

undated 1110.1

JOHANNESBURG JOINT COUNCIL OF EUROPEANS AND NATIVES.

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS BY RESIDENTS

in the

WESTERN NATIVE TOWNSHIP.

The following facts are alleged in a statement issued by residents of the Western Native Township:

I. ADMINISTRATION IN RESPECT OF RENTS.

- (a) Receipts issued for payment of rent are generally marked "on account", sometimes even when no balance is owing. In case of indebtedness the amount of balance owing is not recorded on the receipt. Where occupiers object that they are not in arrears of payment the production of a year's receipts is demanded in proof of their contention. Such production often supports the claim of the occupier.
- (b) Under Section 14 of the Regulations governing the administration of the Township, defaulters are brought before the magistrate, who notifies them of the date by which arrears of rent must be paid. On the day of the appearance in court, or on the following day, the house occupied by the defaulter is locked and admission refused to him and his family. (A case is quoted in which the City Council was successfully sued by a complainant under circumstances of this nature). At the same time the belongings of the occupier are removed to, and locked up in an empty house. When the amount owing has been paid the occupier concerned, and his family, are expelled from the Township, their goods being thrown into the street. In some such cases some articles are missing and others are damaged.
- (c) Seizure of goods for arrears of rent (Section 16 of Regulations).
- (1) Furniture seized and sold in cases of irregular payment or non-payment, of rent, is often of a value greatly in excess of the amount of indebtedness; but no account of such sale is rendered to the defaulter, nor is any part of the proceeds of such sale returned to him. (Cases are quoted in support of this allegation). Much of the furniture has been acquired on the hire-purchase system, and on the day of the sale most of it passes into the hands of second-hand dealers in Johannesburg.
- (2) Offer of part of the amount owing is refused by the office, and thereafter the goods of the defaulter are seized and sold.
- (d) Complaints are made that rents are excessive. The case of native scavengers living and working in the Township is instanced. These men receive £2.10.0 to £3. per month, and out of this have to pay rent to the City Council.

II. ADVISORY BOARD.

The status of the Advisory Board is said to be undefined and unsatisfactory, the result being that the Board does not possess the confidence of the people. It is suggested that unless arrangements are made whereby the Board may have direct access to the Native Affairs Department of the City Council by means of regular meetings with the Native Affairs Committee, no Board be elected after next year.

III. UNSYMPATHETIC ADMINISTRATION.

Constant complaints to the Superintendent and to the Municipal Manager of Native Affairs have been unproductive. A Women's petition addressed to the Mayor and the City Council through the Advisory Board and the Manager is alleged to have been suppressed.

Owing to the generally unsympathetic nature of the administration of the Township it is urged that the present office staff be replaced by native clerks.

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