

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 264

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 8)

264. Mrs C Dudley (ACDP) to ask the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:
(Interdepartmental transfer on 07/03)

- (1) Whether she has been informed (a) of complaints from the small and medium wood manufacturing industry, saying it was becoming increasingly difficult for them to survive and (b) that the Bargaining Council is accused of subjecting these companies to paying regular as well as additional provident funds, which small and medium enterprises find hard to keep up with; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether (a) she has investigated claims that manufacturers have had to close their doors, leaving a significant number of people jobless owing to the unreasonable demands of the Bargaining Council and (b) her department will investigate the impact of Bargaining Council policy on small enterprises; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;
- (3) whether jobs are lost owing to manufacturers closing factories or replacing people with machines; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

(1)(a) No.

(1)(b) No.

(2)(a) No.

(2)(b) Yes, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry will follow-up on this issue with the Saw-millers Association, a new association that was established during the Forest Sector Charter development process based on recommendations by the Forest Sector Charter Steering Committee. The Department will also follow-up on this issue with the Department of Labour and the Bargaining Council to discuss the impact of these policies and the sector. The Department of Labour may be able to indicate whether they are aware of these issues and whether it has been discussed with the relevant Bargaining Council.

(3) The Department is not aware of manufacturers closing factories or replacing people with machines, but will request information from the various industries in the Forest Sector to validate this statement.