

Mixed reaction to

Political Correspondent

R.D.M 15-5-69

conditions

CAPE TOWN. — Mr. Mike Mitchell, chief Opposition spokesman on Justice, and Mrs. Helen Suzman (Progressive, Houghton) have expressed completely different views on the restrictions placed on Mr. Robert Sobukwe, although both have fought strongly for his release from Robben Island.

Mr. Mitchell described the Government's offer to find him employment and to subsidise him until then as "very reasonable".

Mrs. Suzman said that the restrictions "seem very severe".

As one of the Opposition M.P.s who fought for Mr. Sobukwe's release from Robben Island — where he spent six years after serving a three-year sentence for incitement — Mr. Mitchell said that the United Party was "very pleased" that he had been released.

The restrictions placed on him in Kimberley were not "over-stringent, considering the conditions the Minister of Justice, Mr. Pelsers, could impose."

In an interview, Mr. Mitchell pointed out that both Mr. Vorster, who as Minister of Justice, in 1963, sent Mr. Sobukwe to Robben Island, and Mr. Pelsers, had said that they had no one else in mind when promulgating the so-called "Sobukwe Clause".

The clause lapses every year on June 30 and has had to be renewed.

Mr. Mitchell said: "We presume it will now disappear from the statute book. It has done us a tremendous amount of damage overseas. We are glad the Minister has taken our advice. We said all along that Mr. Sobukwe could be contained normally, if it were necessary to contain him.

"The chief thing now is that he will be able to live a normal family life again. He will also be able to talk to people with his own interests and tastes.

"His inability to do this on Robben Island was one of my chief impressions when I visited him there, twice.

Mrs. Suzman commented yesterday: "Naturally I am very glad that the Minister has at last released him. But the restrictions on him at Kimberley seem very severe.

"For instance, it seems as if his employment opportunities will be severely limited. This is really a punishment without end. But at least he will be able to lead a normal family life."

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