

The Daily News

Joint sittings

THE Nationalists' coyness about what will actually happen in the new Parliament is matched only by their coyness about what it will all cost. Yesterday the Conservative Party (playing Devil's Advocate in its own terms) had the Government in a corner over the purpose of joint sittings of the three Houses, which will now be convened by the Speaker instead of the State President, which seems to immediately invest them with a businesslike rather than ceremonial quality.

The CP argument has a certain logical force. If the three Houses assemble together to hear a cabinet minister introduce a bill, does it make sense for them to then disperse for separate debate on it through the various

stages, the minister sitting in on debate in three different chambers? The legislative process was cumbersome enough when bills went through the Assembly and the old Senate. But the Senate had roughly the same party composition as the Assembly, and changes were largely technical. The composition of the Coloured and Indian chambers will be entirely different, and there could be complications.

The Government almost certainly has no intention of allowing general inter-ethnic debate — it could otherwise have simply given the other groups representation in the Assembly. But pressures and practicalities could drive it in directions not foreseen at present.

Drug worries

WHILE drug abuse in South Africa has not reached the alarming levels of the United States, Britain and the Continent, there has been enough evidence lately of young people here turning to hard drugs to warrant the alarm being expressed by Sanca, social workers and government agencies. This country has not yet felt the effects of the cheaper heroin available overseas, but more young people are apparently turning to such substances as morphine, Mandrax and other branded items like Wellconal and Vesperax. And unless

such tendencies are dealt with sensibly the threat of killer heroin may not be far away.

One hopes that by now the authorities have realised that the harshly punitive legislative measures of the Connie Mulder years are not the answer. Preventive education remains the best basic approach, with better state funding of rehabilitative centres. Meanwhile, CID chief Brigadier Dries van der Heever's call for a co-ordinating committee of all concerned with drug abuse deserves urgent attention.

Golden handshakes

THE outgoing members of the President's Council are to be given R4 million in golden handshakes over and above their fat pensions. Not bad for only a couple of years in office — during which time they devised the new constitution that threatens to cost the nation a fortune. As the PFP's Mr Harry Schwarz

suggests, it might help if the Government revealed what the new three-parliament system is going to cost the country, but it is not likely to be that naive. Whatever the case, this is no time for the Government to be playing Father Christmas to the favoured few.

The blitz continues

IT IS disappointing to note that the number of convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol in Durban last month was more than double the total for December. The Deputy Mayor, Mr Ian Morrison, has warned that drivers should not be

misled into imagining that the City Police drop their vigilance after the December blitz; nor should they think to take advantage of it. It remains every motorist's all-year-round responsibility not to drink and drive at any time whatsoever.

TUESDAYS — NYET

By ANDREW WISEMAN in London

TUESDAY is for the chop if two Russian sociologists get their way. They have decided that the current calendar of 52 seven-day weeks and 12 unequal months is irrational and unsuited to the needs of an efficient industrial nation.

Maria Nits and Sergei Pyatnik have drafted their own alternative calendar, details of which appear in the latest issue of *Sotsiologicheskii Issledovaniya*, a quarterly journal published by the USSR's Academy of Sciences. They propose a week divided into six days (so goodbye Tuesday) and 12 equal months of five new-style weeks.

So far, so very rational, is disconcerting when Monday night turns into Wednesday morning. But it counts up to only 360 days. The Russian sociologists have had to accept that no amount of rationalisation will persuade the earth to round the sun in time with their wishes, so they accommodate the unalterable solar year of 365½ days by adding an "extra calendar" week of five days (six in a leap year) to be taken as an annual holiday. It would be time out in a new sense — a week without a month to live in.

Inserting an extra day or month into the calendar to harmonise it with the solar year is known as "intercalating". The Romans did it a lot, but with an eye more to honouring emperors and gods than to the logical ordering of time to ease the burden of factory bosses and the architects of five-year plans.

Why, ask Nits and Pyatnik, should we allow ourselves to be ruled by a system that sub-divides the year in accordance with the wishes of the long-defunct Roman senate? That body named two consecutive months after Julius Caesar and the Emperor Augustus and then promptly gave them an extra intercalary day each at the expense of February.

The results, they say, is that the modern calendar suffers from "serious structural shortcomings". The year doesn't split into even halves (181 days and 184) and the quarters come out inconveniently as 90, 91 and two lots of 92 days. The prime function of any calendar, according to Nits and Pyatnik, is "the rational organisation of labour" and to make it easier "to calculate time." — London Sunday Times

THE key to human survival may lie in an extremely common but much neglected human attribute — stupidity. Indeed, there are so many stupid people around that one cannot help but conclude that it must be at least an aid to survival.

