**Here’s a numbers**

**game all will lose**

Health Minister Joshua Angatia's dismissal of recent claims in the Press that blood in local banks was unsafe because a lot of it could be contaminated with the virus that causes Aids must be treated with the seriousness it deserves both by the Government and, the people.

The issue of Aids - which retired CPK Archbishop

Manasses Kuria last year said was one of the "plagues"

destroying Kenya - is very delicate and anybody making

"authoritative" statements about it must be very sure of

their facts because the consequences of an error are tragic.

The article Mr Angatia was dismissing was by Dr Patrick

Osewe who,· among other things, also claimed Kenyan

laboratory technicians were inept and lax.

During a Press Conference on Thursday at his Afya

House office in Nairobi, ..Mr Angatia said no blood is

transfused into a patient without being screened and results had shown that the margin of error was an "internationally acceptable" 0.1 per cent.

He said that in tests done by Kenyan scientists in

conjunction with the US-based Centre for Disease Control

at Atlanta, the two groups obtained nearly the same results or more specifically the same margin of error.

For example in Homa Bay, the two teams detected three

HIV positive in 177 samples and 15 in 438 samples in New Nyanza Hospital.

But in Siaya and Kisii hospitals the Kenyans detected 11

and four HIV positive while the Americans detected 12 and five respectively out of a sample size of 119 and 594. At Kenya's biggest hospital - Kenyatta - out of ,192 samples, the Americans detected nine cases while the Kenyans came up with a result of seven.

Scientists since Gallileo's time rarely agree with each

other at first and it is irrelevant know who between Dr

Osewe on the one hand, and the Kenyan and American

scientists on the other, is right. What is of importance is

that both teams detected the Aids virus in blood meant for

transfusion, a situation made worse by the fact that the

Americans discovered more tainted blood than the Kenyans in just a few samples. What about country-wide?

To the scientists, the whole issue is a matter of figures

and percentages without considering the human tragedy

which that means. Two' pints of tainted blood passing

through may not seem much in figures but those are two

people condemned to death and if they are married ....

Granted, there is always a margin of error in most things.

but in Aids it's tragic if there is. So Mr Angatia and his

scientists should not. play the numbers game with Dr

Osewe. They 'should ensure even that 0.1 per cent margin of error is eliminated.'