accepted that West Drie had not committed an unfair labour practice. It also held that it was not its job to set standards to which employers must comply before firing workers

But it did grant the workers' request for temporary reinstatement because it said this would promote collective bargaining on an issue with implications for the entire mining industry

So it stopped short of laying down criteria which would bar employers from firing workers in this situation — but did seem to endorse negotiation on safety issues

RDM 30/4/84 (212)
THE long-running safety dispute between Goldfields' West Driefontein mine and the National Union of Mineworkers reappeared in the industrial court last week, only to be postponed indefinitely.

Last year, the court temporarily reinstated 17 NUM members who were fired for refusing to work in an area of West Drie they considered unsafe. The case has now come before the court for a final verdict.

It tests whether workers can refuse to work in an area they consider unsafe even if, as in the West Drie case, an official inquiry has found it to be safe. This has implications for all industries

It is unclear when the court

Hlobane colliery disaster was the main contributor

831 die as SA mine accident rate soars

212. Star 1/5/84

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

Gold and coal mine deaths rose sharply in South Africa during 1983, say the latest reports of the Chamber of Mines and the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

During the year 831 workers died in mining operations — 230 more than in 1982.

The annual report of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, presented to Parliament last week, attributed the increase to the "larger than normal number of tragic multiple-death accidents".

With the Hlobane Coal Mine disaster last September, in which 68 workers died, and the methane explosion at the Beisa Uranium Mine in April, which claimed 16 lives, coal mine deaths rocketed to 129 — almost double the 1982 total.

The Chamber of Mines death-rate figures for collieries show a jump from 0,99 for every thousand mineworkers a year in 1982

to 1,49 per thousand in 1983. This is the worst rate for more than a decade

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs report said it found it hard to explain the increase because operations at some mines were reduced during the year.

But it said it intended giving serious attention to the quality of supervision of accident prevention

Rockbursts

At least 10 of the accidents reported were rockbursts. Active research into rockbursts by a chamber team has not been able to determine when they are likely to occur.

Reportable injuries at mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines totalled 15933 — 548 on gold mines

In terms of the Mines and Works Act, a man receives a "reportable" injury when he is away from work for 14 days or longer.

During the year, 205 fires broke out — causing R21,5 million damage and resulted in the deaths of 16 people.

CAPE TIMES 3/5/84
Mine death toll grows

JOHANNESBURG — Accidental deaths in South Africa's coal and gold mines totalled 831 last year, 230 more than in 1982, the Chamber of Mines said this week.

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs said it could not explain the increase because operations at some mines were reduced.

The Hlobane colliery disaster last September in which 68 miners died and the methane gas explosion at Beisa Uranium mine in April, which killed 16, swelled the death totals.

The Chamber of Mines said the death rate for collieries jumped from 0.99 per thousand mineworkers a year in 1982 to 1.49 in 1983 — UPI

Old misprint made report on mine deaths incorrect

In the article which appeared under the heading "831 die as SA mine accident rate soars" in The Star on Tuesday May 1, it was reported that 230 more people had died in mining accidents last year than in 1982

This should have read 24 — an increase in fatalities of three percent, not 72 percent.

The error was caused through a misprint in a year-old news report which dealt with comparative figures for 1982. The Star regrets the mistaken con-

clusions reached in the report on this page last week.

Altogether 807 people died in the mining industry in 1982, and the increase in deaths in 1983 is almost completely attributable to the Hlobane coal mine disaster

The number of reportable injuries incurred last year (15 833) is half the number reported in 1974. Figures point to a steady decline in the number of reportable injuries over the decade, the Chamber of Mines reports.

Mines urged to strive for lower fatality rate

By Stan Kennedy

While South Africa's mining accidents statistics for last year show continued improvement in the overall performance of mines serviced by the Chamber of Mines, there is concern that the fatality rate has not followed the major decline in that for injuries.

The casualty rate — deaths and reportable injuries — has fallen steadily and last year's 6,61 casualties per 1 000 workers was about 50 percent down on 1974.

Almost all the improvement was in the injury rate, down 49 percent. The death rate of 1,20 per 1 000 in 1974 was virtually unchanged at 1,24 last year.

"What now needs examining is why the death rate has not decreased to the highly significant and very welcome decline in the injury rate," says the Chamber's newsletter.

'BEDEVILLING FACTOR'

Reportable injuries on gold mines, which employ 486 000, also fell in line with the industry as a whole. These reached a record low of 29,93 per 1 000 workers. But the death rate rose marginally from 1,25 per 1 000 workers in 1982 to 1,30 in 1983.

The chamber says the "bedevilling factor" was the death of 69 workers in eight major accidents last year, against 49 in five major accidents in 1982.

Of 607 deaths on gold mines last year, 96,3 percent were underground, giving an underground death rate of 1,70 per 1 000 workers, against 573 deaths and a rate of 1,66 in 1982.

"In the case of gold mines, there may be some small comfort in that the death rate has not deteriorated despite mining operations being done on an increasing scale and at steadily increasing depths."

The death rate on coal mines, which employ 81 000, and which was improving in recent years, rose to 1,49 per 1 000 workers as a result of the Hlobane disaster.

KOM 7/6/84
Man dies in ⁽²¹²⁾ Welkom mine
A WHITE miner died in a fall at a Western Holdings mine at Welkom yesterday
Anglo American said said the fall occurred on the 45th level of Western Holdings' Number Four shaft — Sapa

slips under train loses both feet

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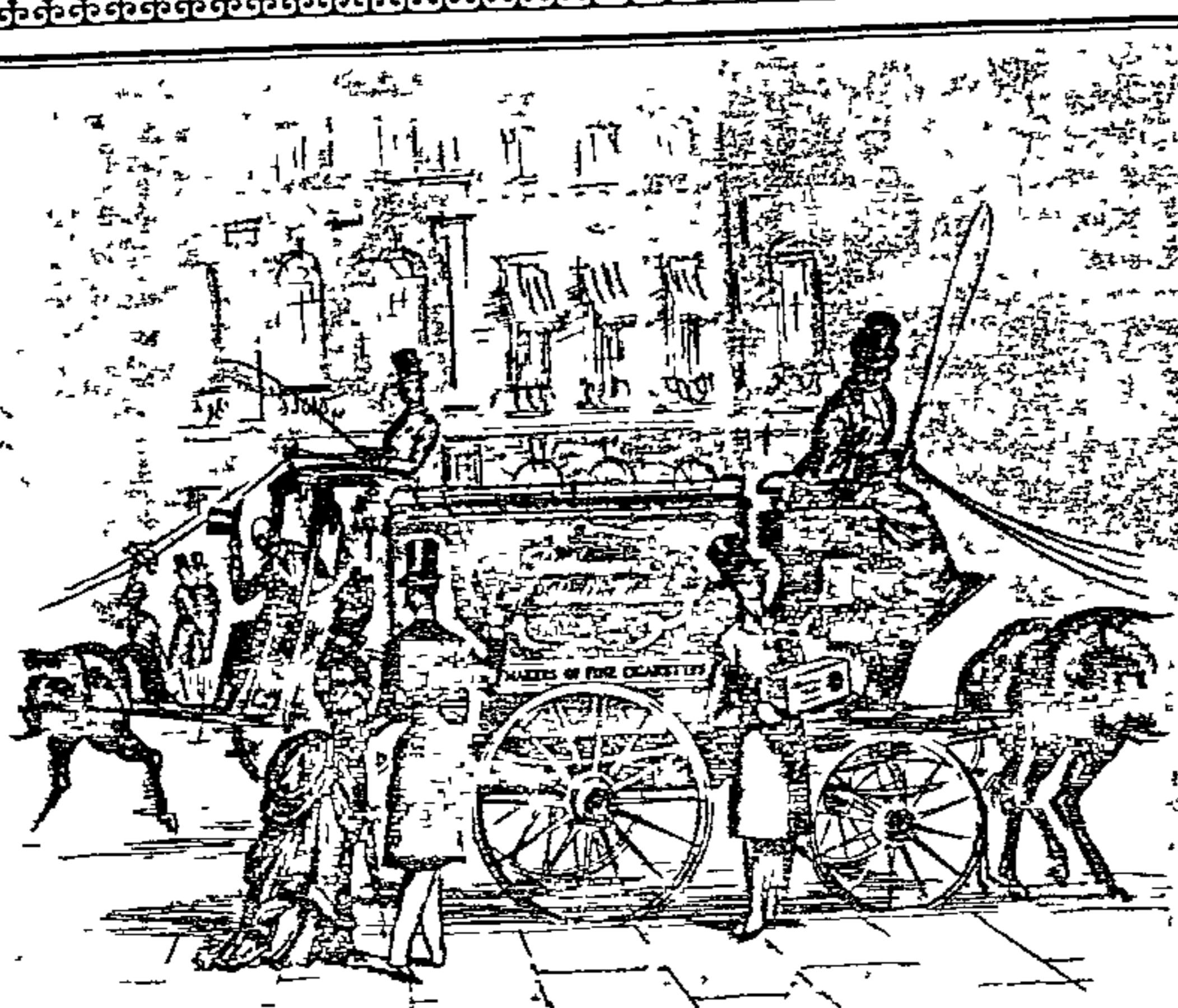
Mr Kearns slipped — and fell between it and the platform.
According to a commuter on the train, the conductor did not appear to have seen Mr Kearns fall and the train continued its journey despite warning shouts from passengers
"I heard one of the passengers shout 'The old man has fallen, stop the train, stop' The passenger was frantic," she said
Mr Kearns is in a seri-

ous condition in the intensive care unit of the Kempton Park Hospital and will undergo an operation today
The orthopaedic surgeon who will perform the operation said Mr Kearns would be left with only the ankles and heels of both feet.
"At his age, it will be difficult for him to walk again," he said
Mr Kearns, an employee of a Doornfontein publishing company, was due to retire next month.

Miner ²¹² *Star* dies in 7/6/84 rockfall

A miner has died in a rockfall at a Western Holdings mine at Welkom, Anglo American announced in Johannesburg today
The fall occurred at 8 am today on the 45th level of Western Holdings' No 4 shaft.
There were no other casualties and the dead man's name will not be released until his next of kin have been informed
— Sapa.

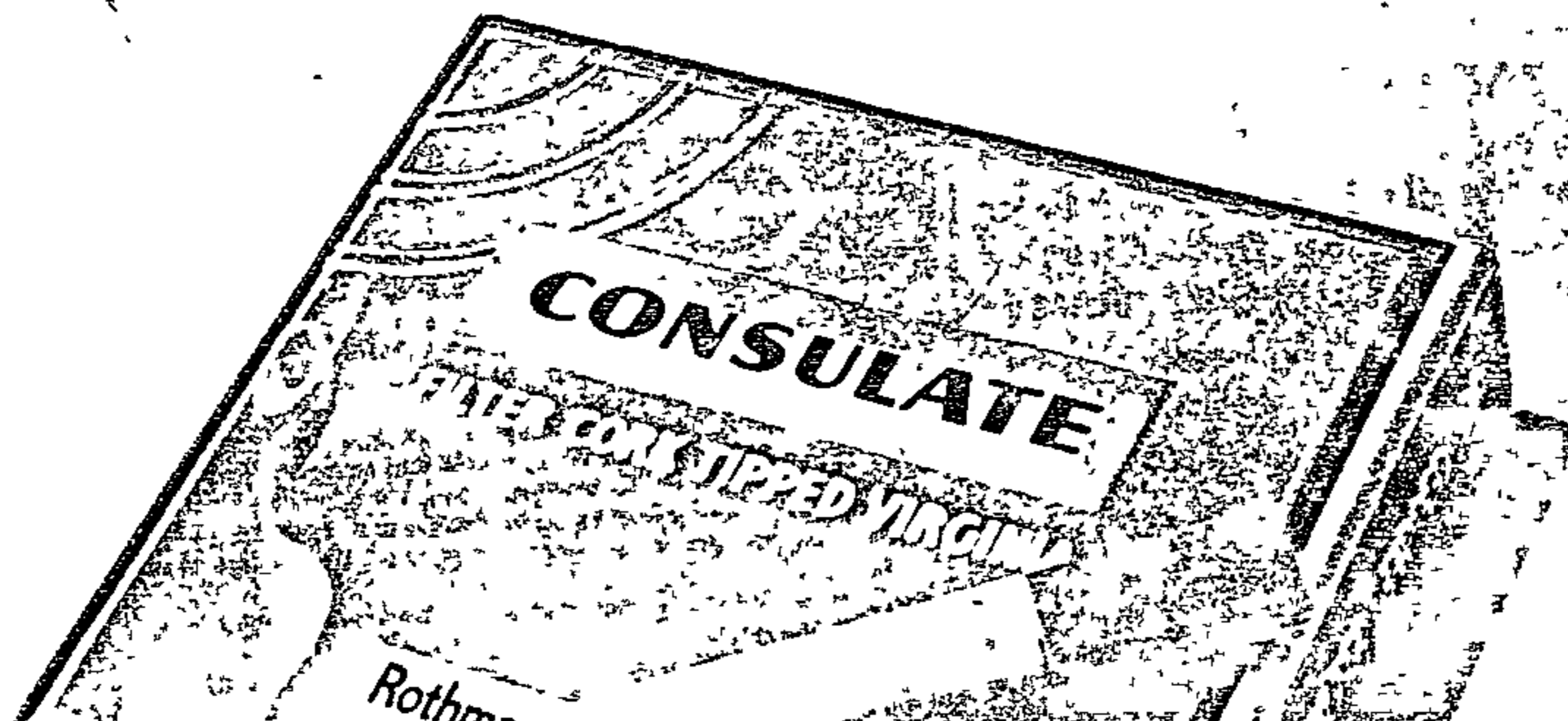
"I buried it. My son, who lives next door, said he had also found a dog's paw on his lawn"
The SPCA's Benoni manager, Mrs Paula Terblanche, described the killing as "one of the most sadistic acts of animal cruelty I have seen"
Benoni police station commander Major H M Koekemoer said police were investigating
"I would love to get my hands on the person responsible," he said
The Anderson family are offering a reward for information about the killing of their pet.
Anyone who can help the police should contact Major Koekemoer at 54 4446, extension 150, or the Benoni charge office at 54 131



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^{Stow}
Bodies of
miners (212)
28/6/84
recovered

West Rand Bureau

After an extensive search, the bodies of the two remaining mine workers who were trapped under a rock fall at the third shaft of the West Rand Consolidated mine in Luipaardsvlei have been recovered.

The accident happened on Saturday morning. A 3 m layer of rock fell about 25 m on the seventh level of the third shaft.

Three black mine workers were trapped and killed.

No one else was injured.

The first body was recovered on Saturday, but rescue teams were unable to recover the other two bodies immediately as their exact location was not known.

Sowetan 29/6/84 (212)

Miners' bodies found

AFTER an extensive search, the bodies of the two remaining mine workers who were trapped under a rock fall at the third shaft of the West Rand Consolidated Mine in Luipaardsvlei on Saturday, have been recovered.

The accident occurred

on Saturday morning when a three metre layer of rock fell about 25 metres on the seventh level of the third shaft at the mine.

Three mine workers, who were underground at the time were trapped and killed. No one else was injured

The first body was recovered on Saturday, but rescue teams were unable to recover the other two bodies until Tuesday as their exact location was not known.

This is the first serious fall of ground at the West Rand Cons Mine in a long time.

ROM 12/7/84 (212)

Noise levels put miners at risk of becoming deaf

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

DURBAN.— Most miners have a one in three chance of impaired hearing because of noise levels — and Government safety regulations made no attempt to control this, a labour law conference in Durban was told yesterday.

This charge was made by Mr Paul Benjamin, of Wits University's Centre for Applied Legal Studies, in a paper sharply attacking mine safety standards.

Mr Benjamin predicted that safety would grow as a bargaining issue on the mines "Safety will always be an issue in an industry as hazardous as the South African mining industry," he said.

He argued that the emergence of the black National Union of Mineworkers had "shattered the cosy relationship that has existed between the State and the Chamber of Mines in regulating safety in the industry"

Mr Benjamin said there were more mine deaths in 1983 than in 1982

The legal basis of safety on the mines were regulations promulgated in terms of the Mines and Works Act. However, the mines inspectorate which was charged with implementing them was understaffed

Mr Benjamin quoted a study which indicated that the ratio of inspectors to workers in South Africa was "considerably worse" than in Britain

The regulations had not been revised since 1970 and

set out minimum standards only.

But, he charged, evidence at the recent inquiry into the Hlobane mine disaster indicated that mine managements regarded them as maximum standards and did not fully enforce them

A prominent area of safety such as noise was not, he said, covered at all by the regulations. Studies had shown that mineworkers were exposed to noise levels well above those allowed by the law for factory workers

This meant miners enjoyed no legal protection against possible deafness or other disability through exposure to noise

Because blacks could not obtain blasting certificates on mines, they were totally excluded from the hierarchy of those entrusted with mine safety.

The Chamber of Mines, he said, argued that it had improved safety standards markedly by introducing a system known as "total loss control" But death rates on the mines had remained consistently high over the past six years and there was no evidence that the system had decreased mine deaths.

The system, he said, was based on the idea that improved safety was always more profitable to employers, but this was not always the case. At times, he said, safety measures required expenditure which would reduce profits.

This concept, he charged, also denied the need for union and worker intervention in safety issues.

defiant col levy



father of horse dressage in South Africa, said farewell to the Johannesburg yesterday.

Picture: ROBERT TSHABALALA

champ bids farewell

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Born in Poland, it was only when he saw the grace and beauty of dressage riding in Germany after the Second World War that he really became interested in the sport.

"I was hooked. When I got to South Africa, I started building up the team and started riding Lipizzaner horses myself," he said.

Maj Iwanowski won the South African dressage cham-

ionships six times.

Although he feels sad about leaving, he believes he is a "nomad" and that his work in South Africa has been completed.

"I'm looking for a new country, new people and perhaps even new horses," Maj Iwanowski said in his charming Polish accent.

"At my age I'm still interested in schooling young horses and am enjoying every minute of it."

e slates gression'

abwean
Munabo

South Africa continues to support them with weapons and training with which to de-stabilise Zimbabwe."

18 killed in bomb attack

NEW DELHI — About 18 people died after Soviet war-planes and helicopter gunships dropped fragmentation bombs on the Afghan town of Istalef, a Western diplomat said in New Delhi yesterday.

Asbestos disease hits hard

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

IN a 10 month period to June this year, up to 134 workers at the Penge asbestos mine were paid workmen's compensation after being found to be suffering from asbestosis, a lung disease caused by asbestos dust.

And workers found to be suffering from the disease were regularly paid off by the mine, according to a medical consultant to Gencor and officials of the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union (Bamcwu).

The mine — which employs about 1 700 black workers — has been in the news recently because of a strike over wages and the refusal of dismissed workers to leave the mine hostel.

Files at the magistrate's office in Praktiseer, near Penge in Lebowa, show that between August 3 last year and June 11 this year there were 134 workmen's compensation payouts for "occupational disease". The vast majority of these were for asbestosis, a scarring of the lung tissue.

A physician who acts as a consultant to Gencor told the Mail yesterday that the high incidence of lung disease at the mine was restricted to older, long-serving workers. He said stricter control in the industry in the past five years had made the risk of asbestosis damage remote.

See Page 11 (217)302

E EMIELIA JAPOSCHEF
Crime Reporter

POLICE have released the first sequence of photographs — taken by a secret surveillance camera — during a R10 600 bank holdup in Johannesburg this week.

These pictures may provide a vital clue to the identity of the robbers and detectives have made an urgent appeal to the public to be on

Sol drops R3m casino claim

By GEOFFREY ALLEN

SOL Kerzner's Sun International group of gambling hotels has withdrawn its R3 400 000 civil action against former Sun City casino staff who allegedly stole the money over the tables.

The thieves admitted to having taken R133 752.

The Sun City "scam" came to light after an American had been mugged in Braamfontein, Johannesburg and his briefcase, which contained a diary listing the names of people working the fiddle and the various amounts they had taken, was stolen.

Mr Kerzner established a meeting with the mugger and paid thousands of rands for the list of names.

There has been an on-going dispute between Sun International and a consortium of insurance companies as to the exact amount the casino staff stole.

the lookout, he snapped by the... The series of "camera" shots were taken by three robbers who up a cashier at Bank in Grant Avenue on Tuesday.

The three men masked and one balaclava, ordered Lanzani — in the presence of three clients — to tie bag. They had filled it with

But the "secret surveillance" clicking away at every move on film.

Late yesterday, Murder and detectives released the pictures the

The young man is wanted to with their robbery team.

He is about 32, has a light complexion, 1.65m tall. He was during the holdup wearing a gold rimmed tinted white shirt and a suit.

Police said the "ing the balaclava holdup was about and the third man, beard, had a dark complexion and was fat dressed.

The robbers are to have escaped, yellowish/lime

A reward of been offered by Bankers' Association information arrest and conviction robbers.

Anyone who asked to contact police at 837-4114.

INSURANCE OFFER

U.S.S.I.

On the West Coast, this amazing tour visits

Portrait of a little boy who may be dicing with death

CHILDREN who play on the asbestos dumps in the Penge mining area are dicing with death, according to an occupational health specialist.

"In 30 years time some of those children will show signs of having contracted asbestos-related diseases," said the specialist.

He said cases of mesothelioma — cancer of the lining of the lung — had been found among people who had holidayed in the area of an asbestos mine in the north-western Cape.

The only known cause of mesothelioma is

exposure to asbestos and it may only be for a few months. It takes about 25 to 30 years to surface and is therefore very difficult to trace the origins," he said. "It has a short contraction and a long 'lag' period."

"Even people living in the area of an asbestos mine are at risk of contracting the disease — depending on the dust factor," said the specialist.

There are three main asbestos mines in South Africa — Penge, in the north-eastern Transvaal, one in the Eastern Transvaal and another in the north-western Cape.



● Mthayeleje Phogole on the asbestos dumps. In 30 years he may have a fatal lung disease

Probe into asbestosis at Penge

By SARAH CROWE

fused this week to comment on the issue of working conditions in the mines

The mine manager at Penge, Mr A Fouche, referred all questions put to him to the head office in Johannesburg.

At head office, Mr Hart was said to be unavailable for comment.

The administration manager, Mr Vernon Carr, said management had been advised not to comment.

A spokesman for the company's lawyers said. "We cannot comment at this stage about anything relating to the case — which may include working conditions

"We don't know how the other side is going to play it."

A MEDICAL expert will visit the Penge asbestos mine this week to investigate more than 100 suspected cases of lung disease

The Black Allied Mining and Contract Workers' Union (BAMCWU) intends to submit the results of the medical screenings to the Medical and Dental Council should that become necessary

The union's legal advisers will also investigate this week the possibility of taking legal action against Gefco, the owners of Penge mine, over compensation paid to the black miners

Under the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, white mineworkers get R18 000 if an "occupational disease" is contracted and R26 000 if they can prove disability

Black workers receive R1 490 if they contract asbestosis and R1 790 if tuberculosis and asbestosis are contracted

"Cases of asbestosis are too frequent at the mine," said the general secretary of the union, Mr Pandelani Nefolovhodwe. "We have given case histories to medical specialists and they are compiling a dossier"

The Lebowa-based Penge mine has not disputed information that emerged this week that 134 workers — almost 10% of the work force — were "paid out" over a period of 10 months after having contracted asbestosis

The issue of mine conditions and compensation emerged after workers downed tools two weeks ago because of dissatisfaction with an offered salary increase of between 11% and 13%

When they refused to meet management deadlines to return to work they were sacked.

Last week hundreds of new recruits were trucked into the mine to keep it running.

The managing director of Gefco, Mr Pat Hart, said at that time he believed the offered salary increase of 11% to 13% was "generous".

The profits before tax for Gefco for 1983 were R24-million — more than double the pre-tax profits of 1981

This week management applied for a court order to have the workers evicted from the premises and the hearing continues in the Pretoria Supreme Court on Tuesday

About 1 600 workers are still on mine property Gefco management re-

Union to sound health alarm

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

The Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union will launch a health awareness campaign among asbestos mineworkers and in rural communities used as a source of labour for asbestos mines.

The announcement follows last week's disclosures that 134 mineworkers at Penge asbestos mine in the Eastern Transvaal have been laid off and compensated for the lung disease asbestosis during the past 10 months.

"As far as we are concerned, people recruited in the rural areas to work in these mines do not know of the enormous

hazards they are being exposed to," explained Mr P Nefolovhodwe, president of Bamcwu.

"Our intention is to go all out, distributing pamphlets, if necessary, to alert these communities to the dangers of working with asbestos. We owe nothing to the mine managements, but we do owe something to the people who are dying because they were not told and not protected from exposure to the asbestos fibre."

"Mines and factories overseas have been

closed as a result of the anti-asbestos campaign," he said.

The union was also sending a team of medical doctors to the mine to investigate the extent of asbestosis and compile a dossier to be used as part of the campaign, he added.

Mr Nefolovhodwe said it was up to the mines to institute safety measures and provide workers with protective equipment.

Investigations by The Star revealed last week that women recruited at

Penge as supplementary labour were paid R2,50 a shift (up to 10 hours) and were taken on to sort waste material from the asbestos.

In interviews with the women it was found that they were not given any protective gear and, as their job involved handling raw asbestos on conveyor belts, they were constantly exposed to asbestos dust.

Medical examinations, in terms of regulations, are carried out on the mine every six months to check for signs of lung disease.

Although asbestosis is disabling it need not be fatal. But the mineworkers also run the risk of contracting mesothelioma, the fatal lung cancer caused by inhalation of asbestos fibres.

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Safety first call

TRADE UNIONISTS are to fight for workers' health and safety rights — a subject of conflict between workers and employers, according to labour sources.

Some unionists have indicated that they will launch a campaign to alert workers on the dangers and hazards at their workplaces, especially in the mining industry.

The campaign and the awareness comes in the

BY JOSHUA RABOROKO

wake of disclosures that in the past 10 months about 134 mineworkers at Penge asbestos mine in the Eastern Transvaal have been laid off and compensated for lung disease, from asbestos inhalation.

The general secretary of the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (Bamcwu), Mr Phandlamani Nefolovhodwe, said

that the reports at Penge have caused concern in the union because "we are recruiting members there". He said that the health and safety of workers was an important issue because protective measures have to be taken by management in this regard, otherwise, he added, a lot of "our people are likely to become victims

of diseases". They intended distributing pamphlets, especially in the rural areas, to conscientise the workers about health and safety matters. Most rural people were still ignorant or did not care about these rights, he said.

The National Union of Mineworkers (Num) general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said in the mines health and safety is the top priority — it is more important

than wages

"You have to get to the top alive and uninjured to earn the wages. Therefore, to us, health and safety comes first," he added.

The Num recently urged mineworkers to refuse to work at places they considered "dangerous" following the Hlobane coal mine disaster, and the West Driefontein and Western Deep Levels fiasco.

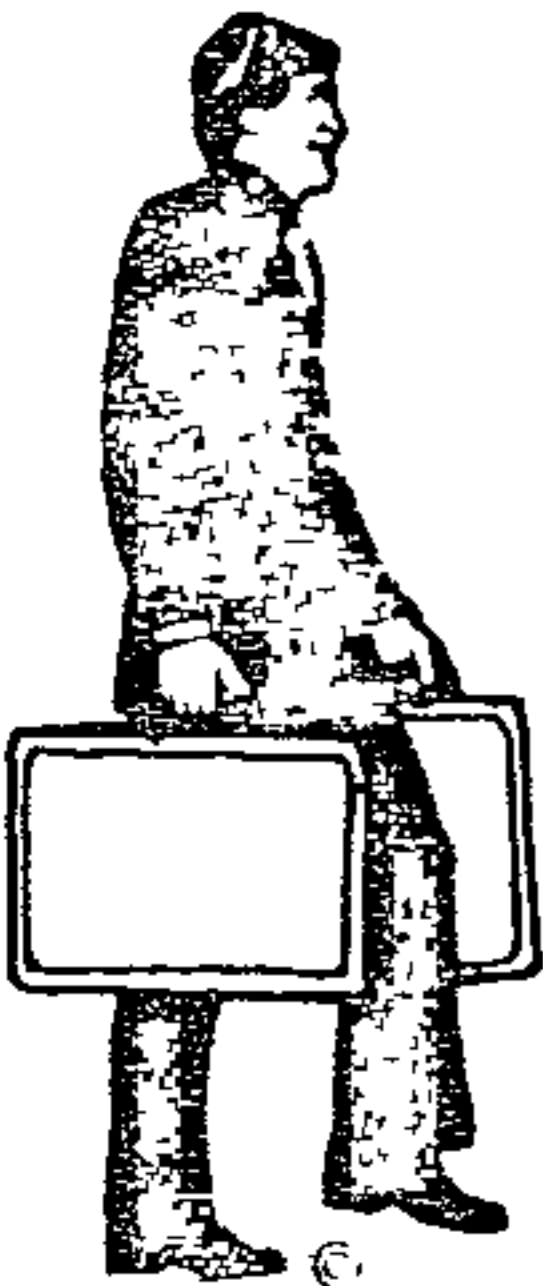


GREAT: Mangaliso Nkumane (left), of Mofolo North, is a fashion designer with a difference. To make the attire he is dressed in, he simply took a bedspread and wrapped himself with it, to portray a picture of an Arab. Ms Cynthia Mahlangu (right), could not help but admire this unusual gear.

PIG PERCY NKOSI

The solution

new home a new
a new lifestyle
ou are a part of the
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ave new needs
classified can provide
solution



The Star
classified 633-2600



"I saw
your
ad
in the
paper..."

People have
been finding
what they
want and
need in
classified for
hundreds of
years And
classified is
still the very
best way to
sell

57 injured when bus skids and overturns

By McKeed Kotlolo
A bus skidded and overturned about 10 km west of Pretoria yesterday afternoon, injuring 57 people

The passengers were on their way home to Mabopane from Pretoria when the accident happened

The injured were rushed to the Ga-Rankuwa Hospital

Of the 57 people, 13 were admitted while the rest were treated and discharged

Mr Dan Rolt, Putco's assistant area manager in Pretoria, said the vehicle's prop-shaft failed, causing it to skid and overturn

Witnesses said the injured people were sprawled on the side of the road, waiting for a fleet of about 10 ambulances from Pretoria and Pretoria North to ferry them to hospital

Some passers-by added that light showers which were falling at the time made it difficult for them to help

Parcels of shopping and other belongings of the injured were scattered over the road after the crash

Mine blast killed 68: company is fined R400

Own Correspondent
MARITZBURG — The death of 68 miners in a methane gas explosion in a Hlobane colliery on September 12 last year resulted in the conviction and fining of a mining company and three officials in the Vryheid Regional Court yesterday

The Vryheid (Natal) Railway Coal and Iron Company was fined R400 on three charges

These were using apparatus which was not flame-proof where there was a risk of igniting gas, using two conveyor belts without devices that would stop them should they break, jam or slip, and unlawfully installing an auxiliary fan in an airway so that return air could possibly pass over a motor and electrical gear

Mine manager D S Watson was found guilty, cautioned and discharged by the magistrate, Mr J D Crafford

Shift boss Petrus J

Klaasens (40) was convicted of neglecting to obey an order from the mine captain to close a break in one of the tunnels. He was fined R200 (or 20 days)

Mineworker Robert Morgan (37) was convicted of failing to carry out Klaasens's instructions to close the hole in the tunnel. He was fined R200 (or 20 days)

The court was told the order from the mine captain, Mr P J Swanepoel, to close the break or hole was for reasons of safety and health

The blast occurred at about 8 am in a shaft five to six kilometres below ground. At the time of the explosion about 1 500 men were underground

Heavy smoke and flames trapped miners and many were believed to have died after inhaling toxic fumes

Mr T Barnard of the Attorney General's office prosecuted. Mr P W A Strydom defended

METRO BRIEFS

Police strike in city pass raids

Police in plain clothes conducted pass raids in Johannesburg yesterday and arrested several men

The raids were held at the corners of Diagonal and Pritchard streets and Diagonal and President streets

People not able to produce their reference books or whose documents were not in order were arrested and put into a police van parked at the corner of Diagonal and Pritchard streets

Police said they were unable to give the numbers arrested

Graham Clarke 'unsatisfactory'

CAPE TOWN — The condition of the Marion Island research team leader, Mr Graham Clarke, who is in hospital with suspected meningitis, is "unsatisfactory, but stable", a Tygerberg Hospital spokesman said

Mr Clarke has been semi-conscious since he was brought from the island nine days ago — Sapa

Astronomer is awarded medal

CAPE TOWN — The outstanding services to astronomy of Mr Danie Overbeek of Edenvale were recognised last night when he was awarded the Gill Medal by the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa

Mr Overbeek is known worldwide for his observations of variable stars

49 arrested in drugs 'clean-up'

Pretoria Narcotics Bureau detectives have arrested 49 people on various charges in a "cleaning-up" operation in the city

Police also reported that Mrs Laura Hendrika le Roux (64) was robbed of R1 904 in cash by two men in her office at about 9 am yesterday — Sapa

Canoeist's body

RANDBURG TOWN COUNCIL

Council throws challenge on 'investment' allegation

By Shirley Woodgate

Randburg councillors last night challenged the chairman of the Ward 13 Ratepayers' Association to prove allegations reflecting on their integrity or face possible legal action for defamation

The challenge came in reaction to a story in the local Randburg newspaper quoting Mr Conrad Plange as claiming at a report-back meeting of the Ratepayers Association that he had proof that councillors were using privileged information to invest in areas which would be rezoned

for new development

The council accepted an urgent proposal by Mrs Del Kevan, leader of the Progressive Federal Party opposition, calling on Mr Plange to reveal his source of information so that appropriate action could be taken

Addressing the Press after the council meeting, Mr Plange denied he had made allegations as stated in the newspaper story. He said the reporter concerned confirmed her story had been changed

Mr Plange said the information he received was factual but he had no

proof the transaction was illegal

He said during the ward meeting his wife had read out a repeat of a request from a ratepayer to investigate a certain transaction

The ratepayers' committee agreed to investigate and consider whether it would write to the council asking for an investigation into this transaction and asking councillors to divulge their property interests in the town

He added there was no urgency and he reserved the right whether to use the information or not

Mine may re-employ strikers

Compensation is called racist and a nightmare

27/7/84

Labour Reporter

No immediate action is to be taken against 1 379 dismissed workers who have refused to leave Penge asbestos mine in the Eastern Transvaal, although an eviction order was granted this week to Egnep, owners of the mine, by the Pretoria Supreme Court.

This was said today by Mr Pat Hart, managing director of Egnep's parent company, Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company.

He said the firm would consider re-employing the miners, but would not say how many of them.

The workers, represented by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union, struck in support of wage demands on July 2 and were fired on July 10 for not returning to work.

The eviction order was granted by Mr Justice J D Curlewis, who turned aside argument by counsel for the miners that they could not be discharged before having a medical examination - according to provisions of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act

By Carolyn Dempster, Labour Reporter
 Compensation for occupational disease or injury has been condemned as racist, discriminatory and a bureaucratic nightmare.

The criticisms have been levelled by a member of the 1982 Nieuwenhuizen Commission of Inquiry into Compensation for Occupational Diseases and labour researchers studying workmen's compensation.

Among the glaring inequities highlighted by Mr J A Hurter, chairman of the Controlled Mines and Works Association and a member of the Nieuwenhuizen Commission, are

- White miners who contract a compensatable occupational disease receive almost 15 times more than black miners
- Millions of rands are paid out after death in compensation for occupational diseases although the disease did not cause or contribute to the death.

It has become the practice that if an autopsy finds so much as a diseased nodule in the lungs the dependants of the dead man are compensated.

But for most black mineworkers who return to the homelands there is scant medical service, not more than 5 percent are examined after death and there is minimal hope of compensation for their families.

● Tuberculosis is treated as a permanent irreversible disease and no provision is made for financial assistance for medical treatment.

In an interview with The Star Mr Hurter also criticised the disparities between the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act and the

Workmen's Compensation Act (WCA)
 "A worker in a factory is actually better off than a chap on the mines. The WCA is non-racial, colourblind, and claims are paid out on a pension basis calculated according to earnings. As a result the factory worker is likely to get more than his mining counterpart, even though they may be suffering from the same disease in the maximum degree," he said.

"It is time the whole mess was sorted out and depoliticised," he added.

But even the Workmen's Compensation Act, which is less blatantly discriminatory, has come under heavy fire from labour researchers.