This is the view of a New York academic, James F Welles, who has just published a learned paper, entitled *The Survival Advantage of Stupidity*, in the British-based international journal, *Speculations in Science and Technology*. His

definition of stupidity is wide, embracing any way of thinking in which someone maintains a system of beliefs in the face of clear evidence of their drawbacks and limitations.

Stupid behaviour, by this definition, is very much a product of human beings as social animals mixing in groups. People engage in behaviour that invites immediate reinforcement in the form of approval from other members of the group. This approval is more eagerly sought than reconciliation of in-

consistencies or contradictions. This is stupid because such behaviour may in the long term be self-defeating. But it is perfectly normal — stupidity is not, says Welles, some kind of abnormality.

What's more, Welles has identified two types of stupidity: radical and conservative. The radical is the eccentric. An inventor, for instance, may come up with a mou-



"You're certain the first thing he said was: 'What do you fancy for the July Handicap?'"

Some questions about the Delville monument

NOBODY likes to discover that he — or she — is being used. And when the suspicion grows that you are being manipulated for ulterior motives, that the proffered hand of friendship is not completely genuine, and that *your* (taxpayer's) money is to be spent to your disadvantage and contrary to your expressed wishes, although ostensibly in your honour — then, my friend, resentment turns into burning anger.

This is happening right now as thousands of ex-servicemen and — women learn more and more about the scheme (and "scheme" it is!) to build a World War 1 and 2 museum at Delville Wood to honour *all* the South African participants in both wars, not only the fallen but also the survivors, wherever they may have served: Western Front, at sea, Mesopotamia, East Africa, SWA — and against the Rebellion?

The scheme was hatched, we learn, in 1980 — round about the time the Government discovered there was some percentage to be gained from Defence Force participation in the Remembrance Day service, which they had ignored for so long. Typically, it was kept under wraps until Mr P.W. Botha, in a blaze of publicity, laid the foundation stone, and we were presented with a fait accompli in the hope that it is now too late to stop it. It is *not*, as I shall explain later. But first, the reasons.

When politicians suddenly move into an act, the public has reason to be on its guard. As I see it, the reasons for the Government's plans are two-fold:

Externally, to persuade the European peoples, particularly the French and Britain, that we are on the side of the West and must be supported. They promise change, and maybe, just maybe, this scheme shows a change of heart.

Internally, to draw into their laager those white voters (by no means all English-speaking) whom they have hitherto brushed aside as irrelevant and/or unimportant, because Nationalist Afrikanerdom was seemingly impregnable and unassailable in its enjoyment of power and privilege. Now they desperately need us to stay in power.

So now they offer us the hand of friendship, and pay lip service to the honour of all those, of all races, who served in the two World Wars. The dead can manage without this homage, and those still living need to be convinced that they are not just being conned.

Let us not forget that the Nationalists actively opposed our participation in those wars. They went into rebellion in 1914, or morally supported the rebels. (Jopie Fourie and Robey Leibbrandt are their heroes still.) They opposed us in 1939, nor ever condemned those who committed acts of sabotage, nor those

The writer, Mr ERIC OETTL of Ladismith, Cape, has sent this letter to newspaper editors around the country. He describes himself as "merely a humble musket-bearer and partially disabled military pensioner ... I do not regard myself as a politician"



Mr Botha lays the foundation stone of the planned museum at Delville Wood last month

who beat up our men in uniform, nor those who denied soldiers in uniform access to certain churches. The interneers of Koffiefontein held a night-long party to celebrate the fall of Tobruk and the loss of our 2nd Division. They pinned their hopes on a Nazi victory, and the principles for which we fought meant nothing to them.

The arguments against the museum at Delville Wood are:

1. The sites at Delville Wood were clearly chosen for external public relations, or window-dressing. This is cynicism and exploitation of sentiment of the very worst kind. If such a museum is necessary (which I dispute) it would be better at home — where we already have a War Museum.

2. The design of the proposed museum is a monstrosity that should never see the light of day. It would ruin the serenity and simplicity of the present cemetery, memorial and environs. It reminds one of the definition of a camel: a horse designed by a committee. And the motif, the Cape Town Castle, had never been used or even thought of in either war.

3. The cost of R6 million (or more — ever heard of estimates *not* being exceeded?) plus future running expenses will have to come out of our strained foreign reserves, which we can ill afford. (Ever wondered why the rand is now worth approximately as many US cents as the dollar used to be worth in SA cents?)

