

THE TORONTO STAR
Thursday, April 18, 1985

BUSINESS TODAY

SECTION E
Pages E1-E20

Falconbridge hits back at attack on South African ties

By John Spears Toronto Star

Metal markets took a back seat to race relations yesterday as Falconbridge Ltd. chairman Bill James hit back at church criticism of the multinational's involvement in South Africa.

Church groups opposed to apartheid have become a regular feature at the meetings of many companies that have business ties with South Africa.

But while most company chairmen try to soothe the Christians, the gravel-voiced James bellowed defiance.

His target at yesterday's annual meeting of Falconbridge — which owns 25 per cent of the South African mining company Western Platinum Ltd. — was Jim Webb.

Webb, representing Canadian Jesuits, used information supplied by Falconbridge to decry Western Platinum's employment policies.

"The 94 per cent of workers who are black make one-quarter of what whites make," Webb said.

"The discrimination on the basis of skin color is obvious. The whites in Western Platinum live in houses. The blacks live separated from their families in dormitories of eight to 12 workers. These statistics which you have provided document a disgraceful situation.

"If you can't do better, why don't you pull out of South Africa and Western Platinum?" he concluded.

James' voice rose and he paced the podium of the Commerce Court meeting

room as he hit back at Webb.

The lowest-paid blacks at Western Platinum make 392 rand a month and get 200 rand worth of room and board, James said — while the Anglican Church in South Africa employs some workers for as little as 300 rand a month.

One rand is worth about 73 cents Canadian.

"If ours is a disgraceful wage rate, your Anglican confreres are worse," James growled.

"And I don't think it's right for you to come here with your holier-than-thou attitude and say (that) when you're paying lower wages than we are.

"And I don't believe in the scorched-earth policy where you have everything break down, and have no infrastructure

left and no jobs, and put all those people out of work until they settle their question on rule in South Africa.

"And if you look what's happened in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, I'll tell you Mr. Mugabe and all the blacks — all the Shona, all the the Matabele — are awful glad that Blanket (a gold mine owned by Falconbridge) is there and that we stayed there through the tough times.

"And as you know, the chief of the Zulus said when you close down a mine, the people who get hurt worst are the blacks. They're the first to feel it. Whitey's going to be around for a long time and he's going to be doing all right. But it's going to be the blacks that are burnt.

"And I say our 392 rand a month is bet-

ter than nothing. And it's 92 rand better than yours. And I don't think that the Anglican church is giving them board with that," James concluded to applause from shareholders.

Bonnie Greene, who represented several Roman Catholic orders at the meeting, asked James to have Falconbridge's directors on the Western Platinum board to press for an end to racist practices and the type of contract labor that separates families.

James said he'd consider it, but "we can't change everything today or tomorrow."

□ Spending in Sudbury/E2

Thursday 18 April 1985

Recession is 'devastating' for the Blacks

PIETERMARITZ-

BURG. — Economic recession had an "immediate and devastating" effect on Blacks, Mr Ron Miller, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, said yesterday in an address he gave at Michaelhouse School.

It especially affected unskilled workers, who comprised most of the Black workforce — as well as almost 90 percent of the unemployed, according to the text of his speech released in Cape Town.

Mr Miller, speaking on the country's economic future and its likely effect on political development, said there was a correlation between the state of the economy and the po-

tential for political activity in South Africa, with special reference to Black-White relationships and the prospects for the advancement of Black political aspirations.

At times when the economy was booming and the average White worker found it easy to obtain employment at a good rate of pay, he felt secure in his attempts at satisfying his material needs, and became far more tolerant of advancement by others economically, socially and politically.

Black economic advancement during times of high economic growth, on the other hand, tended to focus Blacks' attention, especially those in skilled occupations, on their state of relative deprivation when compared to Whites.

This, he said, generally resulted in increased agitation for a better deal, including political advancement.

Boom times were also "high season" for Black and White trade unions to demand a greater share of the spoils for their union members.

He said more than R5-billion was being spent on education this year in

spite of the economic recession.

Mr Miller said South Africa could not afford to cut inflation or State expenditure at the cost of unemployment.

It was precisely at times of potentially high unemployment that the State needed to come to the aid of society to continue to finance those functions which would lead to a higher standard of living through a higher standard of education for all population groups.

The current average of four years formal education for Blacks and programmes to improve this situation left the Government no alternative but to increase expenditure in this field, he said.

Mr Miller said at present about half a million Blacks had lost their jobs and more than 100 000 Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Blacks were registered as unemployed. — Sapa.

Friday 19 April 1985

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

Boesak

DR ALAN BOESAK, the President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, who claimed a unique relationship with a young woman although he is a married man with four children, has now received the nod from the South African Council of Churches to resume his work as vice-president of the council.

This follows the decision of the Ring of the SA Gestig of the NG Sendingkerk that allegations that Dr Boesak had had an affair with the woman were unfounded.

We have the unique situation in which the Johannesburg Star claimed Dr Boesak did have an affair, yet Dr Boesak has not sued it for defamation, which would be the natural thing to do.

One might wonder why his church does not press him to clear his name.

One might wonder also why the SACC does not urge him to do so.

He is, after all, a man of high status in his church, in the world alliance and in the SACC and no newspaper should be allowed to defame him, if that is what the Star did, and get away with it.

We have a feeling that Dr Boesak doesn't want the matter aired in court, not because he is reluctant to be in the public limelight — he is the chief patron of the United Democratic Front and a man who takes a very public and active role in radical causes.

No, it must be that he hopes the matter will fade from public view, now that neither the ring of his church nor the SACC has decided to do anything about it.

However, the Media Council will next month resume its hearing on complaints by the South African Police concerning reports in the Star that alleged police involvement in exposing the Boesak affair. The matter will then again come before the public gaze.

Consequently, the allegations which the newspaper made will simply not fade away.

So, Dr Boesak, don't you owe it to yourself, your family and the young lady concerned to sue the newspaper?

Indeed, with all sorts of snide comments and cartoons being published on the basis of these allegations, have you any alternative? What about it, then, Dr Boesak?

Praise for Buthelezi Leadership from Reddy

HOUSE OF DELEGATES. — Over the past two months of crisis and trauma, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi had counselled and guided the country like a true leader, the leader of the opposition, Dr J N Reddy, said in the Delegates.

Speaking in the Budget Debate, he said Chief Buthelezi had joined the forces of moderation in advising people abroad not to fall victim to the disinvestment lobby. He had shown the type of leadership that would lead the country to peace.

Dr Reddy appealed to the Government not to reject out of hand the report of the Buthelezi Commission into Natal/KwaZulu.

"What is no good today will be good tomorrow," he said. The Chief Minister of KwaZulu should be accepted as a man committed to peaceful change.

Turning to the economy, he said South Africans had always earned foreign exchange from gold sales and had forgotten about exporting. It was time to turn people's energies to exporting, which was a special philosophy.

"The time to talk about exports must end. Action must be substituted for words".

Richards Bay in particular should be investigated for the purpose of locating large scale exporters.

Dr Reddy also questioned the policy of housing subsidies for public servants. While he had no objection to subsidies, the interest rate should be related to the real cost of money.

The practice was inflationary and subsidies should not become a burden to those who didn't enjoy them.

"There must be a semblance of justice."

He said the Government had taken too long to agree to open central business districts to all races. To speed up the process local authorities should be given the power to investigate and decide on suitable areas.

Since the Government had accepted the principle of opening central business districts to all, it was time to do something concrete.