

Picking up the glove in elections challenge

STOCKY former United Democratic Front's Popo Simon Molefe might not be hogging newspaper headlines, but he has been hard at work — as a backroom boy preparing the African National Congress for South Africa's first all-in elections, expected within a year.

Molefe, who heads the ANC's election commission, is quite aware of the responsibility that lies on his shoulders, and those of colleague Patrick "Terror" Lekota. But he says he welcomes the challenge.

He is eager to talk about his work, but has to keep an eye on his watch because not only does he have another meeting after the interview, but he is also leaving for Switzerland in the evening to raise funds for the ANC.

Precisely how well the ANC performs in the elections will depend to a great extent on Molefe and his colleagues. The organisation expects, as the oldest anti-apartheid standard-bearer, to reap the voting benefits of having struggled against the hated system for so long.

But Molefe also concedes another obvious truth — that thanks to apartheid, the overwhelming majority of South Africans have no experience in voting or campaigning for elections. It is his job to see that the ANC's structures are developed for the robust campaigning that lies ahead.

It is one thing to enjoy emotional support; entirely another to translate that into crosses on ballot papers.

ANC organisational infrastructures are inadequate, says Molefe — and money is too tight to mention. Molefe estimates the ANC will need between R168 million to R200 million for the elections, and he is cautiously optimistic that that

ELECTION COUNTDOWN

The date for the country's first nonracial election has yet to be set, but the major political parties are already making preparations to contest that poll. Starting today, The Star will focus on the parties' readiness for elections. Political Correspondent KAIZER NYATSUMBA speaks to the ANC's campaign "generals".

amount will be raised before the elections.

The budget will go towards voter education training, the production of propaganda literature, transport, and the setting up of organisational infrastructure in 94 ANC sub-regions, in addition to the 14 existing regions.

He says R5 million is in the bag so far, and the ANC expects to raise at least 20 percent of the targeted figure locally.

"This is because we rely heavily on the poor, and business has not been a friend of the ANC," Molefe says.

The bulk of the money will be raised internationally, where the ANC has numerous fund-raising structures.

Methodically, Molefe explains that the work for the election has already begun, and says he believes the problems which lie ahead are by no means insurmountable.

The ANC, he says, is putting the finishing touches to its campaign plans, and has begun training people who will implement it. So far the organisation has held 17 workshops, 14 of them in the PWV area and only one in the coloured community.

The organisation has also held one national seminar and

four regional ones to discuss implementation of strategy. This, Molefe says, involves the training of election co-ordinators at local level.

Workshops have so far covered 10 of the ANC's 14 regions, and he is confident this initial process will have been completed nationwide by the end of this month.

But a vast amount of work still awaits.

His commission plans to train at least five people to be "specialist co-ordinators" in every branch of the ANC, and would like to have three trained monitors at each polling station.

He estimates there will be between 7 000 and 10 000 polling stations for the historic elections for a constituent assembly and Government of National Unity and Reconstruction.

The ambition of Molefe and his colleagues is breathtaking. They plan to have 180 000 election volunteers who will serve as "foot soldiers" — and to have one volunteer for every 100 voters.

To this end, the ANC is engaged in "an intensive voter education campaign", and is using the services of "neutral

organisations" such as Matla Trust, the Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa for voter education.

Molefe estimates that about 4.5 million black South Africans do not have identity documents.

He hopes that by the time the elections are held the ANC will have persuaded most of them to obtain ID documents, but says those who will still be without them would have to be issued by an independent election commission.

That said, the busy Molefe looks at his watch and says: "I have only one political statement to make."

"For us, the coming elections are a continuation of the struggle to end apartheid and to transform our society so that we can deliver a better life to the majority of the disadvantaged."

"They are also about the establishment of the legitimacy of the new government. It is absolutely essential that we register no less than a 90 percent poll in the election."

"This is the surest way to ensure that the majority consider this process of transition as their own. It is also important for the creation of political stability which will engender investor confidence."

"It is, therefore, key for us to ensure that ordinary people understand voting procedures, the secrecy of the ballot, that they are sufficiently motivated to vote, and that on the day of election they will go out to vote, and that television and radio will be open to all."

These are statements that — as he well knows — might well come back to haunt him unless he does an extraordinary job.

7-4-1973

THE STAR

Bid to settle soccer row out of court

AN APPLICATION by Mangaung United FC for an interdict against five officials of Mangaung Limited has been postponed until Thursday.

Mr Justice R Erasmus heard from counsel for both parties at the Supreme Court, Bloemfontein.

Parties

Then the judge suggested that it would be in the interest of both parties if they came to an agreement to settle the matter out of court instead of going ahead with what could turn out to be a long litigation.

Mr Justice Erasmus pointed out that eight to 13 witnesses may have to be called and that the main case might not be heard until September next year.

Expenses too could be very high. He suggested that with the assistance of their counsel, the two parties first explore the possibility of a compromise.