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Make-or-break for
constitution tonight

It's the final hour



TIME IS TIGHT: As the seconds tick away for tomorrow's constitutional deadline, Assembly chairman Cyril Ramaphosa talks time with his deputy Leon Wessels.

CLIVE SAWYER and TYRONE SEALE

Political Staff
OPTIMISM surged today that the African National Congress and National Party would strike a deal as the last few minutes ticked away to the final deadline for amendments to the Constitution Bill.

"There is no final breakthrough yet but things are looking fine," an NP source said, as talks between top-level delegations continued this morning.

It is understood there was progress on all three issues - education, the property clause and labour laws - on which the NP and ANC have thus far stalemated.

ANC spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa, speaking after yesterday's late-night round of bilateral talks, said progress had been made and there would be further consultations with principals this morning.

A special meeting of the constitutional committee was to start at noon to allow amendments to be tabled. It was expected to last until 3pm, after which debate would resume in the 490-member constitutional assembly.

However, as hope rose about the outcome of this morning's talks, there was speculation that the committee meeting would be postponed to accommodate the

fruits of a deal.

Unless a settlement was reached by the end of the committee meeting, the present version of the bill, with the three clauses on which the ANC and NP are deadlocked, is the one on which parties will vote.

Voting is scheduled for tomorrow morning. The bill must secure a two-thirds majority to be approved, after which deadlock-breaking mechanisms, which could culminate in a referendum, will come into force.

Yesterday both parties were firing shots across each other's bows.

NP leader F W de Klerk told a rally in Elim last night that his party would not back down on the education issue.

The NP is insisting on a constitutional entrenchment of the right to state-funded single medium education, while the ANC says a decision on whether schools should be single or multimedial should be left to educational authorities and school communities.

Mr De Klerk said: "The NP is fighting its arms to stumps so that you aren't told your school must change and education is misused for political gain."

ANC senior negotiator Valli Moosa

warned yesterday that his party, if the crisis resulted in a referendum, would consider putting its own version of the constitution to the vote.

Approval of a draft in a referendum would require a 60 percent majority of those taking part, which the ANC is confident of securing.

If the last-ditch talks between the ANC and NP today failed, there was a slim chance of the constitution being passed by another route.

If the Democratic Party and Freedom Front chose to support it, this would provide enough votes for the two-thirds major-

ity required.

For the bill to be acceptable to the DP, there would have to be concessions by the ANC to strengthen the rights in the property and labour law clauses. The controversy over the education clause is not as significant for the DP as it was for the NP.

The FF's support might prove as difficult to woo as that of the NP, after indications that it would also vote against the constitution unless there was some movement on the education clause.

● More reports on page 6.

Sit-in demo by postal workers

PORT ELIZABETH - A delegation from the Post and Telecommunication Workers' Association has staged a sit-in demonstration at Telkom's regional offices in Port Elizabeth.

Telkom's regional communications manager, Gill Burrows, said five Potwa representatives arrived at the office yesterday to demand a meeting with management.

The Potwa members wished to discuss "internal matters" relating to the Eastern Cape region.

Ms Burrows said, the delegation was told it could not be accommodated at short notice and the meeting would have to take place today.

"The proposal was rejected by the Potwa members who indicated that they would embark on a sit-in demonstration in the regional general manager's office until the meeting had been granted," she said.

The delegation then refused to leave the building. - Sapa.

All systems 'go' for constitution party

Flurry of activity for formal adoption of new bill

ESANN de KOCK
Staff Reporter

THERE is a flurry of activity as preparations go full steam ahead for the adoption of South Africa's new constitution tomorrow, at a formal sitting of the entire constitutional assembly.

Presses are working overtime to print the new bill, marquee tents are going up at Fernwood parliamentary estate, scaffolding is being set up for the unveiling of a huge mural in Plein Street, choirs are getting in final practices and political parties are going all out to make last-minute amendments to the constitution.

Katharine McKenzie, media liaison officer of the constitutional assembly, says there has been tremendous interest in the proceedings from the local and international media, and

that arrangements are in place to accommodate everyone and ensure the programme runs smoothly.

Final arrangements are also being made to try to ensure the adoption proceedings and ceremonies tomorrow are a success.

The day will start with a praise singer leading a procession of the national assembly after which deputy chairman Leon Wessels will welcome guests and introduce the programme.

