

## Boost for petition against evictions

Mercury Reporter

THE anti-group areas eviction drive in Durban received a boost at the weekend when 18 339 signatures were collected for a petition, bringing the total number of signatures so far to more than 26 000.

Mr Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of the Durban Central Residents' Association, which is fighting the eviction of scores of non-whites from the white areas of Durban, said the Progressive Federal Party and other political bodies had assisted in the weekend campaign.

'Signatures were collected at points in Durban, Westville and Pinetown during four hours on Saturday.

'The kind of support we are getting from whites is tremendous. It is giving us a lot of moral support,' he said.

Not all of those who were approached were against the Group Areas Act, the DCRA had found.

'We did have one or two remarks from whites and in some cases instead of giving us their signatures, slogans such as, "we support the Group Areas Act", were written on petition forms,' he said.



Mr Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of the Durban Central Residents' Association, sifts through petition forms, assisted by Miss Meera Chagan.

The petition would be circulated among students at the Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses of the University of Natal this weekend. It was launched at the University of Durban-Westville last week.

The association was preparing a memorandum to Mr Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, highlighting the

strong feelings against the forced removal of families contravening the Group Areas Act.

'We will point out that these people are not flouting the law by choice. They are faced with a serious housing problem and because of the availability of accommodation at reasonable rental in white areas they are forced to live there,' he said.

## Albert Park dilemma

SIR — I am in a dilemma over my standpoint about people of other races occupying flats in the Albert Park area.

On the one hand my flat in a so-called 'prestige' block in St Andrews Street stands me at about R44 000 and forms a major part of my invested capital.

On the other hand, I find it anomalous that there are empty residential properties in the area which could be occupied by the homeless, or which will become vacant if the present non-white residents are evicted.

Will my property depreci-

ate in value? And will these families of other races restrict the number of occupants per flat, or will they overcrowd? Will they control their birth-rate?

The Corporation is at present re-surfacing McArthur Street, which I think will upgrade this shabby environment. Will the owners of apartment blocks follow this example, and revamp the exteriors of their shabby buildings?

And will the owners take advantage of the prevailing shortage of non-white accommodation, or will they charge the non-white ten-

ants reasonable rentals?

Would the Manning/Musgrave Roads residents welcome these people as neighbours? Will the area depreciate in value — or must I incur the expense and inconvenience of selling my flat, possibly at a considerable loss, and moving back to the Berea or Glenwood where I lived previously?

Can someone please give me the answers? My conscience troubles me if I join in the call for the eviction of homeless people.

NORAH BROWN

Durban