

# 'Health, Not Strike, The Cause Of TCL Ills'

THIS is my opinion on how the money of Tsumeb Corporation Limited should be handled.

1. All money which is owed to workers, people affected by illnesses which were caused by the mine and who cannot work anymore as a result, or persons who would not be able to work in future because of this, has to be paid to these affected persons. These people have to be looked after in the future years when they would still have worked.

2. All taxes owed by TCL have to be recovered. In the same way, preference should be given to paying out the back wages of TCL employees.

3. The disappearance of the Chilean copper concentrate which was sent to Tsumeb to be refined at the TCL smelter is a very serious matter and has to be investigated. It was also negligent not to insure the concentrate. The mere

disappearance of such a large consignment explains nothing. This also applies to (major TCL creditor) Standard Bank of Namibia - they should have taken out insurance to cover their losses. After all, when I buy a car or take up a loan, I have to take out insurance because if something then happens to me I will be fully covered.

4. Gold Fields South Africa has a lot of responsibilities to former employees who are ill and who will in future fall ill, where their illness has not been detected yet. (They say it can take up to ten or fifteen years for the symptoms of mining-related illnesses to show, except where a worker was unprotected and in which case it can take less than a year.)

I would recommend that all the money which is left should not be paid out, but should be deposited into a fund until the fifteen year period has passed, for more instances of ill-health

caused by employment at TCL which might still occur.

What nauseates me, too, are the frequent references to the 1996 strike which was supposedly the cause of the mine's problems. This is in fact not true. The largest problem in fact was that people were getting so ill, and that TCL are not bankrupt but would have been if they had to pay all their ill workers.

How can someone settle out of court and again employ me and then want to declare himself bankrupt four and a half months later? Then it was a trick!

TCL's personnel allowed themselves to be misled by thinking that one can notice the symptoms of a lung disease only after ten to fifteen years - but it can be detected within a year if the worker was not protected.

At TCL, pressure was exercised for production, but regard was not given to people's health. Be-

cause of this the irregularities occurred where permission was given to the cementation section to drill dry - then they are not there anymore and it can simply be said the person died of a heart attack, which is also true because this illness after all also affects the heart which works together with the lungs.

That the strike did do damage is true, but my suspicions are different, that this was a good reason to be used for a plan to get rid of all the ill employees. Many of the ill people can after all not take on such a large company in court.

Indeed, voluntary retrenchment packages would have been offered, but what now when everyone who opts for these is healthy and then they sit with an ill work force because the ill man would of course not ask for the package!

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