In a recently released paper Mr Ighsan Schroeder of the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit says most WCA claimants - unskilled workers - are severely discriminated against because

- Awards are calculated as a percentage of earnings and unskilled workers are in the main paid a pittance
- Red tape and staff shortages result in seemingly interminable delays
- Thousands never receive their compensation because they do not know about the award, have returned to a homeland or rural area and cannot be traced. There is R5 121 916 unclaimed
- Workers are prevented from suing employers for damages
- A rebate system favouring employers with a low accident rate discourages them from reporting injuries

● See Page 8, World section



The bride's happiness outshone even her courage as Ngu at the altar with 20-year-old Gary Moore. And Lan, stubbornly refused a chair to ease the pain she suffers church of St Nicholas on Canvey Island was attended by airlifted to Britain from Saigon in 1975. Two years earlier polio

Journalists urged to build understanding among races

pointing out the potential for consensus and co-operation"

Political Staff

The new-

Mine proposals 'could lead to chaos'

If the mines legislation is used as the basis for a new dispensation for worker compensation — as proposed by the Government — the result will be "chaos and economic ruin"

This is the view of Mr J A Hurter, prominent member of the 1982 Nieuwenhuizen Commission into compensation for occupational diseases and chairman of the Controlled Mines and Works Association (CMWA)

In a letter submitted to the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in January this year, the CMWA states "If uniformity is to be attained by projecting any or all of the basic objectionable features of this Act (Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act) into the rest of the Republic's industry, the basic problem (of compensation) will be aggravated instead of being solved"

"A new dispensation which does not eradicate

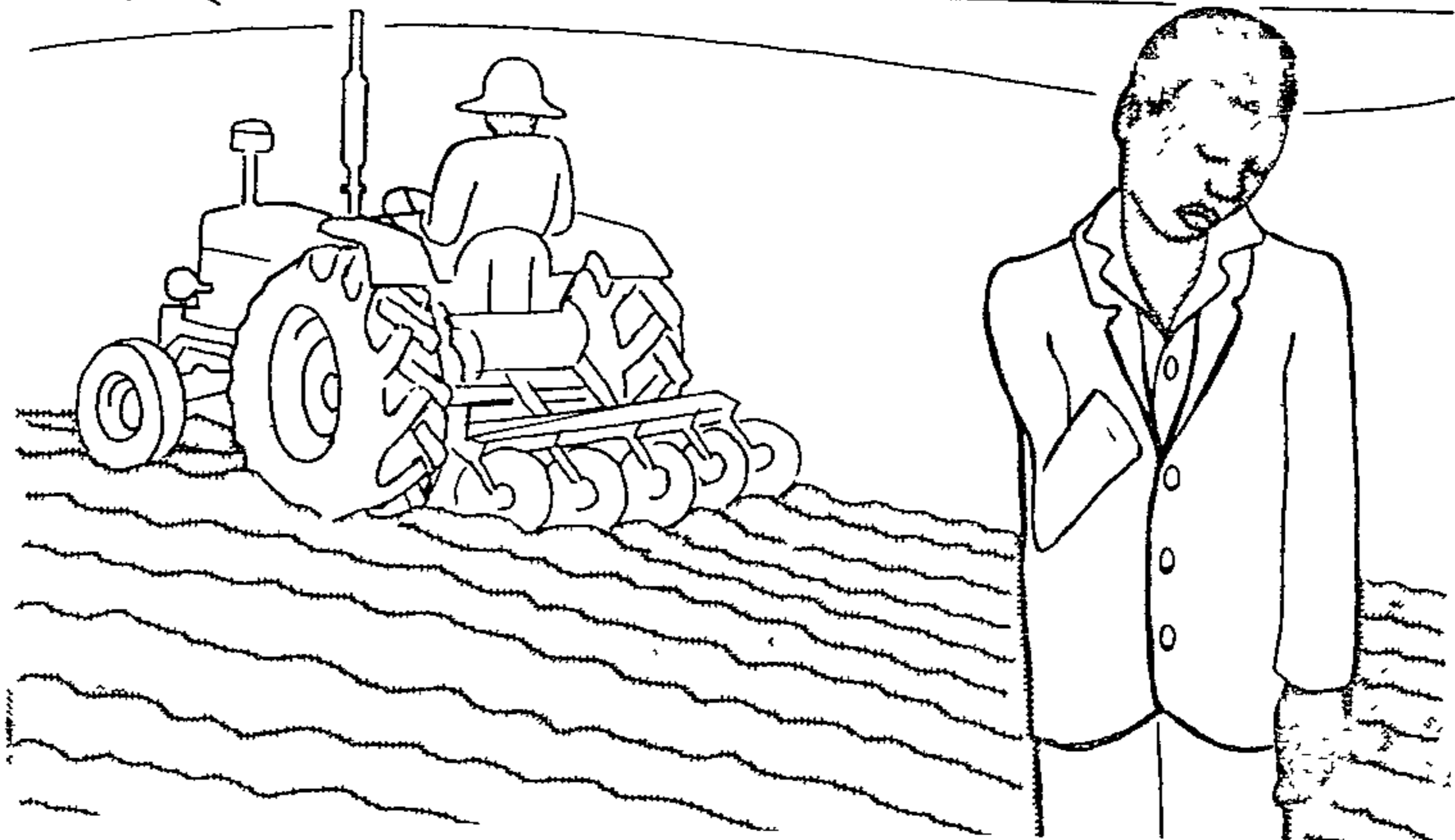
the shortcomings, inequities, anomalies and frustrations will be as short-lived as the present Acts"

The warning comes in the wake of the White Paper issued by the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in response to the recommendations of the 1982 Nieuwenhuizen Commission report

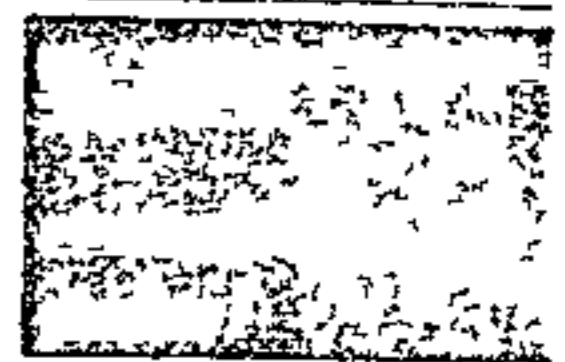
By far the most important recommendation of the commission was that compensation be administered uniformly under a single umbrella piece of legislation

In June 1983 the Minister appointed an interdepartmental working committee — drawing on personnel from the Departments of Health and Welfare, Mineral and Energy Affairs and Manpower — to draft new legislation, using the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act as a point of departure

LIZ WARDER



The long, long



Union will
claim from
death mine

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Own Correspondent

DURBAN — The National Union of Mineworkers is planning to bring massive civil claims against the Hlobane Colliery for compensation over and above any workmen's compensation paid out in respect of 68 miners who died in a methane gas explosion in September last year

Mr Cyril Ramphosa, the union's general secretary, said today that these would total between R1 million and R5 million

Mr Ramphosa added that the union was very disturbed over "the leniency" of the R400 fine imposed on the owners of the Hlobane Colliery and the R200 fines imposed on two mine employees for irregularities which occurred before the fatal explosion

matter how minor, must be reported immediately so that they can be corrected before the possibility of an accident occurs. Mines participating in the ISR programme are graded according to certain set criteria, which are audited annually by the chamber's mine safety division. Top-grade mines are awarded five stars.

The programme came under heavy attack by Paul Benjamin, a researcher with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, when he addressed the recent conference on labour law at Natal University.

Benjamin told the conference "Safety, in the canon of loss control, is the control of all accidental loss. The philosophy's central tenet is that improvements in safety will increase productivity and profitability."

There are certain circumstances in which safety and productivity are linked, he said. But there are also times when they must come into conflict with each other. According to Benjamin, the programme ignores conflicts, such as those between the time consumed in checking that workplaces are safe and the time available for production. It also ignores, he said, the conflicting perceptions of danger between management and the workers who are exposed to risk.

Benjamin pointed out that, at the time of the Hlobane disaster, the colliery had a four-star rating. The inquest, however, revealed a lengthy catalogue of inadequate safety systems and precautions. The overall result showed a vast gap between the "practice and the rhetoric of the mining in-

dustry's approach to safety."

"The ISR programme is preoccupied with the development of safety procedures that are excellent on paper. Much of the evidence at the Hlobane inquest was taken up with the recitation of these procedures. The weakness, and the cause of the tragedy, lay in their implementation," he said.

Another factor against the ISR programme, he said, was the fact that the fatality rate in the mining industry had not declined since its introduction, although the reportable accident rate had been halved in the last 10 years. "The contrasting patterns of reportable accidents and fatality rates raises serious questions about the effectiveness of loss-control approaches to safety," he stated.

Effective safety

Chamber technical adviser Gordon Grange defended the ISR programme to the *FM*. "The programme is an attempt to implement safety through effective management by measuring and auditing the input into safety by all concerned in a workplace. There is no reason why good management principles cannot apply to safety. There are shortcomings in the programme, as there are in any system. But our criteria are constantly rising. Before September 1982, gold mines had to attain a rate of 35 injuries/1 000 to qualify for five stars. This later changed to 29.5/1 000. At present it is 24/1 000," he said.

Grange told the *FM* that it was possible that the ISR programme could amount to merely a paper system. But the mine safety division's audits were designed to measure implementation of the paper system. However, implementation could not be measured between audits.

Hlobane had been rated as a four-star mine on September 12 1982. But it had been taken over by a different management — Iscor — shortly before last September's disaster. Grange told the *FM* he did not know how effective the new management had been in implementing the ISR programme, "but obviously they could not have applied it as was done when the colliery was awarded the four-star rating."

However, an Iscor spokesman retorted that only two management positions had changed when Iscor took over Hlobane — that of the mine manager and the resident engineer. He pointed out that Iscor is a member of the chamber and said it had applied the programme as prescribed.

Grange acknowledged Benjamin's criticism that the ISR programme had not led to a significant decrease in mining fatalities. "We have had fatality improvements on some mines, but overall I cannot see any significant improvements. But we have to realise that the mines, especially the gold mines, are getting deeper, which makes mining more difficult. That fact, and fact that fatality rates have remained relatively stable despite deeper mining, is a significant achievement," he told the *FM*.

MINE SAFETY

Programme flaws

Mine safety, always a controversial topic, is again in the firing line. In the wake of the Hlobane colliery tragedy last year (when 68 miners died), criticism was levelled against the International Safety Rating (ISR) programme used on many mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines.

The programme is an adaptation of a system devised by the executive director of the International Loss Control Institute in Atlanta, US, Frank E Bird.

In broad terms, loss control aims at identifying factors in a workplace which could lead to danger to workers and loss of production. It relies heavily on workers submitting reports on all aspects of the conditions in which they are working.

For example, machine malfunctions, no



Safety sign ... but is the programme effective?

KWDM 27/7/84 (212)

TO THIS BANK ROBBER IS



Disaster mine fine condemned

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK
THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has condemned as "ridiculously low" the R400 fine imposed on the owners of the Hlobane mine for irregularities arising out of last September's methane gas explosion which killed 68 workers.

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, NUM's general secretary, said yesterday that workers were "shocked" that the Department of Justice apparently treated the whole matter as a minor incident.

And a research officer at Wits University's Centre for Applied Legal Studies, Mr Paul Benjamin, said the level of fine rendered the Mines and Works Act regulations "virtually ineffective" by removing any proper deterrent.

The Vryheid (Natal) Railway Coal and Iron Company — a wholly-owned subsidiary of Iscor — was found guilty in the Vryheid Regional Court on Wednesday by Mr J D Crafford, and fined R400 for three contraventions of the Mines and Works Act.

The mine's manager, David Watson, was found guilty, cautioned and discharged.

A shift boss, Petrus Claasens, was convicted of neglecting to obey an order from the mine captain to close

a break in one of the tunnels and fined R200; and Robert Morgan, a miner, was convicted of failing to carry out Claasens' instruction to close the hole and fined R200.

Mr Ramaphosa said he was alarmed that the Department of Justice had not even informed the attorneys of the NUM that the case was to come to court this week.

He said the department appeared oblivious of the local and international concern generated by the disaster, which had raised important questions on the safety of workers in South African mines.

Mr Ramaphosa questioned the justice of the low fines, seeing that 68 men had died.

This was a "gross disregard for safety", and the NUM would be pursuing a civil claim against the company, he said.

"If the Department of Justice and the Government Mining Engineer take this attitude to safety, then this leaves workers with no option but to seek other methods outside the courts of ensuring their own safety and redress from death and injury."

A spokesman for the Natal Attorney-general's office said yesterday he had received no complaints from the NUM and therefore was not in a position to comment.

for LA er race'



in hospital yesterday after parts of his hands had been blasted away when a loaded.

Picture: TONY MAIDOO

'First it hissed, then it exploded'

By COLIN HOWELL
AN ELDERLY Heidelberg man, Mr Rulof Boucher, yesterday told how a device — suspected to be a practice hand grenade detonator — hissed and exploded in his hands after he used a penknife to prise a "ring" off it.

Bleeding profusely and severely shocked, he used his mutilated arms to wave down a passing car and was rushed to hospital.

"I thought the ring would make a nice key holder," Mr Boucher, 64, said from his hospital bed at Sandton Clinic yesterday.

Mr Boucher lost three fingers and received severe burns and cuts to his hands, body and face in the blast, that took place beside the N3 highway, opposite the Heidelberg military training camp, on Wednesday.

Mr Boucher, a Roads Department operator for the Province, said a labourer, Mr Philimon Williams, handed him the "army green" device while he was

sitting in a truck at about 1pm.

"Philimon found it while he was raking ground next to the highway. I asked him if it was a bomb but he said he didn't know and walked away very quickly," Mr Boucher said.

He described the device as having been about 12cm long, with a steel ring on top and a copper pipe, with one end threaded, on the side.

"I was taking the ring off with my penknife. It came free and I noticed that a pin was attached to it."

"The object started hissing and at that moment, I realized it was a dangerous weapon," Mr Boucher said. "It exploded as I was about to throw it aside."

The blast "sounded like thunder with a flash like arc welding", he said.

"I don't know whether I was blown out of the truck or not, but the next thing, I

To Page 2

Ghostly presence keens lighting up

Hlobane

ROOM 28 FEB 1984

relatives

sought

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK
COMPENSATION payouts for 11 of the 68 mineworkers killed in the Hlobane methane gas blast still had to be made, a spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said yesterday

The spokesman said this was because there had been difficulties in tracing their beneficiaries

Dependants and relatives of the dead mineworkers receive compensation both in terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act and a life assurance scheme operated through the Chamber of Mines. Payouts were made according to earnings and number of dependants

The highest lump-sum payment given the widow of a black worker killed in the blast was R16 577, plus a monthly pension of R623 till she died, a widow's benefit of R350 and a cash contribution of R400 for the funeral.

The worker had been earning R883,49 a month and had three children

ONLY R400! IS THAT ALL MY SON AND HIS FRIENDS WERE WORTH?

The agony of the embittered

S. Inyane 29/7/84

By Barney Mthombathi

SHE stares blankly into space and her eyes well with tears at the mention of her son's name. She wails — loudly, violently shaking her head.

Elderly Nokujabula Mbatha cannot bear the thought of her son. The mere mention of his name causes tears to stream down her cheeks.

Siphon Mbatha, 29, her only son, and 67 fellow coalminers died in a methane gas explosion at

Hiobane, near Vryheid, last September.

In February this year, a Vryheid magistrate found the Iscor-owned Vryheid Railway Coal and Iron Company was responsible for the deaths.

In a final chapter this week the company and three senior officials were found guilty of

using unsafe apparatus and neglecting safety precautions at the time of the explosion.

The company was fined a R400. The mine manager, David Watson, was found guilty and cautioned and discharged. The shift boss, Petrus Johannes Klaassens, and a mineworker, Robert Morgan, were each fined

R200 or 20 days' imprisonment.

The Sunday Tribune this week traced some of the relatives.

"Only R400!" Mrs Mbatha exclaimed when told of the fine. "Is that all my son and his friends were worth?"

At her lowly home at Kwadamba, near Mahlabathini, she told how she had raised her only son because her husband had other wives and commit-

ments.

"Siphon had to go to work at a very early age because we were starving. He joined the contract seven years ago. Being my only boy, he was my only hope."

She said he was home a week before the disaster and was in very high spirits.

What overwhelmed her most was the thought of her son being incinerated and overcome by poison-

ous gases deep with no hope of receiving help.

Her son, she said, was a natty dresser, but all his clothes had disappeared. When his relatives went to the hostel to fetch his possessions all they were handed was a bundle of coat-hangers. He had a new watch, which he showed his mother a week before he died, but that too was gone.

Mrs Mbatha said she

had gone from Government office to mine office trying to sort out problems relating to compensation.

She said clerks at Nongoma told her she would not be helped unless she look out a Kwazulu citizenship certificate. But when she got this, she was told to get a marriage certificate.

"I've just been married," she chuckled, waving a certificate of cus-

ASKS AGEING WOMAN

Hiobane mothers

tomary union

This week she received the last of two cheques of more than R4 000 each as compensation for her son's death. But, she said, it was too little. Her son was still young and would have been a great asset to her.

Mrs Jessie Zulu, a widow, of Esidakeni, also in Mahlabathini, lost her eldest son, Bhokithemba, in the blast.

"After the death of his

father, he became head of the family. I have been up and down trying to sort this thing out. I still haven't received the money promised."

She said she was consoled by the fact that she was able to bury him. "He was in bad shape but I was able to identify him. Some of the bodies were so mutilated their families could not recognise them."

Hiobane mine manag-

er David Watson refused to see the Sunday Tribune. He passed a message through another official that only Iscor could comment.

The general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, Cyril Ramaphosa, said this week his union would claim between R1 million and R5 million compensation on behalf of the families of those dead and injured.

KOM 30/7/84 (2)

East Driefontein notches up one million 'safe' shifts

EAST Driefontein gold mine notched up three safety achievements for July, the Chamber of Mines announced on yesterday.

The mine attained a million fatality free underground shifts for the third time in its history. Recently, it won the shield in the Safety Target Competition for gold mines. The competition, which is for the greatest improvement in the reportable

casualty rate, was judged over the period July 1983 to June 1984.

Earlier this month, East Driefontein gained the maximum five star rating in terms of the International Safety Rating system.

East Driefontein's sister mine, West Driefontein, was also a prize winner in the Safety Target competition for gold mines for the period July 1983 to June 1984.

ROM 30/7/84 □ □ □ 212 (212)

A PRETORIA Supreme Court decision ordering strikers at Penge mine to leave their hostels may have weakened a key mines health and safety provision

Lawyers for the strikers argued that Penge could not evict the men because it allegedly had not observed a mines health regulation, which says mines may not fire black workers without testing them for compensatable diseases

Workers found to have a disease cannot be fired until an official certification committee considers their compensation claim.

There are obvious reasons for this, particularly where the risk of disease is high. Black miners are often sent back to homelands if they are fired and often do not claim compensation.

But the court found that this stipulation did not affect the workers' contract of employment, which they broke by striking

So striking miners could now stand to lose not only their jobs, but their most effective means of claiming compensation for disease.

Another court case may also create problems for mine-safety rules the prosecution of the Hlobane mine manager and two miners on charges of contravening Mines and Works regulations before the disaster that claimed 68 lives."

They were convicted but the total penalty was a R200 fine for each of the miners.

This prompted outrage from unionists and lawyers and is certain to prompt increased criticism of official mine safety rules

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK
SHOCK figures revealing how asbestos has endangered the health of workers at a mine in the North Eastern Transvaal are contained in documents leaked to the Rand Daily Mail this week

A report by the manager of the Penge mine, Mr H E Fouche, shows that between 1973 and 1983, about 780 of the mine's employees contracted the lung disease asbestosis

And a mill dust report reveals that asbestos counts up to 65 times higher than the local recommended fibre limit and 260 times higher than the British legal limit, were recorded as recently as 11 months ago

The dust report shows readings for the mine's entire surface plant on September 28 and 29 last year

It records several counts of more than 100 fibres per millilitre, with the highest being a count of 134 fibres/ml

The current recommended limit of the Government Mining Engineer is two fibres/ml, though up to the end of last year it was five per ml

In Britain, where the links between asbestos and lung cancer and mesothelioma have led to more stringent safety regulations, the legal limit is 0,5 fibres/ml

There is a growing lobby overseas — which has already had some success in Scandinavian countries — to have the substance banned completely as the belief is that there is no safe level of asbestos

The vast majority of Penge's readings were more than two fibres/ml while the

8/8/84

Shock figures that tell of asbestosis

212
~~211~~

average of all readings was 3,9 fibres/ml

Two weeks ago a consulting physician to Penge's owners, the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco), told the Mail that conditions at Penge had been rigidly tightened up over the past five years

The mine manager's report listing the number of cases per month notes that there is a steady increase in the incidence of asbestosis, with 1983 having the highest average for the decade

Industrial health experts said yesterday this could simply mean that the tests were stricter

The mine's internal figures are higher than — and in conflict with — those issued publicly in the annual report of Gefco's owners, Gencor, or by the Government Mining Engineer

According to the manager's report, there were 79 cases in 1982, compared to 13 stated in Gencor's annual report to shareholders

The average age of the asbestosis victims since 1980 is about 44 years while there

are 10 cases between 1980 and 1982 of workers under the age of 30 contracting the disease

About 58% in 1980, 53% in 1981 and 41% in 1982 had worked for less than 10 years in the industry

Among those listed as having contracted the disease are security guards, drivers, telephone operators, estates labourers and a caddie — people whose work at the mine should not normally expose them to asbestos

Mr Pat Hart, the managing director of Gefco, yesterday did not dispute the authenticity of the documents

He said that the mine was "pulling its socks up and improving all the time" and that one plant which had particularly high readings in the report had been redesigned

"In our figures to the Government Mining Engineer (GME) we've found that 95% of all our staff at the mine are working in areas where there is less than two fibres/ml," he said

● More labour news
 — See Page 8

JOHANNESBURG

Shock figures revealing how asbestos has endangered the health of workers at a mine in the north-eastern Transvaal are contained in documents obtained by our Johannesburg correspondent

A report by the manager of the Penge mine, Mr H E Fouche, shows that between 1973 and 1983 about 780 of the mine's employees contracted the lung disease asbestosis

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Asbestos levels dangerous

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According to the manager's report, there were 79 cases in 1982 compared to 13 stated in Gefco's annual report to shareholders

Health hazard of asbestos in spotlight

THE potential dangers of working with asbestos have long been a public issue in America and Europe. Now they are being aired here — and the evidence so far has been alarming.

An internal report by the manager of Penge asbestos mine shows that 780 of its workers contracted asbestosis between 1973 and 1983.

It also reveals that asbestos dust levels in some parts of the mine were, as recently as 11 months ago, 65 times higher than the limit recommended by the Government — and 260 times higher than the legal limit in Britain.

This means workers were — and perhaps still are — exposed to massive levels of a dust which is known to cause a debilitating disease and may also cause cancer.

Even more disturbing is that information about asbestos exposure at Penge issued to the public — and hence to workers — by both the mine's owners and the Government seems to have dramatically understated the problem.

Asbestosis figures in the leaked document are six times higher than those in the annual report of Gencor, which owns Penge, and are also higher than official figures revealed by the Government Mining Engineer.

And incidence of disease is probably higher than the leaked document indicates.

Asbestos-related diseases take years to show themselves. Many miners may only reveal signs of illness long after leaving the mine.

Not only might the mine not know about this — workers may not know it themselves. Another Mail report noted that a man in the Penge area who makes bricks out of asbestos

ADM 13/8/84 (212)



LABOUR WEEK



STEVEN FRIEDMAN

suffered from lung disease — but had not linked this with his exposure to asbestos.

Pressure on the asbestos industry in the US has prompted leading producer Manville to file for bankruptcy after facing claims for damages from former workers running into billions of dollars.

In Sweden, asbestos has been largely banned — leading to a sharp drop in asbestos-related diseases.

Similar pressure could mount here now grave doubts have emerged about the accuracy of official information on asbestos dangers.

Compressed air death 'accidental'

By NICOLA BEKKER

THE death of a 20-year-old mine worker — which occurred after compressed air shot up through his rectum into his abdomen — was accidental, a Johannesburg inquest magistrate found yesterday.

Mr Moses Modutwane, a fitter's assistant on Impala Platinum Limited's Bafokeng Mine, died in the Rand Mutual Hospital three days after the gruesome accident.

An in-depth inquiry was held into the incident by Bafokeng Mine officials and an intense campaign stressing the dangers of compressed air was conducted.

The accident occurred at the No 8 Shaft Surface Workshop on July 22 last year.

Mr Modutwane and a fellow employee, Mr Jeremiah Dintwe, finished their normal underground shift at about 2pm that day. Mr Dintwe opened the valve of the compressed air hose and began to clean his overalls.

"While I was busy, Moses arrived and opened the valve even wider and said I must blow his overalls for him.

"I blew the front of his clothes and he turned around and I began cleaning the back."

But then a friend called out to Mr Dintwe and he turned around. When he looked back, Mr Modutwane had collapsed, clutching his

stomach and moaning.

"I never pushed the air hose against him. But when my friend shouted out I turned and the hose may have touched Moses.

"At one stage he bent forward and the hose was about 300mm from his rectum.

"I never saw any holes in Moses' overalls."

On arrival at Bafokeng Hospital, Mr Modutwane's abdomen was grossly distended, having been inflated with compressed air via the anus.

His abdomen was rock hard, according to doctors, and an attempt to deflate him through the anus failed.

His abdomen was eventually decompressed by a tube inserted through his left flank.

He was then transferred to the Rand Mutual Hospital where an emergency operation was performed.

The man died on July 25. The official cause of death was given as "confluent bronchopneumonia following insertion of compressed air into the anus".

Mr Dintwe, contrary to what was said in a statement by the mine's underground manager Mr M C Gericke, said he had never heard "any mention of the dangers of compressed air".

The plastic compressed air hose has an outside diameter of 37mm. Pressure available is 600kPa.

Asbestos hazard to be probed

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Star

Star

By Carolyn Dempster

The office of the Government Mining Engineer is to launch an investigation into widespread asbestos pollution in the north-eastern Transvaal.

Mr D M Morris, deputy Government Mining Engineer, this week openly admitted that the asbestos dumps of the old north-western Cape and Transvaal mines posed a major environmental hazard

15/8/84

"It is a very serious problem and something has to be done about it," he told *The Star*

He was horrified to hear of schoolchildren playing on dumps of blue asbestos waste and traversing the mounds to get to and from their homes

A rehabilitation committee was set up several years ago to look at the environmental problems created mainly by open-cast mining

"The committee has been looking at these hazards but hasn't come up with any definite answers," Mr Morris said

The question of who is responsible for the disused dumps remains a major obstacle

The Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act of 1965 requires mine owners to ensure they dispose of their assets and dumps without leaving behind a major environmental disaster

But in most cases, and particularly in the Transvaal, the asbestos mines were closed and abandoned before the legislation was enacted

"Bewaarskloof was a shambles. There were so many small companies operating there, and most of them closed when they closed the mines," said Mr Morris.

The State and, more specifically, the Government of South Africa should be responsible

"But until such time as a Supreme Court judge makes the position clear and the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs is made responsible, our budget is not likely to be increased"

In any event, the company which derived profit from the mine should make good the damage, he added

Air samples showed fibre counts well below the regulated limits, said Mr Morris, but he agreed this would not necessarily be the case where people were living close to open dumps

● See Page 2

SA could face asbestos scandal involving

By Carolyn Dempster

The lives and health of half-a-million people may have been placed at risk in what could become a major asbestos scandal for South Africa

It has been estimated that the uncovered dumps and abandoned workings of more than 30 asbestos mines in the Northeastern Transvaal and Lebowa constitute a considerable environmental hazard — affecting some 500 000 people in these densely populated areas

This is the conclusion of a team of medical and scientific researchers who have undertaken a study of the asbestos-rich region in recent months

The team is operating under the umbrella of the Technical Advice Group, a voluntary body of socially concerned engineers and scientists based in Johannesburg

Well-documented medical evidence has revealed that ingestion and/or inhalation of asbestos fibres can result in any of three lung diseases: asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer

Asbestosis is a progressive disabling disease, while mesothelioma results in painful and certain death

For mesothelioma victims, exposure to asbestos dust — hence asbestos fibres — need only have been minimal

A 1980 report by the United States Department of Health and Human Services states that "at very short exposure periods — one day to three months — signif-

icant disease can occur"

Mesothelioma takes from 20 or 30 years to develop, but once the symptoms become manifest life expectancy is shortened to two or three years

In the North-Eastern Transvaal towns of Bewsarskloof, Mahlangane, Mmafefe, Dalton and Kromellenboog, children play on asbestos tailing dumps near disused crocidolite (blue asbestos) mines, local black entrepreneurs mix asbestos waste with cement and water to make bricks, and primary schoolchildren study in classrooms with the blue asbestos fibres protruding from roughly-hewn walls

And when the wind blows the blue dust swirls innocuously through the narrow valleys of this hilly region, spills over on to the roads and is ground to a

finer fibre powder by bare feet

ing it more lethal

The tragedy of it is that most are not aware of the danger, say

have conducted interviews in the

In addition, should any of the asbestos, mesothelioma or lung environmental exposure, they will

compensation of any kind

Wherever asbestos has been world, stringent controls have

keep down dust levels to a "safe health hazard

In Scandinavia, asbestos has

while Britain has imposed a sev

Centenary frolics 'will inject new life into Joburg'

By Andrew Beattie

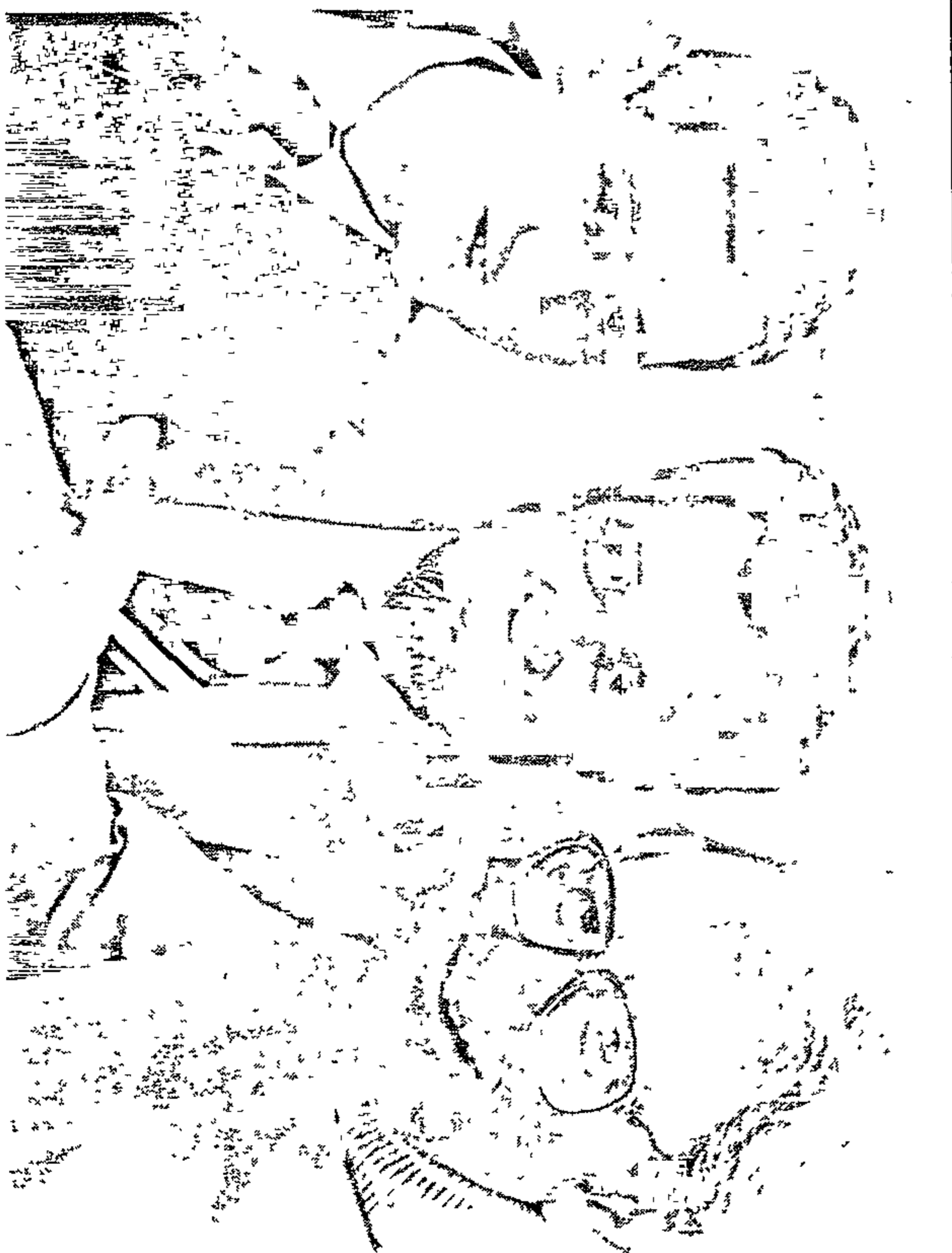
Private enterprise will inject new life into Johannesburg for its Centenary Festival in 1986, and the multimillion-rand extravaganza will not overburden the ratepayer. This is the message from the chairman of the Centenary Festival Association (CFA), Mr David Lewis

Doctors warn on asthma 'myths'

By Susan Fleming

Asthma is 'grossly under-diagnosed and undertreated' in South Africa and six to seven percent of the

Speaking at the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting last night, Mr Lewis promised that the year-long centenary festival would — like the Los Angeles Olympics — be sponsored almost entirely by private enterprise



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Asbestos scandal involving 500 000 people

oup, a voluntary body of socially and scientists based in Johannesburg, medical evidence has revealed inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause lung diseases asbestosis, mesothelioma, cancer and certain death. In the North-Eastern Transvaal towns of Bewaarskloof, Mahlanjane, Mmafele, Dalton and Krommellenboog, children play on asbestos tailing dumps near disused crocidolite (blue asbestos) mines, local black entrepreneurs mix asbestos waste with cement and water to make bricks, and primary schoolchildren study in classrooms with the blue asbestos fibres protruding from roughly-hewn walls. And when the wind blows the blue dust swirls innocuously through the narrow valleys of this hilly region, spills over on to the roads and is ground to a

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finer fibre powder by bare feet or car tyres — making it more lethal. The tragedy of it is that most of the local people are not aware of the danger, say the researchers, who have conducted interviews in the area. In addition, should any of the local inhabitants get asbestosis, mesothelioma or lung cancer through environmental exposure, they will not be eligible for compensation of any kind. Wherever asbestos has been mined in the Western world, stringent controls have been implemented to keep down dust levels to a "safe level" because of the health hazard. In Scandinavia, asbestos has been banned outright, while Britain has imposed a severe restrictions on the

usage of crocidolite — widely regarded as the most hazardous of the three types of asbestos, the others being chrysotile and amosite. In South Africa, under the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act 45 of 1965, no mine owner may transfer or otherwise dispose of his mining assets until a certificate is granted him by the Government Mining Engineer. This certifies that he has taken all the necessary measures to cover the dumps and prevent wind-born asbestos pollution or spillage. Because most of the asbestos mines in the North-Eastern Transvaal were closed before the legislation came into effect, there was little control over the way mine owners left their properties.



