

Group Areas Act threat to cinemas

STAFF REPORTER

A GROUP AREAS ACT proclamation is threatening many cinemas to which non-Whites are admitted. For, since last July, Africans are banned from attending cinemas in areas not set aside exclusively for them.

A proclamation issued on July 4 last extends the provisions of the Group Areas Act of 1957 to "any person who is at any time present in premises in the controlled area or in a group area for the purpose of attending any public cinema" and certain other places.

Owners of non-White cinemas, however, may apply to the Group Areas Board for a permit to allow Africans to attend their shows.

Non-White cinemas — in group areas or controlled areas — which have not yet applied for permits are acting illegally by admitting Africans, said a lawyer in Johannesburg yesterday.

PERMIT REQUESTS

Requests for permits are considered by the Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr. M. D. C. de Wet Nel, on the basis of a report prepared by the Group Areas Board.

Under the Act, cinemas in areas which are neither exclusively African nor exclusively White, may admit Chinese, Coloureds and Indians.

There are about 14 non-White cinemas in the Johannesburg area.

It is not a question of cinemas having individual bans placed on their African patrons except where a permit has been refused.

WILL HAVE TO CLOSE

A non-White cinema owner said yesterday:

"Our attendances are between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. African. If permits are refused to us, many cinemas will have to close."

Owners say it is difficult to distinguish between some Africans and Coloureds who often appear very similar.

"To accuse a would-be patron of being an African when he is really Coloured, would cause much bad feeling and he could sue for damages."

FOOTNOTE: The provisions of the July proclamation also apply to eating houses. African eating houses, therefore, which serve Chinese, Coloureds or Indians are breaking the law.

Blind man's friends; row over an Indian

By a Staff Reporter

A ROW HAS BLOWN UP in the National Council for the Blind over the election of an Indian to represent Natal on the national executive of the council.

The Indian is Mr. K. M. Pillay, chairman of the Natal Indian Blind Society, who has been a national executive member of the Council for the Blind for at least four years.

He was re-elected at the council's biennial conference in Port Elizabeth in October this year, together with four other provincial delegates representing the Transvaal, Free State, Western Cape and Eastern Cape.

Objection to Mr. Pillay's election has come from an affiliated

blind association in Natal on the grounds that he was not proposed by a Natal delegate to the conference, as required by the constitution.

This challenge to Mr. Pillay's election will be considered by the national executive later this month, but the issue threatens the validity of the election of all the provincial executive members, as no record was kept of the names of the proposers of any of these nominees.

Prominent workers for the blind

and charity generally are dismayed at this introduction of race discrimination into welfare work. They have appealed to the National Council for the Blind and all affiliated blind associations not to taint their good work with considerations of race.

Mr. Pillay has an outstanding record as a worker for the blind. Even if the conference for the election of the national executive has to be held again, he is almost certain to be re-elected — provided he is nominated by a Natal delegate.