

Strike at Premier threatens to spread

By STEVEN FRIEDMAN
Labour Correspondent

THE strike by about 300 workers at Premier Paper's Kliprivier mill continued yesterday — and threatened to escalate as the Federation of SA Trade Unions' shop stewards council at Barlow Rand companies planned a meeting to consider action in support of Premier workers.

Fosatu said yesterday it had suggested a mediator be called in to settle the dispute but Premier's management had rejected this.

And Nampak Premier's parent company, said in a statement yesterday it was always willing to discuss worker grievances including pay problems, but only after strikers returned to work.

The company, part of the Barlow Rand group, was the first paper employer to agree to negotiate pay with Fosatu's Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union outside an industrial council.

It said workers had gone on strike without using the dispute procedure in its recognition agreement with the PFAWU but added that it hoped it would continue to have an "effective relationship" with the union, despite the strike.

Workers downed tools on Monday after Premier awarded extra pay rises to some workers and not others. They are demanding rises for all workers.

The PFAWU says workers are also angered at the 13% rise granted them last year. It says it refused to agree to the 13% during pay negotiations last year.

Yesterday the dispute remained deadlocked, with Premier refusing to discuss worker demands until they returned to work and workers refusing to return until the company discussed their demands.

A union representative said yesterday the PFAWU wanted a mediator called in as "Premier breached the recognition agreement by unilaterally raising wages".

He claimed Premier had rejected this because it said it did not want third parties called in.

Nampak said relations between Premier and the PFAWU had been "troubled-free" from the time it recognised the PFAWU in July, 1981, until this week's strike.

It said Premier had, in accordance with group policy to pay the rate for the job carried out, a "systematic job evaluation exercise" in 1982.

Since then, it had been working towards "removing anomalies from the pay system" and this had led to 48 of its 350 workers receiving increases.

The statement said the PFAWU had been "informed of this action in advance" but implied it had not agreed. It said management had "always reserved the right to establish and maintain an equitable pay structure".

Last night Mr Enoch Godongwana, chairman of Fosatu's Barlow Rand shop stewards' council, said he was calling a council meeting to discuss joint action.

He claimed Premier had breached its agreement with the PFAWU and that this, together with other disputes between Barlow Rand companies and Fosatu unions, showed that "the Barlow Rand employment code is nothing but a hollow pretension".

He condemned Premier's "intransigence" and called on Barlow Rand to "clarify its stance" on the company's attitude.

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Smiling despite the downpour, Prince Charles and Princess Diana walk through heavy rains during their walkabout in Dunedin, New Zealand, yesterday before going on to Christchurch, South Island. The Royal tour ends on May 4.

Divided miners resume pay talks

Labour Correspondent

KEY pay negotiations on white wages in the mining industry resume today with union members apparently split on whether to accept a Chamber of Mines offer of an 8% pay rise.

Unions have demanded a 13.1% increase, together with increases in fringe benefits which mine employers say would increase union demands to nearly 23%.

The Chamber originally refused to make unions an offer until they "moderated" their demands, but, at a

meeting two weeks ago, offered mine union men an 8% rise on standard pay rates and a 1% increase in employer contributions to the Mine Employees' Pension Fund.

Unions have been taking this offer back to their members and are due to give the Chamber their answer at a meeting today.

Unionists believe the outcome of the mining talks could have a key bearing on the current metal industry pay talks.

Yesterday the chairman of

the Confederation of Associations and Mining Unions, Mr Arrie Paulus, refused to say what white workers' reaction to the offer had been.

"I am not going to follow the route the Chamber has taken, which is to negotiate through the Press before we have reached agreement," he said.

But a union source said the reaction of unions and white workers to the Chamber offer had been "mixed".

Some union executives believed the offer should be ac-

cepted while others did not.

Among workers the reaction "seems to have followed a regional pattern". In some mining areas, workers believed the 8% was all they were likely to win in the negotiations, while others favoured holding out.

Observers believe it is unlikely that the mine negotiations will result in the same confrontation as last year, when the dispute between the Chamber and the unions was settled on the eve of a union strike ballot.

R145 000 snatched in Pretoria bank raid

By SAM MASEKO

TELLERS at the Barclays Bank branch in Pretoria were ordered to lie down by four black armed robbers before being robbed of R145 000 on Tuesday afternoon, a police spokesman said yesterday.

Northern Transvaal CID Chief, Brigadier H A du Plessis, said one of the four men was armed with an automatic rifle.

The robbers entered Barclays Bank in Church Street at 2.15pm and ordered the tellers to lie down.

Brig Du Plessis said one of them jumped over the counter and rifled money drawers. The men then drove off in a red car, later abandoned in central Pretoria.

The robbery is the third in Pretoria within two weeks.

A house in Giyani

READERS have responded in a welcome way to HOMEFRONT's reports about Edith Shongwe's dream of a bathroom, and Jullia Nyembe's dream of a house: they want to know what they can do to help their own servants.

HOMEFRONT will try to advise them. Here is our answer to one reader's problem, which may be of interest to others.

QUESTION: How do we help our maid get a house built under supervision in Giyani, near Louis Trichardt? Her first house burnt down and when she tried to rebuild the builder disappeared.