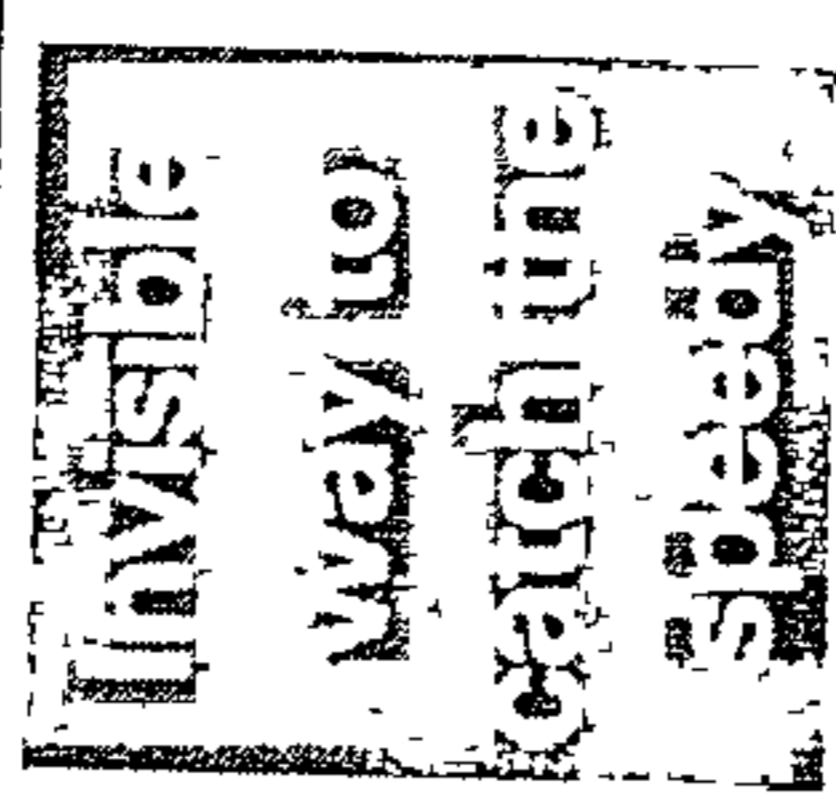
Road plan row: 'no chance for 2nd objection'

By Diane Stuart

The Johannesburg City Council based its decision to construct a road through a park in Cheltondale on a survey which it launched to canvass support. Mr Ernie Wentzel SC said in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday.

He was representing five Cheltondale residents fighting a six-year battle to stop the link road being built from Louis Botha Avenue to the Norwood Hypermarket.

The motion was rejected when it was first considered in April 1982. It came before the council



Municipal Reporter

An invisible "traffic officer" — in the form of a camera trapping device — will be stationed on Johannesburg's motorways to check on speedy motorists from next month.

The city council's management committee approved the device yesterday after weeks of indecision.

When the traffic department announced details of the new camera last month, the council's transportation commit-

Inspector dies after speedy chase

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Penge not charged for illegal fibre levels

By Carolyn Dempster

Penge asbestos mine-workers have been exposed to high and illegal levels of hazardous asbestos dust since 1976, yet the mine has so far not been charged with contravention of regulations by the Government mining engineer

This was revealed this week when documents detailing the levels of asbestos dust and fibre in the north-eastern Transvaal mine from 1976 to 1982 and during August, September and November last year were handed to *The Star*

A graph depicting fibre counts in the Penge mill shows a considerable tightening up as from 1981 when there was a change in mine management

However, quarterly samples since then have on occasion still exceeded the limit

Among the documents is an inspection report by the district inspector for the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr JHE Celliers dated November 8, 1983

He obtained an asbestos fibre average of 4,965

fibres per millilitre (4,965 f/ml) from underground samples, which is twice as high as the limit of 2 f/ml set by the Government mining engineer for controlled South African mines and 24 times higher than the limit set in the United Kingdom

Just two months prior to the inspection, the

mine's ventilation officer recorded spot fibre samples of 134 f/ml and 130 f/ml in particularly dusty areas of the mine mill - 65 times higher than the limit. The information is contained in an internal dust report

Mr DM Morris, deputy Government mining engineer, said the mine had been visited and inspected five times during the past year. Fibre counts had exceeded the stipulated limit in only three samples taken, he added

"In each case, the mine manager was told of the results and action was taken immediately on the problem"

"According to the chief inspector governing the northern Transvaal, Penge has been very co-operative over the past five years

It is crucial to the health of the asbestos mineworkers that dust levels be kept as low as possible as it has been estimated that one out of every 10 heavily exposed asbestos workers will get

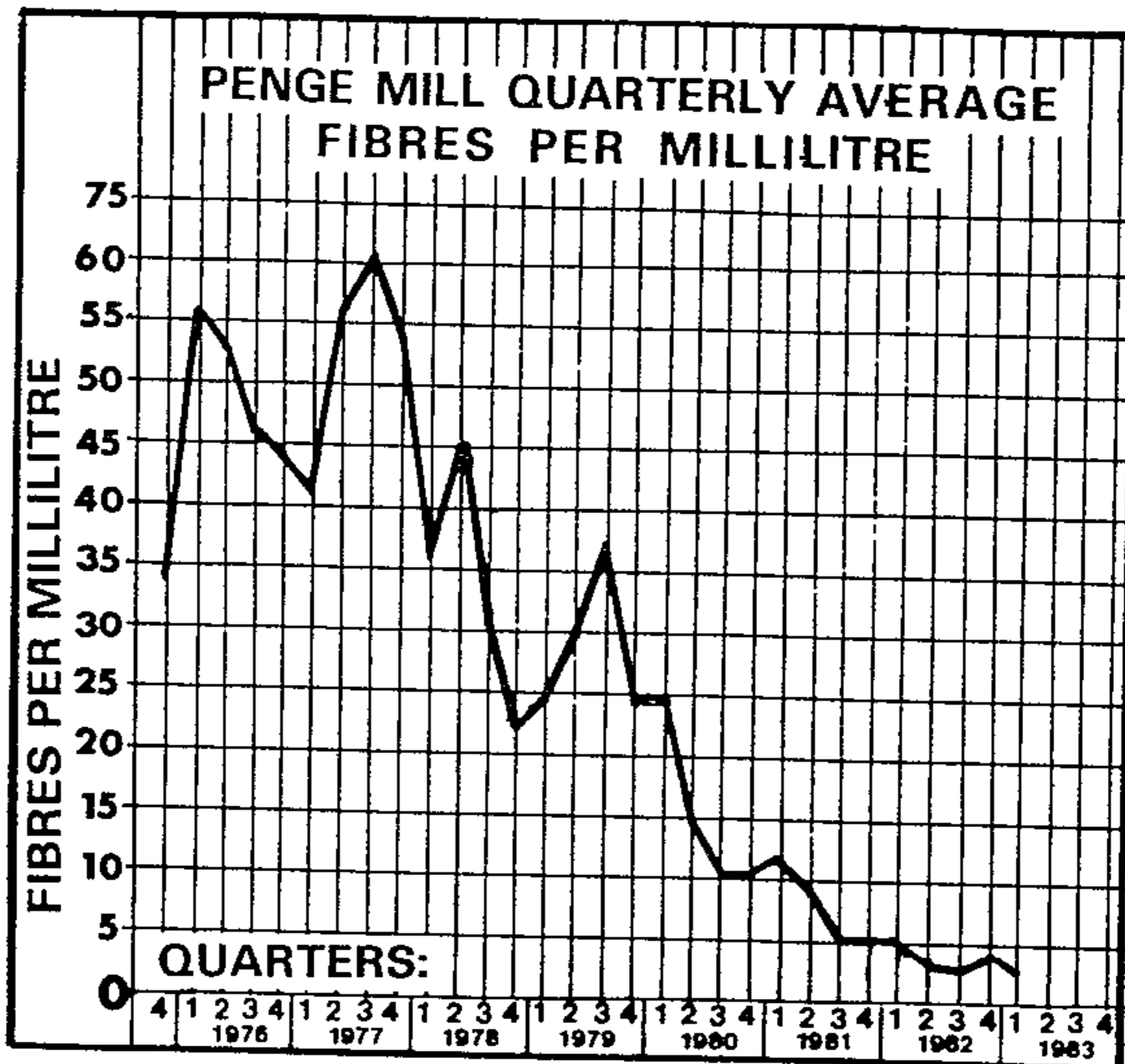
asbestosis - the crippling lung disease caused by the inhalation of asbestos fibres

An analysis of asbestosis and tuberculosis cases at the Penge mine shows that 788 mineworkers contracted asbestosis between 1973 and 1983

Penge mine manager, Mr HE Fouche remarked in the analysis that the figures show a "marked increase in the percentage of pneumoconiosis cases" with the number of asbestosis and TB cases rising from 45 in 1979 to 114 last year

The Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco) which is owned by the General Mining Corporation (Gencor) took over Penge in 1981 from Transvaal Consolidated Land and Exploration Co Ltd - a member of the Barlow Rand Group

Mr LK Jooste, chairman of Gefco was in hospital and unable to comment on the reports and the company's managing director Mr Pat Hart was overseas.



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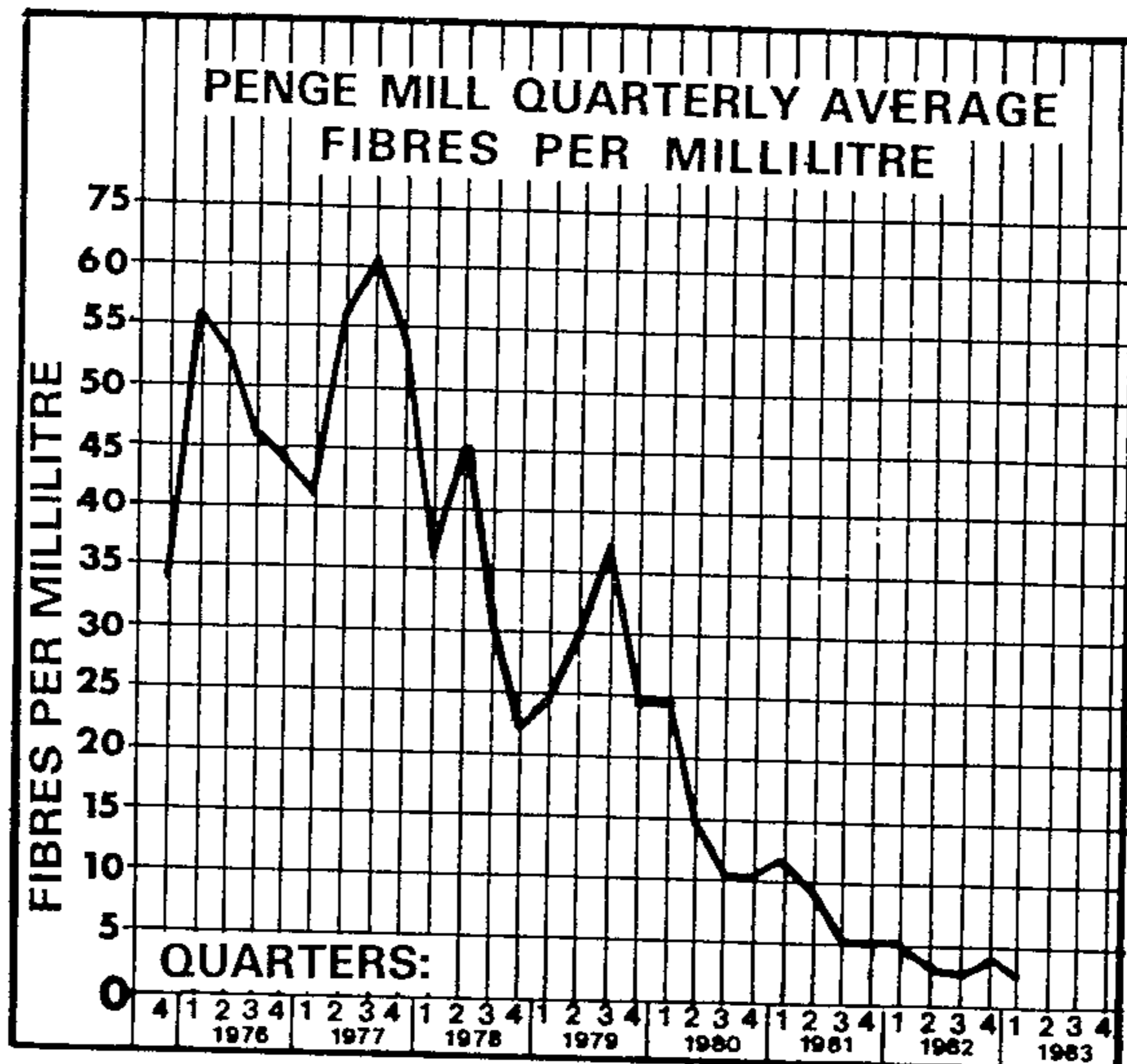
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212 (circled) ~~212~~ Star

17/8/84

RAM 21/8/84 (212)

100 deaths each year linked to asbestos

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

MORE than 100 South Africans are dying every year from mesothelioma, the rare cancer of the lung-lining which is associated with asbestos, says Professor Tony Davies, director of the State-run National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH)

Of the 100 cases at least 15, though possibly many more, are people who have never worked with asbestos and have only been exposed to it in the environment.

Mesothelioma is an incurable tumour of the lung-lining which is known to occur after very low exposure to asbestos

It is one of three diseases associated with asbestos, the others being asbestosis, a scarring of the lung tissue which is much more common, and lung cancer

In releasing these statistics publicly for the first time, Prof Davies said it was about time they became common knowledge

"I lament the fact that these figures — as well as the recently publicised figures on asbestosis — have not been nailed to the walls of factories and mines to remind people of the dangers of asbestos," he said

The figures — soon to be published by the NCOH — were established by a mesothelioma panel, a permanent group of pathologists

analysing the occurrence of the disease

The panel's figures indicate there have been 1 228 known cases of mesothelioma diagnosed in the past 26 years. The actual figure could be much higher

Prof Davies said recent analysis of the figures showed that around 100 people a year were dying from mesothelioma. Of these, 20 were from the mining industry while 15 experienced only environmental exposure

A further 40 cases had no accurate history available and could have resulted from mining or environmental exposure

Prof Davies said he had no doubt that the children who were playing on old asbestos dumps in the north-eastern Transvaal were at risk of contracting mesothelioma

He said mesothelioma often took a long time to manifest itself, "and in this sense we are now living in a situation where our chickens are coming home to roost"

It was very unfortunate that South African asbestos — whether the blue asbestos mined in the north-western Cape or the brown asbestos mined at Penge in the north-eastern Transvaal — seemed to be more dangerous

It was also unfortunate that in the public health field in South Africa everything had been kept confidential

Health danger was ignored by prospectors in 'asbestos rush'

The "asbestos rush" which transformed the scenic Strydpoortberge of the North Eastern Transvaal into a hive of mining activity from 1940 to 1970, brought with it a legacy of death

Blissfully ignorant of the health hazards of asbestos fibres, thousands of get-rich-quick white prospectors swarmed the kloofs to carve out their fortunes after the end of the Second World War

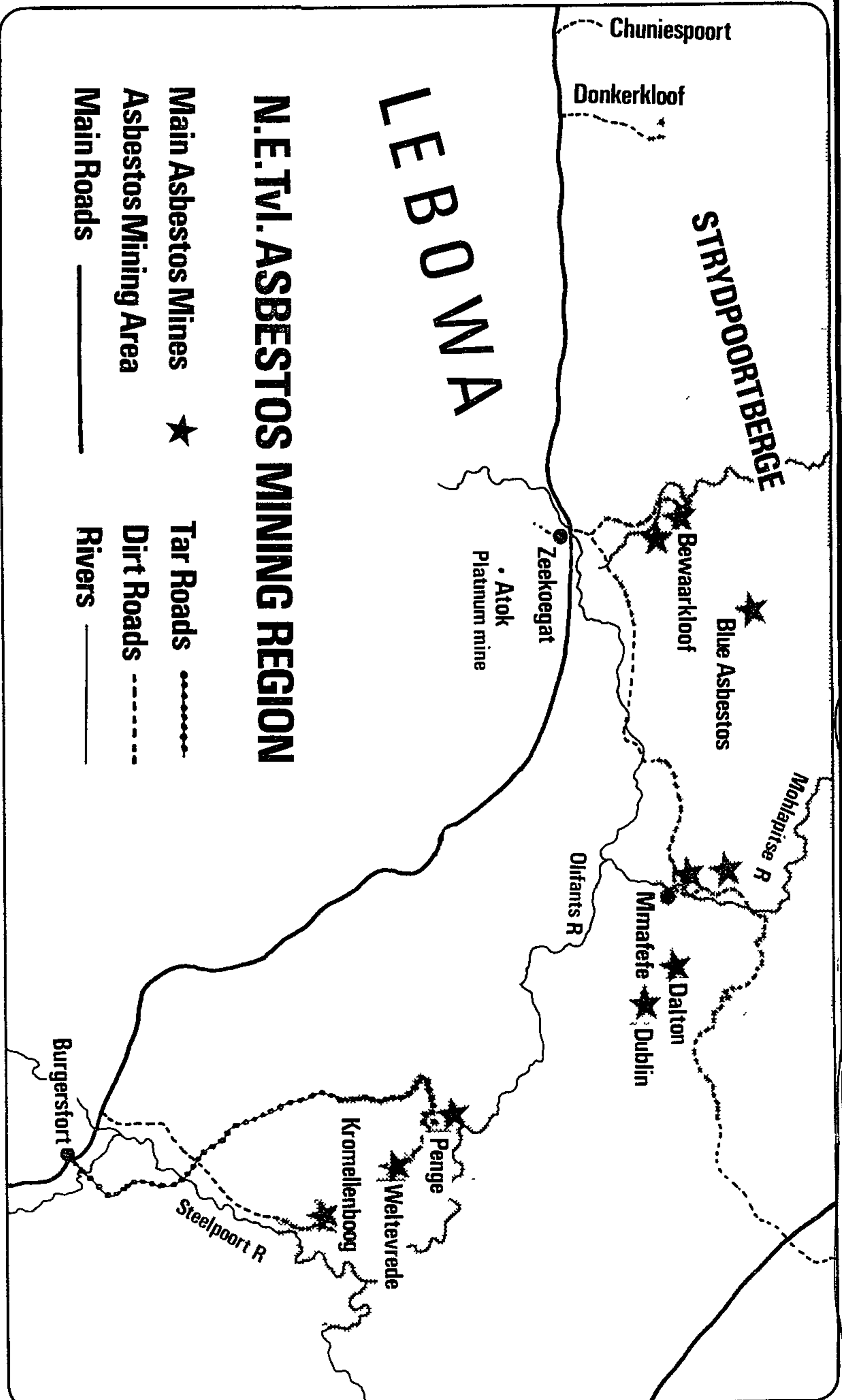
Today, the soaring hills stretching from Donkerkloof through to Mmafele are pockmarked with hundreds of asbestos adits. Waste dumps litter the valleys

Mr Gideon Nieman, whose family owned the farm Skending within the 100 km-wide asbestos mining region, recalls how the brown (amosite) and blue (crocidolite) asbestos was extracted

"The black labourers were issued with a tin of dynamite doppers and sent into the hills

THE SILENT KILLER

goes back 58 years, was fully aware of the health threat, even though mining asbestos in the region has caused the lung disease "deplorable" have



...a couple of drums
 asbestos fibre they
 could sell to the white
 entrepreneurs at one
 pound per drum. These
 white 'entrepreneurs'
 would then make a profit
 by selling it to one of the
 main asbestos mining
 companies," he said.

For every white asbes-
 tos miner who settled or
 set up a tent in the area
 there was a labour force
 of some 200 black work-
 ers - from Malawi, Mo-
 zambique, Rhodesia and
 Zambia.

"The local Bapedi were
 never miners," states Mr
 Nieman, which explains
 why the local black popu-
 lation today knows little
 or nothing of the dangers
 of asbestos fibre.

Mr Nieman, whose
 knowledge of the area

I never worked on
 those mines - I saw
 what the asbstos did to
 your lungs was present
 at four postmortems and
 God, it looked like gan-
 grene," he said. "Even
 amosite is dangerous."

SURVEY

Among the major com-
 panies which moved into
 the area were Associated
 Asbestos, Voorspoed As-
 bestos, Anglo American,
 Cape Blue Asbestos and
 Egneplater taken over
 by the Griqualand Ex-
 ploration and Finance
 Company (Gefco).

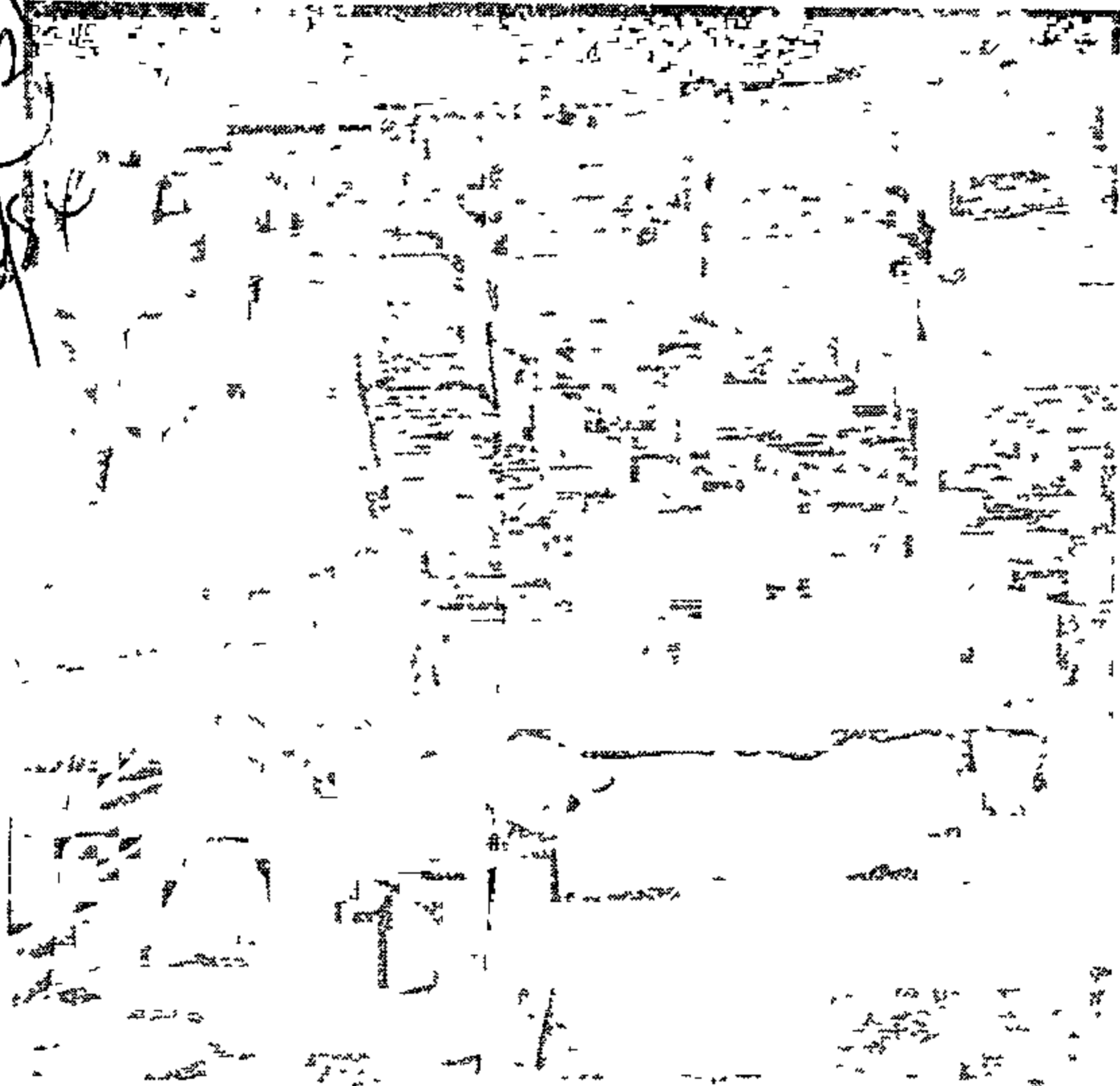
An American medical
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Writing in the annals of
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"X-rays revealed sev-
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"Why Dr Sluis-Cremer
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 There was probably not
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"In the valley where
 the mill was located, as-
 bestos dust rolled
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 mist. Even the food in the
 local hotel was gritty
 with dust."



Asbestos fibre is mixed with cement and water to make bricks at Mmafefe.
 The brickmaker finds the mixture perfect for the job.

Bewaarkloof blues can carry you away

A stone's throw away
 from the community of
 18 white families of
 Bewaarkloof a blue as-
 bestos dump blots out the
 late afternoon sun.

It seems at first sight a
 fairly harmless dump
 overgrown with grass,
 surrounded by a low wall,
 it is only here and there
 that the fibres spill onto
 the dirt road.

When it rains or the
 wind blows strongly, the
 spillage is greater and
 the dust a bit more of a
 nuisance.

"Yes, we know all
 about asbestosis, but I
 suppose we are a bit ostrich-
 like around here. We know
 the dangers but we put up
 fences," one of the resi-
 dents, who preferred to
 remain anonymous, said.

DEADLY

"It was only last year
 that one of the children
 here, I think she was 11,
 was diagnosed as having
 asbestosis," she said.
 Today the children still
 ride their bicycles down
 the fibre-covered roads.
 It is also easy to get onto
 the dump to play, to in-
 hale the potentially dead-
 ly fibres.

In fact Bewaarkloof
 would be better named

Gevaarkloof because of
 the hundreds of asbestos
 dumps which pose a
 major environmental
 health hazard to the peo-
 ple in this area.

The threat will become
 even more real when the
 Department of Co-opera-
 tion and Development
 hands over this slice of
 white South Africa to Le-
 bowa, and the local Pedi
 people move in en masse.

Mr John le Cordeur, a
 Pietersburg resident and
 surveyor for the mining
 groups from 1956 on
 states that there are
 thousands of little holes
 in the mountains where
 private operators dug out
 the asbestos, and conse-
 quently, thousands of lit-
 tle waste dumps were
 left behind.

HAZARDS

The Department of
 Mines, now Mineral and
 Energy Affairs, kept
 tight control over the
 mines when it was dis-
 covered what the health
 hazards of asbestos were,
 says Mr le Cordeur.

Surfacing of the roads
 with asbestos, a common
 practice in the Northern
 Cape asbestos towns of
 Prieska and Kuruman,
 was stopped in the early
 1960s.

In terms of the Atmo-
 spheric Pollution Preven-
 tion Act of 1965, no mine
 owner may leave or
 transfer his mine without
 ensuring that it and the
 dumps do not pose an en-
 vironmental hazard.

In Bewaarkloof there
 is ample evidence this
 was not done.

The scandal is that
 most of the major mines
 were still operating in
 the early 1970s.

REACTION

When they were closed
 the mills and dumps and
 mines, with the exception
 of very few, were left as
 they were.

Mr le Cordeur says he
 knew of the health dan-
 gers of working with as-
 bestos, but only really be-
 came aware of the spe-
 cific dangers of blue as-
 bestos from 1970 on-
 wards.

"I wouldn't say there
 has been an over-reac-
 tion.

"We knew it was dan-
 gerous but asbestos has
 varied uses and was dif-
 ficult to replace."

In recent years Mr le
 Cordeur has attended the
 funerals of three friends,
 all of whom died from ei-
 ther asbestosis or me-
 sothelioma.

THE SILENT KILLER

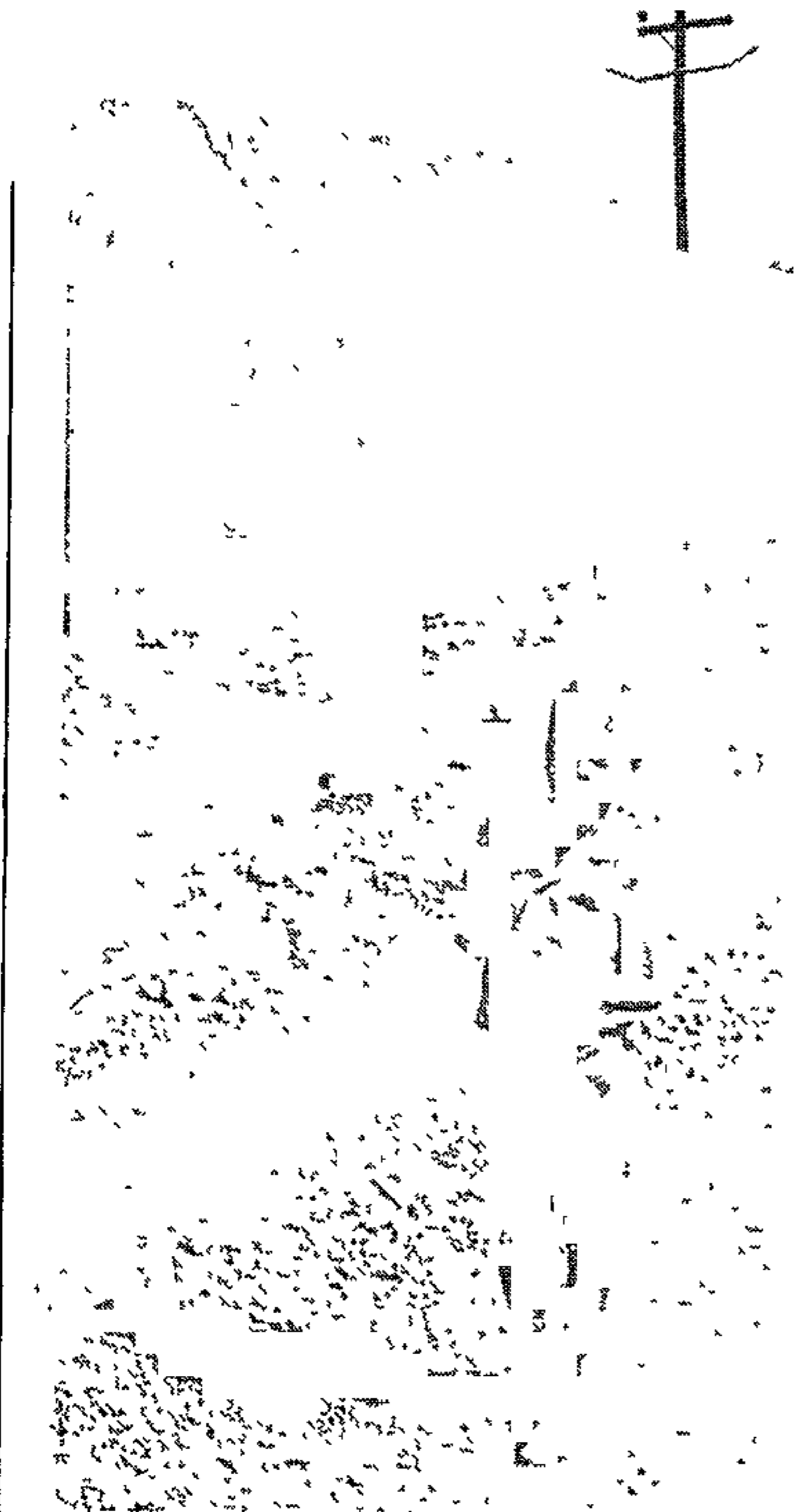


Staw

An investigation into
the asbestos peril by
CAROLYN DEMPSTER

In the shadow of death

23/8/84



Asbestos mine dump looms beyond child standing
in sun-warmed roadway near Kromellenboog Pri-
mary School

When the schoolchildren of Mmafefe Primary School walk to a toilet they never do it sedately. They skip, run, hop and jump over a bright blue dump, kicking up the dust, scuffing their bare feet and laughing together.

Pupils have been doing this for the past 20 years at the school. Even the secretary, Mr J S Mangoale, and senior teachers admit with a smile that they too loiter on the dump on the way to the loo. They never for a moment realised that the blue dump, fibre-soft and fun to play in, could run their lives, cripple their lungs or result in painful death from cancer of the lung lining.

The dump is formed by blue asbestos waste originally brought to the school as a building source material for a new ablution block. Naturally not all of this 'sand' was used and the dump remained in the middle of the busy thoroughfare for pupils.

Since 1951 when the school was officially opened, the number of pupils has risen rapidly to the 1 000 in the classrooms today

• • •
Miss E S Seribishane, a teacher at the school and one-time scholar, recalls how she too used to run across the small schoolyard asbestos dump at least a few times each day.

And after school, she and her friends would race down to the big blue dump by the Mhlapitse River

"The area is so stony that the dump was a natural playground, and remains one even now," she said. Nobody thought, nobody knew, that the dumps could be dangerous.

Mr G R Phasha, the school principal, was not the only one in Mmafefe who thought the asbestos sand would be useful for building once the mines closed down and mining companies moved out in 1967. The sprawling township is experiencing a building boom, with bright blue houses mushrooming throughout the valley.

A new and sophisticated touch lies in the plastering of the houses with asbestos fibre, leaving a smooth finish which can be painted if the homeowner so wishes. Miss Seribishane had never heard of the diseases the dust could cause.

• • •
However she did admit that there was a lot of tuberculosis among the older people of the valley. Some complained constantly of breathing problems and tiredness.

"Most of the miners were foreigners. They probably knew about the asbestos," she states

Mr James Matsokotsa is 25 and his family has lived above the blue dump for years. He knows the brickmaker at the foot of the dump well but says he is ill, cannot breathe properly and cannot get out of bed so his assistant is making the bricks.

212 * * * Star 23/8/84

By Carolyn Dempster

Hundreds at risk in Tvl asbestos mining towns

Hundreds of people breathe in potentially dangerous levels of asbestos fibre every day in North-Eastern Transvaal asbestos mining towns

This emerged during an investigation by *The Star* last week of the townships of Mmafele, Penge, Kromellenboog and Bewaarkloof in the Strydpoortberge

The survey found

- Home-owners are using material from the dumps to make bricks There are hundreds of new as-

bestos houses in Mmafele

- Asbestos fibre is used for plastering houses

- Children play on the exposed blue asbestos dumps in Mmafele

- Few of the hundreds of blue asbestos and brown asbestos dumps have been properly covered They pose a major health hazard

Up to 15 000 Lebowa people may suffer as a result of environmental exposure to dumps

The Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs' air quality section takes regular samples to test asbestos fibre levels in the townships

According to the Deputy Government Mining Engineer, Mr D M Morris, the counts are usually

below the recommended limits for environmental exposure

However, the conditions which *The Star* found in these areas does not support the 1982 report of the Government Mining Engineer, which states that "old tailings dumps are covered with soil or broken rock"

● See Page 6

Mine dust levels exceed UK limit

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

MORE than 80% of the employees at the Penge brown asbestos mine in the north-eastern Transvaal are working in fibre levels above the British limit.

And in several key areas the mine is still unable to meet the Government Mining Engineer's (GME) limit of two fibres a millilitre, or 2-million fibres a cubic metre, and has had to be granted an exemption.

The mine's latest dust figures were revealed by Mr Pat Hart, the managing director of the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco), when he took a Rand Daily Mail reporter on a tour of the mine this week.

The tour followed the publication of reports of extremely high dust levels and the fact that 780 workers at the mine were compensated for asbestosis between 1973 and 1983.

Mr Hart showed the Mail attempts made in recent years to lower the mine's fibre counts and to cut down on environmental pollution.

However, Mr Jean Leger, a chemical engineer and research officer at the University of the Witwatersrand who accompanied the Mail on the tour, said management was only now introducing dust control technology that had been available for decades.

He said the present GME requirement of 2-million fibres a cubic metre was introduced in Britain in 1969 and had been found to be inadequate in preventing asbestosis and lung cancer.

The new British standard

was 200 000 fibres a cubic metre and, according to the mine's own figures supplied by Mr Hart, 80% of Penge's employees were working in fibre levels higher than this.

According to the figures, workers in the bagging and weighing departments — about 8% of the total staff — were working in levels consistently above the GME level.

Mr Hart said these workers all wore respirators and the mine had been exempted by the GME from meeting the levels as long as there was evidence they were attempting to improve the situation.

The highest counts for workers in a number of other departments — such as mill supervisory staff and workers in the sorting plant and the processing plant — were as high as 9 900 000 fibres a cubic metre (9,9 fibres a millilitre).

The average count for workers at the underground faces in the first quarter of this year was 2 000 000 fibres a cubic metre with the highest count being 4 600 000 fibres a cubic metre.

Mr Hart said the earlier publicised counts of up to 134 000 000 fibres a cubic metre were engineering counts taken with a kumometer and did not reflect what a worker in the mill would be exposed to.

He did not deny earlier reports that the mill's dust average had improved substantially since 1980, but said he "did not want to put the needle into" the previous owners — Transvaal Consolidated Land — who sold the mine to Gefco two years ago.

PAUL DUNN'S disability is part of the legacy of asbestos mining in the North Eastern Transvaal.

