

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Noise Sub-Committee held in the Board Room, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Second Floor, Block 1, Visagie Street Government Buildings, Pretoria, on Tuesday, 7th October, 1947 at 2.15 p.m.

Present:

Dr. A.J.A. Roux - Chairman (National Building Research Institute).
 Mr. P.H. Connell - Organising Secretary.
 Prof. A.L. Meiring - (Institute of S.A. Architects).
 Dr. R.E. Meaker - (Department of Health).
 Dr. J. Lochner - (National Physical Laboratory).

In Attendance:

Mr. J. Delpont.

1. Convening of Meeting:

Mr. Connell declared the meeting duly convened and introduced Dr. Roux as Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed all members and thanked them for their willingness to contribute to the important work on which the Sub-Committee was about to embark. As most of the members were Afrikaans-speaking he invited them to address the meeting in Afrikaans if they so desired.

2. Introductory Statement by Organising Secretary.

The Convenor said that for the present the function of the Committee would be limited to considerations affecting housing only, which included all types of dwelling such as the conventional house, the maisonette, flats and any type of building which human beings used for dwelling purposes. It was a well-known fact that all over the world there existed a movement to try to better the standards of housing accommodation and to improve the legislation which governed such standards, with the object of promoting progressively higher standards of accommodation, comfort and convenience. Such legislation as existed, however, was neither uniform nor consistent, and much of it was felt to be arbitrary and out of date.

In common with the rest of the world, we in South Africa had felt dissatisfaction with the type of housing environment in which the bulk of our population lives, both in town and country, and with much of the legislation governing the minimum standards permitted. As a result, therefore, of internal arrangements in the National Building Research Institute, followed by a request from the National Housing and Planning Commission to investigate and

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report on certain tentative standards of accommodation proposed by the Directorate of Housing for application to all housing schemes for which State loans were to be advanced, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research set up a Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation. This Committee generally spoken of as the "Main Committee", is a permanent sub-committee of the Building Research Advisory Committee. Its function is to direct and co-ordinate research into minimum standards of accommodation in dwellings and eventually to issue a series of recommendations, some of which may lead to new codes of practice and revised legislation. The convenor pointed out, however, that it had been ruled that the work of the Committee would be confined to conducting research and making recommendations, and that it would not undertake the drawing up of codes of legislation. The Main Committee, which meets under the Chairmanship of Mr. Norman Hanson, A.R.I.B.A., would have to consider the matter of minimum standards of housing accommodation in the widest sense; the work would not be limited to the consideration of minimum standards within the dwelling, but would cover the whole housing environment, and touch on many fundamental aspects of the housing problem. For this reason the Main Committee would be supported by nine working sub-committees, divided into three main groups, viz:-

- (a) Survey Sub-Committees (Nos. 1, 2 and 3).
- (b) Design Sub-Committees (Nos. 4 and 9).
- (c) Sub-Committees dealing with health and comfort factors.

The sub-committees were then described in detail and the scope of the work as a whole, as illustrated on the attached chart, was outlined. It was proposed to issue an interim report in June, 1948, which would deal chiefly with the Housing Commission's schedule of standards. Thereafter the work of the Committee would revert to a more fundamental consideration of the long-range problems involved in the study of accommodation standards for housing.

The work of this sub-committee, which fall under category (c) above was outlined in the Terms of Reference, to be discussed later. Briefly its task would be to make recommendations which would promote a better standard of house and neighbourhood design from the point of view of the noise factor.

Relation to S.A. Bureau of Standards.

It was pointed out that this sub-committee (No. 8), together with Nos. 5, 6 and 7, would be considered as joint sub-committees serving both the Building Regulations and Codes Sub-Committees of the S.A. Bureau of Standards and the Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

3. Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference.

Draft Terms of Reference were tabled, discussed and amended to read as follows:-

To/.....

"To examine the Standards of sound-insulation in existing forms of dwellings, and to make suggestions as to such changes in the design and construction of dwellings as the sub-committee may consider necessary or desirable, to reduce, if necessary, the noise level in dwellings to more comfortable standards".

4. (a) Methods of Work:

The Chairman advised that the general policy pursued by the other sub-committees dealing with similar problems was to report on all existing information, including research, and then to base any further work that may be required on such preliminary information. The Committee agreed to work according to this principle.

(b) Division of Work.

AGREED that

(i) Prof. Meiring reports on existing practice in building construction to reduce transmission of noise.

(ii) Dr. Lochner reports on the research which has been carried out on the insulation of buildings.

(iii) Dr. Roux gives a summary of the acoustical properties (Sound absorption coefficients and Sound reduction factors) of different building materials. In this connection it was pointed out that reverberation times for a specific room could be calculated if the absorption coefficients of the different building materials used were known.

(iv) Dr. Meaker would report on the work done in connection with the establishment of noise levels for comfort, although the committee was of opinion that very little actual work had been done in this connection. Average values of sound levels for different types of rooms, it was pointed out, would be of value.

