

Teachers from elsewhere are reluctant to travel to such a remote area or to live in the area or to live in the settlement. It is not yet certain whether the secondary schools in the district can cater for the influx of pupils in the higher standards. There are no medical services on site. The nearest clinic is five km away, with a cost for a visit of 60 cents. Patients may sometimes contact a doctor on his visit to the store three or four km away. Consultation and treatment costs R3 for an adult and R2,50 for a child.

For pensioners the move from long-established and well-loved homes has been particularly traumatic. Recently

about 16 old age pensioners received the additional shock of discovering that their pension advice dockets had not been received by the pension clerk, which meant a probable two-month delay in receiving a pay-out. Others, however, are receiving regular pension pay-outs of R47 every second month, which in many cases supports not only the pensioner but other members of the family as well.

Compensation is just one more example of the implementation of official policy of Black spot removal. There are others, and the results have been similar – misery, poverty, unemployment and hopelessness. □

NEW LIGHT?

“More has happened in White South African politics this week than in the previous 30 years.” (The Guardian, 28.9.79)

After generations of false rhetoric,
lifetimes of tragic nonsense,
suddenly strange words are spoken.

The old robots at the crossroad,
which have shown a bloodshot red
for longer than anyone can remember –
those robots in front of which
vehicles have rusted, multitudes have died –
suddenly blink, and flicker,
and turn an awkward bluey green.

What do these new words betoken?
What does this change of colour mean?

That sound of ancient stuttering starters,
does it mean people are coming to life?
That smoke, that noise, those exclamations,
are they the start of peace or strife?

And after these years – so bleak, so stern –
Have many waited for the lights to turn?

By the time they're told 'Go if you will'
has a by-pass slipped behind the hill?

By the time they're told 'You needn't hoot'
and the police have said 'We will not shoot',
have most of them taken another route?

VORTEX