Unable to walk a few steps without stopping for breath, 54-year-old Mr Dunn spends his days in an armchair in the darkened lounge of his Randfontein home

Two years ago he was pensioned off from Penge mine suffering from "asbestosis" what medical people call "pneumoconiosis" and what miners call "pith-sis"

He is one of the more than 800 victims of asbestos dust who have been compensated for the disease at Penge mine since 1973

These figures — which only became public knowledge after they were leaked to the Press — have led to widespread concern at the dust levels in the mine

They have also sparked calls for the figures of asbestos-related and other occupational diseases to be made public and subject to scrutiny

As one of the victims, Mr Dunn speaks with a characteristic asbestosis croak in his voice when describing the mine "The phthisis was on the surface," he says

He pauses between sentences to catch his breath "I was lazy and used to sit on the steep Hell, when the trucks went by they used to raise a lot of dust"

Yet Mr Dunn believes the company (Gencor, which controls Gefco, which owns Penge) has been good to him

In view of the vast experience gained in the Rand in the treatment and prevention of miners' phthisis there is very hope the disease (asbestosis) will be wiped out before long'

SUNDAY TIMES, November 2, 1941

Sent home — to a lingering death

PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK



Mineworkers at Penge wait in a corridor of the mine hospital to be medically examined

This year there have been 45 confirmed cases, with another 22 "suspicious" cases. A senior medical officer summed it up "They're like plastic syringes. You use them and when they're damaged you throw them back to the homelands". Asbestosis is a disease that gets progressively worse. When he was first found to be suffering from it, Mr Dunn was switched from shaft foreman to bankman. Three years later, an X-ray test ended his working career by revealing he had second phase asbestosis. Two years later, Mr Dunn walks with difficulty, supporting himself on the wall and stopping frequently as he slowly goes down the passage. He is glad of one thing he does not have cancer. Both lung cancer and mesothelioma, the rare cancer of the lung lining, are promoted by contact with asbestos. In fact, about half the asbestosis sufferers will die with lung cancer. According to Professor Tony Davies, director of the National Centre for Occupational Health, more than 100 people die in South Africa every year from mesothelioma. At least 15 of them never worked with asbestos, but were exposed to it in the environment. Mesothelioma can occur after very low exposure to the substance a fact which is often cited in the debate over whether there is a safe level of exposure to asbestos. Industry spokesman such as Mr Hart believe that the present level of two fibres a cubic centimetre (2-million fibres a cubic metre) is a "socially acceptable" standard. An educational pamphlet handed out to employees starting work at Penge says the present disease cases are related to working conditions that prevailed 20 to 40 years ago. However, though in the past two years there have clearly been vast improvements both in environmental as well as workplace dust control at the mine, this statement has been seriously disputed. Mr Jean Leger, a chemical engineer and research officer at Wits University,

said after a tour of the mine last week that management was only now introducing dust control technology that had been available for decades. The implication is that if the industry had acted on what was available at the time, it could have substantially cut down the level of disease. Mr Leger said the present Government Mining Engineer's requirement of 2-million fibres a cubic metre had been introduced in Britain in 1969 and found to be inadequate in preventing asbestosis and lung cancer. At Penge today, more than 80% of the workforce still work in levels above the current British limit of 200 000 fibres a cubic metre. As recently as 1980 the average fibre levels at the mine's mills was 64-million per cubic metre. Even in 1984, the mine has not been able to bring all its levels to below the GME's 2-million limit and has had to be granted an exemption for about 8% of its staff. Industrial health experts believe that disease levels could have been reduced substantially if the public had been kept properly informed of the dangers of asbestos. Prof Davies said that he "lamented the fact that the figures of asbestos disease are not nailed to the wall of factories and mines". Since 1941 the public has been told not to be alarmed, that the situation is under control. These statements have been disproved, sometimes only decades later, by the continuing high rate of disease. Diseases from the current levels will only be diagnosed in warts to come. For this reason, the National Medical and Dental Association (Namda), last week called for the setting up of emergency statutory limits for exposure to asbestos. They believe that South Africa workers are being exposed to risks which would be unacceptable in

'I am satisfied that with the various intensive precautionary measures now in existence, the risk of contracting asbestosis can, proportionately speaking, today be said to be slight'

Dr CAROL DE WET, Minister of Mines and Planning, September 23, 1967

Paul Dunn... "Hell, when the trucks went by they used to raise a lot of dust". other industrialised countries. While it is too late to help Paul Dunn or the hundreds of diseased mineworkers who have returned to their villages in Lebowa, mounting pressure is building up to protect those who have not yet gone that way.

'We know conditions were bad in the sixties. There has been a tremendous improvement in our dust counts over the last decade... the risk of asbestosis for a miner who's entered the industry in the past five years is remote'

CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN to Gefco, July, 1984



The asbestos battle in US

THE THREAT to health posed by asbestos in buildings is very much more serious in the United States than was previously realised.

According to new figures gathered by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), hundreds of thousands of public and commercial buildings, blocks of flats and private homes contain asbestos in a form that could possibly be inhaled or swallowed.

The New York Times recently quoted a United States government study, not yet published, that said there were as many as 700 000 such buildings with asbestos in an easily crumbled or powdered form.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Science was investigating evidence that as many as another 200-million homes could contain the insulation material — mainly in air-conditioning systems — the paper said.

The new findings intensified concern and brought new discussion on the problem it presents. Schools across the United States were earlier this year threatened with fines if they did not begin to remove asbestos.

According to Mr Mark Wein, a spokesman for the association of companies that used to manufacture building materials with asbestos, the process of removing the asbestos could release the damaging particles into the air, causing more of a health risk.

There were few contractors qualified to do the removals safely, he said. Earlier studies focused mainly on schools and work places. This is the first time there has been a nationwide assessment of asbestos risk in public and private places.

According to a new study on schools, about 15-million children and 1.4-million school employees are at risk in buildings containing asbestos.

For private companies the cost of removing asbestos can be prohibitive. An insurance company said it was going to spend more than \$30-million to clear one 52-storey building in Boston.

A leading researcher in the health impact of asbestos — Dr Irving Selikoff, of Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York — estimates that there is at present about 30 tons of asbestos in buildings across the United States.

He describes this as the "third wave of exposure to asbestos hazards". In an interview with the New York Times he explained that the first involved those who mined or milled asbestos, then came those who worked with it in construction, transport and chemical businesses.

Now those at risk are the occupants of buildings with asbestos and those involved in removing or maintaining it.

He said that within the next few years victims of asbestos could claim between \$35 000-million and \$100 000-million from industry.

American unions are currently fighting to gain compensation for slow-developing diseases, such as those caused by exposure to asbestos.

argu 28/8/84 (212) (94)

Asbestos rush brought death legacy

Miners swarmed to mountains

Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The "asbestos rush" which transformed the scenic Strydpoort Mountains of north-eastern Transvaal into a hive of mining activity from 1940 to 1970, brought with it a legacy of death.

Blissfully ignorant of the health hazards of asbestos fibres, thousands of get-rich-quick white prospectors swarmed to the kloofs to carve out their fortunes after the end of World War 2

Today, the hills stretching from Donkerkloof through to Mmafefe are pockmarked with hundreds of old asbestos adits (mine entrances) and waste dumps litter the valleys

Mr Gideon Nieman, whose family owned Skerding Farm within the 100km-wide asbestos mining region, recalled how the brown (amosite) and blue (crocidolite) asbestos was extracted

"The black labourers were issued with a tin of dynamite doppies and sent into the hills. When they had collected a couple of drums of asbestos fibre they would sell it to the white entrepreneurs at £1 a drum. These white 'entrepreneurs' would then make a profit by selling it to one of the main asbestos mining companies," he said

Labour force

For every white asbestos miner who settled or set up a tent in the area there was a labour force of some 200 black workers — from Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia

"The local Bapedi were never miners," states Mr Nieman, which explains why the local black population today knows little or nothing of the dangers of

Asbestos fibre is mixed with cement and water to make bricks at Mmafefe.



Asbestos dumps loom behind a child standing in a road in the Strydpoort Mountains.

asbestos fibre

Mr Nieman, whose knowledge of the area goes back 58 years, was fully aware of the health threat even though mining asbestos might have meant overnight wealth

"I never worked on those mines — I saw what the asbestos did to your lungs. I was present at four post mortems and it looked like gangrene," he said. "Even amosite is dangerous."

Among the major companies which moved into the area were Associated Asbestos, Voorspoed Asbestos, Anglo American, Cape Blue Asbestos and Egnep, later taken over by the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco)

An American doctor who made a radiological and clinical survey of the mines in 1949 — at least 15 years after it was discovered that inhalation of asbestos fibres caused the lung disease asbestosis — found "deplorable" hygienic conditions in one of the large mills

Young children

Writing in the Annals of the New York Academy of Science Dr G W H Schepers states "I found young children completely in large shipping bags, trampling down fluffy amosite (brown) asbestos. X-rays revealed several to have asbestosis with cor-pulmonale (failure of the right side of the heart) before the age of 12

Why Dr Sluis-Cremer (a prominent South African medical researcher) did not see them 10 years later is fairly evident. There was probably not one of them still alive

In the valley where the mill was located asbestos dust rolled through like the morning mist. Even the food in the local hotel was gritty with dust.

Asbestos 'phobia' persists in spite of laws

Murphy 29/8/84 (212)

LONDON BUREAU

STRICT new control measures aimed at improving the safety standards applied by contractors handling asbestos, especially those involved in stripping asbestos from buildings, have been in force in Britain since the beginning of this month

But the measures have not succeeded in allaying growing public concern over the potential lethal effects of asbestos. Numerous reports about the suffering caused by asbestosis have been a constant reminder of the killer potential of this fibrous silicate mineral

Legislation introduced in Britain on August 1 requires all companies engaged in stripping asbestos from buildings to be licensed by the Government's Health and Safety Executive

The Health and Safety Commission agreed last year that the import, manufacture, marketing and use of blue asbestos generally regarded as the most dangerous, should be prohibited. It asked the HSE to prepare regulations. A voluntary ban on blue asbestos exists already

The commission also agreed that there should be a ban on brown asbestos and it asked the HSE to discuss the implications with the relevant government departments. Under the new legislation licences are

granted only to companies with unblemished safety records of stripping operations

The legislation requires contractors to provide workers with protective clothing and other safety equipment, such as ventilators. Workers must also be examined by a doctor at least every two years

Since the licensing system was introduced it has been revealed that licences have been issued to contractors who have already been convicted for contravening existing safety measures. The HSE admits it has approved more than 700 applicants, some of whom it knew nothing about

The licences have been branded 'licences to kill'

Many councils are conducting concerted asbestos searches on their properties, and one council in south London recently found traces of asbestos in 10 000 homes. Large-scale operations are also under way in power stations

A housing spokesman for the Association of Metropolitan Authorities said that, ironically, unless greater care was taken to safeguard the health of workers involved in asbestos removal more people would actu-

ally die removing the material than would have been the case if it had been left where it is

Many people feel the new safeguards are not only long overdue but woefully inadequate

Mr D Gee of the General Boilermakers and Allied Workers Union, wrote recently to a national newspaper saying the real tragedy was that thousands of construction workers were exposed to dangerously high concentrations in spite of the existing knowledge of asbestos disease and the protective safety laws that have been available since 1931

In another letter to the national Press, however, Dr Muriel Newhouse warned that 'wild statements' about the alleged perils of asbestos were dangerous

She said she had a patient with such a degree of 'asbestos phobia' that the patient felt compelled three or four times a day to scrub an airing cupboard that had previously been lined with asbestos boarding

Efforts have been made since 1980 to achieve common standards in the EEC on the marketing and use of asbestos products and the protection of workers in the asbestos industry, and there is a possibility that an agreement is in sight

(212)

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US Steel holds interests in asbestos dumps

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

UNITED States Steel — one of the wealthiest and most powerful corporations in the world — holds investment interests in abandoned asbestos dumps which are polluting large areas of the North Eastern Transvaal and creating a health hazard to thousands of people, a Rand Daily Mail investigation has disclosed

Also holding extensive land and mineral rights in the area is the British asbestos multinational, Turner and Newall

The Mail has established that several farms in the area littered with asbestos dumps have been sold to the South African Development Trust in the past 18 months for incorporation into Lebowa

At present sparsely populated, these contaminated farms are soon to be the scene of large-scale settlement by blacks

The sales could be in contravention of a provision of the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act that a mine-owner cannot dispose of any asset of that mine unless he has taken the necessary steps to prevent dust pollution

The Mail was the first to report the existence of numerous uncovered dumps in the area four weeks ago. Since then researchers have estimated that at least 200 000 people living there could be exposed to the pollution

Only one tailing dump in the entire asbestos area running along the Strydberg mountains, which includes densely-populated sections of Lebowa, shows signs of attempts to cover it and prevent environmental contamination

The main companies still owning land and mineral rights in the area are Associated Asbestos, Lagerdraai Asbestos, Dublin Consolidated Mines and Egnep, alongside numerous other small owners

Dublin Consolidated is owned by Turner and Newall, while Egnep is owned by the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco), which is controlled by the mining giant Gencor

Associated Asbestos and Lagerdraai Asbestos are wholly owned subsidiaries of Associated Ore and Steel which is controlled by Oresteel Investments in which US Steel has a 49 % share and is the largest single shareholder

An Italian company, Italiani Prodotti Minerali, also holds a substantial interest in Associated Ore

Mr Robert E'sperance, a director of Oresteel based at US Steel's headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, told the Mail yesterday that he was "totally unaware" of the situation

"We are minority shareholders," he said, adding "I can't comment on the environmental situation, though US Steel is very, very concerned about environment all over"

Three farms contaminated by asbestos dumps and in which US Steel, through Associated Ore, holds a major shareholding have been sold in the past 18 months to the SA Development Trust

They are Piezangsdraai, Lagerdraai and Beesthoek. On Lagerdraai there is an old mill and a tailing dump with a family living right on top of it.

Mr Guido Sacco, the chairman of Associated Ore and Steel, admitted that they had taken no steps to cover the dumps on their properties

"We stopped mining asbestos a long time ago, about 15 years," he said "We were a very, very small producer. At the time we did not know asbestos was injurious to the health"

According to company reports, there were mining operations on both Lagerdraai and Piezangdraai as recently as the early seventies

The Turner and Newall-owned Dublin Consolidated — which has maintained substantial base mineral rights in the area — has been gradually selling off its farms with old mine dumps on them.

All the farms have been sold in the past five years, and the dumps show no signs of having been covered up

At Bewaarkloof — which Egnep sold to the SA Development Trust in May for almost quarter of a million rand — vegetation has been planted on the dump but fibres have continued to spill into the road despite a wall being built around it

Mr C Good, the group finance executive for Turner and Newall Holdings, said that as far as he knew the mines on Dublin property had been worked by tributors

"To the best of my knowledge — and I must concede its scanty — the Government Mining Engineer's approval was granted for the sale of the properties"

However, according to an old newspaper report Dublin Consolidated employed 15 000 workers in 1968 working mines in the Bewaarkloof valley alone.

August 11/19/84 (212)

Quarry-owner fined for failure to apply safety regulations

Tygerberg Bureau

A MAN has been convicted in Bellville Magistrate's Court on 17 counts of failing to comply with safety regulations at a stone reduction plant and quarry.

Nicondro Ciolli, of Welbeloond, Potsdam, Milnerton, pleaded guilty to all counts

He was fined R100 (or 50 days) on 14 counts taken as one and R50 (or 50 days) each on two charges. He was cautioned and discharged on one count

Ciolli was found guilty under the Mines and Works Act of omitting to rectify situations endangering safety at Ciolli Bros Gran Sasso quarry between May 25 and November 9 last year

He was also convicted of refusing or neglecting to attend an inspection by a mines inspector, of failing to provide the manager with the necessary means and facilities to comply with the regulations and failing to effectively control the release of dust into the atmosphere

Miss A M de Swardt, for Ciolli, said the machinery at the reduction plant was "no larger than the type of equipment found in the ordinary handyman's garage"

Mr A G du Plessis was on the Bench. Mr P Herrmann appeared for the State. Miss de Swardt was instructed by Mrs E A van der Merwe

It will never be known how many people have suffered ill effects or even death from asbestos dust exposure in a time when effective action could have been taken, or how many more face this grim prospect as a result of past exposure

Dr Carel de Wet, then Minister of Health, was quoted on September 29 1967 as saying he was satisfied that with the variety of intensive precautionary measures then in existence "the risk of contracting asbestosis could, proportionately speaking, today be said to be slight"

He further said he was convinced that the so-called dangerous effects of asbestos on the human body were greatly exaggerated on the strength of misrepresentations or insufficient knowledge and for the purpose of creating sensation

Yet there had been repeated warnings in the medical Press world-wide as early as the beginning of 1961 and similar articles had appeared in South Africa

At the Pneumoconiosis Conference held in Johannesburg in 1959, a paper on the pathological aspects of asbestosis described a number of patients who had died of the disease in the period 1954-58 and several cases of mesothelioma — a rare tumour in South Africa. The speaker concluded that "a very serious hazard may exist on the Cape asbestos fields"

On January 14 1961, the *SA Medical Journal* published an article by three respected researchers on diffuse pleural mesotheliomas in South Africa. They referred to 41 cases, eight of which had been exposed to asbestos in the north-west Cape. Not all of the unfortunate victims were miners or had even worked with the mineral

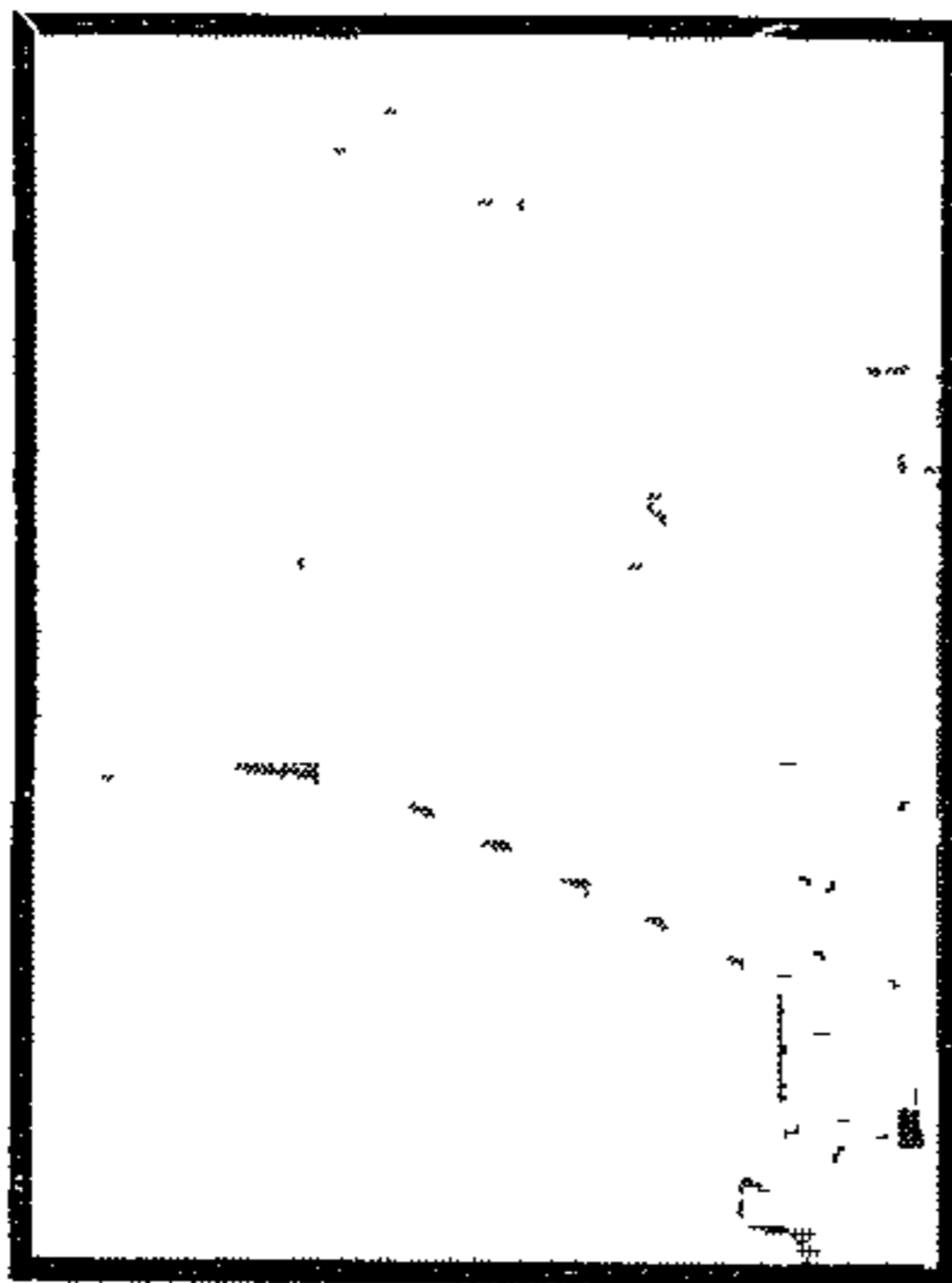
A survey was then undertaken in asbestos areas, in which it was found that 27 percent of blacks living in the vicinity of asbestos mines or mills,

not occupationally exposed, had chest X-ray changes consistent with asbestosis. There was also an abundance of reports from other countries concerning the dangers of exposure to asbestos dust. The British Press published a report of a wife who developed a mesothelioma from the dust on the clothing of her husband, who worked with asbestos

On the home front, an article submitted to the *SA Medical Journal* was initially accepted but never saw the light of day. After almost a year and numerous inquiries, it was returned to the author for abbreviation under conditions which suggested there were those who would rather that it were not published at all

When it eventually appeared in print in shortened form, it was de-

Killer-dust warnings that went unheeded



Asbestos mill dust menace is tackled with a water spray

scribed as a "generally unscientific publication" by a leading local pathologist who was advising one of the asbestos companies in an honorary capacity at the time. The same article was reviewed in the January 1968 edition of *International Abstracts on Hygiene* as "this comprehensive and informative paper"

The article traced the use of asbestos in history, described the various types of mineral and where they occurred in the Republic. It then set the alarm bells ringing with a review of the hazards of exposure to the mineral and a description of an asbestos refining factory in Durban that produced unbelievable exposure to asbestos dust of all three varieties mined in South Africa together with the rapidly produced pulmonary disability suffered by workers in this environment

It was this article which to a great extent was responsible for forcing the then Minister of Health into claiming that the "so-called dangers were greatly exaggerated" and the *SA Medical Journal* in an editorial on April 6 1968 concluded that "there is now a grave need to halt the headlong risk of assumption and to pause for a careful reappraisal of the situation by all available methods"

Meanwhile, the number of cases of mesothelioma had been growing. Twenty-five cases were diagnosed from 1955 to 1959, 64 cases from 1960 to 1964, and 113 cases from 1965 to 1969

At the heart of the asbestos scandal lies an official cover-up which "extends over two decades and makes the Salem oil affair seem trivial". This is the claim of Dr Theo Collins, superintendent of the Durban Chest Clinic and regional medical officer for the Department of Health for 31 years. He wrote this article in the light of recent Press reports on the health hazards of neglected asbestos waste material in South Africa

In 1966 I received information that women engaged in assembling gas mask filters in England during World War 2 were exposed to asbestos and I wrote to the Cape Asbestos Company head office in London requiring further details. (Cape Asbestos was part of the UK-based Cape Industries, a mining enterprise controlled by Charter Consolidated, the English investment wing of the Anglo American Corporation)

Following considerable delay, I was informed that "we cannot of course disclose the composition of the material used in these filters, but as a matter of fact, asbestos was not a component of the great majority of the pads produced"

Subsequently the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine* in February 1982 dealt with the mortality of World War 2 female gas mask assemblers following a 30-year period. The women showed a pronounced excess of deaths from mesothelioma and lung cancer. The authors discovered that the filter pads of the gas masks consisted of merino wool mixed with 15 percent pure crocidolite (blue) asbestos

My suspicions that an official cover-up of the asbestos story was being applied by frightened bureaucrats and the industry itself were revived by an article in *New Scientist* dated April 22 1982

It was claimed that senior members of the medical research establishment in South Africa, on the urging of the asbestos industry, suppressed research pointing to the link between asbestos and cancer

The claims were that research papers by South African scientists — on the risks faced by workers in crocidolite and amosite asbestos mines, and mortality from asbestos-related disease — were withdrawn at the last moment from presentation at a New

York Academy of Sciences conference

After the first paper had been read, the scientists were flatly ordered not to read the second one and the order allegedly came directly from the SA Medical Research Council. The article further stated that the information was suppressed at the direct request of the asbestos mining companies

Naturally there were subsequent denials, but the order to withdraw was issued at the last possible moment, after the direction of the research became clear

Up-to-date informed comment on asbestos waste — such as that lying exposed in large areas of this country — equates asbestos waste with "special" toxic waste and recommends immediate disposal (journal of the Institution of Environmental Health Officers in Britain)

I have written this article because I believe that every day hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, and including men, women and children who are not involved in any way with asbestos mining or its use in industry, are exposed to a form of environmental pollution which is truly a killer dust

Star
18/9/84

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

MORE than 350 gold mine workers were admitted to mine hospitals after police fired tearsmoke and rubber bullets, and used batons and dogs to disperse crowds during the first legal strike by black miners this week.

Five mineworkers are expected to appear in the Roodepoort Magistrate's Court today on charges of attending an illegal meeting, alternatively intimidation.

Trade unionists representing the workers — the National Union of Mineworkers and the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union — have expressed anger at the violence, which they say was "unwarranted and provocative." They intend taking legal action.

A Police Directorate for Public

Relations spokesman in Pretoria Lt H J Beck, confirmed that police had used tearsmoke and rubber bullets to disperse the workers, at the request of the mine owners.

He said yesterday morning workers had gathered at the Welkom mine and police used tearsmoke to disperse them. He could not comment on the casualties.

Simmering

However, the first legal strike by black gold miners in South Africa's history was reported to have ended, although union officials said the situation was still simmering. Bamcwu has claimed that workers were forced to go underground at gunpoint, but this has been refuted by management.

Bamcwu's spokesman also claimed that over 200 of their

members at Durban Deep Roodepoort gold mine were injured.

In a joint statement, the Chamber of Mines and the NUM yesterday announced the end of the dispute in the Transvaal and Orange Free State mines, and the end of the strike which saw some 40 000 miners refusing to work.

However, it was reported that more than 250 workers had been treated at the Welkom mine and admitted to the Ernest Oppenheimer Hospital with fractures and wounds resulting from rubber bullets fired by security personnel and the South African Police.

Late last night a spokesman for the Police Directorate said two white policemen were injured in rioting at Waterpan mine near Westonaria. He said police fired several rounds of buckshot and it is feared that several people could have died.

VC

Miners mourn 16 dead

16th killed



CYRIL Ramaphosa was a bitter man this week. *C.P. Press*

The country's first legal strike by black miners — and the accompanying unofficial strikes which left 16 dead and hundreds injured in its wake — had the National Union of Mineworkers general secretary seriously questioning the mine bosses' response to their grievances.

With the strike over, after the NUM and the Chamber of Mines resolved their wage dispute, he said, desparately: "We're starting to ask ourselves whether the agreement is worth the paper it's written on. It's an agreement stained with blood."

The agreement — which comes into effect on October 1 — means unskilled workers get a holiday allowance equal to half their basic wage. Semi-skilled workers get 75 percent.

But, as Mr Ramaphosa said, the new agreement was achieved at great cost.

● Sixteen miners died during a week

By Z B MOLEFE
and MARTIN
NTSOELENGOE

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of unrest. Nine died and 11 were injured at Johannesburg Consolidated Investments' Western Areas and Hartbeesfontein mines.

Management said 99 percent of the miners were back at work yesterday, after being threatened with dismissal. Seven died and 112 were injured at Waterpan in Westonaria after police were called in.

● Nine Anglo American mines in Welkom reported 250 injured but no deaths.

● Twenty-three miners were injured at Eisburg gold mine on the East Rand when police fired rubber bullets at a group of 500 miners who stoned their vehicles.

● Two hundred miners were injured and five arrested at West Rand Durban Deep near Roodepoort after being teargassed by police. Another 50 were

To Page 2

for blood to spill?

THE legal mine strike lasted a day.

Agreement between the National Union of Mineworkers and Chamber of Mines was reached at the 13th hour.

This was hailed by Anglo American as a victory for collective bargaining, which indeed it was.

That is the good news.

A wave of unofficial strikes in support of the NUM coincided with the settlement. During this unrest 16 miners died, and hundreds injured — some seriously.

The final casualty figures are not known. Nor is it known how many of the casualties resulted from police action, mine security personnel action and violence among groups of mineworkers.

What is known is that police took action with rubber bullets, buckshot, teargas and sjamboks.

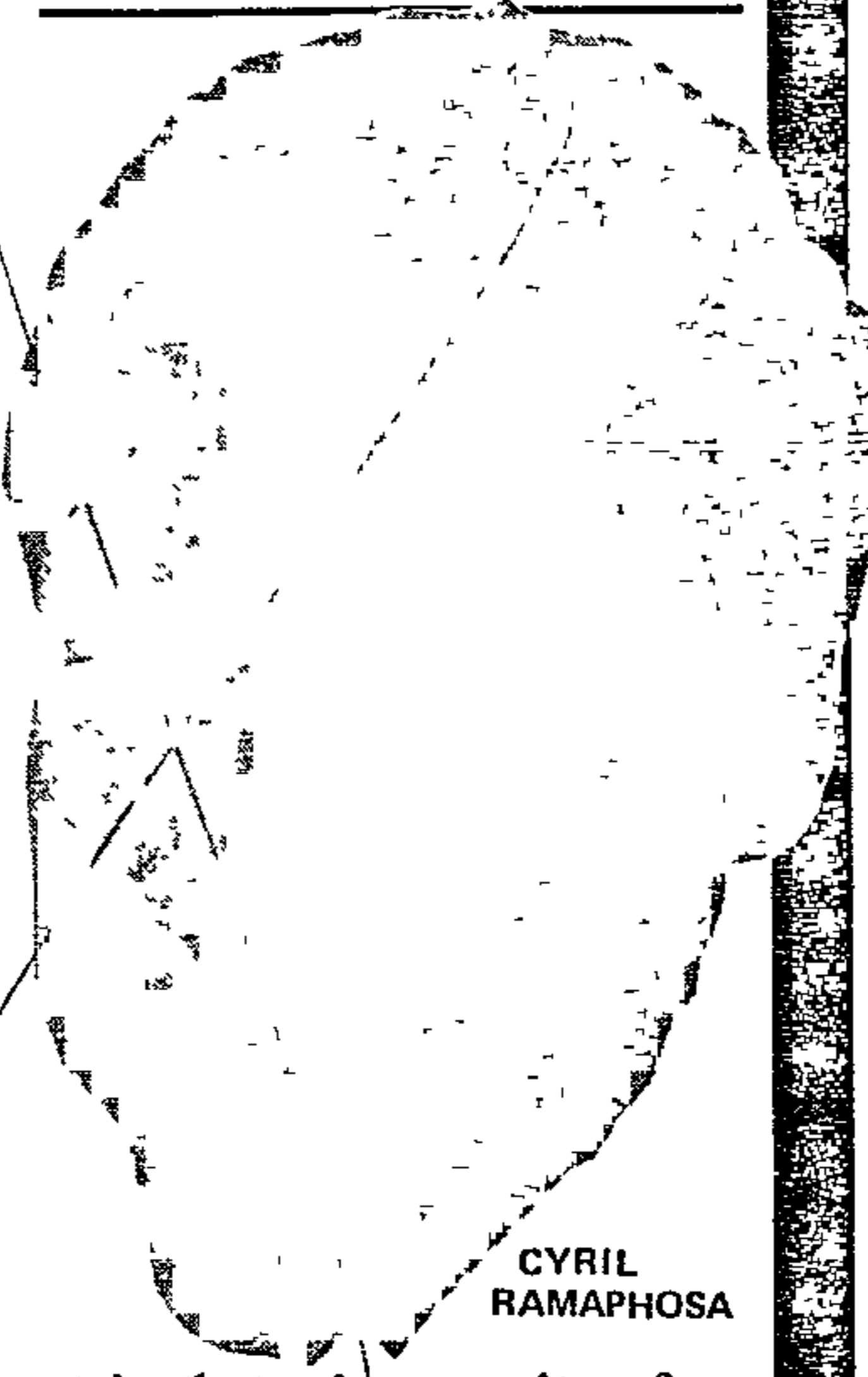
Also known is the horrifying fact that the trouble lasted for about 48 hours — and in that short period more people were killed and injured than in the British Union of Mineworkers' strike, which has lasted six months.

And that strike hasn't been a gentlemanly affair.

There are those who main-

FOR

SEPTEMBER 23, 1984



CYRIL
RAMAPHOSA

tain that mine security officials panicked — among them NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa, who said the strike committees could have dealt with the trouble without bloodshed

This opinion was backed by spokesmen for the miners who maintained that the violence escalated after police arrived.

Violence begets violence — and this, according to reports reaching City Press, is what happened.

That is the bad news.

From Page 1

sent to the homelands. The five arrested miners appeared in court later this week on charges of public violence. But their case was postponed

● A Rand Mines spokesperson said 80 of its miners had been sent back to the homelands when they refused to return to work.

The spokesperson denied that workers had been forced to go back to work at gunpoint on Tuesday, or that they had cancelled a recognition agreement with the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union — saying

there had never been a formal recognition agreement.

The spokesperson added that 115 miners were injured during the strike. Twenty-five were treated at a local hospital, but one had to be transferred to Rand Mutual Hospital with a serious eye injury.

● About R2-million worth of damaged was caused to a hostel at Western Areas gold mine's northern division after 500 miners went on strike.

A mine spokesperson said half the miners went back to work. He added that some of the miners and "elected to return to their homelands"

Managements' responses to the legal and illegal strikes was varied. Anglo American spokesperson E P Gush said he believed the issue could have been resolved "peacefully, without pickets".

JCI spokesperson David Rowe came up with a new angle — he told City Press most of the injuries sustained by striking miners were not caused by the police but by "inter-tribal fighting" between those who wanted to strike and those who didn't.

The unions, however, were united in their criticism of the way mine managements responded.

FOR

CRUCIAL talks take place in Durban today in a bid to end the conflict at Hambanathi between Inkatha and Jorac supporters.

The situation in the township is still so

Rent protest rally call for PE stayaway

By MONO BA

RENT protestors in Port for a work stayaway from

More than 600 people in New Brighton this week work in protest against the shack dwellers, due to be introduced to the council.

"We won't pay the new rates on our homes," a shack dweller of the call.

The service charges for shack dwellers will go up 150 percent if they are approved by the Government — which PE Youth Congress leader Mkhuseleli Jack, described as "highway robbery".

"This is a crime against humanity," he told the rally, pointing out that the council would make as much as R4,2-million a year from the shack dwellers if the increase was approved.

He asked the council to scrap the increases, saying they were "provocative".

Medics disturbed by asbestos-rel

By Pamela Kleimot,
Medical Reporter

Despite the relatively large number of black miners found to have mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lung), many cases must occur which are never recognised or diagnosed, says a Johannesburg doctor

Dr K Solomons, of the National Centre for Occupational Health (NCOH), says the reporting of cases is "unfortunately unreliable"

He says in an article in the South African Medical Journal that 12 050 miners in South African mines — which produced 249 187 metric tons of asbestos in

1979 — were at risk of developing asbestos-induced diseases, "but it is not possible to estimate the number of people in the rest of the population who are at a similar risk from either occupational or environmental exposure"

Dr Solomons said almost 100 new cases of mesothelioma were confirmed nationwide by the South African Asbestos Tumour Reference Panel each year, but "this figure underestimates the true incidence"

In a study of 89 cases of malignant mesothelioma referred to the clinic at the NCOH between 1977 and 1983, 89 percent had been exposed to asbestos.

Of these 80 cases, 59 (74 percent) had occupational exposure either in the mining industry, the Railways the construction industry, the marine engineering industry, the primary asbestos manufacturing industry and in other assorted industries, seven (9 percent) had environmental exposure and five people had both

Of the remaining nine, four had possible occupational exposure one as a boilermaker, another as a fitter and turner on naval ships, one handling construction material, and the fourth as a market agent handling hessian sacks which had previously been

ated lung disease

24/7/84
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Star

used to transport asbestos sacks Five had no history of exposure.

The duration of asbestos exposure ranged from one week to 47 years The lag period from first exposure to diagnosis ranged from four years to 68 years.

