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Horwood to look into riot insurance discrimination

Political Staff

CAPE TOWN — Senator Owen Horwood, Minister of Finance, has given an undertaking to investigate the racially discriminatory rates laid down in riot-insurance cover.

Senator Eric Winchester (PFP) took up the issue with Senator Horwood after the publication of the insurance rates last week which revealed that blacks would have to pay premiums five times more than those paid by whites for cover.

After Senator Winchester had described the rates as "blatantly discriminatory," Senator Horwood agreed to investigate the issue as soon as possible.

Senator Horwood last month announced the formation of a pool of insurance companies known as the South African Special Insurance Association which would be underwritten by the Government to cover damage

caused by civil strife.

Senator Winchester, who is an insurance consultant, said in an interview today that he had suggested the idea of riot insurance after the 1976 riots.

"At no stage did I believe we would introduce a system that was blatantly discriminatory," he said.

He accepted that risks in certain localities could be higher, but it was totally unacceptable that all black areas should carry a higher rate than white areas.

The Oriental Bazaar in Johannesburg was occupied by Indian businessmen who would have to pay the higher rate although they were surrounded by white business houses and where there was equal risk.

"This is crazy. Any insurance which has racial content to it is totally unacceptable," Senator Winchester said.

TREFWOORDE

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