President Mandela and representatives of political

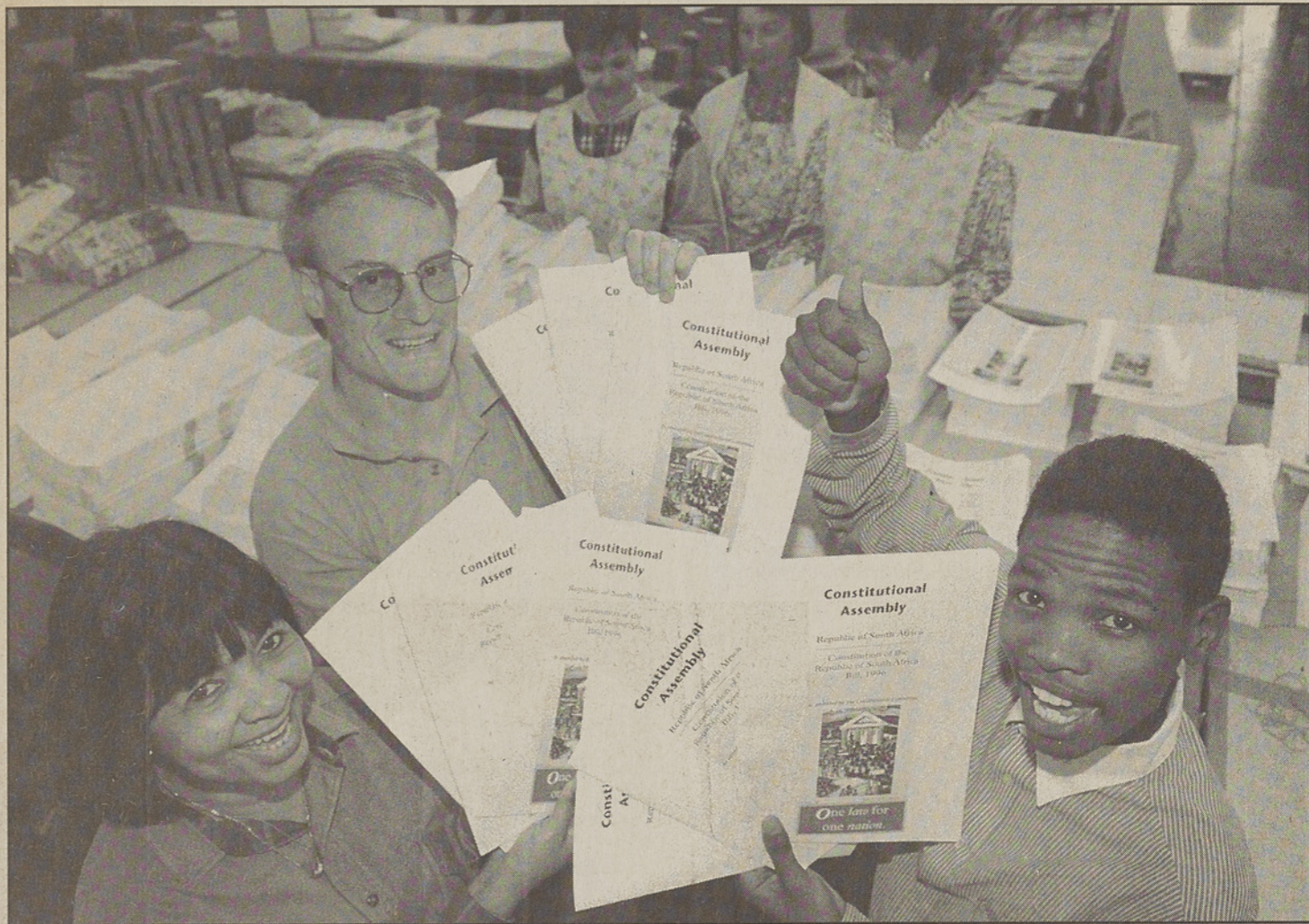
parties will address the assembly, and Mr Mandela will also speak at a gathering outside the national assembly chamber of schoolchildren and various organisations.

The constitutional assembly song will be performed outside the assembly and everyone will be invited to join in the national anthem, which will be led by a choir.

A dinner will be hosted at Fernwood parliamentary estate tomorrow evening where Mr Mandela will be the guest of honour.

Picture: LEON MULLER, Chief Photographer.

PRESSED FOR TIME: Creda Press staff worked through the night at the weekend to print the Constitution Bill in time for tomorrow's debate. Pamela Stanfield, Khayaletu Gomfa and Michael Bates join colleagues in celebrating their achievement. Time will tell whether deadlocked constitutional negotiators will produce further amendments.



tomorrow, there'll be one law for one nation.



Tomorrow is the 8th of May, 1996. It's one of the most important days in the history of South Africa's long journey to democracy.

Because tomorrow we adopt our new Constitution, written by all the people of South Africa. Once it's adopted we'll submit it to the Constitutional Court for certification.

We'll have a set of new rules for all South Africans - including government - to respect and follow.

We'll have the foundation for a true democracy, and a Constitution we can be proud of.

