

The Star

Johannesburg Wednesday June 13 1979

Johannesburg uses record electricity

The whole of South Africa felt the deep bite of winter last night, and on the Reef temperatures dropped to minus 8,2 deg C — the coldest in 33 years.

Not since July 28, 1946 when the temperature dropped to minus 7,4 deg C — has there been such a freeze on the Witwatersrand.

At Pretoria it was minus 1 deg C.

Between 9 am and 10 today, electricity consumption in Johannesburg reached an all-time peak.

The Chief Electrical Engineer, Mr Wessel Barnard, said consumption was 1 163 megawatts, the highest since June 14, 1978, when it reached 1 134 megawatts.

Two of the gas turbines bought by the city as emergency plants or for short-term peak, were brought into use today. Another two are still available for emergencies.

Natal fared best, escaping the worst brunt of the cold. There was snow on the high plateau round Kokstad, and Newcastle had the coldest temperature — minus 5 degrees C.

Drakensberg resorts were bitterly cold, but there was no snow.

In Johannesburg, however, ponds and fountains were frozen and many roads had dangerous icy surfaces.

Even at midday today, the miners' statue in Rissik Street was still partially covered with ice.

This morning, hundreds of Johannesburg motorists were stranded when cars broke down because of burst radiators and overheating.

The Automobile Association breakdown service received more than 100 calls.

There were at least five accidents in Empire Road.

Mr M G Ridley (32) of Muldersdrif, was treated at the Johannesburg General Hospital after his motorcycle skidded on ice outside the Helpmekaar Girls' High school.

Shortly before 6.30 am

The coldest in 33 years

Fountain freezes over

The coldest day in years froze over Oppenheimer Fountain Johannesburg. Elise I torius, one of many shivered on their way work today, stopped at leaping impala turned ice.

● Picture: Ruphin Coudyzer.

