

Mercury's powerhouse takes shape in a city sail loft

ROW after row of triple-stitched seams fall from the sailmaker's machine as the Mercury's mainsail takes shape in a Durban sail loft. The 30.84 sq m (332 sq ft) of snowy-white imported American cloth will push Natal's 13m (42ft) ocean racing yacht for 3 600 miles across the South Atlantic in her racing debut — the Cape to Rio race in January next year.

Mr. Bruce McCurrach (left), of Elvstrom Sails, Durban, said he had just managed to lay out the 13.82m (45ft) tall mainsail in his loft in Guntree Avenue, off Berea Road.

But for an even bigger sail — the lightweight genoa for a sail of 60.50 sq m (651 sq ft) he has had to hire the Frere Road Presbyterian Church Hall.

Mr. McCurrach is making six sails for Mercury's wardrobe. The rest will be made in England.