The study also found

● Less than half (38 percent) of those eligible have been compensated

● A significant number of subjects who were exposed to asbestos environmentally had no recourse to compensation as present laws only covered people exposed occupationally "No other provision is made to

cover them or their families against losses suffered as a result of the disease," said Dr Solomons

● Malignant mesothelioma affects a relatively young population

In concluding, Dr Solomons said more studies were needed on the subject "With the continuing mining, manufacturing and consumer utilisation of asbestos and asbestos products in South Africa even today, medical practitioners should be seeing cases of mesothelioma well into the next century and should have ample opportunity to study the disease more comprehensively"

August 27/1984

NATIONAL

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Killer asbestos disease described

Staff Reporter

A survey has shown that people in mining, building, marine-engineering or even working on the country's railways may be exposing themselves to a deadly asbestos-related disease.

A DEADLY asbestos-related disease, malignant mesothelioma, is contracted by about 100 South Africans each year, according to the latest edition of the South African Medical Journal

The article says while asbestos miners are at risk, it is not possible to estimate how many other people face a similar risk from occupational or environmental exposure

However, each year about 100 new cases of mesothelioma — or a national incidence of 7.2 a million — each year are confirmed by the South African Asbestos Tumour Reference Board

True incidence

The article says this statistic underestimates the true incidence of mesothelioma in South Africa because it excludes certain types of tumours

A study undertaken at the National Centre for Occupational Health between January 1977 and June 1983 of the clinical and epidemiological features of 80 cases of malignant mesothelioma showed a positive history of asbestos exposure in 89 percent of the cases

The average survival time from diagnosis to death was about eight months and from onset of symptoms to death about 13 months

Average duration of asbestos exposure for patients was about 13 years, but the time ranged from one week to 47 years. Average time from first exposure to diagnosis was about 34 years

Mining industry

Of the 68 people who reported occupational exposure, 22 percent had worked in the mining industry, 22 percent on the railways and 12 percent in the construction industry

Others worked in marine-engineering industry, the primary asbestos manufacturing industry and other assorted industries

Most of those exposed had been involved in lagging boilers and pipes, (34 percent), drilling, cutting and sawing asbestos products, (16 percent), underground mining, (12 percent) and surface mining jobs (7 percent)

Other activities included transport of raw asbestos and the use of asbestos gloves, blankets and aprons and aprons

MINE SAFETY

West Drie settled

FM 28/9/84

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Gold Fields this week agreed not to continue with a case which arose out of the dismissal of 17 workers who had refused to work in conditions they considered to be unsafe. As a result, the Industrial Court has dismissed the case

The workers, who were employed on the West Driefontein mine, were fired on September 22 last year. A subsequent inquiry by the Government Mining Engineer established that the area was safe. In the interim NUM had successfully applied to the Industrial Court to order the company to temporarily reinstate the workers.

In terms of the order, management agreed to pay the workers' wages pending the final outcome of the dispute. The order was renewed a number of times, but on May 9 the court refused a further renewal.

This week's court hearing revolved around whether Gold Fields had taken adequate steps to allay the workers' fears. The union said the company had not done so and that this constituted an unfair labour practice. Now that the case has been settled, Gold Fields is not obliged to rehire the workers.

In a statement, Gold Fields said it viewed the culmination of the proceedings as formal confirmation of the union's inability to substantiate its allegations.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told the *FM*: "NUM withdrew the case because it had not been well coordinated and we felt it should not continue.

"However, the struggle for safety on the mines is still unresolved and our union will continue to press for procedures to adequately regulate safety. This will mainly be done through collective bargaining," he said.

RUM 28/9/84 (24) (25) (26)

Miners' union drops action over firing of 17

Mail Reporter

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has withdrawn its important industrial court case in which 17 workers — fired for refusing to work in an area of a mine they believed unsafe — were demanding reinstatement.

The case was regarded as a key test of the right of workers to refuse to work in conditions they considered dangerous.

The workers were fired on September 22 last year after repeatedly refusing to work in a section of the West Driefontein mine near Carletonville on the grounds that conditions were unsafe.

A Government mining engineer's inquiry subsequently found the area to be objectively safe.

The NUM pursued the case on the grounds that management had not done enough to

allay the workers' fears.

They charged management . . . with committing an unfair labour practice by firing the workers.

A Gold Fields statement said that in terms of the settlement, the mine is not required to re-instate the 17 workers.

"Gold Fields views the culmination of the proceedings today as formal confirmation of the union's inability to substantiate its allegations," the company said.

Mr Cyril Rampahosa, general secretary of the NUM, said they had withdrawn the case because it was not coordinated . . . due to the absence of a number of the witnesses.

"The whole question of safety still remains unresolved.

"The struggle for safety still has to continue and it will be handled by collective bargaining," he said.

Bid for improved disaster payouts

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers lawyers have applied for increased compensation for dependants of the victims of the Hlobane coalmine disaster which killed 68 people.

The application — to the owners of the mine, Iscor — is believed to be the first of its kind in the mining industry for 20 years.

It follows the widely-publicised inquiry into the disaster in February and the subsequent court case in which the mine was fined R400 for irregularities arising out of the blast.

In terms of the Workman's Compensation Act accident victims can claim for increased compensation if it can be proved that the accident was due to negligence on the employer's part.

The NUM application has been made on behalf of various families, but they have demanded that any award be made to apply to dependants of all the workers, a spokesman for the legal representatives said.

The company has another two months to reply to the application, failing which the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner will

have to rule if there was negligence.

If awarded, the additional claims could run into millions of rands.

More than R2-million compensation — which includes pensions — is already being paid out to dependants of miners killed in the disaster, a spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said.

He said all injuries had been settled and payment to beneficiaries of 59 of the 65 black miners killed had been settled.

Another five have been almost settled while the beneficiaries of one had not yet been traced, he said.

If the commissioner finds that additional compensation should be paid the actual amounts of compensation will have to be assessed on the basis of loss of earnings and support for people who had a legal right of support by any of the dead miners.

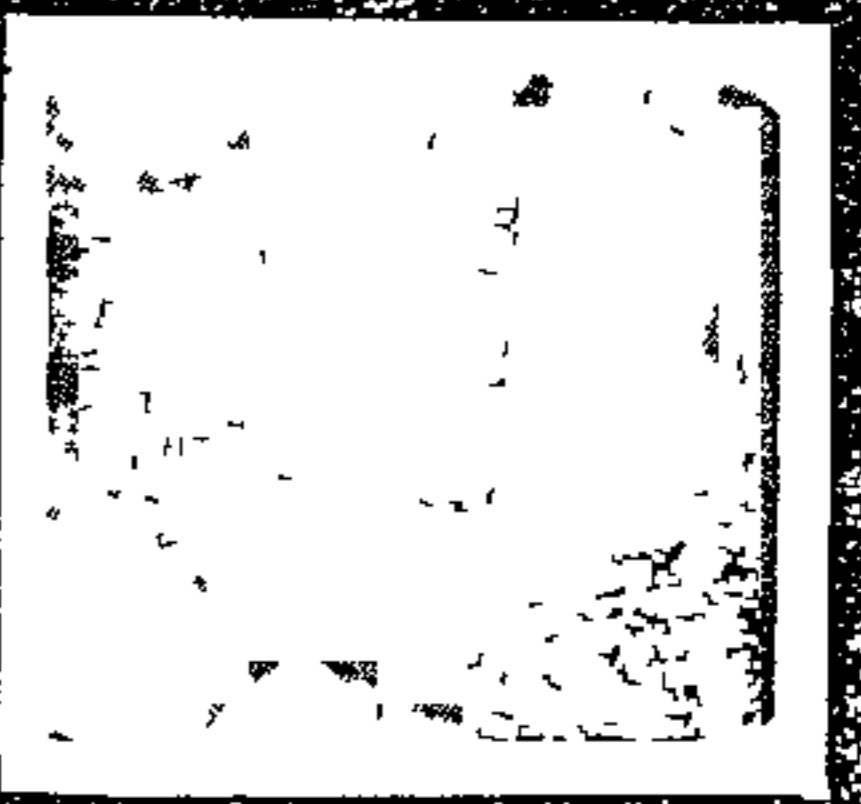
The claims would then be calculated on the difference between the full financial loss and the amount of compensation they are already receiving.

There have been no such claims in the mining industry for 20 years even though there have been 23 successful claims in the nine years from 1974 to 1983 for all industry.

● STILLE KAMPHORSA



● PANDELANI NEWSPAPERS



Blue fibres, black death

By ZB MOLEFE

LEBOWA Health Secretary E Mphahlele has refused to comment on the Northern Transvaal asbestos scandal which is affecting more than 200 000 people in the homeland — because "it is a sensitive issue with political overtones".

"We must first have our facts about this thing. It is causing an undue disturbance. It can't be left like that while pushing all those concerned very hard," said Lebowa Health Director A M Makunwane.

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30/9/84

The Government Mining Engineer's office has not responded to inquiries from City Press. The Government's Deputy Mining Engineer, D M Morris, said the newspaper should put its questions in writing.

Dr Makunwane said reports on tests carried out on the dangers of asbestos have been handed to the Legislative Assembly. Trade unions with members in Northern Transvaal asbestos mines — the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union and the

National Union of Mine-workers — are concerned about this silent killer. Bamwuwu general secretary Pandelani Nefolohwe says his union has asked medical specialists to check the files of 1 700 miners formerly employed at Penge, one of the biggest asbestos mines in the area.

And NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told City Press his union plans to launch a campaign against asbestos. Last month the Gwaland Exploration and Finance Company, one of the industry's main

companies, revealed that Penge was still unable to meet the Government Mining Engineer's limit of two fibres a millimetre in several key areas. This followed critical Press reports of extremely high asbestos dust levels. About 780 workers at the mine were compensated between 1973 and last year.

Already an order has been issued prohibiting the manufacture of bricks from asbestos waste dumps. The Technical Advice Group is alarmed that more than 200 000 black workers in Strydpoort-

beige, from Donkerkloof through to Mmafefe, are surrounded by hundreds of killer asbestos waste dumps. There is little relief under the law for these Northern Transvaal The Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act of 1965 does not prescribe control of asbestos dust levels.

The Mines and Works Act does not seem to offer any recourse either. "The workers have no statutory recourse under these circumstances, unlike other workers who are protected by the Workmen's Compensation

Act," said Wits University research officer Jean Leger. "Then only recourse would be to bring civil actions of negligence against the asbestos companies. But that would be hard to prove."

Meanwhile, black workers in Mahlujane and Mmafefe are still using asbestos waste to make bricks and children are still playing in unprotected asbestos dumps. All the asbestos mines in the Strydpoortberge have been closed down but no dumps have been covered adequately.

RAM 3/10/84 212

Asbestos campaign launched

Mail Reporter

THE Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (Bamcwu) has launched a national anti-asbestos campaign following investigations held in the wake of the strike at the Penge mine in the North Eastern Transvaal

A spokesman for Bamcwu said yesterday they would be holding a Press conference later in the week to spell out the details of their findings

"As a result of these findings the union felt that a national campaign to help all people affected by this deadly dust should be launched"

The strike — in which several hundred members of Bamcwu were dismissed — sparked much interest when the fact that hundreds of workers had been compensated for asbestosis over the past decade came to light.

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Bamcwu wants asbestos mines closed

By NKOPANE MAKOBANE

THE BLACK Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (Bamcwu) yesterday launched a national anti-asbestos campaign following its recent investigations on asbestos mineworkers in the north eastern Transvaal

Addressing a Press conference in Johannesburg yesterday, Mr Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, the union's general secretary, said the launching of the campaign has been prompted by the high incidence of asbestos-related diseases

The diseases were mesothelioma and asbestosis (lung cancer), which communities living near asbestos mines and dumps are in danger of contracting. In the north eastern Transvaal alone, 500 000 people could be affected

"The closure of asbestos mines is going to be our priority because the health and safety of black workers comes first. We would rather starve than sell our labour plus our lives," he said

"Our campaign shall be geared at alerting the entire community to the dangers they are subjected to in their daily toil for the enrichment of the capitalist minority. It shall also make the rural masses aware of the looming death as a result of the system's intransigence," Mr Nefolouhodwe said

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RD 6/10/84

Six killed in mine accidents

THREE black mineworkers were killed in a rockburst at No 3 shaft, Western Deep Levels, about 10,30am on Thursday, the Anglo American Corporation announced in Johannesburg yesterday.

Twenty other black workers and one white were injured, none seriously, in the incident which occurred at a depth of about 3 300 metres, a spokesman said.

The next of kin of the dead are being informed. Gold Fields of SA announced yesterday that three black mineworkers had been killed in two accidents underground, also on Thursday.

At West Driefontein, in the early hours of Thursday, two workers were fatally injured by a fall of ground while travelling to the face 2 102 metres below the surface.

And at East Driefontein a rockburst occurred, also just after midnight, 2 266 metres underground, fatally injuring one person. Sapa

Azapo in call for improved pay-out

THE Azanian Peoples Organisation yesterday called on asbestos mine managements in South Africa to increase the compensation paid to black workers suffering from asbestosis from R1 500 to R15 000.

In a statement, the health secretary of Azapo, Dr Abu-Baker Asvat, also suggested that the total banning of the mining of "this magical mineral" should be considered in view of the serious health hazard posed.

Although we may be classified as Third World, our citizens deserve first world treatment," Dr Asvat said.

Knowing fully well that the banning of the mining of the mineral could not be achieved overnight, Dr Asvat said, Azapo called on the managements of asbestos mines to immedi-

ately institute the following recommendations

- to provide better protection for their workers from the hazards of the fibre,
- to reduce the size of permissible fibre from four fibres per cubic millimetre to one per cubic millimetre,
- to dispose of the dumps so that they no longer pose a danger to those living in the surrounding areas, and,
- to improve the living conditions and facilities of those employed by the mines.

Besides calling for a large increase in the compensation paid, Dr Asvat said black workers who suffered from "this irreversable and permanently disabling disease" should get a permanent monthly pension to bring them in line with white workers

— Sapa

ATTENTION

Black union will fight for asbestos ban

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By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

Star 12/10/84

A national campaign to get asbestos mining in South Africa banned has been mounted by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union

The aim is to bring to the attention of black mineworkers and black communities the health hazards of occupational and environmental exposure to the mineral fibre

Mr Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, the union's general secretary, said in Johannesburg yesterday that the campaign had the full support of union members in mining and construction

He added that communities in and near the asbestos mining areas of the North-Eastern Transvaal and Northern Cape

would be told of the dangers of exposure to the mineral fibres. There would be meetings, and pamphlets would be circulated describing asbestos dangers

The union also plans to rally international support for the campaign, and will alert Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique to asbestos hazards

South Africa is one of the world's largest producers of blue asbestos (crocidolite) — held to be the most hazardous of the five types of asbestos fibre — and is the world's sole producer of brown asbestos (amosite)

Inhalation of asbestos fibres can result in asbestosis, a crippling fibrosis of lung tissue, mesothelioma, a fatal cancer of the lung lining, and bronchogenic carcinoma, which has a high fatality rate.

The international health lobby against the mining of asbestos and manufacture of asbestos products has resulted in the fibre being banned in Scandinavia and Holland, with stringent dust levels legislated for in Britain and Europe

Figures released by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases show that there were a total of 5 140 asbestosis victims between 1967 and 1983, 212 compensated cases of mesothe-

lioma, and 57 cases of bronchogenic carcinoma

A total of 704 people are recorded to have died from the three diseases

Compensation paid out for occupational diseases on the mines is grossly discriminatory, and black workers receive only a fraction of the amount paid to their white colleagues for the same diseases

The Azanian Peoples Organisation (Azapo) has called on asbestos mine managements to increase compensation to black workers suffering from asbestosis from R1 790 to R15 000

White workers receive a lump sum payment of R24 000

Azapo calls for equal aid for asbestos victims

Labour Reporter

The Azanian People's Organisation has called for equal compensation for black mineworkers who contract the crippling lung disease asbestosis through the inhalation of asbestos fibres.

At present black mineworkers receive only a fraction of the lump sum paid out to their white counterparts for certifi-

cation for the same diseases

In terms of section 107 of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act, black mineworkers suffering from a compensatable disease receive a lump sum payment of R1 491

If the mineworker is suffering from tuberculosis as well he will receive R1 790

White mineworkers who are certified as suffering from a compensatable disease (second degree) receive R26 833 in lump sum benefits

The call by Azapo's Health Secretariat for equal compensation comes at the same time as the anti-asbestos campaign launched by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (Bamcwu).

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Union seeks support for anti-asbestos fight

By Sol Makgabutlane

The Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union has stepped up its anti-asbestos campaign by appealing to governments in Southern Africa for support.

The union's publicity secretary, Mr Motsumi Mokhine, said it had forwarded communiques to the governments of

Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia and Malawi notifying them of the campaign.

"We want to make them aware of the dangers of asbestos, especially as most of their workers are employed on South African mines

"We also asked them to look into ways and means of helping their people on South African mines who

have contracted asbestosis and have not been adequately compensated"

Mr Mokhine said that the union had congratulated labour movements in Denmark, Norway and Sweden for launching anti-asbestos campaigns.

"We also asked them to pledge solidarity with our campaign"

He said that the union had also written to trade unions in South Africa

telling them about the anti-asbestos campaign and seeking their support.

The campaign was launched on October 13 to urge the closure of all asbestos mines in South Africa.

"This was done because asbestos is a health hazard and we cannot sacrifice the lives of our members and the community at large," Mr Mokhine said

Union ²⁰¹²
warns of
asbestos
dangers

Mail Reporter

THE Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union has sent letters to the governments of six Southern African states warning them of the dangers of asbestos to which their nationals are subjected to in South African mines.

The states include Botswana, Zambia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Malawi.

The letters have been sent as the next step in BAMCWU's national anti-asbestos campaign, the first such campaign in South Africa, which was launched last week.

BAMCWU has "vowed" to close down the asbestos mines and it has said that workers would rather "starve" than sell their lives for very little.

A statement released yesterday by BAMCWU's publicity secretary, Mr Motson Makhine, said that extensive public support was being galvanised in the campaign by the union's members.

Local organisations, institutions, trade unions and groups were being contacted.

Letters have also been sent to international labour movements in Sweden, Canada, Norway and Denmark to make them aware of the campaign and to request them to pledge solidarity with it.

Mr Makhine also said that BAMCWU's lawyers were studying legislation with a view to taking companies mining asbestos to court "for gross negligence".

At the campaign's launch last week BAMCWU produced figures which showed that 5 140 mineworkers had been compensated for asbestosis since 1967 and that 212 had been compensated for mesothelioma and 57 for lung cancer.

The figures, which BAMCWU said "under-estimated" the extent of the asbestos-related diseases, were taken from the official Mines Bureau of Occupational Diseases statistics.

Just who's in charge of these dumps of death?

TWO-AND-A-HALF months after the Rand Daily Mail first reported the widespread asbestos pollution caused by abandoned dumps near Pietersburg in the North Eastern Transvaal, little has been done to clean them up.

The Government Mining Engineer has warned local brickmakers to stop making their bricks from asbestos dust. The Egnem mining company — owned by the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco) — has taken down its signs in the Bewaarkloof valley. For the communities living next to the blue and

brown asbestos dumps in the villages of Lebowa — who have learned for the first time that they are threatened by a potentially deadly health hazard — it has been a trying time. In recent weeks they have been visited by doctors, journalists and television crews, by all sorts of officials testing for dust levels and in one case by a

PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

mysterious group wearing white jackets and masks

Children have been warned to stop playing on the dumps, the brickmakers now make their bricks from red clay brought in from other areas, and attempts have been made by school teachers in particular to educate the villagers and find ways of dealing with the problem

A teacher at Mahlajani, one of the small villages polluted by blue asbestos dumps, summed up a dilemma which has arisen within the community over the hazard

"There's little we can do. We can agree to stop using the dumps but we can't cover the dumps. We don't have the money."

Some children still play on the dumps, people have continued to plaster their homes with asbestos. Most of the pollution is all-pervasive. The roads are full of asbestos, houses are built of asbestos bricks and plastered with asbestos cement and asbestos fibres are caked in the ground.

Mr Samson Mojalefa, a teacher at the village of Mafefe, said many people were angry because they believed the mining companies and the Government had evaded their responsibilities. The community had simply been left with the dumps without ever being informed of the hazard

"The government must do something," he said. But no one has yet accepted responsibility for the situation which could cost millions to clean up. According to Mr S P Badenhorst, the Government Mining Engineer, the asbestos fields of the North Eastern Transvaal are not in a "proclaimed area" so there is no legislation providing for the covering of dumps.

Most of the land no longer belongs to the big companies who, until recently, owned substantial property in the area, so it is not seen as their responsibility. But in terms of the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act, there is an obligation on the GME to ensure that the owner of a mine has taken "all the necessary steps" to prevent dust pollution before he sells the mine or the land it is on.

Group financial executive of Turner and Newall Holdings South Africa, said his company was working on the situation and would soon inspect the property.

What makes the sale of these properties significant is that, while at present they are sparsely populated, they are soon to be opened up for settlement by thousands more people before being incorporated into Lebowa.

In recent years there has been a vast influx of people into the whole area. According to official census figures, the population doubled between 1970 and 1980, a result of forced resettlement and influx control.

Despite the GME's denials that the health hazard is serious, people are flooding into an area contaminated by what, in western countries, is recognised to be a highly toxic substance.

In the United States last year, an entire community at Globe, Arizona, was evacuated by the US Environmental Protection Agency because they were found to be living near an exposed asbestos dump.

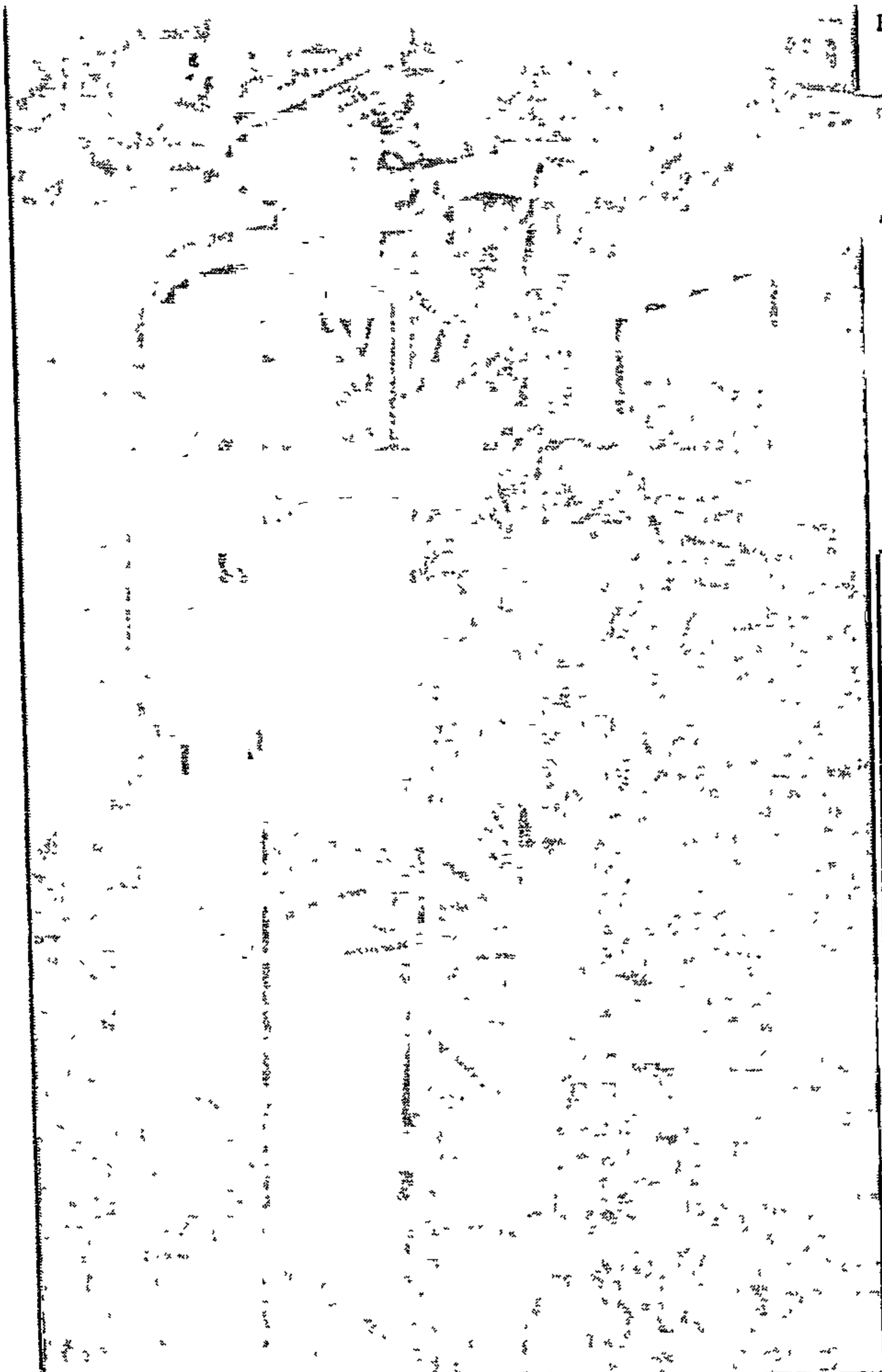
On the other hand, people in the town of Cermik, Turkey, have used asbestos outcrops in the mountains to make whitewash and stucco for their walls and roofs, leading to an exceptionally high rate of chest disease and cancer.

Inadequate health facilities have made it difficult to determine the extent of disease in the villages of Lebowa.

The territory's director of Health, Dr A M Makunyan, has pointed out that people die and are buried at home, without going to hospital and without having post mortems to establish causes of death.

In addition, the long latency period for the asbestos-associated cancer of the lung lining, mesothelioma — which can be up to 40 years — makes the actual effect of the dumps almost impossible to measure.

And for many of the people of the area, the problems of unemployment and starvation are more immediate than what they see as the far-off dangers of asbestos.



For the communities living next to the blue and

brown asbestos dumps in the villages of Lebowa — who have learned for the first time that they are threatened by a potentially deadly health hazard — it has been a trying time. In recent weeks they have been visited by doctors, journalists and television crews, by all sorts of officials testing for dust levels and in one case by a

now make their bricks from red clay brought in from other areas, and attempts have been made by school teachers in particular to educate the villagers and find ways of dealing with the problem.

A teacher at Mahlajani, one of the small villages polluted by blue asbestos dumps, summed up a dilemma which has arisen within the community over the hazard.

“Some people say we’ve been here a long time with these dumps and nothing has happened. Others said yes, a lot of people of the older generation are dead because

GEORGE MOGELE, an asbestosis sufferer, points to the mine in the mountains where he used to work. In the background is an old mill which is still littered with asbestos fibres.

FIFTEEN elderly men in the former asbestos mining areas of the North Eastern Transvaal interviewed last week all showed signs of suffering from asbestosis.

All had worked on the mines. Most had been compensated for the disease, while some did not know that their difficulty in walking without losing their breath, their rasping coughs and their hoarse voices probably meant they were suffering from the disease.

One who was compensated is George Mogele who — when asked about asbestos mining — supported himself with his stick and pointed to a row of worked-out mines in the mountains.

He was standing near an old asbestos dump on the farm, Lagerdraai, in the

They don't know that they are doomed ...

Bewaarkloof valley, where he now lives.

An interpreter translated the old man's Tswana words: “He came with his boss, Hans van Wyk, from the Kimberley diamond mines in 1951. Hans van Wyk bought a small mine up there that one

“Those mines up there closed a long time ago the men who worked them are dead. Many had phthisis. Hans van Wyk is dead. He had the same phthisis.”

All that is left of Lagerdraai's mining days are an old mill, asbestos dumps

and George Mogele.

Many of the men who worked the mines are dead from asbestos-related diseases. The mining companies have gone.

In May this year George Mogele's farm was sold by Lagerdraai Asbestos, in which United States Steel has a major shareholding, to the South African Development Trust for R71 000.

Farther down the valley there are more men suffering from the disease.

And more uncovered dumps.

By Carolyn Dempster

All members of mining family suffer crippling and painful lung disease

Asbestosis — deadly legacy of Penge mine

When my father died, they said it was the worst case they had ever seen. Man, he really suffered. I stayed with him here in his house right to the end."

Herman is one of the youngest members of the Davises family — a family which will never be able to shrug off its heritage of a childhood spent on an asbestos mine.

His father died because of it, his mother suffered from it, Herman (40), his three brothers and two sisters also carry the legacy of asbestos dust in their lungs.

All suffer from the crippling lung disease asbestosis.

A progressively disabling disease caused by the inhalation of asbestos fibre, asbestosis results in a fibrosis of the lung, causing acute pain to the sufferer, who is difficultly breathing during strenuous physical exercise. In extreme cases, a person will wheeze and cannot walk more than 10 paces before stopping for a rest.

James (50), the eldest of the Davises children and articulate spokesman for the brood, bears no grudges. Life in the Penge asbestos mining community of the north-eastern Transvaal was good to the family, he recalls, from the comfort of his Lowveld home at Cairns, where the climate is kinder to his lungs. "My father originally went to

work on the mine in 1938 and we all grew up and went to school there.

"We stayed in tents for the first two years at Penge, but I was still a youngster then. As children we used to play on the dumps and my mother would repair the soft extractor bags they used for carrying the asbestos fibre."

The white community was a small one, perhaps no more than 40 families to begin with, but there were "hundreds" of black miners from Botswana, Blantyre in Malawi and Mozambique, he remembers.

James was only 24 when he was certified as an asbestosis case.

"No, the family didn't really know about the hazards of asbestos dust. My father was first declared by the Miner's Phtisis Board in Johannesburg, but at that time everyone referred to it as pneumoconiosis." But the mine owners, Cape

Asbestos, knew about the health hazards of asbestos because regular medical checks for the mine employees were instituted as early as 1944.

"It was after several hundreds of blacks had died that they started checking up on the health side of things."

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research also did a survey of the area, trying to establish the incidence of "tuberculosis", he says.

In the early days of asbestos mining in the northern Cape, asbestosis and the fatal lung cancer mesothelioma were often confused with tuberculosis. But tuberculosis is treatable and curable.

James remembers how it was impossible to avoid the dust. The mine houses and mill were situated down the valley and the wind would whip up the fine asbestos fibres, covering everything and everybody with a fine white mantle.

In the mine mills, one would just have to dislodge a piece of machinery and the dust would cascade down.

Then Walter, the second eldest, was X-rayed and diagnosed as suffering from asbestosis.

Both of the boys had started working on the mine from about age 19, James as a carpenter and then as a foreman and Walter as a boilermaker.

"There was a doctor, Dr Huntleigh, who explained to us what would happen, but that was long after we had already been affected," remembers James.

"I spoke to the blacks there and they told me of the young umfana — boys aged nine and 12 — who had died of sore lungs. Blacks I worked with weren't told of the dangers of asbestos and when they got sick, they were told they had TB and were warned not to smoke. They never received any benefits."

Herman was only three days in the army when he collapsed under the rigours of "basics" and was taken to an army hospital at age 20 to be certified an asbestosis sufferer.

He never gave up smoking and as a consequence suffers the most of the entire family today. He looks on his disability with characteristic cheerfulness. "It only really hurts in the winter, with the change of weather."

Phyllis (45), Dora (42) and August (37) never worked on or in the mine, yet were also certified as asbestosis sufferers in their early 20s.

All received compensation, unlike the hundreds of black mineworkers who drifted back home to Malawi, Mozambique and Rhodesia.

As a family who have lived in the close-knit mining community, the Davises can tell of friends, fellow miners and relatives who also suffer from asbestosis — and of many who died from the disease.



A young asbestos worker wears a respirator to avoid inhaling asbestos fibres — but hundreds of others didn't and are now paying a heavy price

25/10/84 212 184

Nosa aims to achieve more trade union contact

By PRISCILLA WHYTE

CONTACT with trade unions was essential to steer the National Occupational Safety Association (Nosa) through the hazards of industrial relations.

Nosa's president, Mr Don Carroll, told the annual general meeting in Johannesburg last week "There is no doubt that the manager who does not take his safety responsibilities seriously will reap the industrial relations whirlwind"

He said Nosa was working with trade unions to teach safety procedures. Considerable time was being spent on establishing contacts with major unions.

Contact was necessary because of the increased legal responsibilities imposed by the Machinery and Occupational Safety Act.

Mr Carroll said Nosa had taken

the safety message to more than 4 000 firms but there were nearly 200 000 companies registered with the State Accident Fund.

"We are getting through to 2,1% of the firms and 40% of the employees

There were 2,5-million workers insured by the State Accident Fund whom Nosa was not reaching directly

A third of the fatalities, but only 8,6% of injuries, reported in the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner's report were related to vehicles

Vehicle accident deaths absorbed a large proportion of compensation payments

Mr Bunny Matthysen, Nosa general manager, said that in 1951, 4% of the workforce had disabling injuries. The most recent figure released by the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner showed a decline to

1,7%

The Commissioner, who administers the State Accident Fund, had been able to reduce the assessment rates of 82 of the 109 classes of industry and commerce in the period 1972 to 1984/85

Of these, 12 classes had remained constant and 15 had increased

The average unweighted assessment rate for all industry had dropped from R1,15 to R0,84 per R100 of wages

The merit rebate paid out for the 1980/82 cycle was expected to be a record, said Mr Matthysen

The Nosa safety budget was R3,5m and had grown at 20,5% compounded over the past five years. Grants still comprised 60% of the total turnover.

The number of trainees attending courses had increased by 69%. Field staff had grown by 29% over the past five years

RAMM 25/11/84 (27) (212)

Shock asbestos dust figures

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

A SAMPLE from the Government Mining Engineer's (GME's) dust survey in the area of abandoned asbestos dumps in the North Eastern Transvaal far exceeded the GME's own recommended limit for the environment

This contradicts a statement by the GME, Mr S P Badenhorst, to the Rand Daily Mail several weeks ago that, on the basis of the survey, fibre pollution was low

The sample readings were revealed this week by Mr L W Isserow, chief inspector of mines in the air quality section, when he answered questions at the Council for Scientific and

Industrial Research's conference on air pollution

Mr Isserow said that out of six samples of the general atmosphere in the area, most were around the GME's limit of 20 000 fibres per cubic metre while one was "quite a lot higher"

The 20 000 fibres a cubic metre readings — a fibre count which in some countries is regarded as unsafe for the general atmosphere — are in a densely populated area

In a recent paper, Dr R S du Toit, of the GME's air quality section, pointed out that a figure of 1 000 fibres per cubic metre — 20 times smaller than these counts — had been recommended

by experts as a safe level

And a count of 11 000 fibres per cubic metre at a mine hostel was described by Mr D J Selles, the environmental engineer of the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (Gefco), at the conference as "very high"

Both Mr Isserow and Mr Selles presented papers — one of them jointly — to the conference

The papers set out to show that fibre levels in the air at and around asbestos mines had improved substantially and compared favourably with conditions in other countries

Mr Selles said "Although we are accused of polluting

the air, the picture is not so bad and we compare favourably with overseas"

Out of six samples taken 100 metres away from an asbestos mill, two showed exceptionally high counts — one of 600 000 fibres and another of 300 000 fibres a cubic metre

Although the paper said this could have been caused by a "still unprotected tailings dump" in line with the mill, Mr Selles conceded at question time that it was most likely caused by the mill

The paper said "high" readings in some mine hostels were caused by "workers who still disregard company rules on hygiene"

Six killed
in mine ^{Star} ^{2/2}
26/10/82
accident

Six men were killed and one injured in an accident at Ermelo Mines last night, Gencor said in a statement issued today

The statement said the cause of the accident at the south-eastern Transvaal colliery was not yet known and was being investigated by company officials and the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs

The accident damaged the ventilation system in a section of the mine

The names of the dead are being withheld until their next of kin have been informed — Sapa

Monday 30/11/84 (212)

Safety limit key to survival of asbestos industry

JOHANNESBURG— The most important aspect of the asbestos health issue is the establishment of a scientifically-determined threshold for the safe use of the mineral, Mr Luther Jooste, chairman of the South African Asbestos Producers' Advisory Committee, said yesterday

'The result of this lack of precision is evident today in the uncertainty and variations in limit values proposed or already in force throughout the world

'The approach of "when in doubt, play safe" has had a marked effect on regulations and, while we

fully support this approach as a temporary necessity, it would be a sad loss to mankind if the benefits of a better quality of life arising from the use of asbestos were to be denied to millions of people for lack of a solid scientific basis for limit setting' — (Sapa)

Mr Jooste, addressing the Asbestos International Association here, said it was essential to the survival of the asbestos industry that permissible safety limits should be based on the 'threshold concept', and not on the notion that the 'only safe limit is zero'

The three-day session is being attended by more than 100 delegates from 17 countries. It will focus on the latest developments in asbestos dust measurement techniques, as well as biological results of the latest experiments on asbestos dust exposure

Health

'There are indications that the epigenetic character of asbestos will find general acceptance in the near future and this would mean that a reasonable threshold limit could be established,' Mr Jooste said

Mr Jooste said it was unfortunate that the standard dust measurement procedure in use was not available 20 to 40 years ago

'All the limit values being applied today are based on health problems stemming from exposures many years ago, when exposure levels either were not, or could not be, recorded, or where techniques used were unscientific and therefore completely unreliable,' he said

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Asbestos may not be cause of cancer — expert

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

ASBESTOS might not initiate cancer — it might only promote it.