4. In 1945 the overwhelming feeling of

all servicemen was that we wanted no expensive, elaborate memorials of stone (of which we had had a surfeit after 1918), but rather *living* memorials, such as the Red Cross Memorial Hospital and the National Health Foundation. That feeling still prevails. Therefore —

5. We would rather see the money spent on desperately-needed housing for pensioners in general, and ex-servicemen in particular, especially black and Coloured ex-servicemen.

The SA Legion has been apolitical for so long that they are politically naive, and did not look for ulterior motives. The Legion was not properly consulted ab initio, and its national president, Mr Norman Clothier, accepted the invitation by the Government to attend the stone-laying ceremony before he had had an opportunity of seeing the whole scheme in perspective. His hands are tied at this stage. But, if his constituency, the ex-servicemen, tells him in no uncertain fashion that they oppose the idea, he will not only be able to withdraw his tacit support, but also be able to play an active part in redressing a mistake made in good faith.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO STOP THE SCHEME. Remember how the Government embarked on a plan to build ministerial houses on Groote Schuur Estate? Public opinion and protest forced them to stop, despite work having commenced and foundations having been laid. Let us raise our voices and compel the Government to cut their losses. Write or phone (or both) the Regional Offices of the SA Legion and tell them we want this museum stopped forthwith.

Do the same to your MP and MPC, regardless of whether you support his/her party.

Most of all, write to the Bothas P.W. and Pik, and let your newspaper know too.

Has the Nat leopard changed its spots? Has it come to understand and appreciate the value for which we fought? The rule of law? Freedom of speech, of association, of movement, of religion? Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention? So far there is little evidence of this sort of change, but maybe the Prime Minister is already leading his party in this direction.

We shall now put Mr Botha to the test. If his hand of friendship and his moves for reform are genuine, let him heed our voice and call off what looks more like another memorial to PWB than to the comrades of two World Wars. If he does, I'll be the first to admit that my suspicions were unjustified, and gladly take his proffered hand.

pay more attention to information that will support their beliefs.

In this case, people are more concerned with maintaining their group status, with the group reinforcing the stupidity. Welles says the group "makes virtues out of both stupidity and its handmaiden, ignorance". It's more about looking good in their eyes than doing good.

And how is all this reflected at the level of society? Societies, according to Welles, are usually reluctant to recognise their fail-

ings, and prefer "any stupid explanation of behaviour to one which would require a sacrifice".

Technology isn't helping, either. Success here, says Welles, simply makes us more efficient at being stupid. Computers just make it easier for us to calculate our absurdities. Ultimately, stupidity "keeps us from understanding ourselves, it helps us live with ourselves, and that is certainly a requisite for continued survival." — London Sunday Times News Service.

WISE UP — GET STUPID

By IAN WILLIAMS in London

setrap that is worse than existing versions. But he is not deterred from this stupid behaviour, because it is reinforced through all the attention paid to his eccentricity.

Moreover, says Welles, this radical stupid behaviour helps survival, because it enables thought to be extended beyond con-

ventional boundaries. Education can help, because intellect would seem to expand the scope for this sort of stupid behaviour.

Conservative stupidity, which is deemed to be more common, is the familiar resistance to improvement, the rejecting of novelty for its own sake. Whatever is new is not as familiar and comfort-

able as its traditional counterpart, and tradition is embedded in the norms of the group.

The survival advantage of conservative stupidity lies in the cohesion it gives the group, even if the belief in one's self or one's group is unjustified. Indeed, conservative stupidity can protect people from learning anything; the way they think about things will be self-confirming, and they will

COMMENT

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MOST PEOPLE would consider it a waste of time writing about the Venda elections — because the outcome is so predictable.

What makes it perhaps imperative for us to take note and reflect on this farcical situation is the fact that many Vendas, who are after all our countrymen, are affected directly and sometimes painfully by the re-election of a government such as Mr Patrick Mphephu's.

That besides, there is the question that these elections cost the tax-payer money. It is perhaps to their credit that South Africans are not howling more about the expense involved in the running of these unproductive figments of a political idea. But times are getting increasingly difficult, and it is our feeling that we should be spared the unnecessary expense of running non-viable, very expensive bureaucratic monsters that are also a blight on the country's image abroad.

For the record there are 45 seats in the Venda parliament, and seven of these were returned unopposed. Whether the Venda National Party, which is the ruling party, loses all the 38 outstanding seats is immaterial. We know from experience that these governments are pushed into power democratically or any other way.

