

SQUIRRELS OR RATS?

The Bureau of Information has commenced blowing up R4.7 million of the taxpayers money to publicise the October Election. The real purpose of this binge is to try and get respectable figures for the voting polls. Thus far the voting percentages of 10, 5 and 15 for the Tricameral Circus, Community Councils and the Local Affairs Committees has been a reflection of failure of the government's "reform" initiative.

Even the government realises that the calibre of the candidates likely to stand for the elections will not invite Civic-minded Citizen of the Year awards. Hence the 4,7 million helping hand. So far, all we have seen of this taxpayer's money is a series of weird advertisements on television. The characters in the advertisement, who urge people to take part in the elections, are hard to define. They are rodents of some sort. Some say that they are squirrels and others call them rats with bushy tails. This is one debate we are not going to enter. But all are agreed that the characters are animals, i.e. not human beings. The question that people are asking is : Was the person who worked out the advertisement, trying to send out a secret message to the viewers? Was he trying to tell people that the elections were not for human beings? We don't know. But the boss of the Department of Information, Dr Stoffel van der Merwe, certainly had his suspicions. Therefore he moved in swiftly. He has given instructions that the advertisement must be scrapped!

Too late.

"ACTION" AGAINST FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

Out of the blue the South African Government has promised action against fraud and illegal financial practices. We agree that some of the larger frauds and financial scandals have affected the economy of the country – and that means us – the majority of the people. But when we look a little closer and apply our minds to the amounts involved in the bigger cases, one thing is very obvious. These amounts are mere drops in the ocean. What costs us, the taxpayers, far more is the utter wastefulness of the apartheid regime and its hundreds of duplicated authorities; the huge bureaucracy and the corrupt officials of the bantustans. There the wheeling and dealing went unnoticed and unpunished for many years. As long as these sell-outs did their master's dirty work, all was forgiven. However when corruption reached gigantic proportions, it could no longer be overlooked.

The South African Government could no longer look the other way. The sheer magnitude of the operation and the fact that corruption was not confined to just a single bantustan, compels the government to take heed. Now it takes on a very righteous attitude. "All culprits are going to be dealt with."

But the biggest culprit – the system which generates graft, corruption and greed – escapes scot free.