This was said by Professor E Beck, director of the Hygiene Institute of the Justus Liebig University of Giessen in West Germany, at the conference of the Asbestos International Association in Johannesburg this week.

The association is made up of asbestos producers, whose industry is being threatened by a growing anti-asbestos lobby concerned over the health effects of the substance.

Prof Beck said. "So far there is no concrete evidence that asbestos is an

initiator of lung tumours, and there is increasing evidence that it acts only as a promoter."

He said fibres posed a risk only when they were inhaled and were of no significance when taken in with liquids or food.

Research was still required to provide conclusive answers to a number of questions relating to asbestos and health.

These included the significance of the size and chemical properties of fibres, whether a single fibre was enough to cause a tumour and whether there was a specific fibre concentration beyond which there was no risk.

ROOM 1/11/84 (212) (S/211)

Asbestos-cancer link 'firm'

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

IT WAS "playing with words" to say asbestos only promoted and did not initiate cancer, says Dr Jonny Myers, of the University of Cape Town's Industrial Health group

Dr Myers said there was conclusive evidence to show asbestos was closely linked to various forms of lung cancer as well as a number of other cancers

He was responding to claims by Professor E Beck, director of the Hygiene Institute of the Justus Liebig University of Gießen in West Germany, that there was no concrete evidence that asbestos was an initiator of lung tumours

Prof Beck told the conference of the

Asbestos International Association in Johannesburg that there was increasing evidence that asbestos acted only as a promoter of cancer

But Dr Myers said the link between asbestos and cancer was as clear and as medically beyond doubt as that between smoking and cancer.

It was a "dubious distinction" to say asbestos did not "initiate" cancer

Dr Meyers also rejected a claim by Prof Beck that asbestos fibres only posed a risk when they were inhaled

"Some studies have shown that ingesting asbestos fibres leads to cancer of the organs of the digestive system," he said

3 miners
killed in
rockburst

Post
15/11/84
212

JOHANNESBURG —
Three miners died, 12 were injured and two were still missing after an underground rockburst at Kloof Gold Mine yesterday, the Kloof Gold Mining Company said in a statement

None of the 12 injured was in a serious condition following the 11.15am accident which occurred 3 000 metres underground at the mine's number one shaft.

Rescue teams are still searching for the two missing men. — Sapa

3 miners
killed, 2
lost in
rock burst

STAR 15/11/84
212

Three miners were killed and two are still missing after a rockburst at Kloof mine yesterday morning.

A spokesman for Gold Fields said the accident happened at about 11.15 yesterday morning. It took place at the mine's number one shaft at a depth of about 3 000 m.

Rescue teams are still trying reach the area where the two missing miners were when the accident happened.

Twelve other miners were injured but none of them critically, the spokesman said.

Names of three dead miners are released

S.F.A.R. 19/11/80 212
Anglo American has released the names of three of the four miners killed in a mudslide at the President Steyn gold mine in Welkom on Saturday.

They were shaft foreman Mr Willem Pretorius (58) of 5 Mostert Street, Welkom; Mr Paul Hamel (38) of 32 Geldenhuys Street, Welkom; and Mr John Campbell of 10 Theron Street, Welkom. All three were married

The name of the fourth miner, who was from Lesotho, would be released only when his family had been informed, a spokesman said.

The accident happened at about noon on Saturday at the mine's No 4 shaft.

Miner's premonition of death came true

STAR 20/11/84 (212)

By Chris Steyn

Mr John Campbell came home in a disturbed mood on Friday night.

He was behaving so strangely it was as though he had a premonition about something, said Mrs Cecilia Campbell, wife of the 48-year-old Welkom miner.

Mr Campbell — a father of six — was upset because he had been told to go underground the next day.

The timberman had a morbid fear of working down below — though strangely, only on Saturdays.

Fifteen hours later John Campbell and three of his workmates were swamped by a huge mudslide 3 000 m underground.

Mrs Campbell said yesterday morning that her husband kept "milling around" on Friday night.

"He usually works in his garden before settling

down to watch television. "But on Friday night he didn't even go into the garden.

"He was very restless and talkative all evening. He didn't wake me up when he left at four on Saturday — and I never saw him again."

Mr Campbell, who worked at the President Steyn gold mine for the last 15 years, leaves his wife and six children — the youngest is six years old.

DUE TO RETIRE

His funeral will be held from the Reitz Park Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk at noon on Thursday.

Fellow miner Mr Willem Pretorius was due to retire in March — after 27 years on the mine.

The 58-year-old foreman was still in good health and was looking forward to a well-deserved rest on his father's plot which he had pur-

chased at Petiet, near Benoni — only two years ago.

His only child, 34-year-old Mr Willie Pretorius, said yesterday morning that his father would be buried at the Bredel Cemetery, near Kempton Park at noon on Thursday.

"That is the cemetery nearest to the place where he wanted to retire," said Mr Pretorius.

The family of the other miner who died in the mudslide, timberman Mr Paul Hamel (38), could not be contacted this morning.

The name of the fourth miner, from Lesotho, who is married and has three children, is being withheld until his next of kin have been informed.

The men were engulfed in a mud rush on 100 Level at the mine in Welkom on Saturday. Their bodies were brought to the surface early on Sunday.

Sowetan 30/11/84 (212)

Support for asbestos campaign

ALL OF THE seven black unregistered trade unions which formed an alliance to help each other, have supported a campaign by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers'

Union to ban asbestos mines in South Africa.

The alliance's co-ordinator, Mr Phandelani Nefolovhodwe, told The SOWETAN after a meeting that the unions have agreed to inform and advise their members about the campaign, which was gaining momentum.

The campaign was launched by Bamcwu following numerous incidents of people who died or contracted asbestosis in the mines, espe-

cially at Penge in the Northern Transvaal.

Union sources have argued that most miners who went on retirement after working at these mines were lowly paid or received very little money in terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

They also contended that white miners received large sums of money whereas the black, who do most of the work at these mines, received only a pittance.

Sweeten 18/12/84

NUM at odds with Chamber

By JOSHUA
RABOROKO

THE CONTROVERSY concerning the safety working and living conditions of South African black mineworkers gained momentum yesterday when the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers gave conflicting views of the situation.

The Chamber of Mines contends that the South African mining industry is one of the most open industries in the world, while NUM maintains that the conditions are appalling and could not be tolerated anywhere in the world.

The controversy started when a member of the British National Union of Mineworkers, Mr Roy Jones, who visited the country recently, said that living conditions in some of the South African mines were reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps in Germany.

Mr Jones, who was a guest of the local NUM, also said the high mortality rate in SA mines was caused by poor safety precautions.

He said if the same conditions prevailed in Britain, then the mines would be closed, adding that local conditions were the worst in the world.

Riots

NUM's assistant general secretary, Mr Mokheseng Maloka, has come out in full support of Mr Jones' claims, and said that most of the riots at the mines were caused because mine bosses divide workers according to their ethnic groups.

Accommodation, safety and harsh recruiting methods were highlighted by Mr Maloka as the issues which cause concern among black mine workers in the country.

However, the Chamber has refuted Mr Jones' disclosures and said "anyone who has ever visited gold mines will recognise how grossly untrue — to put it mildly — the claims are."

11 killed in mine accidents

STAR 18/12/84
212

Eleven miners were killed and three are still missing after two separate mining accidents on the Reef yesterday.

Five miners died after a pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine in the Boksburg/Germiston area.

A spokesman said today that rescuers were still searching for three missing miners.

The accident occurred at 1 pm at about 2 700 m below the surface in the 64 West Stope at the mine's South West shaft.

And a mudrush on the 74th level of Vaal Reefs Number Nine shaft, claimed six lives.

The names of the dead have not yet been released.

10 miners die

TEN MINERS were killed and four others are missing following two mining accidents on the Reef this week.

Five miners died after a rock (pressure) burst at the ERPM gold mine on the East Rand on Monday afternoon

Another five lives were claimed on the same night at the Vaal Reef gold mine near Orkney

A spokesman for the Boksburg mine said the accident occurred at about 1 pm at about 2 700 m below the surface

He said rescuers were still searching for five missing miners

In Orkney, rescuers are still searching for the missing miners

Sent for 20/12/84

Unions want report on miners' deaths

212
~~123~~
~~123~~

TWO trade unions recruiting black mine-workers have demanded a full report of the circumstances surrounding the killing of at least 14 miners in two separate accidents on the Reef this week.

The unions — the National Union of Mine-

workers and the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union — are waiting for reports from their shaft stewards who were busy compiling reports on the accidents

Burst

Eight miners died after a pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine in the Boksburg / Germiston area on Monday,

while six miners died in a mudrush on the 74th level of Vaal Reefs Number 9 shaft, on the same day

Rescue teams were still searching for the missing miners at both plants by late yesterday, according to mine officials. The names of the dead have not been released because the next of kin have not been informed

ITES
SELECTION

MINING - ACCIDENTS

1985

(212) stan 7/1/85

Holiday-job student dies in mine accident

A holiday job ended in tragedy for engineering student Mr Charles Cameron when he and two black men died in an underground mining accident at the weekend

Three other men suffered minor injuries in the accident, at the Holdings division of Western Holding, Welkom

Mr Cameron was a bachelor aged 22

He had just completed his third year for an engineering degree at the University of Natal

Mr Cameron and the team he was working with were transporting ore cars in a two-tier cage from the 21st to the 26th level at the Number 7 shaft

Bars securing the cars apparently failed

A spokesman for Anglo American said it appeared that an ore car stuck out from the cage and jammed against the shaft between the 21st and 26th levels

It is thought that Mr Cameron hit his head against the roof of the cage

He is believed to have been killed instantly

One of the black assistants died after falling from the upper to the lower level of the cage.

The names of the two black men killed will be released when relatives have been told of their deaths

The Anglo American spokesman said the cause of the accident was being investigated

session of a rifle

Miner is *Stan* killed in rockburst

A miner was killed and nine others were injured in a rockburst at the Blyvooruitzicht Gold Mine near Carltonville yesterday, a spokesman for Rand Mines said.

The spokesman said the burst, which occurred in the 24 West Stope of the B3 incline shaft at 9 45 am, measured 1.9 on the Richter scale.

Mr Stanley Kent (28) died and nine other miners were injured. Six of them were treated at the Blyvooruitzicht mine hospital and discharged.

Mr Kent was married with three children.
Sapa

Sapa

Council of Unions urges asbestos mining ban

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

The 150 000-member Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) has thrown its support behind the campaign to ban asbestos mining and manufacture in South Africa

The campaign was launched by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union last year after it was re-

vealed that thousands of Lebowa residents and mineworkers in the North Eastern Transvaal asbestos mining region of the Strydpoortberge were at risk.

Inhalation of fine asbestos fibres in the form of asbestos dust can result in the crippling lung disease asbestosis, the fatal and rare cancer of the lung lining; mesothelioma, and lung cancer.

The old disused dumps in the NE Transvaal pose a severe health hazard to the local community, who, *The Star* found, were using the waste asbestos material to make bricks.

It was also established that dust levels during 1980 to 1982 often exceeded the safety limits recommended by the Government Mining Engineer.

In the latest issue of *Izwilethu*, the Cusa newsletter, the union federation states that the campaign to ban asbestos in South Africa "cannot be dismissed as a case of political opportunism. Asbestos has already ruined the lives of many people"

Official statistics compiled by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases reveal that

there were 5 140 asbestosis victims between 1967 and 1983, 212 compensated cases of mesothelioma and 57 cases of bronchogenic carcinoma.

But because the asbestos-related diseases take between 20 to 30 years before the symptoms become manifest, Government and health officers admit that the official records are unreliable indicators of the full extent of the health hazard.

LETTERS

The Editor, Rand Daily Mail,
Box 1138, Johannesburg 2000

RDM 17/1/85

~~27/1/85~~

212

~~88~~

Asbestos — lack of concern for public

IN a letter published on December 21, Mr L B Lewis, the Marketing Manager of Everite Ltd, a large asbestos product company, has once again underrated the deadly hazards associated with this mineral

Mr Lewis claims that asbestos cement products do not liberate significant amounts of respirable fibres

Numerous studies show that the effects of the weather, pollutants such as acid rain and handling of the products do cause considerable fibre release

For example, a concentration of 1 000 fibres per cubic metre was measured in the surrounding air of a wall faced with asbestos cement tiles (Studies in Environmental Science Vol 8)

Secondly Mr Lewis remarks that, in the photograph, the removal of the asbestos roofing from the Kromellemboog school is being done under adequate supervision. This comment further shows the lack of concern for the South African public displayed by the asbestos industry

The only supervision shown are two men wearing overalls. No equipment for dust

level measurement can be seen nor are any of the standard safety precautions visible

While moving the school is welcomed, the ongoing presence of a large asbestos dump remains a health hazard for the nearby communities

Finally Mr Lewis claims that consumers of asbestos products are encouraged not to do their own cutting or drilling, however there is little consumer warning of the health hazards associated with asbestos

Nowhere in two of the catalogues issued by Everite — "A Guide to (asbestos) Container Gardening" and "Handmade (asbestos) Plant Containers" — is mention made of how deadly this dust can be

The barest minimum exposure to asbestos can kill. A recent tragic example involved two sisters who both developed an asbestos cancer after cleaning a white asbestos cement roof (BMJ June 1984)

Evaluation of all available human data provides no evidence for a threshold for a "safe" level of asbestos exposure (US Department of Labour) — ASBESTOS RESEARCH GROUP, Berea, Johannesburg

81 pc drop in fatality rate on coalmines

Staw 212
#19/1/85

By Carolyn Dempster,
Labour Reporter

The fatality rate on South African coalmines dropped by 81 percent last year compared with the 1983 figure and was 31 percent lower than the 1982 figure — but there was still substantial room for improvement

This was the message issued by the Government Mining Engineer, Mr G P Badenhorst, to 200 colliery managers and senior mining officials attending the launch in Ermelo yesterday of the 1985 colliery safety programme.

Fatality rates for the first six months of 1984 were the lowest in the country's coalmining history, but a potential annual record was marred by the methane gas explosion in October last year which claimed six lives, he said

Investigations carried out recently by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs had revealed several shortcomings, the most serious of which was the casual attitude of surface personnel, who over-haul underground machinery

"People who send non-flameproof equipment underground are gambling with the lives of their fellows and, as far as I am concerned, deserve no mercy," Mr Badenhorst told mine managers.

SELF-RESCUERS TO BE INTRODUCED

Other measures which the department is to introduce this year to promote safety are the use methanometers, as opposed to safety lamps, and self-rescuers

Regulations regarding the use of the equipment are likely to be implemented towards the end of 1985

Methanometers can detect smaller concentrations of potentially deadly methane gas than the flame safety lamps now widely used in South African collieries

Although self-rescuers (portable oxygen packs) have not yet been designed for the SA market, they are likely to be introduced at the end of the year

Training, communication, co-ordination and control were emphasised as the keys to the 1985 safety-through-training programme

Mr D Rankin, chairman of the Collieries Committee, said the success of the programme ultimately depended on the work done on the mines. Although substantial improvements were discernible in reportable injury rates, this was not the case for fatalities

Because South Africa's coal industry is expected to continue to expand consistently — with an estimated output of some 280 million tons in the year 2000 — if it is to remain a successful industry the accident rate would have to be reduced, he added

Mine-shaft plunge 212
17/6/43 3/10/43
JOHANNESBURG — Mr. Johannes Bronkhorst, 27, a mining technician, died when he plummeted to his death 120m down a shaft at West Rand Consolidated Mine in Krugersdorp — Argus Correspondent.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, possibly bleed-through or a margin note, containing faint and illegible characters.

yesterday.

20/11/85 31/1/85
Miner dies in
shaft fall (212)

Mail Reporter

A KRUGERSDORP miner died on Tuesday when he fell from the 24th level of the West Rand Consolidated Mine to the bottom of the shaft

Mr J A Bronkhorst — his address and age have not been given — fell 120m to his death.

2 7/2/85 (212)
miners die
in rockburst Stan

Two mineworkers died in a rockburst at Western Deep levels gold mine last night, a spokesman for the Anglo American Corporation said today

The names of the dead will be released when their next of kin have been notified —Sapa

U S

250 mineworkers down tools

Sowetan 14/2/85 212

MORE than 250 mineworkers at Rietspruit Opencast coal mine near Bethal yesterday downed tools following a row with management over a memorial service for a colleague who was fatally injured on the mine last year.

A spokesman for Rand Mines, owners of the mine, said that the stoppage took place despite "strenuous efforts" by management to come to an agreement with the shop stewards on a mutually suitable time for the holding of a service.

Mr Eric Gumbi, a

By JOSHUA RABOROKA

member of the National Union of Mineworkers, was killed on the mine last year. The union was arranging to have a memorial service for him on the premises before his funeral at Witbank on Saturday.

The spokesman said that NUM rejected all offers made by the management and were not prepared to discuss the matter.

The spokesman added that Rietspruit employees were notified of the intended work

stoppage at a meeting by the union last night which was supposedly called at a report-back meeting on shop stewards training.

Four employees have been suspended on full pay pending an enquiry into the incident — in terms of the established

Rietspruit disciplinary code, according to the spokesman.

This is the second strike this week by members of the NUM following the massive industrial action by over 13 000 mineworkers at Kloof gold mine near Westonaria.

99-year-lease for Wattville

THE 20 000 residents in Wattville, Benoni, were yesterday granted the 99-year leasehold rights by the Government.

The announcement that the black township would remain a black residential area was made at a Press conference in Pretoria yesterday after a meeting between the village council and senior officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development, who were led by Deputy Minister Sam de Beer.

The councillors were led by their mayor Mr Noel Mlokoti.

made at the Press

Asbestos: the true perspective

IT IS widely recognised that exposure to asbestos can be a danger to health and no responsible person would wish to underestimate the risks

It is important, however, that discussion of the problem should be scientific and objective and that sensational public statements should find no place in the debate

Unfortunately, well-meaning enthusiasts sometimes exaggerate the dangers by quoting statistics that they have not properly understood or which have been taken out of context.

An example of this is the use of statistics extracted from the annual reports of the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases (MBOD). Several times recently figures have been quoted that make the asbestos problem appear more

DR F J WILES

Director: Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases

serious than is actually the case if the figures are properly interpreted

Two instances will be given

● An article in the Rand Daily Mail of October 12, 1984 (quoting the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union) stated that MBOD reports show that since 1967 a total of 5 140 miners have been compensated for asbestosis

This figure is approximately correct (The exact numbers are not readily available in some of the earlier reports)

It is misleading, however, to cite this figure without some explanation of what it really means. It is essential to take three important figures into account

(a) Diagnosis of asbestosis depends mainly on the reading of an X-ray film of the chest

All authorities agree that the reading may be controversial and that even the most experienced X-ray readers are often in doubt as to whether asbestosis is present in a particular case

This is recognised in the International Labour Organisation classification of X-Rays of pneumoconiosis which makes provision for two border-line categories labelled 0/1 and 1/0

A person whose X-ray falls into one of these categories is suspected of having asbestosis but may not actually have it

It is the policy of the Certification Committee of the

MBOD (and in keeping with the spirit of the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act) to give the worker the benefit of the doubt in a border-line case

Thus many workers are compensated for asbestosis even though there is doubt whether they do in fact have asbestosis. Of all cases compensated for asbestos-related diseases 23% are in the border-line categories of 0/1 or 1/0

(b) The Certification Committee also compensates workers who definitely have no asbestosis in the lung itself but only asbestos-related plaques on the pleura (the lining round the lung)

This condition is nearly always harmless and causes no disability. Of all cases compensated for asbestos-related diseases 34% fall into this group

Taken together with the 23% mentioned in the previous paragraph this means that 57% of all compensated miners do not have a serious disease but only an abnormality on an X-ray film which is usually not associated with any disability

(c) Of all miners compensated for asbestos-related diseases since 1967 at least 60% started work in asbestos mines before 1960. Fibre counts then were higher (sometimes as much as 50 times higher) than what is now considered safe

Obviously the fact that pre-1960 miners have developed an asbestos related disease bears no relation to the conditions in the mines today

It is illogical to cite compensation statistics which include such persons in any debate on the question of safety in asbestos mines now

● The second example of a wrong interpretation of

statistics is a statement in the Sowetan of October 17, 1984 that MBOD reports show that between 1967 and 1983 a total of 704 miners died from asbestos-related disease

This statement is a serious mistake caused by a misunderstanding of the tables in the MBOD reports

The relevant tables show the number of persons who were certified after death (compensation being paid to their next of kin). This does not mean that all these persons died of an asbestos-related disease

On the contrary, only 19% of the deaths were caused by asbestos-related disease

The other 81% died from an unrelated cause (heart disease, accidents etc) and a slight degree of asbestosis was an incidental finding at the post-mortem examination

It is clear, therefore, that the reports in the Sowetan gave a grossly distorted impression of the number of workers reported to have died as a result of exposure to asbestos

The purpose of this article is to appeal to all concerned with the asbestos problem to make sure of the facts before they publish figures that may be quite misleading

In the Press reports described above a lack of understanding of the MBOD statistics led to a considerable over-estimate of the risks of working in asbestos mines

Nevertheless, even though the effects of asbestos on the health of miners are not as serious as these Press reports made them appear, this is certainly no cause for complacency

Unrelenting vigilance to ensure that safe fibre levels are strictly maintained is mandatory

TODAY IN HISTORY

TODAY is Thursday, February 21, the 52nd day of 1985. There are 313 days left in the year. Highlights in history

1613 — Michael Romanov, son of Patriarch of Moscow, is elected Tsar of Russia, thus founding House of Romanov

1652 — Treaty of Hildesheim between Sweden and North German Protestant states

1795 — Freedom of worship is established in France.

1799 — Graaff-Reinet burghers in revolt

1849 — British forces defeat Sikhs at Gujrat in India.

1885 — Cecil Rhodes resigns his official post in Bechuanaland after offering to administer the territories with 10 policemen

1892 — Great fire at Cape Town, destroying exhibition buildings and other places

1903 — A deputation of the Afrikaner Bond Party under J H Hofmeyer sees the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain in Cape town.

1904 — Dr Jameson forms a new ministry with himself as Premier and also in charge of Native Affairs

1916 — Battle of Verdun in France begins in First World War, the longest and bloodiest battle of the war with more than one million killed

1919 — Bavarian Premier Kurt Eisner is assassinated in Munich

1922 — British protectorate in Egypt ends

1934 — French troops combat Berbers in South West Morocco

1943 — Britain's King George VI awards Sword of Honour to Russians for defence of Stalingrad in Second World War

1947 — King George VI opens South African Parliament

1963 — Soviet Union warns United States that an American attack on Cuba would mean world war

1975 — UN Commission on Human Rights, in Geneva, Switzerland, accuses Israel of violating "basic norms of international law" in Arab territories it occupies

1984 — US Marines start evacuating combat forces from Beirut, Lebanon, to Navy ships in Mediterranean

TODAY'S birthdays John Henry Newman, English cardinal (1801-1890); W H Auden, English poet (1907-1973); Leo Delibes, French composer (1836-1891) — Sapa-AP

My life with death

By Arlene Getz

DOT WILSON was seven when she and her family moved to an asbestos mining town in the Northern Cape

Today she is a 34-year-old Pretoria mother — dying because her family made that move in 1958

Mrs Wilson is suffering from mesothelioma, an incurable cancer caused by her exposure to asbestos as a child in the mining towns of Koegas and Pomfret

A vivacious secretary, she knows exactly what this diagnosis means

Only four months ago her mother died after a painful battle with the same disease. The previous year her father died from lung cancer with underlying asbestosis, another asbestos-related disease

"I feel very bitter," Mrs Wilson said in Johannesburg this week

Speaking after a Press conference to launch Asbesta, a research group aimed at helping other victims of asbestos-related diseases and campaigning against the use of asbestos, Mrs Wilson told of her battle against her illness

In December 1980 fluid began to build up in one of her lungs. A biopsy was performed and she was told she had tuberculosis. A year of treatment followed, but she failed to respond to the medication

Eventually mesothelioma was diagnosed and Mrs Wilson underwent a major operation to remove the lining of her affected lung

She knew, however, this was not likely to help. Most mesothelioma victims die within two years, and Mrs Wilson considers herself lucky to be alive three years after diagnosis

"I've been a lucky patient," she said. She has chemotherapy every three weeks



■ Dot Wilson (left) and Ina Penderis with a sample of the asbestos-bearing rock which has sentenced them to death ■ Asbestos victim

Her parents died of the cancer asbestos — now Dot Wilson

Her hair has fallen out and she is losing weight, but she says she and her husband, Air Force technician Rath, derive comfort from their faith as reborn Christians

"One must try and live with it," said Rath, his eyes clouding over as he spoke

"It's very unfair, but my wife doesn't sit at home and mope"

Until two months ago the Wilsons played tennis regularly. They had to stop when Mrs Wilson found one game of tennis caused her three days of pain

"We've been open with our daughters about it," she said. Aged eight and ten, the girls had been brought up with the awareness that their mother was a dying cancer victim

Another founder member of Asbesta, Ina Penderis, also knows she is living on borrowed time

Now 42, she lived in the asbestos mining

towns of Koegas and Prieska since she was three

Unlike Mrs Wilson, who attended boarding schools and was only exposed to asbestos during her holidays, Ms Penderis came into direct contact with the substance

As a teenager, she helped weigh asbestos rocks at her parents' trading store and paid the miners who brought them in

Her mesothelioma — which followed the common pattern of taking years to surface — was diagnosed last May

The following month her affected lung and lung lining were removed

Her remaining lung is healthy, but the cancer is expected to resurface in another part of her body

With her days marked by a continuous struggle to breathe, Ms Penderis still works as a labora-

tory supervisor for a pharmaceutical company

The remaining asbestos sufferers in the group were too ill to attend this week's launch

Margeritha Kearney, 68, was "too old and sickly to attend anything any more", said Ms Penderis

Mrs Kearney's exposure to asbestos began when she moved to Kuruman in her late teens. The store in which she worked as a cashier bought cobbled asbestos from the local inhabitants

Close to the store was a shed in which asbestos fibre was manually removed from the ore

This exposure ended when Mrs Kearney moved to Johannesburg in 1936

The youngest founder of the group was Francois van der Heever, 28. The son of a doctor, his parents moved to Pomfret shortly after he was born

They lived there for four years and last year Mr van der Heever was also found to have mesothelioma

Too ill to work, the unmarried Mr van der Heever has had one lung removed and undergoes regular chemotherapy

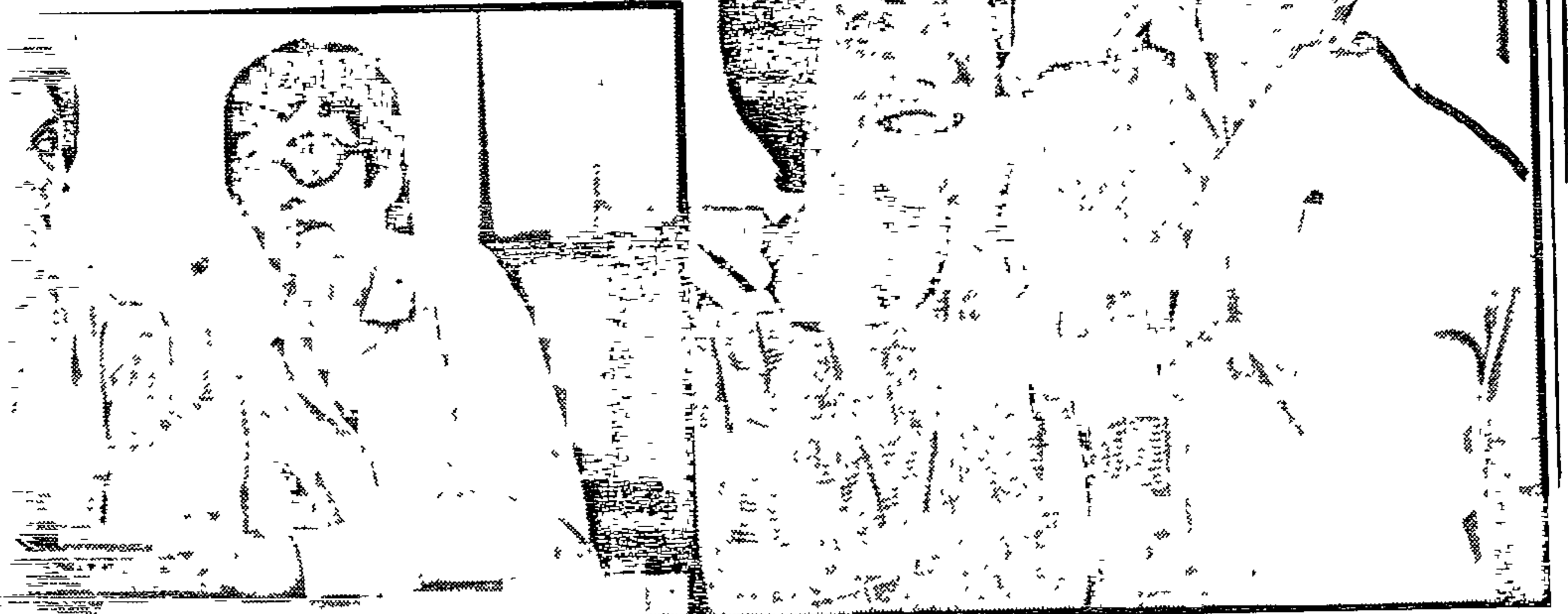
A Gaborone father of two was the fifth sufferer to help form the group

Jacob Ramalepa, 39, went to school in a prefabricated building made of asbestos/cement bricks and worked near the subsidiary of an asbestos-processing company

His mesothelioma has affected the lining of his abdomen and he is receiving treatment

None of the group is entitled to compensation from the owners of the asbestos mines — which still operate in the north-western Cape and the north-eastern and eastern Transvaal — because they did not work in the mines themselves

e Death



Ina Penderis with a sample of the asbestos- ■ Asbestos victim Dot Wilson and her husband Rath... behind which has sentenced them to death the smiles lies tragedy

Parents died of the cancer caused by asbestos — now Dot Wilson waits her turn

towns of Koegas and Prieska since she was three

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"Miners are not the only people at risk," Ms Penderis stressed

Families were equally vulnerable, she said, citing the British case of Millie Toms, who died from asbestosis caught from washing her husband's asbestos-containing clothes

Consumers were also in danger, as household products ranging from hair dryers to toasters to floor tiles all contained the deadly dust

Although such products as asbestos pots might be safe when new, exposure to the elements could chip or crack them, causing the release of thousands of invisible fibres

Brake pads also contained asbestos, said Ms Penderis

One school of thought in the United States believed one mechanic dies every day because of contact with asbestos-containing brake pads

"There are 3 000 uses

for asbestos in the world," said Ms Penderis. "We must encourage people to search for alternatives"

Ms Penderis was anxious to contact all sufferers of asbestos-related diseases in southern Africa

These diseases included asbestosis — a fibrosis of the lungs caused by considerable exposure to airborne asbestos — and mesothelioma, which could develop after limited exposure

• Victims and their friends and families should write to Asbesta, P O Box 479 Garsfontein, 0042, for further information

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The International Labour Organisation is to propose new standards, specially designed to protect workers exposed to asbestos, against its harmful effects, when it meets in Geneva in June this year.

Asbestos dust has been identified as a cause not just of asbestosis, a crippling illness which harms the lungs, but also of bronchial cancer and of mesothelioma (cancer of the pleura and peritoneum), maladies which are usually fatal.

In South Africa, trade unions have reacted strongly to the diseases which they claim have caused the deaths of many workers. They maintain that the occupational exposure to its dust may, in some instances, present a serious health hazard.

The general secretary of the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union, Mr Pandellani Nefolovhodwe, has claimed that hundreds of families close to asbestos dumps in rural northern Transvaal villages are ignorant of the possible death they face from inhaling asbestos fibres.

Crippling

Many are unaware of having already contracted the crippling lung disease and thou-

ghts, and demolitions or removal of insulation material containing asbestos," the report says.

The scope of the problem can be gauged by the use in world production of asbestos which increased from 675 000 tons in 1940 to well over 5 million tons today.

Over two-thirds is utilised in asbestos cement and their remainder as an ingredient for some 1 000 other industrial products.

"Why not replace this potentially dangerous substance by one which is harmless or less harmful? Or even better, why not ban asbestos in particularly hazardous conditions," the report says.

This view has been supported by Bamcwu in its campaign which is finally aimed at banning all asbestos mines in South Africa, according to the union's publicity secretary, Mr Morshumi Mokhine.

Hazards

The ILO report says such principles are generally accepted and put into practice whenever possible. But unfortunately no technologically suitable alternative materials have been suggested for the majority of industrial uses of asbestos.

The report notes that threshold limits vary from 11 to 7 to

BID TO CONTROL ASBESTOS POISON

BY JOSHUA RABOROKA

report stresses. Moreover, ILO comparisons of legislation and regulations in different countries covering work with asbestos show an extreme imbalance in the type, extent and string-

ency of measures taken. All this underscores the urgent need for an attempt to create international standard based on the participation and constructive contributions of

representatives of government, employers and workers. Bamcwu has welcomed the notion of the conference and says it will support any move aimed at fighting the killer disease.

BAMCWU. Mr Phandellani Nefolovhodwe.



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Crippling

Many are unaware of having already contracted the crippling lung disease and thousands of children growing up around asbestos dumps also face death within the next 20 years from inhaling the mineral's fibres.

The union has since started an anti-asbestos campaign which it claims has gained momentum when it was supported by most emerging black trade unions.

In its bulletin, the ILO says that the risk of lung cancer has shown to be particularly high in cigarette smokers among workers exposed to asbestos.

"It is its insidious nature that makes the asbestos hazard particularly dreaded. The clinical signs or related diseases may develop many years after exposure to asbestos has ceased.

Occupationally, millions of people are at risk of inhaling a significant amount of asbestos dust in their work. Such exposures occur mainly in asbestos mining, processing the mineral, manufacturing asbestos prod-

ucts utilised in asbestos cement and their remainder as an ingredient for some 1 000 other industrial products.

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Hazards

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The report notes that threshold limits vary from country to country as do methods of monitoring. The various methods need to be harmonised internationally in terms both of strategy and technique to ensure comparability in the establishment and implementation of basic protection measures.

The report stresses the importance of technical control measures such as prevention of formation of dust, effective control of dissemination of dust at the site of its formation and adequate ventilation of the workplace.

Attention also must be given to the control of possible secondary sources of airborne asbestos, such as dust settling on surfaces in the working environment or contaminating work clothes.

Medical supervision of all workers is also essential.

Workers should be informed about the dangers of the mineral dust and should also participate actively in the application of protective measures the

POISON

By JOSHUA RABOROKA

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Swetten 28/3/85

NUM talks on mine safety

MINE safety — a major issue that has become the focus of attention in the industry — is to feature prominently at a special conference called by the National Union of Mineworkers at the Lutheran Church Hall in Hillbrow on Saturday.

Interest in safety will be heightened by the evidence of a United States lawyer specialising in the issue, Mr Davitt McAteet, who has been invited by the union.

According to an NUM spokesman mine safety has become the focus of attention since the Hlobane colliery methane gas explosion which killed 68 people and injured scores of others on September 12, 1983.

Each time a person is killed on the mines or is involved in a reportable accident as defined in the regulations to the Mine and Works Act, an inspector of mines is obliged to hold an enquiry into the incident, the spokesman said.

The NUM has not been slow to become involved with these issues. Union representatives have attended inquiries in the past. These include the probe into an accident at the Driefontein mine and an accident at the Libanon mine in which one miner was killed.

Mine safety has also been the cause of some recent unrest and labour disputes involving the NUM.

