

THE recent Nkomati Accord could create a wide range of opportunities for South African business, says Mr Buddy Hawton whose appointment as chief operating officer of the giant Rennies group was announced yesterday.

What was most important, however, was the implementation of the policies agreed to at Nkomati. Both Government and big business in South Africa needed to endeavour to implement policies which would be of benefit to both parties.

Interviewed in Johannesburg, Mr Hawton said he believed that private enterprise in South Africa had a price to pay for the maintenance of stability in the region.

"We can provide assistance and support to countries like Mozambique even if it may not be in our short term interests to do so. For example, from a shipping point of view, it may be more advantageous for a South African shipper to move all his cargo through Durban or Richards Bay rather than Maputo.

"But by opting for Maputo the local shipper will be helping Mozambique and at the same time contributing to the price that private enterprise must pay to ensure Southern African stability."

In his new position, 46-year-old Mr Hawton will be responsible for all the day to day operations of the Rennies group. For the past 10 years he has been in charge of the group's shipping, transportation, security and travel services.

Mr Hawton believes the two main areas open to South African entrepreneurs in Mozambique are tourism and shipping.

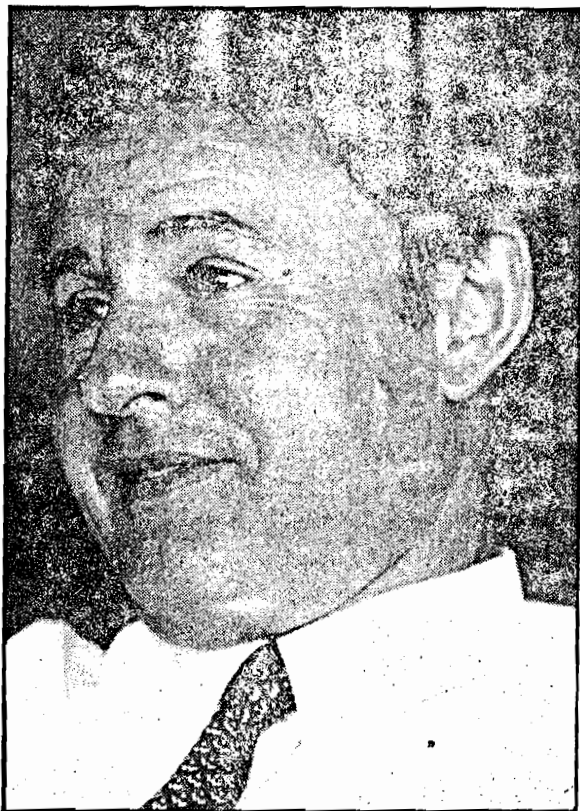
"Let's face it, Mozambique has many problems. Apart from terrorism and the general state of the place there is the wide-scale dereliction of equipment.

"To begin with, I think we can start moving small groups of tourists into the country and from a shipping point of view there is a great deal we can do to help refurbish the port at Maputo and then start moving small cargos through there."

Mr Hawton said the Rennies group had been operating in Mozambique since 1938 and currently employed about 120 people in Maputo and another 100 in Beira. As a consequence the organisation would like to capitalise on its position by helping to straighten out

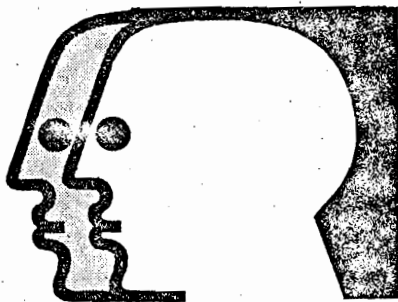
# A man with his eye on Maputo

RDM  
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Mr Buddy Hawton, Rennies' chief operating officer

## PROFILE



PETER BUNKELL

the port and start moving tourists through the country.

"We are very well equipped to assist in this regard and we have the infrastructure to handle increased business. What is more, we are prepared to put some money up front in the interests of getting the place back to normal and although there is a degree of philanthropic bias in what Rennies is prepared to do, we would — in the longer term — see ourselves as being able to capitalise on our initial investments."

Born and educated in Durban, Mr Hawton has been with Rennies for 27 years. "Those around me say I am a workaholic," he said. "One could, I suppose, describe me as a hands-on manager". There has been one important factor that has given rise to this.

"Over the years the division of Rennies that I have been responsible for has beaten all its competitors. One of the primary reasons for this has been the concern of our top management for customer problems.

"I think in our business —

particularly travel and shipping — customers like to know that they can get hold of a senior man who can implement action. They need someone at the top who can start hitting quite hard to get things done.

"Part of my management philosophy has always been to be accessible to customers. In this way you can avoid creating the impression that you are just another huge, monolithic and impersonal organisation. I believe you are only as good as you are perceived to be by the customer.

"Customer loyalty — particularly in the current competitive climate — is extremely important and if the customer believes you provide a good service he will be prepared to pay the costs you demand."

Responsible for Fidelity Guards, the security arm of the Rennies group, Mr Hawton is acutely aware of the poor image projected by the security industry. He says there is no question that the industry, in the past, has left a lot to be desired in the way it has handled its image, or lack of it.

"Quite frankly, in the past, it has been scruffy and not anywhere near as well disciplined as it should be."

Mr Hawton ascribes the security industry's problems to the fact a large number of the people who have become involved have done so with minimum investment and in an effort to capitalise in terms of short term gain.

"We have recognised these problems and are attempting to approach the matter in a different way. We want to become — indeed we have become — the biggest private security organisation in the country.

"It is our plan to expand in all areas of the security, business and provide a service that will enable us eventually to increase benefits for our employees and attract better quality people."

Married with two children, Mr Hawton is an amateur ornithologist and believes that big business in South Africa has a role to play in improving the lot of the common man.

"Our primary objective is to improve the welfare and benefits of our own employees but we also assist various welfare programmes in the country. One needs to establish a viable balance between supporting worthy causes and at the same time being able to give one's shareholders a worthwhile return."