Mr Mphephu, who has most certainly made a farce of the system of democratic governments, is Pretoria's man. He is also one of the worst leaders that blacks have had the misfortune of being ruled by.

His party, for all we care to say, is a fact of life. Many Vendas happen to be living under the most chilling conditions, by irresponsible, incapable men, who should never lead.

Venda as a state is simply ridiculous, and that is being kind. It is however also expensive and dangerous.

Now there is the Venda Independence Peoples' Party which is opposing the government. We do not know what exactly prompts these men to take the trouble of giving such elections credibility. Even in the very unlikely event

that this party wins, they could still be giving the system of homeland politics credibility.

At the worst by standing for elections, the opposition groups have simply confused the masses. Man being a creature that lives on hope, there must be scores of people who believe that the devil they do not know might be better than the present devil they are acquainted with.

If Mr Mphephu comes to power again, as he will no doubt do, we suggest he take a leaf from the other farcical governments such as the Ciskei. Let his party rule until things come to their inevitable change. That will save us a lot of time and money; will save us the unnecessary time of writing and reflecting on such ridiculous situations, and this country's money of putting up such bogus elections.

It's still a homeland

SIR — On May 2, I read in *The SOWETAN* that Chief Buthelezi said that "the lobster tail would stick in my throat" if he accepted an invitation to lunch with Mr P W Botha.

If Mr Botha — i.e. the South African Government — did not create Chief Buthelezi's position, where would he be? Who then, or which government passed the law that granted self-government to KwaZulu and established a government of that order at Ulundi? There surely cannot be that much wrong with my history and understand-

ing of things.

How does KwaZulu then differ from homeland governments like Lebowa, KwaNdebele, QwaQwa, etc? Who created these "states"?

I am very much tempted now to ask whether Inkatha would rather be compared to the new Volkswag(en) but it is not my intention to insult anyone. I am just in the dark about the confusion I create for myself by reading some of the things the papers print.

LM MANOTWANE
Mamelodi

SOWETAN, 3 JULY 1984

Mixed feelings to Govt-ANC talks

By SAM MADE

BLACK leaders yesterday reacted with mixed feelings to a hint that the South African Government might be willing to talk to the ANC to discuss peaceful solutions to the country's problems.

The hint was made at the weekend by Foreign Minister Pik Botha while addressing a Press conference in Maputo, where he had gone to deliver a message from Prime Minister P W Botha to Mozambican President Samora Machel.

Bishop Desmond Tutu of the SACC said he would be happy to see talks between the Government and the ANC taking place, but not before the Government complied with certain conditions.

To show its bonafides, Pretoria would have to declare its commitment to an undivided South Africa. Pass laws would have to be abolished immediately, forced removals stopped, all banning orders lifted and a uniform system of educa-

tion implemented. He said the country believed itself to be in a position of strength, hence its willingness to bargain with the ANC. He warned, however, that the Government was overlooking the fact that the ANC was not the only organisation in

tion implemented.

Warning

"Once those conditions are met, one could easily start taking the Government seriously," said Bishop Tutu.

Azapo released a statement in which it said the ANC would be committing suicide if it were to agree to "discuss whatever solutions with South Africa."

The statement further said that Azapo would itself be prepared to talk to the Government only if such talks were to centre around the transfer of land to its rightful owners, the return of all exiled organisations and

the struggle for liberation, and that it does not hold monopoly of the representation of black political aspirations.

Mr Popo Molefe, national secretary of the United Democratic Front (UDF), said Mr Botha's claim that his Government was willing to talk to the ANC was not genuine. He described it as the best

persons, the release of all political prisoners and an end to structural violence like detentions, removals, pass laws and other dehumanising practices.

Mr Muntu Myeza, Azapo's publicity secretary, also said in the statement that Mr Pik Botha's statement

public relations exercise and a Nationalist Party propaganda calculated to mislead the world.

If the Government was genuine, it would have to start by releasing Nelson Mandela from prison, scrap forced removals, reverse the Bantustan policy, the new constitution and the Koornhof laws "which have clearly been identified by the UDF as a recipe for conflict."

AZAPO: Mr Muntu Myeza.

UDF: Mr Popo Molefe.

Harare gearchange

Party congress will dictate pace of march to fully marxist society 30

HARARE: The old question of how a society should change is once again top of the debating list in Zimbabwe as the days draw closer to the crucial second congress of the ruling party to be held in August.