The NUM spokesman added that the conference will be addressed by other speakers from other organisations, including the Industrial Aid Society.

Miners honoured for outstanding bravery

West Rand Bureau

Two miners who risked their lives in January to rescue five unconscious colleagues were presented with merit awards for outstanding bravery by the Chamber of Mines in Krugersdorp yesterday.

Mr Thuso Sebolaoa (24) and Mr Thebeyame Modisaotsile (28), of West Rand Consolidated Mine, were each given an inscribed gold watch, honours tie, framed citation and R750

They showed their bravery when Mr Sebolaoa, a tip attendant, was working on the 22nd level of the mine

While looking for a hammer he entered a stope and saw five members of the cleaning crew lying on the ground.

Realising they were unconscious, he alerted

the team leader from another stope, Mr Modisaotsile, and together they carried the men about 200 m to safety.

Four of the rescued men survived. One died from inhaling gas.

Both rescuers were completely exhausted from exertion and also inhaling carbon monoxide gas which had accumulated in the stope through a ventilation fault.

Presenting the awards, the president of the chamber, Mr G Y Nisbet, said: "To risk one's life to save a colleague is one of the noblest things a man can do. Both men have gained the deep and enduring respect of their colleagues, and in recognition of their deed have also been accorded one of the highest honours this industry can bestow."

(2,2) Steyn 11/4/85

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2 brave mineworkers honoured

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

TWO black mineworkers are the toast of their colleagues. On January 19 this year they risked their lives to rescue colleague trapped underground.

Last week the Chamber of Mines presented them with certificates of bravery at the West Rand Consolidated Mines near Krugersdorp where they are employed.

In an interview with The SOWETAN they said

"We took a risk through the gas fumes in an attempt to save them. We could have died — but we prayed God to help us."

After 30 minutes of

search and inhaling gas we managed to trace the workers, dragged them out of the danger tunnel and took them to the surface — one was dead and the other unconscious.

"We are proud to have saved our colleagues, though one died."

In presenting the awards to the two heroes — Mr Thuso Sebolaoa and Mr Thebeyane Modisaotsile — the president of the chamber, Mr George Nisbet, paid tribute to the workers for their outstanding bravery and courageous action.

He said "To risk one's life in trying to save a colleague is one of the noblest things a



PROUD: Mr Thebeyane Modisaotsile ... Proud to save colleague.

man can do"

Those saved are Mr British Naditshuge

(from Botswana), Mr Thabiso Damazane (from Lesotho), Mr Jonas Teledimo (from Bophuthatswana) and Mr Vuyani Mhlobo

(from Transkei). "We were working during the night when we suddenly felt tired and bilious underground. I do not know what happened to me until I found myself at the mine hospital," Mr Mhlobo told his story.

"I tried to wake up my colleague. He had fainted. I felt dizzy — apparently from the gas fumes. I am happy to be alive," Mr Damazane said.

The incident occurred on the night of January 9 this year while the men were working on 22 level of the West Rand Consolidated Goldmine. They were suddenly exposed to the carbon monoxide gas that was in the stope.

Mr Modisaotsile, from Botswana and a team leader, said he was working when a colleague, Mr Sebolaoa made a report to him



HAPPY. Mr Vuyani Mhlobo ... "I am happy to be safe"

No solution to

SAKABANTU TULLICE (11A)

THE Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union has demanded a fully-fledged inquiry concerning the killing of a worker whose head was crushed at Hippo Quarries, Olfansfontein this week.

The body of Mr Abram Mnisi (25), a migrant labourer from Nebo in the Northern Transvaal, was found among rocks by colleagues who raised the alarm

Bamcwu's publicity secretary, Mr Motshumi

Worker's death: Union demand full inquiry

Mokhine, said they were not satisfied with the information they received about the accident

The union's demand is the latest in which a black mine trade union has questioned management about the safety of their members at workplaces — the National Union of Mineworkers has made similar de-

mands and urged members to refuse to work at places they regard as unsafe

Safety of workers is also one of the demands several trade unions have put to the negotiation table and when signing recognition agreements with managements

Mr Mokhine said they demand an independent expert who will collect information on the accident "We are aiming to institute either a civil action or criminal case depending on the outcome of the inquiry," he said

Anglo-Alpha, owners of the company, have confirmed the accident

and said an official inquiry has been instituted under the auspices of the inspector of mines

The company said it is distressed at the death of one of its employees, particularly in the light of its good safety record and it expressed its concern for its employees

The groups' industrial relations manager, Mr M G Foster, said they were unable to comment on the circumstances of the accident pending the outcome of the inquiry

RDM 19/4/85 (212)

Mine accident

AN UNDERGROUND locomotive and material truck fell about 400m from the 26th level to the bottom of the Buffelsfontein Gold Mine in Klerksdorp on Tuesday, damaging the southern secondary sub-vertical shaft, a Press release from Gencor said yesterday. Nobody was injured and repairs are expected to take up to four weeks.

Mine plunge
NM 19/4/85 212
JOHANNESBURG—An
underground locomotive
and material truck fell
approximately 400 m
from the 26th level to the
bottom of the Buffels-
fontein Gold Mine in the
Klerksdorp area on April
16 Nobody was injured
— (Sapa) ~~NT~~

NT

740⁽²¹²⁾ miners die at work

Political Staff

PARLIAMENT — A total of 740 mine workers died in accidents on South African mines last year, according to the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs' report tabled in Parliament yesterday *RD 24/4/85*

Most of the deaths — 588 — occurred on gold mines, while 78 coal miners lost their lives. The total number of fatalities during the previous year was 831.

The report said 15 528 accidents occurred in 1984, compared with 16 584 the previous year. Gold mines accounted for 13 736 of the accidents.

The number of workers rose to 733 581. This was an increase of 18 528 compared with the previous year's figure of 715 053.

The gold mines employed 510 171 workers, coal mines 116 608, and "other" mines 106 802.

● The report said a 10-year study of advanced electric vehicle drive systems had produced "several important results which offer electric vehicles a realistic chance in the market".

Minister on Kani death

Political Staff

PARLIAMENT — The relatives of Mr X A Kani, the brother of the actor, John Kani, who was shot dead in Port Elizabeth on March 28, were not informed about the date of his postmortem, the Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange, said yesterday.

"The relatives made their own arrangements in this regard," Mr Le Grange said in reply to a question which had been tabled by Mrs Helen Suzman (PF P Houghton).

However, on March 29, a private pathologist from Johannesburg performed postmortems on a number of deceased, including Mr Kani, Mr Le Grange said.

A postmortem was conducted on March 28 and its findings were "shotgun pellet wound of aorta 'venacava', left kidney and intestines".

The relatives requested a postmortem in the presence of a pathologist of their own choice and this request had been acceded to, Mr Le Grange said.

Cape Times
2/5/85 (212) *

4 miners die in accident.

JOHANNESBURG — Four miners died and 18 were injured yesterday in an underground pressure burst at the Kloof gold mine, 50km southwest of here, according to a statement issued by Goldfields of South Africa

The accident happened in a footwall drive on 37 level at a depth of 2 900 metres underground about 9 10am, according to the statement

Names are being withheld until next-of-kin have been informed

The statement said no loss of production was expected — Sapa

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Why the miners seek radical changes

By Craig Kotze

The mining industry's conservative nature condemns the black miner to seek radical changes but the system is not designed for this, said Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, last night.

He told a multiracial meeting at the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg that the status of black miners had not changed in the last 100 years.

He added that the the 130 000-member union would resist mine managements within the law to achieve change on the mines.

Pressure on the industry was necessary to achieve change, said Mr Ramaphosa, and if this did not work the only alternative would be to shatter the harmony of the mines.

There was, he added, nothing illegal about resistance and management used the miners' insistence to stick to the letter of regulations as an excuse for dismissals.

Mr Ramaphosa said: "When workers refused to carry white miners' satchels containing their food and comics because it was not part of their job description, management called it disobedience and started mass dismissals.

"This activity was one of the reasons to dismiss 14 000 workers because when white miners resigned, management felt the National Union of Mineworkers had gone too far."

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South Africa
10/5/85
Conference postponed
LABOUR Reporter

(12)
(13)
(14)
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(212)

THE BLACK Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union has postponed its anti-asbestos conference scheduled for this weekend because delegates from overseas have visa problems and cannot enter South Africa.

Bamcwu's publicity secretary, Mr Motsomi Mokhine, said the delegates were expected to play a leading role in the conference because of experience in the ... and the diseases

(12) (12/29) Press
Conference delayed 12/5/85

SOUTH AFRICA'S first major anti-asbestos conference, organised by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union for this weekend, has been postponed to next month

Bamcwu publicity secretary Motsomi Mokhe said this week the unavailability of a suitable venue and visa delays for overseas speakers were the main reasons for postponing the conference

The new conference dates are now June 1 and 2

~~NUM~~ (1975)
21 NUM men
out on bail (211)

12/5/85 C Press
THE case against 21 National Union of Mineworkers members who appeared in the Oberholzer Magistrate's Court this week was referred to the Regional Court for a hearing on May 21

The men appeared on charges of organising and attending an illegal meeting at the East Driefontein Gold Mine in the Western Transvaal, which resulted in more than 12 000 mineworkers going on strike early this year

Blast at Westonaria kills three miners

212
B-Day 13/5/85

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

THREE miners died and one was seriously injured in an explosion underground at the Libanon mine near Westonaria, a spokesman for Gold Fields of South Africa has confirmed.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) claims the accident occurred while black miners were involved in blasting operations without the supervision of white miners, a contravention of the Mines and Works Act.

The NUM has charged that black workers routinely do tasks for which they are not trained nor paid or are not supervised according to the provisions of the Mines and Works Act.

The union holds that it was this issue — the refusal of black miners to do work they were prohibited from doing in terms of the Act — that sparked the recent dispute at Vaal Reefs which led to the firing of 14 400 workers.

The GFSA spokesman said a Government Mining Engineer (GME) inquiry into the accident — which occurred on Tuesday — was to be held early this week.

He denied there had been contraventions of the Act and said this was an issue at which the GME inquiry would look.

● THE white Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) has called on the Chamber of Mines to delay talks aimed at reaching agreement within the mining industry on the scrapping of racial job-reservation.

The AEU is one of the 10 white unions that has been meeting with the chamber for more than a year to

hammer out agreement on the issues of an industrial council for the industry, job-security and job-reservation.

Its call to delay consideration of job-reservation comes at the same time as the NUM, excluded from the talks, is pressing for the chamber to scrap mining apartheid.

In an editorial in its official journal, the Metalworker, the AEU's general secretary, Mr Tommy Neethling, accuses the chamber of "insincerity" for linking the industrial council to the job-reservation issue.

"When the chamber first put forward proposals for a structure a year ago, we expressed the hope that the unions were about to succeed in their efforts to secure an industrial council for the mining industry. But that hope has been fading fast."

The editorial says that while the worker might stand to gain, if the first issues of job security and an industrial council were resolved, there were no guarantees that this would be permanent, whereas scrapping job-reservation would be "irrevocable".

"Because of the complexity of the issues involved, to try to tackle all three issues simultaneously would unnecessarily delay reaching agreement on issues of importance to our members."

The editorial advocates that the first two issues should be dealt with before the issue of job-reservation is tackled.

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8	Radio	7	Women's
4	Sport	18-20	World Report

13/5/85
Inquiry
into mine
deaths 212

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG —
Three miners died and
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Libanon mine, a spokes-
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The spokesman said an
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According to the
National Union of
Mineworkers (NUM), the
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black miners were in-
volved in blasting oper-
ations without the super-
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contravention of the
Mines and Works Act

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Manenberg Avenue shortly before
noon on Saturday
An unidentified man in his mid-for-
ties was killed when struck by a car on
De Waal Drive, Cape Town, near the
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An 11-year-old boy, Gert Sargon, of
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Had accidents

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13/5/85
Inquiry
into mine
deaths 212

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Three miners died and one was seriously injured in an explosion at Libanon mine, a spokesman for Gold Fields has confirmed.

The spokesman said an inquiry into the accident — which occurred last Tuesday — is to be held early this week.

According to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the accident occurred while black miners were involved in blasting operations without the supervision of white miners, a contravention of the Mines and Works Act.

The NUM claimed black workers routinely did tasks they are not trained or paid for, or were not supervised according to the provisions of the Act.

The union claims it was this issue — the refusal of miners to do work they were prohibited from doing — that sparked the dispute at Vaal Reefs which led to the firing of 14 400 workers.

The spokesman denied the allegations, but said the inquiry would look into the matter.

CARE TIME
10/6/85 (212)

Missing miner believed dead after 'burst'

Own Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — The bodies of eight miners have been recovered and a missing worker is presumed dead after a massive rock burst sent tons of rock crashing into a drilling area 3 500 metres underground at the Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville on Friday

Rescue operations continued yesterday but a spokesman for Anglo American Corporation, which owns the world's deepest mine, said there was "no hope" that the missing miner was still alive. It was "impossible" that the miner could have survived the rock-fall in the stope of the mine's number three shaft.

"We know where his body is and rescue workers are busy working their way to him. It's a slow process and we doubt whether the mineworker will be found today," the spokesman said.

The stope had been "almost completely shut off" during the rock burst, a "seismic event"

that registered 2,8 on the Richter Scale.

Eleven mineworkers were reported missing after the midday burst but two — cut off by fallen rock — were rescued about six hours later. They were taken to the mine's hospital, where they are in a "satisfactory" condition.

Three bodies were recovered early on Friday evening, and five more were found during the night.

About 80 workers in special Proto rescue teams were involved in rescue operations, with 60 working underground to remove tons of rock, the spokesman said. Yesterday, a team of 20 rescuers searched for the missing worker.

Scores of workers were in the shaft at the time of the burst, but miners in other areas were not affected.

"As is the case after any incident of this nature, a full investigation will take place," the spokesman said.

The names of those killed would not be released until their next of kin had been informed.

Sowetan
10/6/85

Miner presumed dead ²¹²

THE mineworker missing after a rock burst at Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville on Friday — in which eight other people died — was presumed dead, a spokesman for Anglo American Corporation, which owns the mine, has said.

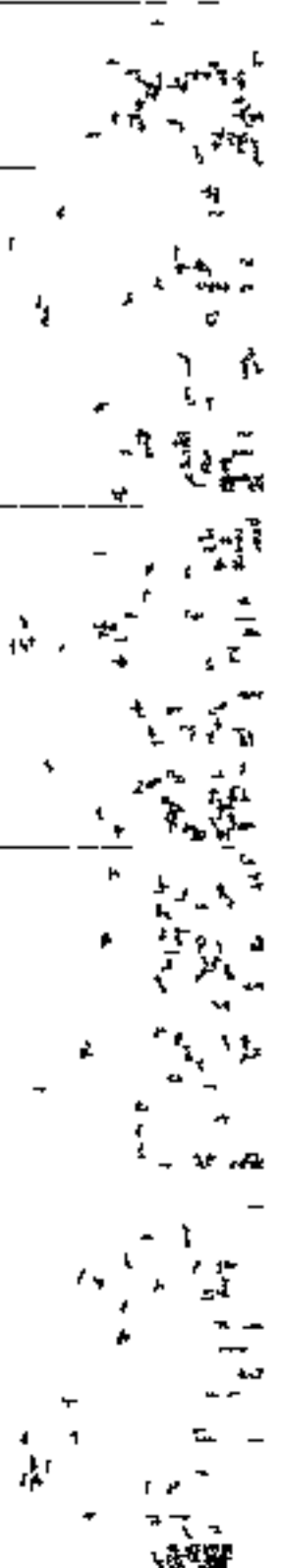
“It is not possible for the missing mineworker to have survived the rockfall.

“We know where the

body is and rescue workers are busy working their way to him. It is a slow process and we doubt whether the mineworker will be found today,” he said yesterday.

Eight bodies were recovered after rescue teams — involving about 80 people — battled through Friday night to reach them. — Sapa.

7



Miner killed

ONE miner has been killed in a pressure burst at ERPM in Boksburg and six are missing. *212*
Soweto

The fatally-injured worker was brought to the surface after the burst occurred at 9 45 yesterday morning. *25/6/85*

NUM calls for probe into ~~the~~ Mines Act breaches

26/6/63
Mercury Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called on the Government Mining Engineer to open an official inquiry into violations of the Mines and Works Act (MWA), which allegedly threaten the safety of thousands of workers.

The request was announced by Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the NUM, following the unveiling of research commissioned by the NUM into safety on the mines yesterday.

The research, which was conducted by Mr Jean Leger, a University of the Witwatersrand researcher, made startling claims about breaches of the MWA.

Mr Leger said that about 600 workers died in accidents in South African goldmines every year, and that this figure had remained almost constant since the 1960s.

According to his report, which was based on interviews with black workers, the role of the white miner had changed from being a productive worker to being a supervisor.

It said that in order to meet production quotas, for which the white miner was paid a bonus, workers were coerced to work in dangerous conditions and the safety provisions of the Mines and Works Act were routinely breached.

(2121) B. Dany 27/6/85

Mine asks to see evidence

WINDHOEK — A legal representative of the CDM diamond-mining company has requested inspection of documents submitted in evidence to the Thirion Commission of Inquiry by a former senior employee of the company, Gordon Brown, the SWABC reported yesterday. The documents allegedly show that CDM is over-exploiting SWA diamond resources.

The commission is hearing evidence on the alleged misapplication of State funds and resources in SWA.

CDM legal representative John Kirkpatrick said the documents were the private property of the mine.

The company wished to establish whether the copies submitted to the commission were genuine and whether Brown had committed an offence by having them in his possession without permis-

sion of the company.

Judge P W Thirion said the commission would consider a written application by CDM for the inspection of the documents led in evidence by Brown.

The director of geological surveys in SWA, Roy Miller, told the commission his directorate was not aware of all prospecting activities in the country.

Miller said he was not aware that about 180 000 tons of soil had been removed from Lange Heinrich, near Swakopmund, for analysis. The soil had apparently been taken to South Africa.

Miller said overmining at small diggings was the result of a lack of appropriate equipment and knowledge.

He said government should be informed of any prospecting and mining activities in SWA — Sapa.

Unions 'sick' and tired of accidents

By JOSHUA ROBOROKO

HEALTH and safety in South African industries have become a priority of black trade unions.

The unions say this is also so because they are "sick and tired" of attending inquiries into accidents in which workers had either died or injured.

A research, commissioned by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and published this week, has revealed that 600 black miners died in mine accidents every year in South African goldmines.

This figure has caused concern among unions, employers and the State. They feel the accident rate and incidence of diseases have to be reduced as they constitute a source of conflict between workers and employers.

Refuse

The research was done by Mr Jean Leger, a chemical engineer employed by the Sociology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Professor Eddie Webster was project leader.

The study examined the views of a selected sample of 90 black miners from four goldmines. It recommends the Mine and Works Act be changed in several ways, and production bonuses be eliminated in favour of fixed salaries.

In the study, Mr Leger says 83 percent of his interviewees believed white miners neglected safety precautions to get production bonuses. This was because whites could receive unlimited production bonuses, while management policy was not to pay black miners

production bonuses. These represent more than 30 percent of wages.

The respondents believed they should have the right to refuse to do dangerous work, to accompany inspectors, to relay problems to inspectors and have safety stewards and to negotiate with management.

Mr Leger says most white miners did not care for the safety of the black miners, even after the black miner had reported that there was a danger in the mine.

One black miner told him "The white miner is not interested in safety whatsoever, he is only interested in production. So he does not do a damn thing about it. He does not come at all, he says it is up to the team leader to do it, he wants to blast everyday."

Baas

Another black miner said "The team leader says the baas (white miner) says I should work there, and if I do not want I should tell him and report to the baas that I do not want to work."

The team leader tells me I must work — if I do not want I must take my jacket and go. But I need the money, so I work. The team leader does come and check, and then he calls the team member to put in the explosion packs."

Mr Leger also says confrontations leading to possible assaults were also reported by team leaders. One miner claim that after several complaints he was threatened with assault by a white miner who accused him of refusing to work. White miners wanted production to return to normal as soon as possible, whether the actions taken to ameliorate the hazards were adequate or not.



A RESCUED mineworker is brought to the surface after being trapped 600 metres underground.

Disciplinary action, including victimisation and facing charges were rife if a black miner insists on complaining about the dangers in the mine, especially underground.

Some of the steps taken include workers being demoted, having a disciplinary record, bonus reduction warning or rebuke. Demotion means a drop in wages by about 50 percent. The outcome of such cases depend on the discretion of the white miner.

Some of the miners have refused to work at places they regard as dangerous because "you cannot get killed for a

Bonuses

Regarding bonuses received by black miners, Mr Leger says the lack of clarity about

bonuses is a general feature of the mine industry. The workers are not told why they were not getting it or at times the bonus is discontinued.

"The bonus appeared to have been discontinued. I was getting it, but now I am not getting it," a black miner said.

"The time this bonus was introduced, we used to get R70 for every 700 feet mined, but now we get R30 or R40 and so we don't know how they calculated it," another miner said.

Some of the miners have refused to work at places they regard as dangerous because "you cannot get killed for a

fifty cents." In the survey Mr Leger also contends that miners were not well protected against diseases, their boots were not safe, their hats were worn-out and were subjected to "terrible noise and hearing defects."

Sowetan
28/6/85

In articles in the latest *Indicator South Africa*, an industrial monitor bulletin produced by the University of Natal's Centre for Applied Social Sciences, two experts cross swords on the issue of safety on South African mines. Ironically the two — one an outspoken labour critic and the other a technical adviser to the Chamber of Mines — used the same statistics to reach different conclusions. ANDREW WALKER reports

Labour lawyer hits at safety in mines

SAad 4/7/85 212

Government statistics show between 1974 and 1983, more than 8 500 miners died in mine accidents

And labour lawyer Mr Paul Benjamin says the prominence of safety as a labour issue in the mining industry, which has more than 700 000 employees, "reflects the high level of exposure to hazard and risk" faced by miners

The emergence of an active black miners' union has brought home the intensity of the feelings of miners about safety conditions, he says, while criticising the loss control approach to safety management adopted by the Chamber of Mines. Such an approach must inevitably subordinate safety standards to production goals, he argues

FATALITY RATE

"According to the general secretary of the rapidly expanding National Union of Mineworkers, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, 'in the mines, health and safety is the top priority — it is more important than wages. You have got to be alive and uninjured to earn the wages'"

He says though the reportable accident rate in the mining industry has been halved in the last 10 years, the fatality rate has not declined since the introduction of the International Mining Safety Rating system in 1978

"The contrasting pattern of declining reportable accidents and static fatality rates raises serious questions about the effectiveness of loss control approaches to industrial health and safety on the mines"

He says the rationale behind "total loss control" embodied by rating system, is that accidents in which workers might be killed or injured actually constitute only a small percentage of all unplanned events causing financial loss to a company. "The philosophy's central tenet is that safety improvements will increase productivity and profitability"

Other claims by Mr Benjamin include

- The white miner bears front-line responsibility for safety levels as he performs the pre-shift safety examination. But the qualifications and experience needed to become a miner in South Africa are, by international standards, low

- White miners also bear the critical conflict between safety supervision and production. They are employed in both areas and a large part of their income comes from production bonuses

He also criticises noise levels, describing them as one of the most prominent safety areas left unregulated by the Mines and Works Act

Serious injuries 'have been sharply reduced'

The case for the S A mining industry rests on the fact that it has succeeded in dramatically reducing the number of serious injuries in mining over the past decade," says Mr Gordon Grange, technical adviser to the Chamber of Mines

Accident figures for 1984 are the lowest recorded in virtually every category

"Through the continuing research efforts, which are already bearing fruit, and through more effective management of safety, the mining industry is confident that it will continue to improve its safety performance"

Taking labour lawyer Mr Paul Benjamin to task, he claims:

"Confronted with the only measurement of safety performance available and utilised internationally — the number of people who are injured and the number who are killed — he illogically asserts that the one measurement (fatality rates) is valid and the other (injury rates) is not"

He says Mr Benjamin's criticisms come while the NUM is campaigning to make safety a major issue

In South African gold mines, as in the rest of the world, "accidents caused by human factors are to a very large degree

controllable by good management and safety practices".

Because of their great depths, SA gold mines have a problem which is less controllable — rock bursts

"Even allowing for this factor, Mr Benjamin is still wrong in his assertion that the fatality rate in the mining industry has not declined since the introduction of the IMSR (International Mining Rating System), in 1978"

The fatality rate in SA gold mines has in fact dropped by 20 percent since 1978, Mr Grange asserts

Replying to other criticisms, he says about 75 percent of the coal miners in the United States have at least a high school education

TRAINING

In the face of this "vast training problem" in South Africa, the most effective way of making sure that a man works safely is to train him the right way to do the job, rather than confusing him with two approaches, one involving his job and one safety

According to Chamber safety policy, accident prevention must take precedence over production demands in cases of conflict

Legislation on noise levels is in hand

MINE SAFETY: A SENSITIVE ISSUE

It's doubtful whether black miners have ever before sat down with top management in the rarified atmosphere of a university lecture theatre. But it happened last Tuesday when Jean Leger, a researcher attached to Wits University's sociology department and the Technical Advice Group, presented the findings of a study he has conducted into black miners' perceptions of safety conditions on the gold mines.

The study was commissioned by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which has made health and safety one of its foremost concerns. Leger interviewed 90 experienced underground workers from four mines, chosen through an expert choice sample. The survey concentrated on their perceptions of

- The adequacy of supervision of work by team leaders and white miners,
- Their own accident experiences,
- Underground hazards,
- The relationship between bonuses and safety,
- The adequacy of protective clothing and training,
- How mining can be made safer, and
- The NUM's role in terms of safety.

Leger says the study substantiates his argument that accidents are not simply a result of the great depths at which gold mining takes place and the inadequacies of individual workers, but also of the way work is organised. He has drawn these conclusions from the picture informants painted of underground work as one in which both the productive and supervisory tasks of white miners who hold blasting certificates has been usurped by black team leaders. And he further contends that mine management is encouraging and fostering the changing role of team leaders to maximise productivity.

The Chamber of Mines, while stating that it does not question the statistical basis of the report, has labelled it "tendentious." According to a Chamber statement "While some aspects of Leger's research might prove useful and will no doubt be followed up, his report as a whole lacks validity — due to the nature of its approach, the unproven speculative nature of its findings, and its overall tendentiousness."

At present blacks are prevented from obtaining blasting certificates because they are excluded from the terms of the definition of "scheduled person" in the Mines and Works Act (MWA). Despite this ban, exemptions have been obtained and team leaders have been performing many of the white miners' functions since 1976. The problem with this system, the report says, is that while team leaders have *de facto* been responsible for safety, they lack the formal training and the

authority necessary to act decisively when faced with hazards. And the NUM has repeatedly claimed that the MWA's regulations and the terms of the exemptions are being violated.

The system of bonus payments on the mines is central to the problem, the report argues. There are no limits to the amount white miners can earn from bonuses, but the policy for black miners is that bonuses are limited to a maximum of one-third of the average basic pay rate.

Among the many charges levelled, the most important are that

- Scant regard is paid to the MWA's requirements, and
- Bonuses encourage supervisors to pressure workers to maintain production despite hazards.

"If gold mining is to be pursued more safely in the future, management has to recognise that the rights of workers to act and negotiate for their personal safety and health must be placed above the dictates of production and profitability," the report concludes.

Bill of Rights

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa has fully endorsed Leger's report, but says the union's demands go even further. The NUM has drawn up a "Miner's Bill of Rights" containing 12 demands, foremost among them the right for safety stewards to be recognised. Ramaphosa says the union has also asked the government mining engineer to conduct an official inquiry into alleged breaches of the MWA and its exemptions, and the manner in which government inspections are handled. What was impressive about the Wits meeting was Ramaphosa's sincerity when he told the audience the union "is not out to get management" on safety, but rather wanted to share in the process.

The Chamber makes a number of points

- Last year the mining industry as a whole witnessed its lowest ever fatality and injury rates. The injury rate on gold mines has almost been halved in the last decade, while the fatality rate last year was 20% lower than in 1978,
- Although it readily accepts that breaches of MWA regulations do occur, it seriously questions whether they and the fact that blacks do whites' work under exemption have had any significantly negative effect on mine safety. Statistics show that since 1976, when exemptions were introduced, the fatality rate has fallen by 15% and the injury rate by 48%.

Says the Chamber "Contrary to Leger's assertions, the delegation of safety responsibilities to black team leaders may well have been a contributing factor

to the steadily improving safety performances of the gold mines in recent years."

If this is so, it lends major weight to the Chamber's arguments for cancelling the MWA's "scheduled person" definition,

As for bonuses, the Chamber says it has evidence that high productivity is more compatible with safe mining practice than with unsafe practices,

The problem of noise and hearing impairment in mining where pneumatic drilling is practised is acknowledged. However, a new quieter hydraulic rock-drill has been developed which, when used with hearing protection devices, reduces the noise to within internationally acceptable levels, and

Leger's claims that less than 2% of the Chamber's Research Organisation's 1985 budget is directly applied to safety and health matters is untrue. The Chamber says direct expenditure for this year is 32% of the budget, while directly and indirectly at least 75% of it relates to health and safety.

That is the Chamber's response. But it does not mean that the mining houses don't have their individual views. Says Anglo American's industrial relations adviser Bobby Godsell "We welcome this NUM initiative. We thought the study was interesting and important. Safety is perhaps the major area of common concern between management, workers and unions. The idea of worker-management safety committees is a positive one and we look forward to discussing both the idea of the committees and the more general role of the unions and employers in promoting safer working practices."

Leger has now come back with responses which he says refute the criticisms. Safety is an emotive issue. But what makes it difficult to assess the two sides' contentions is that there is deep distrust between them. In this case, the Research Organisation refused to hand over 42 unpublished reports on safety matters when the NUM requested them. The Chamber says this was done because there was concern that they might not be used objectively. Instead, it had offered to co-operate in a joint project — but this was rejected as the NUM said its investigation had been completed.

Whatever the merits of the arguments, the most immediate problem is the big gulf between the NUM and the Chamber.

That is unfortunate. While perceptions may not always constitute the whole truth of a matter, they are truths for the people who have them. A frank exchange of opinions and information between the two sides — and a lot less politicking over issues affecting human life — would be more constructive. ■

Sociology professor replies to chamber's criticism of study

(712)

B. Day
15/7/85

Mine safety debate rages

Business Day Reporter

DESPITE improvements in collective bargaining, safety problems have not been a subject of negotiation between management and black miners, according to Prof Eddie Webster of the sociology department at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Webster, president of the Association for Sociologists in Southern Africa, is a project leader of a study conducted by research engineer Jean Leger, entitled "Towards Safer Underground Gold Mining".

He was responding to criticism of the report by the Chamber of Mines. The chamber has said that while Leger's research might prove useful, the report as a whole "lacked validity due to its approach, speculative nature of the findings and overall tentativeness".

EXPERIENCED

Leger interviewed 90 experienced underground workers from four gold mines — chosen through an expert choice sample.

The main findings of the study, which was commissioned by the National Union of Mineworkers, were that

□ Underground mining practice deviated from that envisaged by the Mines and Work Act.

Informants described productive and supervisory tasks of the white miner as having been usurped by the team leader. Although team leaders were responsible *de facto* for safety, they did not have formal training or legitimate authority to take decisions in hazardous conditions. This rested

A major study on gold mine safety has stirred controversy. Business Day outlines the findings, criticisms and defence.

with white miners who could exercise power coercively.

□ White miners received production bonuses 15 times those of black miners. Leger concluded that as supervisors, white miners were not exposed to the hazards facing black miners, and pressed for increased production while neglecting safety measures.

□ Informants all wanted greater involvement in safety issues and favoured a safety committee system. They also believed training was inadequate.

The chamber has said the report's criticism of safety at gold mines came just after the mining industry achieved its best-ever safety results, in 1984.

The injury rate on the mines had halved over the past 10 years, while the fatality rate had dropped by 20% since 1978.

Leger and Webster conceded the chamber's good safety record for 1984, but charged the chamber with making statistically invalid comparisons.

Fatality rates varied every year, and if 1988 was compared to 1984, improvement would only have been 2%, they said.

The chamber said that when it first learnt of the research project, it declined to make its research reports available for fear they might not be

used objectively.

They offered their co-operation in a joint venture instead, but this offer was refused.

However, Webster argued that it was unconvincing for the chamber to say it couldn't make its research available because it would not be used objectively.

He said others had been unable to participate in the chamber's research and "the logic of the chamber's approach would be to suppress all uncomfortable and critical social science".

In its response, the chamber accepted that breaches of regulations took place, but questioned whether such breaches — and the fact that blacks were being allowed to do the work of whites under exemption — had any bad effect on mine safety.

It charged Leger with producing no evidence to demonstrate the impact of this on safety.

The chamber said statistical evidence showed that since 1976, when exemptions were introduced, fatality and injury rates had fallen. The delegation of safety responsibilities to blacks could well have contributed to this improvement.

Experience had shown that bonuses did not tempt people to take chances to boost their income, because accidents disrupted work and earnings

High productivity was more compatible with safe mining practice — borne out in South Africa, where gold mines attained the highest rating of the International Safety Rating system, while recording commensurate increases in productivity.

Leger disputed the chamber's claim that higher productivity coincided with fewer accidents. He quoted a United States study which showed that while US miners were about three times more productive than their British counterparts, they experienced fatality rates three times higher.

The chamber also argued that while perceptions should be regarded seriously, no attempt had been made by Leger to obtain the corresponding perceptions of management, underground officials, white miners and others.

CONSTRUCTIVE

Webster, in turn, said that "with regard to the validity of the research, we will have to leave it to the social scientific community to judge its merits, and not interested persons".

"However, our department was hoping for an objective and constructive response from the Chamber of Mines to this unique study.

"One glaring misunderstanding by the chamber of Leger's method must be corrected. They question, can we take the subjective perceptions on the part of selected workers as facts?"

"This raises the essential difference between the engineering approach to the study of work and technology and that of the sociologist. For the social scientist, whatever is real and measurable in its consequences has to be taken as a fact."

53 ^{Sowetan 15/7/65} miners killed

HONG KONG — The bodies of 53 coal miners had been recovered from a mine in one of the worst disasters in China's coal industry in years. Chinese mining officials said yesterday.

Contacted by telephone in Canton they said that three more bodies had been located but had not been recovered from the Meitan

number three mine in Guangdong province

They said most of the miners had died on Friday from inhaling poisonous gas that escaped

into the mine, about 300 km north of Canton. Others were crushed by tons of coal loosened by the escaping gas, they said.

Officials said they had accounted for all workers who were in the mine at the time of the accident — Sapa-
Reuter

King's widow 'moved'

NAIROBI — Mrs Coretta Scott King, widow of the black American civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King,

accompanied by Miss Dorothy Height president of the National Council of Negro Women in the United

States, has returned to South Africa to support protests against apartheid and protests against the actions and policies of the South African Gov-

Three miners
are killed (212)

Three miners died at the Western Deep Level gold mine near Carletonville last night in an accident in the No 2 shaft, a mine spokesman reported today star 19/7/65

Grade	Current Hours: 44	Hourly Change 1975 to date: Nominal	Real
Grade 10	0.00 0.00 17.59 20.22 21.98 23.74 27.72 27.72 31.68 34.76	0.00 0.00 30.07 24.45 24.59 23.67 21.76 19.96 21.88 21.47	+0.0%
Grade 12	11.88 15.84 19.43 21.58 23.74 25.90 30.24 30.24 34.56 38.16	22.12 29.06 33.21 26.09 26.55 25.82 23.74 21.77 23.87 23.57	+425.6%
Current Real Weekly Wage: R 19.85			
Current Real Weekly Wage: R 21.79			
Real +61.2%			

Mine death rate falls

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Business Day Reporter

B. Day

FATALITY rates on gold mines declined further in the first six months of the year. The figure for the period is one death for every 1 000 employees compared with 1.18 for the whole of 1984.

A Chamber of Mines spokesman ascribed the safety performance to continuing research efforts and more effective management of safety.

government — not just those agencies directly involved with implementing apartheid. The legislation also would have immediately prohibited the sale of Krugerrands in the US, while the president's order buys the White House time to first discuss a coin embargo with the US's other trading partners.

Last, but certainly not least, the president's order contains no provisions for future action, whereas the congressional version laid the framework for potentially significant sanctions in two years' time if SA had not made great strides toward easing racial barriers by then.

