



No Houdini-like exit for Corpcapital executives

A FORTNIGHT ago, a beleaguered and now very svelte Corpcapital issued its interim results. There are no surprises — except that in their commentary, chairman Tom Wixley and director Benji Liebmann say the intention now is to delist and voluntarily wind up the company not later than July 9. This is intriguing.

Here is a company involved in a deluge of litigation from

which it looks rather as though it seeks to escape, Houdini-like, by disappearing down the proverbial tubes.

It will find this difficult. In a voluntary winding-up, all civil legal actions are suspended. Four weeks are allowed during which notice must be served of the intention to continue these.

And, in any event, liquidation does not absolve the directors from liability for their actions.

Corpcapital has asked the courts to oblige the trade and industry minister to release that long-awaited report of the inspectors into its activities inspired by the drama of its fight with founder and former nonexecutive director Nic Frangos. In turn, Frangos has asked the minister to reopen the investigation.

Meanwhile, Corpcapital is also involved in an argument

with Brian Puttergill. He was the owner of Rent-a-Sign and the Inter-Africa Group, which he sold to what was then Corpro in 1997 and which became the fulcrum of Corpcom, the listed outdoor advertising company. Puttergill is awaiting arbitration on claims which, he says, range between R75m and R240m.

He is furious because he agreed to a postponement of

the arbitration from July this year to November. Now he is concerned Corpcapital will not be able to pay what he believes will be awarded.

Just to cap it, Corpcom was sold later to Clear Channel Independent (for R468m).

Clear Channel is suing Corpcapital against a suretyship limited to R50m.

And there is still that inspectors' report.