

THE TIMES Monday, Feb. 17, 1975



Fire Destroys Nairobi School

Sheriff's and Menlo Park Fire District investigators are probing two arson fires which destroyed the Nairobi High School and damaged the nearby Nairobi Day School in East Palo Alto Sunday night and early today.

Battalion Chief Ronald Taylor estimated the loss to the high school building, 855 Runnymede St., at \$28,000. He said flames swept through the two-story building which had been converted from a residence for use as a school.

The loss to the day school, 805 Runnymede, which was fire bombed as firemen were cleaning up from the high school blaze, was estimated by Taylor at \$8,000.

The schools, operated as a private, non-profit educa-

tional alternative for blacks, were formed by Gertrude Wilks, a member of the East Palo Alto Municipal Council.

Firemen were summoned to the first fire at 10:51 p.m. They reported that the building was engulfed in flame as they reached the scene.

Deputy Sheriff Darrell Butler said firemen informed him that the front and side doors of the building were open and that two large plate glass windows were broken when they arrived.

Taylor reported that the fire started in the front office, and swept up to the second floor and through the ceiling to the roof of the building, which once was a four-bedroom home.

The battalion chief said

firemen were in the process of rolling up hose about 12:30 a.m. after putting out the fire when the second blaze erupted in the day school, located about 100 yards from the high school.

He reported that fire bombs fashioned from two soft drink bottles which had been filled with a flammable substance then stuffed with a rag to form a wick were tossed inside the day school and on the porch of the building.

Portions of the bottles were found at the scene and turned over to investigators.

Taylor said that the bomb which hit the porch started a fire which spread up the wall of the building and onto the roof. The fire starting from

the bomb thrown inside the building did comparatively little damage, igniting a carpet in several places as the flammable liquid splattered when the bottle hit and broke.

The fires are the latest in recently mounting difficulties for the schools. Mrs. Wilks reported only last week that unless a fund drive

was successful in raising \$37,000 by March 8, the schools would have to close.

The staff of nine teachers in the two schools have not been paid for the past two months because of financial difficulties.

Sheriff's Detective Sgt. Ron Radetich and Les Blum have been assigned to the arson case.

Cambodian Troops Suffer Setback

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — The Cambodian government's drive to reopen the Mekong River supply route from South Vietnam received a severe setback

American official said. "The Cambodians simply have to get the river open or they will lose the war in a few months."

The government suffered

Eritreans Flee