

'We want same power as SA Govt'

Staff Reporter

THE Chief Minister of the Transkei, Paramount Chief Kaiser Matanzima, yesterday confirmed his homeland had asked for security powers, but denied it had asked for the power to ban people.

Accusing the Press of misinterpreting the Transkei's request, Chief Matanzima said: "We did not ask for banning powers. We only asked for the same security powers as the Republican Government has."

As his brother Chief George Matanzima put it: "The powers meet with our requirements — and even more, in that we did not ask for powers to ban people."

Chief George is the Transkei Minister of Justice and the man who moved the resolution in the November 1973 session of the Transkei Legislative Assembly asking Pretoria for security powers to deal with "subversive elements".

He denied there was any unrest in the Transkei and described the need for security powers as "precautionary".

The powers were definitely not needed to deal with opposition from Sotho-speakers in the Maluti region to the prospect of incorporation into an independent Transkei.

"That is a far-fetched interpretation," Chief George insisted.

The leader of the opposition Transkei Democratic Party, Mr Knowledge Guzana, said yesterday his party had grave reservations

about the proposed new security powers.

"They could be used to curb ordinary political activities and are unnecessary in view of security laws already operative in the Transkei," he said.

"Although you do find pockets of political trouble in the Transkei, they are not so great as to warrant the banning powers proposed (in the Bantu Laws Amendment Bill)."

While some Sotho-speaking Transkei citizens wanted to pull out and join Basotho Qwa-Qwa and held meetings without official permission to propagate their cause, they did not constitute a serious threat and the issue could be settled by political bargaining and dialogue, he added.

Only one other homeland leader yesterday came out in favour of the proposed banning powers — Mr Lennox Sebe, Chief Minister of the Ciskei.

Speaking from Caux, in Switzerland, Mr Sebe defended the proposed laws as "precautionary powers needed by every developing nation in the world."

'NO NEED'

Reaction from the three Chief Ministers attending the Moral Rearmament Conference at Caux, with Mr Sebe, was:

● Dr Cedric Phatudi, of Lebowa: "We did not ask for them. We have no need of them in Lebowa."

● Professor Hudson Ntsanwisi, of Gazankulu: "We did not ask for those powers. I don't think we shall have need of them. There is no subversion in Gazankulu."

● Chief Lucas Mangope, of BophuthaTswana: "We did not ask for them, but the Bill was sent to my Cabinet for comment. We had no option but to let it go through, but I think it should be discussed collectively by all the homeland governments."

Acceptance and use of banning powers granted to them by the South African Government would undermine the legitimacy of the homeland governments in the eyes of the outside world, Dr David Welsh warned yesterday.

Dr Welsh, senior lecturer in Comparative African Government at the University of Cape Town, was commenting on the Bill before Parliament which proposes to extend banning powers to the homeland governments.

Implementation of banning powers would give the impression that the homeland leaders were "mere cyphers of Pretoria", he said.

Professor Barend van Niekerk, Professor of Law at the University of Natal and South African representative of the International Commission of Jurists, said it seemed as if the Government would like to dispose as much as possible of the need of doing the job of suppressing civil liberties of certain Blacks and would prefer to have the Blacks do the dirty work for themselves, not unlike the demand on the Newspaper Press Union to apply its own censorship.