

Senator's attitude generates some candid thinking

The Afrikaans Press... by TERRY McELIGOTT

THERE'S little love lost between Senator Edward Kennedy and the Afrikaans Press — but his visit has nevertheless generated some candid thinking regarding the South African situation.

Not only is Senator Kennedy's criticism of conditions in Soweto's Nancefield hostel for migrant labourers echoed by newspaper commentators, but there is also a call for the whole migrant labour system to be reconsidered.

In addition, a *Rapport* political commentator says a campaign must be launched to improve the attitude of whites to blacks.

The paper gives the senator saturation coverage. This includes the front page lead, three inside pages, a Cable page article, a large slab of the leader page and a cartoon.

Commentator Louis Oosthuysen says in *Rapport* that it must be remembered the senator represents a viewpoint — regarding conditions in South Africa — with which very few people overseas disagree.

The writer expresses concern at the widening communication gap between whites and blacks in South Africa, and says the situation could be improved by promoting a complete change of attitude and thinking by whites towards blacks.

While taking into consideration

existing differences, a campaign needs to be launched to improve these attitudes, to prevent the voice of reason among blacks being smothered by restrictions and lack of communication, and to enable their needs and wishes to be spelled out to reasonable whites.

New frameworks can be developed in which people can consider the needs of the country. This is a prerequisite for meaningful change even though it will mean a period of painful adaptation for whites. Basic beliefs on what blacks need and what can be offered to them will be changed.

This could lead to a unified South Africa, which could then tell "knowalls" like Senator Kennedy to restrict himself to his own country's problems.

THERE is much speculation about what the senator will finally decide on disinvestment.

Die Burger says he recently called for stronger trade and economic sanctions against South Africa. The paper described him as arrogant and says it will be surprising if he heads the American Ambassador Herman Nickel's warning about the devastating effects which disinvestment would have.



"But, Bishop, I thought that was one of YOUR dogs!" — Orin Scott in Beeld

Ted Kennedy's brother, Robert, who visited South Africa 18 years ago, was against sanctions and disinvestment because of the repercussions on the black people, says *Die Burger*.

Rapport comments: "Senator Kennedy will serve South Africa's black people if he appeals for investments and intercedes for development aid in the form of grants for education and training and for help in building up economic momentum which can offer a better life and better opportunities for all."

"Political rights will also not fail to come then."

NOT surprisingly, Senator Kennedy's past comes under the microscope in most newspapers, but not excessively so.

"In this light there must also be another look at the whole policy of migrant labour."

Rapport's Los Angeles correspondent claims that as a result of his lifestyle, he was recently admitted to hospital with a bleeding ulcer, anaemia, hepatitis and other ailments. Doctors warned him to be careful or he would land in an early grave.

Beeld political commentator Piet Muller comes up with a surprising explanation for Senator Kennedy's visit. He is aiming to win the negro vote back home for his 1988 Presidential campaign, which he is already fighting.

Beeld says of the Nancefield Hostel: No arguments can disguise the need to put right such conditions immediately — not so as to appease the Kennedys of this world but because humanity and civilised norms demand it.