(v) Mr. Connell investigate whether different planning techniques would have any appreciable effect on the transmission of noise from the outside to the inside of dwellings, and if so to frame a recommendation to the Estate Planning Sub-Committee to consider this factor in more detail.

5. General.

Professor Meiring reminded the sub-committee of the case where in multi-storey buildings containing flats etc., a different class of accommodation might exist on the ground floor. As this class of problem was typical in the central areas of all South African cities and often elsewhere, it was felt that this point should be covered in the sub-committee's report.

Two further points were mentioned as affecting the transmission of noise into buildings:

- (a) the design of opening windows so as to minimise the effects of outside noise.
- (b) the planning of internal courts and external setbacks to reduce noise as far as possible.

Professor Meiring and Mr. Connell agreed to work in close collaboration on points where their respective tasks overlap.

The next meeting to be held on Friday, 7th November, 1947, at 2.15 p.m.

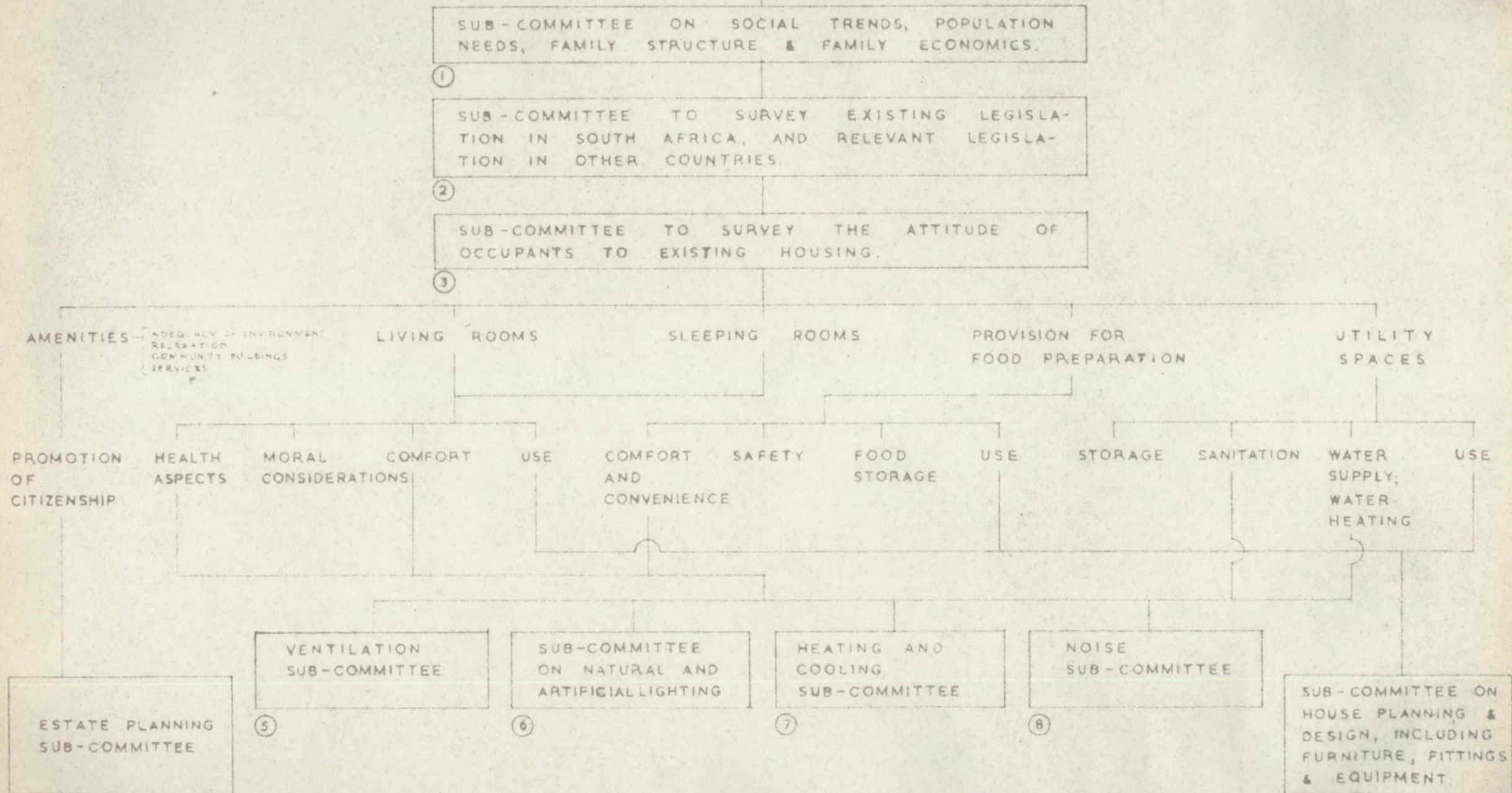
The meeting terminated at 3.35 p.m.

Confirmed

CHAIRMAN.

MCB.

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