



Charlestown community ready to return to land

IN December 1992, the Charlestown community of the Newcastle District won back their land from which they were forcibly removed in the 1970s. After the community's removal, Charlestown became a ghost town. In preparation for their return, the community has had to ensure that basic services, such as, water, roads and schools were set up. These basic services have now been installed and the community will be meeting in early September to decide on a date for their return.

Bop game park may deprive people of livelihood

MORE than 30 000 people could lose their livelihood as a result of the Bophuthatswana government's decision to establish a 7 500 hectare game park in the Madikwe area. The park is about 30km away from the Southern Sun Lost City complex. Local residents and chiefs said they were not consulted about the park, which is expected to be completed within a year.

(New Nation: July 9 - 15 1993)

Thukela Biosphere farmers negotiate with black landowners

NEGOTIATIONS around the needs of black landowners who will be affected by the Thukela Biosphere Reserve began in August. The communities of Cornfields and Tenbalihle, whose land borders the reserve, managed to persuade the farmers to make additional land available to them.

A land acquisition technical committee, consisting of members of the two communities, NGOs who work with them and experts who may be coopted, has been established to identify which additional land the communities want and to determine what are the land needs of the two communities. This committee is expected to put proposals to the biosphere farmers by the end of September 1993.

A committee of community members and farmers to resolve any disputes which may arise in the interim was also established.

Government makes money available for land purchases

THE government has set aside R25 million in 1993 to help communities buy agricultural land. This is in terms of the Provision Of Certain Land For Settlement Act 126 of 1993. To get assistance, communities must identify the land they want to buy and the current landowners must be willing to sell. The Department of Regional and Land Affairs will then investigate the land in question to see whether it is viable and suitable. If the property is found to be

suitable, the community will have to pay 5% of its market value, as determined by land valuers. The government will pay a subsidy of up to 80% of the price and the Department of Regional and Land Affairs will pay the remaining 15%. The community will be expected to repay this 15% to the Department of regional and Land Affairs over a five year period, starting one year after the land was bought. The interest rate on repayment of the 15% has not yet been worked out.

National African Farmers' Union to join SA Agricultural Union

The National African Farmers' Union (NAFU) will join with the mainly white South African Agricultural Union (SAAU). SAAU president, Boet Fourie, said the time had come for black and white commercial farmers to join forces and speak with a united voice for organised agriculture. He said that NAFU and the SAAU had been in contact for some time and had an "excellent" relationship. The SAAU had represented black farmers for a long time through the SA Cane Growers' Association, he said. "We could have a black office bearer soon," he said, referring to the SAAU. *(Farmer's Weekly: August 6 1993)*

Farm schools education crisis

FARM school children have the most inadequate buildings, the least qualified teachers and the fewest available places in schools, said Ken Margo, national coordinator of the Rural Education Forum. He said that the laws regulating farm



schools had largely remained unchanged since formulated by Hendrick Verwoerd, the Minister of Education in 1953. Farmers on whose land the schools are built have complete control over provision and management of the schools, although the Department of Education and Training supplies teachers, furniture and books.

About 6,2 million farmworkers and their dependents live on South Africa's 65 000 commercial farms. There are about 5 671 farm schools but although their number has been increasing since 1989, 230 have closed.

Transport is a major burden for parents who earn an average of R250 a month. Transport to and from school may be as high as R80 a month. There have also been reports of farmers illegally keeping children out of school to work on farms. About 60 000 children from the homelands work under contract on farms. (*Financial Mail: August 6 1993*)

IFP asks farmers to "help their workers to vote"

FARMERS should get involved in ensuring that we "get the right election result for the country, the region and for yourselves,"

KwaZulu Deputy Minister of Works, Velaphi Ndlovu, told a Mooi River farmers' meeting in July 1993. "We need you to organise meetings that we can address. And most of all we need you to become skilled enough to undertake voter education with your workers. If all farmers in Natal were to help their workers to vote and to vote for what is right for them, then the farming community has played its part." He said the IFP did not believe radical land reform and emotional redistribution measures were the simple answers to addressing imbalances to benefit black farmers. The IFP valued existing farmers and what they were doing and were therefore not going to do anything rash, he said. (*Natal Witness: July 22 1993*)

ANC suggests land reform Act

THE ANC suggested that a land reform Act would be the most effective way to address land redistribution. Mr Ezra Sigwela of the ANC's Land Desk said at a meeting in Kokstad on August 3 1993 that all political parties at the multiparty negotiating forum should agree on such an Act. The basic aim of such an Act would be to set up a land claims court. He said the ANC wanted to guarantee existing property rights but to do so would contradict the greater need to address injustices in property ownership. (*Natal Mercury: August 4 1993*)

Billions of taxpayers' money for drought

THE current drought in South Africa has cost

taxpayers about R9 billion over the past 18 months. Official statistics put the cost of drought aid at R4,3 billion but this could be as high as R5,5 billion. Additional food imports to offset crop losses cost R3,5 billion earlier in 1993 and were still rising. (*Natal Mercury: August 9 1993*)

R469 million allocated for drought relief

A FURTHER R469 million was allocated for emergency drought relief and will come into effect on August 15, the Minister of Agriculture, Kraai van Niekerk announced. The emergency aid is made up of:

- R133 million as continued aid to the TBVC states
 - R88 million to assist farmers with debt consolidation
 - R81 million to stock farmers in extensive grazing areas (R600 million was made available to them over the past five years)
 - R50 million for low-interest production loans to stock farmers in drought-stricken extensive grazing areas
 - R52 million to areas with emergency water shortages - for sinking boreholes and erecting pipelines
 - R45 million for interest subsidies on re-establishing loans to farmers for re-establishing long-term crops and vegetables
 - R20 million to the sugar industry
- (*Natal Witness: August 6 1993*)