

MAKING FAST BID TO GAG SOBUKWE?

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Urgent Bill expected

SUNDAY EXPRESS POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A RACE against time is expected when Parliament re-assembles on Wednesday. The question is whether the Minister of Justice, Mr. Vorster, can get a new Bill, expected to be published after Easter, through both Houses of Parliament before the Native political leader, Robert Sobukwe, is released from jail in the first week in May.

Mr. Alec Goshel, United Party M.P. for Hospital, in Johannesburg for the Easter recess, said it was firmly believed in Opposition circles that the Minister and his law advisers were spending the recess working on the bill, and that he would try to steamroller it through during the 10 working days available before Sobukwe was released from

such an area and make his way to one of the Protectorates.

This is what Potlako Leballo, Sobukwe's chief lieutenant, did last year.

This is what Mr. Vorster wants to prevent.

"It would be just possible for the Minister to push the Bill through both Houses in the 10 days available," Mr. Goshel said. "But he could only do so if the Opposition gave the Bill a free and unchallenged passage at all stages.

"There can be no guarantee that the Opposition will allow this to happen. We may find all sorts of objections to the clauses which the Minister may wish to include.

Steamroller machine

"To get the Bill through in time, the Minister would then have to apply the closure at several points and generally use the Nationalist steamroller machine to achieve his object," he said.

"The Minister will be faced with the added difficulty that the estimates of detailed expenditure of the Budget have to come before the House during this crucial period."

Mr. Goshel said that if the Minister managed to get the expected Bill into law before Sobukwe was let out of jail he would only do so "by the skin of his teeth."

Special camps

It is expected that the Bill will include provisions enabling the Government to detain politically active leaders (of any race) in special camps for an indefinite period.

So severe a restriction will be defended in the light of Mr. Justice Sayman's interim report on the Poqo organisation, which he linked with the banned P.A.C., of which Sobukwe was leader.

In a recent trial in Kimberley, where Sobukwe was a witness, he was reported as saying that the P.A.C. "was dead."

When Sobukwe's three-year sentence comes to an end, the prison authorities must set him free.

(Some years ago the Transvaal Supreme Court ordered a prison superintendent to release a man who had been kept in jail because he was sick at the time his sentence expired.)

A notice of banishment to some isolated area can, however, be served on Sobukwe before he leaves the prison—and it is believed that this will be done.

But the authorities are aware that Sobukwe could escape from

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