ANSWER: Giyani is in Gazankulu homeland, South Africa building societies may not operate in the "homelands" and there are, as yet, only a couple of homeland building societies.

However, the Economic Development Corporation (CED) runs a housing scheme. A would-be home-owner would have to apply to the township superintendent for a site, then draw up building plans and have them approved by the Gazankulu Government.

According to Mr Cedric Nkomo, the senior development officer in Giyani, the CED could then assist with a loan, with finding a builder and with the purchase of materials at wholesale prices.

They would have to supervise the building of the house, because their money is involved.

They ask 11% interest on a loan of up to R6 000, with the interest rate rising with the size of the loan to 14.25% on a loan of between R25 000 and R30 000.

But money for loans is short in the CED generally, so they would rather grant small loans than large ones.

That means the applicant should have not just a deposit, but a fair portion of the cost of the house available... and then take a small loan from the CED so as to obtain the benefits of their expertise and supervision.

Address inquiries to: The Manager, Economic Development Corporation, PO Box 222, Giyani 0826. TELEPHONE: 01526-3225.

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Britain joins Biko outcry

By IAN HOBBS
LONDON BUREAU

LONDON — THE British Medical Association yesterday expressed concern that medical bodies in South Africa seemed not to have the "ethical machinery" capable of dealing with the "problem" posed by the performance of the five doctors who treated Mr Steve Biko before his death in detention.

The BMA is to seek full details on the decision this week by the South African Medical and Dental Council not to re-open the investigation into doctors' treatment of Mr Biko before his death.

At a meeting of the World Medical Association Council in Monaco next month and a full meeting in Venice in October, the BMA will propose a new voting system, which could count against South Africa's continued membership of the world body.

And in Durban, the National Medical and Dental Association — the 100-statutory "alternative body" to the SA Medical and Dental Council — yesterday joined the outcry against the decision.

The association said the following questions relating to the Biko case had still not been answered:

- Was Dr Ivor Lang's report on Mr Biko careless or intended to mislead?
- Why was Mr Biko not kept under observation when it was felt he might have suffered brain damage?
- Why had Dr Lang incorrectly filled in Mr Biko's bed-letters?
- Why had Dr Benjamin Tucker allowed Mr Biko to be transferred to Port Elizabeth in Pretoria?
- Why had no action been taken when an abnormal planter reflex (a physical condition) had been elicited in Mr Biko?
- If the doctors had not been able to persuade the Security Police that Mr Biko needed hospital treatment why did they not refuse to treat him under the conditions imposed on him?
- A spokesman for the association said it was scandalous that such a lack of action could be allowed to detrimentally reflect on the medical profession.
- Meanwhile, the five doctors who called for the "Biko affair" to be brought into the open through a public inquiry — and whose call was refused by the SAMDC — are considering Supreme Court intervention in the matter.
- They and several others believe there is prima facie evidence of improper or disgraceful conduct on the part of at least three doctors who treated Mr Biko during his detention in 1977.
- Professors Frances Ames, Phillip Tobias and Trevor Jenkins, and Dr L I Robertson and Dr E M Barker together complained to the council about the conduct of Port Elizabeth district surgeons Dr Benjamin Tucker and Dr Colin Herxell and neurologist Dr R J Keeley.

HNP to pick its candidate

Pretoria Bureau

THE HNP's divisional management meets in Middelburg tonight to nominate a candidate for the forthcoming provincial by-election in the constituency — and their man is expected to be Mr Louis Stofberg, the party's head secretary.

The seat became vacant earlier this week with the resignation of the National Party M.P. Mr John Visser.

The date of the by-election has yet to be announced.

Ermelo, Middelburg and Rustenburg are regarded as HNP strongholds — the party claims the support of 4 000 voters in these constituencies.

(News by Don Marshall, Van der Stel Building, Pretorius Street, Pretoria.)

Gleam of hope over NFI

Mail Correspondent

DURBAN — Thousands of shareholders in the National Fund Investment scheme — launched in 1969 and sunk in 1970 — could receive at least a portion of their losses back. This belief was expressed yesterday by the Cape Town financier, Mr Richard Benson, who was this week granted special permission to prosecute 15 former directors and officials of the company on criminal charges of fraud and contravening the Companies Act.

The accused, whose names can be published once summons to appear in the Supreme Court is received by them, are all leading local businessmen.

Their roles in the saga, details of how the crash came about, the huge amounts of money involved and the widespread public interest in the case seem set to make the trial the most sensational in South African commercial history.

Among other revelations on which light is likely to be finally shed is why it had been necessary for the NFI company to change managing directors three times within four months.

Mr Benson, whose *noie prosequi* certificate in effect empowers him to assume the role of Attorney-General, said he expected a spate of civil claims to be laid jointly or individually against the 15 businessmen by private investors in NFI.

A problem they were up against was that most had been small investors whose legal fees would amount to more than the value of their shares, while another was that civil proceedings could not be instituted until details of the alleged fraud were established.

"It's only right that these people expect their money back. They are entitled to get it back," Mr Benson said.

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