

NUTW wins Patons' ballot

IT'S a big yes for the National Union of Textile Workers at Patons and Baldwin on the West Rand. In a secret ballot held recently the majority of the workers at this Randfontein factory voted 'yes' to being represented by the NUTW.

NUTW's victory at Patons and Baldwin signals a major defeat for Selora's Textile Workers Union.

Earlier this year Selora 'botched' up the wage negotiations at the factory which led to a strike by the entire workforce of Patons and Baldwin, a union official said.

Since then, he said, workers had said they were fed up with her union and had 'crossed the floor' to NUTW.

Initially management granted both unions stop orders on the understanding that only one union would have stop order facilities when it had proved it was a majority, the official said.

'We then decided to go for a ballot on the basis that the winner takes all,' he said.

The ballot is the second that the NUTW has had to face against Selora's union.

The first was at Braitex where 86 percent of the workers voted in favour of NUTW.

Transvaal Branch secretary, Bangi Solo said that now Patons and Baldwin had 'fallen' all other factories in the area would move across to NUTW.

He said the Patons and Baldwin workers had waited outside the factory for the results of the ballot and celebrated their victory with a braai in the township.

Second FOSATU union joins Industrial Council

THE National Union of Textile Workers has joined the Industrial Council covering the Transvaal knitting industry - making it the second FOSATU union to join an industrial council.

Earlier this year in a strategic move the Metal and Allied Workers Union joined the metal industry's industrial council.

NUTW's move onto the knitting industrial council shatters a TUCSA dominated closed shop.

Up until April last year the Garment Workers Union and the National Union of Clothing Workers had used the industrial council agreement to keep membership in the Transvaal knitting industry.

NUTW general secretary, John Copelyn said an April agreement between the union and the knitting employers' association gave the NUTW full rights at factory level.

'In addition we said we would apply for membership of the council which we did in August last year,' he said.

However, the unions on the council blocked our application saying that the NUTW was not registered for the Germiston area, he added.

'We then applied for the extension of our registration to cover Germiston. This was opposed once again by these two

TUCSA unions,' Brother Copelyn said.

He said the Registrar decided to over-rule their opposition and NUTW had been granted extension of registration.

The TUCSA unions, then had no choice but to let us onto the industrial council, he added.

'Once we were there we then had a clash over the number of seats given to the unions on the council.'

'The NUTW argued for seats to be given according to the size of membership,' Brother Copelyn said.

'Out of the six seats, we said NUTW should get two for its 400 members, the National Union of Clothing Workers should get three and perhaps one for Anna Scheepers' Garment Workers Union,' he said.

'Eventually the TUCSA unions agreed to give NUTW two seats but said that they would split the four remaining seats between them - two each,' he added.

Brother Copelyn said at present the NUTW was happy with this arrangement as the two seats represented about a third of the industry.

'But if we expand we are not going to be satisfied with the Garment Workers Union's thirty members being given two seats,' he said.

The NUTW has also applied for membership of another council governed by a TUCSA closed shop - the clothing industry's industrial council.

TUCSA's Garment Workers Industrial Union has turned down NUTW's application but the union will be appealing to the Industrial Court against this decision.

Huge turn-out at textile AGM



The three branches of the National Union of Textile Workers packed the hostel hall at Clermont near Pinetown for the union's AGM. The guest speaker was FOSATU president, Chris Dlamini and the meeting was entertained by the Braitex and Frame choirs. Frame workers also presented a play on their struggles.

COTTON DUST HAZARD

TEXTILE workers are realising the health dangers of cotton dust and are clamouring to be tested by National Union of Textile Workers' new health and safety officer, Dr Neil White. These pictures were taken during a recent Brown Lung campaign at Hebox. The worker below is 'doffing' in the spinning department - his hair and overalls are covered with cotton. As the spinning department is the dustiest department mainly workers from this department were tested. The worker on the left is having his lungs tested.

