



E.E. KENNEDY. *Waiting for the boom* (introduced by Maryna Fraser). South African Library reprint series 13. South African Library: Cape Town, 1985. 60 pp. Illus. No price. ISBN 0 86968 053 6.

This is a very welcome reprint giving the reader an interesting insight into the pioneering years of Johannesburg, as the town was not quite four years old when this book was written. The author was a London stockbroker who arrived in Johannesburg in the middle of June 1889 with the sole purpose of making a quick kill on the Stock Exchange when it experienced its next big boom. The market however crashed almost without warning, and towards the end of 1889 prices reached their lowest point. After a stay of nine months in Johannesburg, Kennedy left the town towards the end of March 1890 to return to London — incidentally, the next boom did not occur until 1895.

Inevitably the writer's narrative concentrates on his experiences on the Stock Exchange with the result that readers who are more interested in everyday life in old Johannesburg may be disappointed. At the same time, however, Kennedy provides interesting snippets about the dusty streets and dust storms, the cost of living, the crime rate and unsanitary conditions. In this regard Kennedy observed that Johannesburg was only a place to go to in order to make and lose money, but that in future it might be a town in which people would be willing to spend their days.

Furthermore, the fact that Kennedy was writing from the perspective of the Uitlanders' makes this publication quite valuable. According to him the most important grievances of the Uitlanders were the high cost of labour and expensive transportation, because the "wretched Dutch government" was reluctant to allow railway lines to be built on Transvaal territory. Kennedy also mentions the Uitlanders' demand for voting rights, although he does not emphasise this as being a major grievance.

Maryna Fraser's introduction provides a very useful supplement to Kennedy's work. This reprint of *Waiting for the boom* by the South African Library can be seen as a wise decision, because it is undoubtedly a piece of Africana.

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