

# One man holds law to ransom, says Mitchell

*ROH, 14/6/68*

IT WAS ASTONISHING that the Government was prepared to let one man hold the laws of the country to ransom, Mr. M. L. Mitchell (U.P., Durban North) said in the Assembly yesterday.

Mr. Mitchell was speaking in the committee stage of the General Law Amendment Bill on the clause which provides for the detention for a further 12 months of Robert Sobukwe.

He said the United Party did not think the extension was necessary and that the country's interests would be better served if the clause were not on the statute book.

With the powers it already had, it was surprising the Government should ask for a sixth time for the detention of one man who could be held or restricted under other laws.

In addition there was South Africa's magnificent Security Police. Furthermore, Sobukwe could be allowed to leave the country on an exit permit.

## MARTYR

The Minister was in danger of making a martyr of Sobukwe in the eyes of the Africans and others.

Replying, the Minister of Justice, Mr. P. C. Pelsler, said that for the very reasons which Mr. Mitchell had mentioned he, as Minister, had personally gone to see Sobukwe. Sobukwe's reply had been that he still held exactly the same opinion.

"What is that opinion?" asked a Member.

"I shall not say he is a 'communist,'" said Mr. Pelsler, but he is still of the opinion that he will incite people to commit the deeds of communism."

Mrs. H. Suzman (P.P., Houghton) said it had to be remembered that Sobukwe had been gaoled not for terrorism or sabotage, but for incitement against the pass laws.

The clause was approved by 96 votes to 34, Mrs. Suzman voting with the United Party, and Mr. W. M. Holland (Coloured's Rep., Outeniqua) voting with the Government. — Sapa.

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