In reality, while the president's emergency order does not differ greatly from Congress's sanctions, both included *de facto* measures that will not have a great economic impact on US-SA trade. Krugerrand sales have already come to a standstill, US computer and nuclear technology sales have been controlled for some time, and all American banks stopped lending to South African apartheid agencies long ago.

The president's "end-run" around the congressional sanctions legislation did not come easy. Even though he had lined up the support of Senate majority leader Robert Dole and Foreign Affairs committee chairman Richard Lugar, Reagan only managed to forestall final passage of the sanctions Bill by a slim margin.

To take final action on the legislation, the Senate needed 60 votes out of a hundred. But, even with Dole and Lugar urging a "no" vote, last Monday's tally on the move to begin final action on Congress's Anti-apartheid Act was 53-34, just seven votes short of the necessary vote.

And Senate Democrats have not given up their efforts to see the harsher congressional Bill passed. Massachusetts' Edward Kennedy immediately filed to have the South African sanctions Bill come up for reconsideration on Wednesday. Although it is not likely the outcome will be any different later this week than it was during Monday's vote, the president does not have the kind of backing needed to be certain the Senate will not at

some time take up the stronger sanctions Act.

Not surprisingly, House members reacted sharply and angrily to the president's executive order. "The president's executive actions were an ill-disguised and ill-advised attempt to circumvent an overwhelming bipartisan consensus in the Congress," claimed William Gray, chairman of the House Budget Committee.

The move may have worked in the short run, but, as the sensitive Senate vote showed, the battle may not yet be completely over. ■

REFUGEES

A question of status

The SA Council for Churches (SACC) has taken up the legal status of the Mozambicans fleeing into SA with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

While the SA authorities insist the Mozambicans crossing the border are prohibited

JOHAN FRITZ

Beating the strike



Johan Fritz is executive director (mining) of Gencor. He discusses the recent wage dispute and subsequent strikes.

FM The wage increases granted by Gencor to black miners this year were the lowest in the industry. Why?

Fritz: The wage increases granted in July were more than appropriate in the circumstances, and were generally well received. We also have to ensure that we do not overlook our long-term competitiveness. Excessive wage increases mean there will come a time when we have to turn to high levels of mechanisation.

Because of this we believe the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has not acted in the best interests of its members. Other companies do perceive the situation differently, but I do not want to argue with them here. Our wage structures — whereby there is a larger gap between skilled and unskilled wages — are designed to encourage advancement up the ladder.

Are legal obstacles to black job advancement — particularly the scheduled person definition — not preventing the very advancement you wish to encourage?

It does inhibit progress. We are working on abolishing discrimination, but we must take sufficient white workers — who want guarantees of job security — with us, so as to

retain their loyalties.

How do you view the strike generally?

The strike was unjustified. The NUM did not represent the wishes of its members, as borne out by the fact that only 8% of our workforce struck and it petered out so quickly that by Wednesday all mines were fully operational. In our opinion the strike collapsed through lack of support. It disappoints and concerns us that the union saw fit to go public with a range of malicious and far-fetched allegations.

How did you process the dismissal of strikers?

No-one was summarily dismissed. Miners who refused to return to work on the second day after being warned to do so were interviewed so as to isolate those who were merely drawn along by events. In total about 1 100 were dismissed, most of them at Marievale. The eviction of dismissed workers from mine premises and the legality of some dismissals are currently subject to litigation so we cannot comment further.

Was any mine property damaged during the strike?

We are very pleased that damage to mine property was absolutely minimal. There were relatively few injuries, although 34 people were hurt. This was a result of assaults by striking workers, by mine security staff in the process of protecting employees who wanted to work against assault and intimidation, and the process of protecting property and maintaining order. Overall though, there was much co-operation from management and employees, including strikers. The fact that strikers behaved in a more disci-

plined way is a welcome development. **Was the dismissal of strikers not hasty and harsh?**

We consistently maintained a clearly stated position. It is important to remain consistent with black employees and not vacillate. Blacks have a different cultural approach. They want to know exactly where you stand otherwise they lose confidence in you. Your general approach to labour matters seems to be very authoritarian and out of step with general trends.

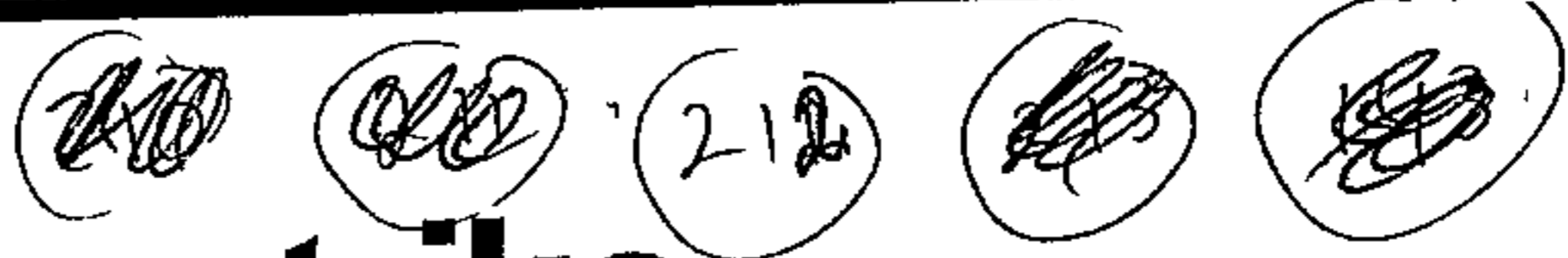
It is a consequence of the industry's historical background. Mining operations are conducted more in a military manner than other industrial activities. This is due to the relatively unsafe natural environment. Unless you maintain a structured approach toward mining methods and discipline, the work would be more dangerous.

Do you believe workers have the right to strike?

I do not dispute that workers have the right to withdraw their labour. But they do not have the right to disrupt production. If working conditions on our mines do not suit them they must find work elsewhere. We must keep our operations going.

Do you accept that dismissing migrant workers is a particularly harsh step because once they lose their jobs they may no longer remain in the area?

Yes. But before striking, a worker must weigh up potential gains against potential losses. We have a shield against their irresponsible action — a large reserve of unemployed.



FACE TO FACE

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Mine gas blast
B. Day
kills seven 13/8/85

A METHANE gas explosion in a section of the Middelbult colliery, at Secunda, claimed the lives of seven mineworkers and injured 22 others yesterday morning.

The mine was temporarily evacuated.

A spokesman said the some of the injured were being treated at the mine and the seriously injured at Winkelhaak Hospital.

The names of the dead will be released when next of kin had been notified. Another 10 workers, near to the explosion, are still missing. — Sapa.

JAF Times

13/8/86

21 die ⁽²¹⁾ in blast at mine

From COLIN HOWELL

JOHANNESBURG — At least 21 mine workers were killed and 29 injured in a massive methane gas explosion at the Middelbult colliery in Secunda soon after midday yesterday

Late last night, rescue attempts by special Proto teams were hampered by what a mine spokesman described as "dust so thick, you can't go in looking for people"

In addition, because ventilation structures had been destroyed in the explosion, an accumulation of gas in the blast area had made it inaccessible

Earlier yesterday, the mine put the death toll at seven, with 22 men injured and 10 missing

While "temporary ventilation structures" were being installed last night to restore the flow of fresh air, the toll rose to 21 while 29 men were taken to hospital

The spokesman could not say if all the mine's staff had been accounted for yet. Rescue operations were continuing last night

The names of the dead will be released once their families have been informed

Number of miners killed still unknown

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SAP 13/88
Sasol had by midday today released no further information about how many miners had died or been injured in a methane gas explosion at the corporation's Middelbult Colliery at Secunda.

The death toll was estimated at 21 last night, with 27 injured, according to a spokesman for the colliery. It was believed that another 10 miners were missing. Johannesburg head office secretary Mr R Hugo said this morning that rescue operations were still in progress at the mine. He would not divulge any further information, apart from saying that the injured miners had been taken to the Winkelhaak Mine Hospital.

But the hospital's superintendent said he knew nothing about the incident.

Sapa reported that the explosion had destroyed ventilation structures at entrances. Steps were being taken to re-establish the flow of air.

Colliery blast death toll has risen to 29

Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Mineworkers at Middelbult Colliery at Secunda, Eastern Transvaal last night still did not know how many of their fellow miners were dead and how many injured in Monday's methane gas explosion

A statement from Sasol's management yesterday said a rescue team had discovered the bodies of eight mineworkers, bringing to 29 the death toll from the explosion. Twenty-nine people were injured, eight

of whom were still in hospital, the statement said

One of the workers said that when the methane gas in the mine exploded the mine "erupted"

"The accident took place at midday. By 2pm word had spread that 16 people were dead. The death toll grew to 21 by 1am on Tuesday. We are still not sure about the number of injured.

NOT FOUND

"On Monday night about seven people were unaccounted for. By 2pm on Tuesday two more bodies were recovered from the shaft."

Security at the mine was strict and reporters were not allowed on the premises.

In a telex message a Sasol spokesman said the injured miners were in Sasol Two Hospital and Sasol Two Clinic. Three of the seriously injured were in hospitals on the Witwatersrand. Nineteen mineworkers had already been discharged.

Sapa reports that a Sasol spokesman said temporary ventilation structures were being installed to re-establish the flow of fresh air at the colliery in an attempt to gain access to the area of the methane gas explosion.

Mining tragedy should not have happened — Sasol

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STAR 17/8/85

by
Andrew Beattie

The methane gas explosion which killed 30 miners at the Middelbult Colliery at Secunda on Monday was a tragedy that should never have happened, according to Sasol, owners of the mine

Middelbult was recently awarded a full five stars for safety standards under the International Institute of Loss Control's scheme, said Mr Robin Hugo, Sasol company secretary at head office in Johannesburg

It is believed to be the first coal mine in South Africa awarded full marks for safety standards

The actual cause of the explosion is not yet known. A formal enquiry will be held soon following yesterday's inspection in loco by the Government mining engineer and affected parties

Sasol sources said this week the presence of methane gas had always plagued the mining in-

dustry, especially coal mining operations. The gas seeps out of the exposed coal underground and because it is odourless and colourless, is difficult to detect.

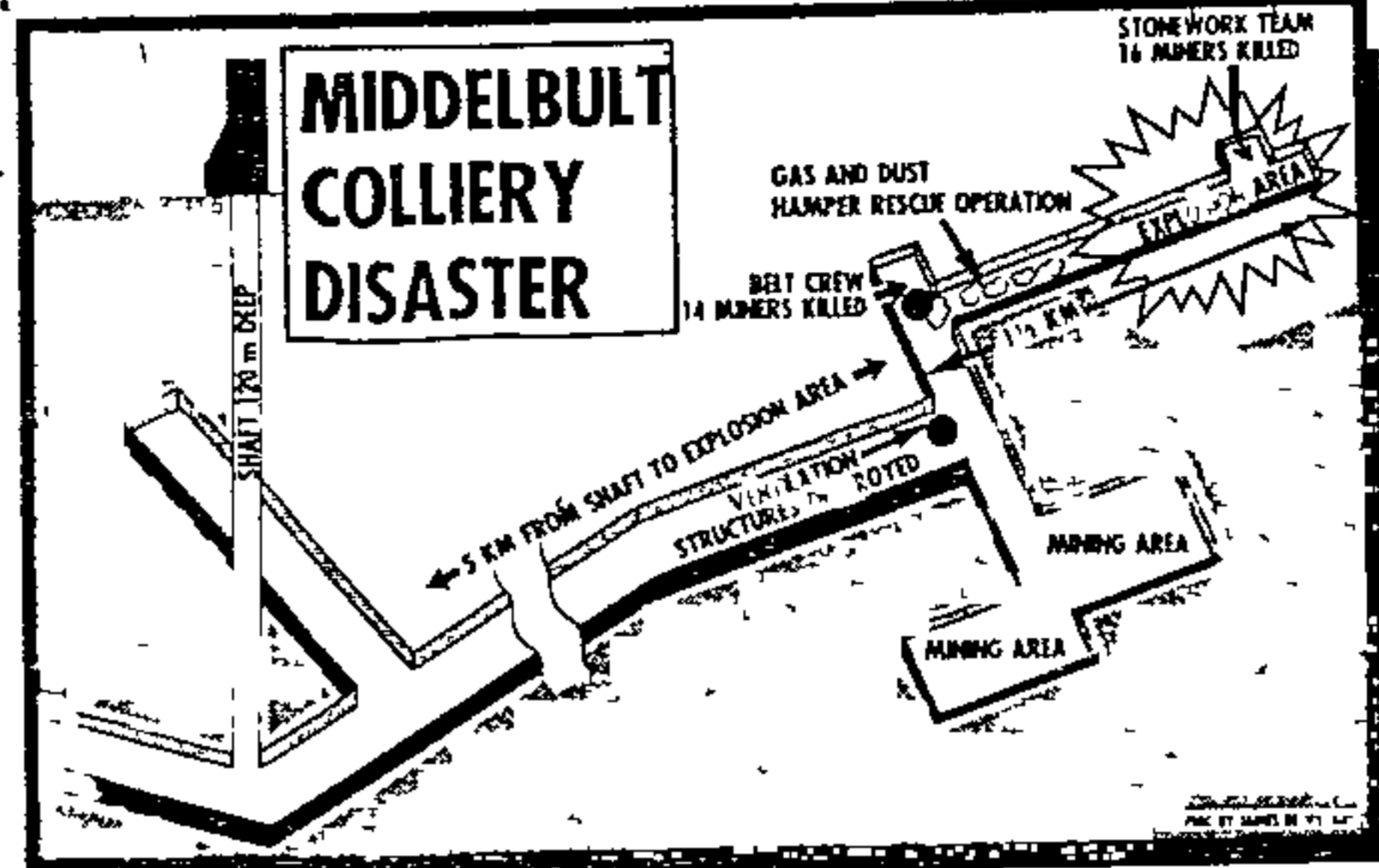
It is also highly inflammable. "The force of an underground explosion in the narrow drives of a mine is incredible. The miners were killed by the concussion of the blast — literally concussed to death," he said.

"When the first rescue teams went in there the air was so thick with dust and gas they re-

marked they couldn't even see the noses on their own faces."

Most of the deaths occurred in a drive not used for coal production — the miners were extracting rock for analysis. Others working a conveyor belt at the junction between the drive where the explosion occurred and another drive were also killed instantly.

Temporary ventilation structures had to be set up to clear the area before teams could search for the dead and missing.



COURTS COURTS COURTS COURTS COURTS COURTS COURTS

Blast kills 22/8/85 8 miners

JOHANNESBURG—Eight mineworkers were killed and 30 were injured in an explosion at the Vaal Reefs mine, the Anglo American Corporation said yesterday.

It did not mention when the explosion occurred.

The injured miners, two of them in critical condition, had been admitted to the Westvaal Mine Hospital, said the company.

The explosion occurred at the No 8 shaft, 2 100 m underground — (Sapa)

8 miners killed in ²¹² Vaal Reefs ^{22/8/85} explosion ^{STAR}

Eight mineworkers were killed and 30 injured in an explosion at the No 8 shaft of the Vaal Reefs mine near Orkney at 9 30 am yesterday.

The injured men have been admitted to the Westvaal mine hospital.

Three are in a critical condition and the rest are making progress, a spokesman for Anglo American said today

The explosion occurred 2 160 m underground in a crosscut away from the stope face, a spokesman said earlier

The workers were doing support work after blasting, by fixing wire meshing to secure overhanging rock.

The names of the dead and injured will not be released until their next of kin have been informed

Anglo American said the cause of the explosion was being investigated

● The incident follows last week's methane gas explosion at the Sasol-owned Middelbult Colliery near Secunda, in which 30 miners died.

8 miners die

Soweto EIGHT mineworkers were killed and 30 injured in an explosion at the Vaal Reefs Mine, the Anglo American Corporation announced yesterday.

It did not mention when the explosion occurred 22/5/85



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Capt. Tarkenton
22/8/85
212 Ga

Explosion:

8 miners die

JOHANNESBURG. — Eight mineworkers were killed and 30 injured in an explosion at the Vaal Reefs mine, the Anglo American Corporation announced yesterday. It did not mention when the explosion occurred.

The injured miners, two of them in critical condition, have been admitted to the Westvaal mine hospital. — Sapa

Mine still refuses ~~213~~ to name ~~211~~ ~~212~~ victims.

An Anglo American spokesman this morning would not confirm a report that one of the eight men who died after the explosion at Vaal Reefs No 8 shaft near Orkney on Wednesday was acting mine captain Mr Etienne Andre Alberts (47).

Nor would he confirm whether Mr Alberts had been involved in the underground rescue ~~STAR~~

A spokesman for the Alberts family said yesterday that Mr Alberts had collapsed after coming to the surface just after 1 pm on Wednesday.

The Anglo spokesman said the names of the dead and injured would be released only when all the next of kin had been informed. ~~23/8/85~~

Yesterday an Anglo American spokesman said three men were in a critical condition in the Westvaal Mine Hospital

He could not confirm this morning whether one of the men in intensive care was a Mr Johann Werner ~~212~~

B. Day
**Three die
in mine
accident**

27/8/85 (2/2)
THREE black miners were killed in an accident at the Elandsrands gold mine near Carletonville on Friday, Anglo American reported in Johannesburg yesterday.

A spokesman said the three men had been killed in a "fall of ground" on the mine's 73 Level

He said names would not be released until next of kin had been informed

The accident is being investigated. — Sapa

Blasts

rock

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SA

Sawetani

By JOSHUA
RABOROKO

SOUTH Africa's mine industries and businesses have been rocked by explosions, violence and work stoppages in the Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal regions in the past few days.

About 1 800 black mineworkers at Hlobane Colliery near Vryheid, Natal, on Tuesday entered their second day of strike as talks continued between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and management

The strike was sparked off by an apparent misunderstanding on pay increases. The dispute began on Monday when the workers refused to go underground

29/8/85
Meanwhile an explosion rocked a shoe store in Odendaalsrus on Monday morning. No one was injured in the shop or in the vicinity

Explosion

In a separate incident on Sunday, an explosion took place at a garage in Welkom. Damage was extensive, but no one was hurt.

In a third incident, a minor explosion occurred at the number 5 shaft of Holdings Division of Western Holdings Limited in Welkom on Monday.

Most of the 35 black miners injured during confrontations with police at Gold Fields' Kloof gold mine in the eastern Transvaal have been discharged from the hospital, according to a spokesman for the company.

The situation was back to normal after the Monday incident in which some 300 workers waving banners and forming a loose picket, apparently intimidated their colleagues to go on strike.

The situation at other mine houses, Anglo American, Anglovaal, Gencor and Rand Mines was normal as no incidents were reported.

Union, Sasol clash over safety

CLAIMS and counter-claims about safety procedures have been made by a union and Sasol, owner of Middelbult colliery near Secunda, where 30 miners died in a methane gas explosion recently.

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU), which represents 60 percent of the mine's 8 700 workers, said it was high time companies put the lives of workers above profits.

The union and the company have held meetings to discuss the blasting procedure and several other issues which could not be made public 2/9/85

CWIU's spokesman said workers at the Middelbult plant claimed that, although modern equipment for the testing of methane gas is supplied, often safety procedures are ignored

Claims

Production was more important than safety

However Sasol said it cared for its employees and safety enjoyed the highest priority

It said that apart from the mine safety competitions at the plant monthly audits by independent mine officials were carried out as well as quarterly inspections and audits by senior management

The mine recently won a five-star rating for safety from the Occupational Safety Association, the spokesman said

The union claims that workers at the plant, following the blast on August 12 refused to go underground and that management has threatened them with dismissal

Sasol has disputed these claims and said workers had reported for work as usual without any threats being made. Eighty percent of the workers refused to go underground and those who did so, were returned to their hostels

The union claimed that workers said there was inadequate compensation for death and injury and that there was no insurance cover. Their only compensation came from Workmen's Compensation Act

The union has also made certain proposals to the management, including that their team be incorporated in the investigating team inquiring on the cause of death

Three miners missing after tremor

212

STAR 17/9/85

Three miners are missing following a ground fall 2 500m underground at ERPM's Central Section near Boksburg early today, a mine spokesman said

One miner was treated for slight leg injuries sustained in the fall. The names of the missing miners have not been released

The fall was limited to a small section of a stope on the 65th level at F shaft at the mine and there were very few miners underground at the time

A mine spokesman said the fall was at about 6 am and rescue operations began immediately

The fall was associated with an earth tremor which shook parts of the East Rand and Johannesburg

The tremor lasted two to three minutes and measured 3,2 on the Richter scale

A spokesman for the Bernard Price Institute, a

geological research institute attached to the University of the Witwatersrand, said the tremor was picked up on the university's geophone

It was similar to those usually recorded on the Rand, but of slightly higher scale

"Depending on your location, a tremor of 3,2 magnitude could usually cause a lot of damage, such as cracking pools and house walls," she added

A resident near ERPM reported that her house "shook" from the tremor, and a resident of Glenvista, near Mondeor in southern Johannesburg, said the tremor caused a wall in his home to crack

The tremor was also felt by residents in Saxonwold, northern Johannesburg.

Rescuers hunt for trapped miners

18/9/55
212
Rescue teams are today searching for two mine-workers missing 2 500 m underground on the East Rand after an earth fall killed one miner yesterday.

STAR
The fall came as an earth tremor measuring 3,2 on the Richter scale shook the East Rand and some areas of Johannesburg early yesterday.

The dead miner, who has not yet been identified, was killed on level 65 of the F shaft of the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg, in a groundfall thought to have been caused by the tremor.

Rescue teams recovered his body shortly after midnight last night.

An ERPM spokesman said only "extensive examination" could determine whether the tremor was the cause or result of the groundfall.

A resident near the mine said the underground movement, which lasted between two and three minutes, caused a crack in his house.

He said he had no intention of laying claims for the damage.

CAPE TOWN
Tremor: 12/9/68
Search 212
for miners

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue workers at East Rand Proprietary Mines' gold mine in Boksburg were yesterday afternoon still frantically searching for three mineworkers "unaccounted for" after a fall of ground about 6am.

The three mineworkers were apparently in the area of the fall, about 2 500m underground at the F Shaft of the mine's Central Section.

One other mineworker received minor leg injuries in the incident, which occurred at precisely the time a tremor of 3,2 magnitude on the Richter scale was felt in the area.

The spokesman said earlier that mine management believed the fall of ground might have been the result and not the cause of the tremor.

He said damage would have been much more serious if the epicentre had been at the mine.

Earlier yesterday a spokeswoman for the Bernard Price Institute, a geological research department at the University of the Witwatersrand, reported that a tremor measuring 3,2 on the Richter scale occurred at 6am near ERPM.

The tremor was felt as far away as Johannesburg's northern suburbs.

A resident of Glenvista, near Mondeor on the south-east Rand, said the tremor had caused a crack in the wall of his home — Sapa

Mine death probed

23/9/85

Crime Reporter

212

STAFF

Police are investigating the death of a 72-year-old Klerksdorp engineer who fell 60 m from a mine's headgear at the weekend. His wife was found dead in their luxury home with a bullet wound in the head.

Police today said Mr Eugenysz Nalecz'Ginalski fell to his death from the headgear of the No 6

shaft of the Hartebeestfontein Gold Mine at Stilfontein at about 5 30 pm on Saturday.

When miners went to Mr Nalecz'Ginalski's home to tell his wife Ursula (67) of his death, they discovered her body in the bedroom.

Police found a note in Mr Nalecz'Ginalski's car which was parked near the No 6 shaft.

Bodies of two miners found

East Rand Bureau

212

23/9/85

The bodies of two miners missing after last week's rockfall at ERPM's Central Section shaft near Boksburg were recovered early on Saturday.

Their names have not yet been released. STAR

One body was found last week. All the miners who were underground at the time of the fall have now been accounted for.

212

212

Five miners killed in 212 faction fight

Five miners were killed and at least 27 injured in fierce faction fighting at Gencor's Stilfontein Gold Mine on the West Rand

Gencor spokesman Mr Harry Hill said fighting broke out on Sunday among about 500 Pondo and Basotho workers

Five miners were battered to death. The injured were admitted to the Duff Scott and Tshepong hospitals

Gencor said there had been trouble between the two factions for some weeks *STAR*

Police said fighting erupted when a Pondo miner attempted to stop a Sotho man from buying beer because of a boycott of white businesses

Shifts went down as usual yesterday *24/9/85*

B. Day

(8) (212) (8)

Weak rand insulates SA asbestos industry

2/10/85

ONLY a year ago, the prospects for the South African asbestos industry were gloomy

In June 1984 the operating income of asbestos producer Msauli fell from R1,8m to R822 000 for the first six months of the year, a fall of more than 50%, and production at the mine declined by 20% as a result of Cyclone Domoina

The other main producer, Griqualand Exploration and Finance (Gefco), experienced a fall of 24% in income

Worse seemed to follow as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began a campaign to ban asbestos from that country

In October 1984 the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union (BAMCWU) called for an end to asbestos mining because of the hazards of occupational and environmental exposure to the material

This year, however, there has been a turnaround in fortunes

Most importantly, the Msauli mine overcame its underground difficulties with a considerably expanded capital expenditure programme

In February the EPA called off its

STEPHEN CRANSTON

banning campaign which had threatened the major market for blue asbestos. By May there was talk of a possible repeat of the spectacular growth of 1974/76, when Msauli shares went up from 33c to 540c and Gefco from 110c to 1 450c

However, a Gefco spokesman warned of too much false optimism

"There is still a glut in the world supply of asbestos," he said. "The turnaround can largely be attributed to the weak rand/dollar exchange rate. Although in our June figures we were slightly ahead with profits, our sales were down in volume

"The dollar price itself is under pressure and we cannot be sure that all our orders will materialise. I think though that we are seeing the bottoming out of the decline"

The company has no fear that artificial substitutes such as sisal will pose a major threat to asbestos

"The main market for asbestos is in underground areas. Sisal will never be able to compete in that area as it is known to be perishable while asbestos is effectively indestructible"

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CAPE TIMES
31/10/83

(212)

Poison gas claim 'bizarre'

JOHANNESBURG — The Chamber of Mines yesterday described as "nonsensical" an allegation that a South African mine had installed equipment for pumping disabling gas through mine ventilation shafts into black mineworkers' living quarters.

A statement issued by the chamber follows the allegation by former Australian prime minister Mr Malcolm Fraser at the United Nations on Tuesday.

The chamber "has absolutely no knowledge of any such equipment ever having been installed in any mine in this country and regards the allegation as devoid of truth and bizarre," the statement said.

The allegation was based on hearsay and was nonsensical, as mine ventilation shafts formed a functional part of mining operations and were totally unrelated to the living quarters of any employees on a mine — Sapa

Milnerton hotel to go?

Municipal Reporter

ONE of Milnerton's most famous landmarks, the old Cambridge Hotel in Koeberg Road, may be demolished soon to make way for a supermarket.

Marcow Brothers has apparently sold the hotel to developers and it will be torn down in the new year.

Milnerton Town Clerk Mr J Veldsman said he had heard "rumours" of the demolition.

He said the site was zoned for business and the town council would not be in a position to reject plans for a supermarket if these did not contravene town planning regulations.

(212) Staw
6/11/85

Six killed in second rockfall at ERPM

Six miners were killed in a rockfall on Tuesday last week at ERPM's Central Shaft. The names of the miners have not yet been released.

A mine spokesman said the fall occurred in 78 West Stope, GH Shaft, of Central Shaft, 3 200 m underground.

The bodies were recovered within hours of the fall, the spokesman said.

● This was the second fatal rockfall to occur at ERPM's Central Shaft within two months.

Dot Wilson, left, is still working, but her fellow sufferer Ina Penderis has died since this picture was taken.

Victim of the killer asbestos

Arges 22/11/85 (212) (217) (218)

KATE MCKINNELL
in Johannesburg

MRS Dot Wilson is dying from cancer caused by a substance she never handled — asbestos

Both her parents died from asbestos-related diseases Her two brothers fear they too will be victims

Recently, Mrs Wilson, of Pretoria, heard of the death of Ina Penderis, a friend with whom she formed Asbesta, an organisation for asbestos victims

The dark rings around Mrs Wilson's eyes are the only clues to her illness There is no self-pity, just steadfast acceptance — she refuses to make her cancer a major issue

But she is determined to warn the public about the dangers of asbestos, and she is angry with company directors who claim that safety precautions have removed the deadly threat of the mineral

Protection

"I don't see how asbestos mining could ever be safe — asbestos affects the whole environment It is not only people in direct contact with it who need protection

"The fibres are barely detectable and the effects insidious," she says

Her account of how asbestos infiltrated her life sounds like a science fiction horror movie

Mrs Wilson's father was a mine supervisor. Her family first moved to an asbestos mine at Koegasbrug in the northern Cape when she was eight. Later they moved to another mine at Pomfret.

Mrs Wilson went to school in Kimberley, and only stayed in the mine home during school holidays During the Christmas holidays the family would go to the sea.

Distinctive

"I don't think I ever touched the mineral. I never played on the dumps or went to the mines. When my father came home, he always had a distinctive smell.

"But the fibres in the air are hardly noticeable, although I remember seeing them mingling in the soil and sticking to fly traps hanging in homes."

In 1979 when routine tuberculosis tests were done at the Pretoria office where Mrs Wilson worked as a secretary, she was told she was suffering from TB and was treated for the disease for over a year

"I cannot remember how often I told doctors I had lived on an asbestos mine, but I suppose they just

weren't tuned in to the implications of this.

"When TB treatment didn't help, I was referred to a thoracic surgeon, and after doing tests, the first thing he asked me was whether I had lived on an asbestos mine"

Mesothelioma

In 1981 she was told she was suffering from mesothelioma, an incurable cancer of the lung lining directly caused by asbestos

"I seem to have lasted longer than most I've even been able to work, although I do get very tired I need a week to recover after cobalt treatment every month," says Mrs Wilson

Her daughters, aged eight and 10, know their mother has cancer Mrs Wilson says they and her husband are a great support

Last year she met Ina Penderis and they formed Asbesta, to create public awareness about asbestos and to help sufferers from asbestos-related diseases

They have heard from people who have had contact with asbestos and are now doomed with directly related illnesses Not all have lived near mines — some are laboratory workers, others transporters who loaded the asbestos.

"Most of the response has been from people who need financial help Mining companies only pay compensation to people they have employed — a small proportion of those who have been exposed to asbestos

Alternative

"I wish we could create more awareness among people working at asbestos mines — how can those mothers take their children to live in places like that?"

Mrs Wilson says claims that safety standards have been improved and asbestos is safe to handle can only be proved after 20 years — the effects of asbestos can take decades to manifest themselves

Asbesta is campaigning for alternative materials to be found for manufacturing items like heaters, plant pots, hairdryers and toasters

"Who knows the danger of asbestos in these items? A report from overseas showed asbestos-related disease in someone who lived near a stop street — she had been affected by the asbestos fibres from car's brakes," says Mrs Wilson.

Asbesta's appeal for alternative materials aims to reduce mining of the material and therefore the number of people handling it.

23/11/85 (212) Star

'Millionaire' mines

Wildebeestfontein South platinum mine has become the 18th this year to achieve a million consecutive fatality-free shifts — breaking the record of 17 "millionaires" in 1981, the Chamber of Mines announced yesterday

The Chamber of Mines Millionaire Shield is one of the industry's most sought-after safety awards

Only six days previously South Africa's youngest gold mine, Beatrix in the Free State, became the 14th mine in 32 years of the competition's existence to achieve 2-million fatality-free shifts

Two gold mines achieved a million twice in 1985 — Deelkraal and Western Areas. The other "millionaires" are Free State Geduld, Free State Geduld North Division, Stilfontein, Blyvooruitzicht, Loraine and Bracken — Sapa

Argus
28/11/85

212

5 die in mine pressure-burst

Argus Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG —
Five miners were killed and 12 are missing following an underground pressure-burst at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg

Rescue workers last night brought to the surface two miners who were injured in the blast yesterday

They were in a satisfactory condition in hospital

The accident occurred shortly after 9am, about 3km underground. Rescue operations were mounted immediately and will continue around the clock

The names of the dead are being withheld until families have been informed

Labour meeting

741

Miners killed in rock burst

212 Stw
28/11/85
Five miners were killed and 12 are missing following an underground pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg yesterday

Two miners injured in the blast were in a satisfactory condition in hospital, a mine spokesman said today

Rescue operations will continue around the clock

The names of the dead are being withheld until their next of kin have been informed

5 killed

FIVE miners were killed and 15 are missing following an underground pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg yesterday, the mine said.

Several miners were injured in the accident, one seriously, according to a mine statement

The accident occurred shortly after 9am, about 3 km underground in the 79 level of the K Sub-Incline Shaft, which is serviced from the southeast vertical shaft, the statement said.

Rescue operations were mounted immediately and will continue around the clock.

The names of the dead are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed

—Sapa.

212
28/11/85

SOWETAN

Enquiry today into death of 'lost' miners

By SEFAKO NYAKA

AN enquiry into the death of two miners, both members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), at the Rand Mines-owned Rietspruit Opencast Mines near Witbank last week, will be held today.

Ivan Futshane of Colesberg in the Cape and Johannes Thoka of Tafelkop, near Groblersdaal in the Eastern Transvaal, died during a blasting operation at the mines on Monday last week, but neither was missed for at least 24 hours.

Futshane had allegedly been sent to count the number of holes charged up, and the blast was set off before he returned.

Thoka was allegedly told to guard the area around the blasting point, in order to turn back vehicles and pedestrians from the area.

According to NUM, Thoka was reported missing a day after his wife enquired about his whereabouts when he failed to turn up at home.

A search at the clocking office at the mines revealed that he had clocked in on Monday but never clocked out.

The blast area was immediately searched and a body was discovered on Thursday.

When his wife was called in to identify the body she denied it was her husband's.

It was later established the body was that of Futshane, who up to then had not been reported missing.

Search-dogs were brought in and Thoka's body was found on Friday.

A Rand Mines representative confirmed the two deaths.

"The matter is still sub judice and I do not want to prejudice the findings of the enquiry."

He said his company would conduct an independent enquiry, apart from the enquiry opened by the Inspector of Mines.

Rand Mines concerned at ERPMS' death toll

212

Star
30/11/85

By Sheryl Raine

The rockfall which killed 15 men at the ERPMS gold mine near Boksburg this week brings to 48 the number killed this year — and Rand Mines has expressed concern about its declining safety record

In the past month alone 18 people have been killed underground

Rescue teams are still working to find two miners missing since Wednesday, so this week's death toll could still rise

Press files show that only 37 of the total number of deaths at ERPMS have been made public by Rand Mines since December 1984

The deputy chairman of Rand Mines gold division, Mr J R Forbes, explained why all deaths were not disclosed

He said the company did not believe it had an obligation to make public all deaths, but the company did respond to Press queries. The fact that 11 deaths this year had gone unreported could be attributed to this mine policy

Earlier this month ERPMS was criticised for failing to make public the death of six miners in a rockfall. News of the incident was leaked to *The Star* by a reader who had spoken to a mine employee

ERPMS responded by saying the failure to make the deaths public for six days after the accident was a "straight oversight" during a busy rescue operation. Commenting on the fact that 48 miners have died this year, Mr Forbes said 52 died last year, 35 in 1983, 24 in 1982, 40 in 1981, and 39 in 1980

The mine is one of the deepest in world. On average, six million manshifts are recorded each year

Mr Forbes said Rand Mines was extremely concerned about the fatalities and the mine's safety record. Everything was being done to improve safety

He said that in the past ERPMS had pioneered safety equipment such as the hydraulic prop and barrier pillars, which are now used extensively in the mining industry

Sophisticated computers at ERPMS are helping to

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Concern over mine's safety

SOWETAN
Reporter

THE underground pressure burst which claimed the lives of 15 men at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg brings to 48 the number killed this year.

And Rand Mines and black trade unions have expressed concern about the mine's safety record.

In the past month alone 18 people have been killed underground according to sources.

Rescue teams are still trying to find two miners missing since last week's incident — so the death toll could rise

Statistics show that only 37 of the total number of deaths at ERPM have been made public by Rand Mines since December 1984

The deputy chairman of Rand Mines gold division, Mr J R Forbes, has said the company did not believe it had an obligation to make public all deaths, but the company did respond to the statistics

Last month the mine was criticised for failing to make public the death of six miners in a rock fall. However, news of the incident was later leaked to the Press

On average, six million manshifts are recorded each year

Mr Forbes said the mine was concerned about the deaths and the mine's safety record

Everything was being done to improve its safety

2/12/88 SOWETAN

