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ERRATA:- We apologise for the error in our last issue. W. L. McConkey should have read Dr W. G. McConkey.

EDITORIALS

1. MORE GLOOM

The financial crisis; highly questionable activities in Angola and Mozambique; the emergency; violence and upheaval in one area after another — as if all this did not cast enough gloom over the South African scene, the Nationalists must add to it.

At a time when we had almost been persuaded that re-settlement for ideological reasons was a nightmare of the past, new consolidation proposals for Kwa-Zulu threaten to set the whole cruel process in motion again. The Consolidation Commission itself seems to have no idea how many people its plans affect. What one does know is that fear, uncertainty and apprehension have again swept into many homes in Natal, and that it is the Commission which has let them loose.

Quite apart from threatening to uproot settled tribal communities, many of them still living where they were when the first white men appeared on the scene, the proposals imply the resettlement of almost every single black freehold area in the Province. In every case the land was bought legally, at the cost of great financial sacrifice on the part of those involved, often more than a century ago. Many of these places have become over-

crowded and agriculturally debilitated over the years, but the people living in them argue, and it cannot be disputed, that this was an inevitable consequence of the restriction placed by the 1913 Land Act on black purchase of land in 87% of the country. In an uncertain and often hostile world the black freehold areas became havens of security for many black people. They were one place where they could escape from the harsh, daily implications of living under the white man's laws.;

Overcrowded or not the freehold areas remain to this day settled and generally orderly communities — something increasingly rare and surely to be treasured and given every encouragement and support in South Africa in 1985? It would be an act of absolute madness to now tear such places to pieces to serve an ideological blueprint which has been a miserable failure and which is being abandoned bit-by-bit everywhere else. The cost of this consolidation plan would be enormous. That money would be an important investment in our future if it was used instead to develop the areas it is now proposed to destroy. Nobody in Natal wants this plan. Pretoria should publicly abandon it before it does everyone who lives there great harm. □