The congress is being seen as a turning point whose outcome will determine the pace which Zimbabwe will adopt in the avowed march towards marxism and the establishment of a socialist society.

Will it be a gallop or a crawl, or could there even be a change of direction?

It will be only the second congress of Zanu (PF) to be held since the party was formed in August, 1963, when a militant group of nationalist politicians led then by the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole broke away from

By **ROBIN DREW**
Daily News Foreign Service

Mr Joshua Nkomo's leadership. They wanted action and they got it.

Robert Mugabe took over the helm in 1976 after Mr Sithole had lost the support of the guerrilla fighters, and it was through his direction that the party swept to power in the 1980 independence general election.

Its platform then was built on socialist foundations. But a pragmatic approach to the question of how to convert a capitalist system to a socialist structure has until now been dominant, and in the process doctrinaire socialists and textbook marxists have been bitterly disillusioned.

Political commentators and analysts in Zimbabwe are now hard at work pointing to the dangers that neo-colonialism holds for revolu-

tions that lose their way, or conversely to the dangers that purges and great leaps forward have posed for states trying to accelerate the move to socialism.

In the run-up to the congress, a massive drive is under way to recruit more members. Extreme pressures are being applied to followers of the Zapu leader, Joshua Nkomo, and of the detained UANC president, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, to join Zanu (PF).

But at the same time as the campaign continues to make Zanu (PF) the party of the masses, one which could claim to be truly representative of the people in a one party state, some strategists are calling for a purified party composed of genuine socialists who will spear-



Robert Mugabe

head the drive towards scientific socialism.

Among them is Dr Herbert Ushewokunze, whose lower profile as Transport Minister as against his former post as one of the security ministers should not obscure the fact that he remains an ambitious politician, popular with radicals and students.

To press his case, the Durban-educated doctor

has had published a book from a collection of his speeches in which he stresses the danger of a party with mass membership losing its direction, and of being transformed into an agency for the corrupt practices of opportunists and neo-colonialists.

He paints a picture of opposing elements within the party: on the one side the forces of neo-colonialism described as "the few rich blacks and whites who team up to run the old colonial economic structure for their own benefit and for international capital... the other, the "progressive elements advocating collective responsibility over the exploitation of national resources and the distribution of those products according to need".

But the proponents of the formation of a "vanguard" party, restricted to carefully screened

and committed followers of marxism-leninism, are not having it all their own way.

Prominence was given to a recent article in the Herald outlining the dangers should Zimbabwe follow the call at the recent congress of the youth league of the ruling party for Zanu (PF) to transform to a truly marxist-leninist party.

The article made the point that in outlook and practice, the overwhelming membership of the party was made up of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements, including senior leaders at all levels.

To purge them from the party ranks would mean the minority expelling the majority, said the writer, referring to Trotsky's observation that revolutions had a tendency to eat their own progeny.

History was full of examples of socialist revolutions ending up in fascist repression of the masses.

The article said it would first be necessary to gain popular approval for scientific socialism, a concept which even most of today's decision makers did not understand, before implementing it.

It said the interests of the masses could be upheld only by placing effective power in the hands of the people themselves, and not in the hands of a self-selected band of men and women who called themselves socialists.

Africa, it noted, had too many self-styled socialists who denied the masses democracy, embezzled public funds, operated Swiss bank accounts and owned buses, bars and farms.

Swazis reject SA warning

MBABANE — South Africa's warning that Swaziland must negotiate with the KwaZulu authorities over the stalled land issue was firmly rejected by two groups involved at the weekend.

They were reacting the South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha's warning when he visited Mbabane last week that there would be "conflict" if Swaziland refused to talk to KwaZulu over the incorporation of homeland territories of KaNgwane and Ingwavuma.

Swazi Prime Minister Prince Bhekimpi said at the weekend the kingdom was not prepared to bring any third party into the border adjustment issue. He stressed that his government was still committed to holding talks with the South African Government on the issue.

The Prime Minister told an official gathering at the weekend: "Zulus never tampered with Swazi borders and there

is no need to negotiate with them".

The pro-incorporation KaNgwane Council of Chiefs also rejected the South African suggestion that Swaziland should negotiate with homeland leaders.

The chairman of the council, Chief Mkolishi Dlamini, said: "Mr Botha is hiding behind a thin facade. It is the

boers who took the land from Swazis and it is the same boers who must bring it back".

The secretary of the council Mr David Lukhele said: "The Republic of South Africa is trying to evade the border adjustment issue by referring the matter to talks between KwaZulu, KaNgwane and the kingdom of Swaziland".