One law for one nation.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Voter education advertising starts

Staff Reporter

THE Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) has announced the start of the radio, print and billboard advertising leg of its R2,45-million voter education campaign for the May 29 elections.

The announcement came amid widespread criticism that not enough was being done to reach voters at grassroots level.

Speaking at a media briefing in Cape Town yesterday, CMC chairman Willie van Schoor expressed confidence that the advertising campaign would get the message across to voters of how, where and why to vote. He said the multifaceted, 11-phase campaign, launched two months ago, was now in full operation in an attempt to reach as many of the 1,3 million registered voters as possible.

It was estimated that more than two million voters had been reached so far through voter education workshops and the distribution of posters and booklets.

The main bulk of the education activity had, however, been planned for May because the experience of the November elections showed widespread voter apathy until the last few weeks before the election.

Meanwhile, the Tygerberg joint executive committee has expressed serious reservations about the effectiveness of the voter education campaign and has requested a meeting with the CMC voter and election affairs committee on Thursday.

Tygerberg returning officer Dave Wilken said they were worried that because of the size and magnitude of the substructure, not enough people were being reached.

The voter education programme during the next few weeks will include a print advertising campaign in community and regional newspapers, more than 3 500 radio ads and chat shows on various local stations, radio ads on music tapes supplied to taxi drivers, a moving billboard campaign and a ward/voting station knock and drop pamphlet designed for each substructure.

A further 430 000 posters and booklets, in addition to the 530 000 already distributed, will also be disseminated during the next three weeks.

The cost of the entire campaign for the Cape metropolitan area works out at R1,90 a voter. The national campaign totalled R6 a voter and the campaign for the Western Cape rural areas for May 29 totals R5,90 a voter.

Metro ballot papers - W Cape printers upset

ANDREA WEISS
Metro Reporter

WESTERN Cape printers are upset that the printing of ballot papers for the May 29 elections is being handled by only two companies.

Selwyn Spolander of the Printing Industries Federation, which has about 250 members, said printers were hoping to avoid a repeat of the 1994 election scenario when South Africa's ballot papers were printed offshore at "huge cost", but had been disappointed at the handling of the printing of ballot papers for the Cape Metro.

Mr Spolander said he had held discussions with Brent Gerber of the Cape Town City Council and members of the Cape Metropolitan Council to offer the services of the printing industry.

However, his members were upset to find that Digitron, the company appointed to manage the process, would also be printing the bulk of the papers themselves.

Only one member of the federation, Federal Business Forms, was awarded the contract for the CMC's ballot papers, which is for about 1,4 million papers.

Digitron will be printing all the papers for the six substructures, each of which require ward and proportional representation ballots.

Mr Spolander said his members had scanned the newspapers for advertisements, but none had

appeared.

He had met Digitron and left the meeting under the impression that they would be managing the process only, and not printing, as they now were.

Stefaans Olivier, deputy returning officer for the CMC, said a co-ordinating committee of the chief executive officers had asked three companies, Digitron, Time Slot and MCS, to submit tenders for managing the process.

These companies had been chosen because of the complexity of the operation.

Digitron won the tender because it put in the best price, R118 000, for managing the security, delivery and auditing of the ballot papers.

Digitron, in turn, had asked members of the printing industry to submit their names, 22 of whom responded to their call. These 22 were given tender documents, with only five tendering.

Mr Olivier said that at this point, there was a meeting with the returning officers of the various substructures at which it was decided that, because of the tight deadlines, security risks and complexity of the job, Digitron should print the ballot papers for all the substructures as well.

Digitron has been asked to print 10 percent more than the required number of ballots, which includes papers for 172 wards.

The total cost of printing is expected to come to about R600 000.

Bid to protect KwaZulu poll

Political Staff

KEY security ministries in the government are to start talks about a security plan for KwaZulu-Natal after the postponement of the local elections there from May 29 for a month.

The postponement was announced last night after a special cabinet meeting which lasted more than five hours, during which Inkatha leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi was convinced to agree to the delay.

The decision - based on recommendations of a task team set up by President Mandela last month to probe allegations of voters' roll fraud and no-go areas in the province - will allow time for limited registration, a further look at fraud allegations and for the security situation to be assessed.

Government sources said the delay would allow time to plan and put in place effective security measures to ensure the polls were not marred by violence and intimidation.

The cabinet is likely to discuss these measures when it meets for its regular meeting tomorrow before a possible meeting of the Safety and Security, Defence and Intelligence ministries.

However, presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana has said that security measures would not include a state of emergency, which the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal has demanded.

Yesterday, Chief Buthelezi, who had earlier opposed a delay, said the postponement had been a unanimous decision by the cabinet.

"We are hoping that this will have a calming effect," he said.