

COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER MOVING NATIVES FROM WESTERN AREAS

Resolution Referred to Committee for Full Inquiry and Report

JOHANNESBURG City Council agreed unanimously yesterday that, in view of the recent riots in the Western Native townships, the General Purposes Committee should investigate and report on the implementation without further delay of the removal of all Natives from Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare.

Put forward in the first instance as a resolution by Mr. F. R. P. du Bruyn, an amendment that it should first be referred to the committee for investigation and report was moved by Mr. J. J. Page and adopted.

The amendment read: "In view of repeated rioting that has occurred lately in the Western Native Townships this council resolves that the following proposals should be referred to the General Purposes Committee for investigation and report:

(a) That, as the Government is prepared to offer assistance, the policy adopted by the council in October, 1944, that all Natives should be removed from Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare, should be implemented without further delay.

(b) That, as a first step towards implementing this policy and in order to prevent a further increase in the removal costs, no further plans for new buildings or alterations to existing buildings, except alterations necessary for health reasons, should be approved, or new licences granted in respect of the above-mentioned Native townships.

(c) That a curfew should be imposed for Natives.

"We want to deal with this matter outside party politics," Mr. De Bruyn said. "This is a very serious matter. In view of the fact that it has been the council's policy to move Natives from the Western areas, and in view of the fact that the Government has agreed to this now something should be done immediately.

Persecution Not

Intended

"It is not our intention to persecute the better type of Natives, who, we know, work hard, but it is the loafers and Native gangs at night that constitute the trouble.

"Europeans in these areas are living in a state of extreme tension because they do not know what will happen next. The people feel that they are sitting on a volcano that may erupt at any time."

Mr. P. J. Coetzee said that many meetings of residents had been held in the Western areas, and the seriousness of the position might not be fully understood. "We who are closely in touch with the residents in these areas realise the position only too well. I feel that it is the duty of this council to approach the Government for immediate action.

"Loafers Must Be Moved"

"If there is more trouble in these areas it will be difficult to restrain Europeans from taking a hand, as they in the past have been the section which has kept the peace. The loafers and agitators in this area must be moved out.

"The instigators of most of the trouble are the Basuto women who live by brewing beer and incite the young men.

"There is proof that secret societies have been formed among young Natives, and they have to prove themselves by stealing and robbing before they can become members. The streets are full of thousands of Natives who seem to have nowhere to go and no employment.

"The council must start with the removal of these loafers. It was never intended that the blacks should be neighbours of the whites. We who live a stone's throw from these areas are the people who will suffer if there is another disturbance—not the people who live in Houghton, Jeppe and such suburbs.

"It is not our idea to treat the Natives badly. We feel that the Natives should be allowed to live in their own areas, and to build their own

homes in those areas. While Europeans have to build houses for Natives at a cost of between £700 and £800 we will never solve the Native housing problem."

Mr. A. Bloch said that a number of years ago the City Council had decided to remove the Natives from the Western areas, but what had happened nobody knew. The necessity for their removal had now been proved.

"Nothing Done"

"I have brought this matter before the council on many occasions," he said, "but it always had some feeble excuse for not taking action. Mayors of big cities in America, including Mr. La Guardia, have had the fullest assistance from their citizens and councils in clearing up gangsters.

The Mayor, Mr. J. Mincer: They had the money:

Mr. Bloch: I say that any move is worth it. We are in danger here. If a man wants

to break into a house he stops at nothing. He hits you with an axe or shoots you.

"I do not want to see anyone persecuted, but these gangsters have got to be put in their place because our wives and children are in danger. The removal of the Natives should have taken place years ago, and we would not have had gangsterism growing up as we have to-day. Whatever we may spend on it it will be worth it."

Amendment

Moved

"I quite realise that this is a very burning question to-day," Mr. J. J. Page said. "I would also like to express my appreciation of the remarks made from the other side of the co-operation we are endeavouring to give in this matter."

He moved the amendment that the General Purposes Committee should investigate and report.

"I have moved this amendment for a very definite and specific purpose," Mr. Page said. "I want to say that my friends of the Nationalist Party agree and know that long before the riots actually took place the General Purposes Committee, in co-operation with other committees, had under consideration this item but, in view of the fact that the figures have considerably changed both in the numbers of the people in that area and the cost of removal, it would be stupid of us to go to the Government immediately on these figures, which are out of date.

"They were drawn up in 1943-44. There has been a considerable alteration in the population figures and other factors. In going to the Government we must be up to date.

"Facts First"

"In view of the statement made by the Minister in offering to assist in this regard only yesterday morning certain councillors and the Town Clerk met the Minister in Cape Town unofficially and discussed the matter. It was agreed that the policy suggested by us was the right one—that we should get the latest facts and figures first.

"It is a very big movement indeed, and involves an enormous amount of money and so many technical points have to be co-ordinated. By the time we do meet the Minister he will be able to have the full facts," Mr. Page said.

"This is a very vital question to the whole of South Africa. It is a question in which there must be no party feelings, but the full co-operation of all Europeans and the non-European population. We must work in harmony if we are to alter this unfortunate position."

Decision to Expropriate the Natives from the Western Areas

FOR the third time in some ten years a decision has been taken to expropriate the Native peoples living in Sophiatown and its adjacent areas.

The fact that such an expropriation will take 20 years and cost £10,000,000 (if Mr. Venables is correct in his statement) has not prevented the City Council from agreeing unanimously to go forward with this plan without delay. As a first step, all building in this area is to cease. There are indications that more drastic measures are contemplated for cleaning up the district. A curfew is to be imposed.

Having lived for over six years in the heart of Sophiatown, perhaps I may be permitted to express an opinion on this very vital and far-reaching decision. I should like to do so from the point of view, not of passion and prejudice (this has been quite adequately done already!) but of principle.

The Real Reason

THE chief reason given for the desirability of expropriating the inhabitants of the Native western area is the recent serious rioting at Newclare, and the consequent danger to those living in adjacent European areas. Presumably the Riots Commission will very soon report on the causes of these outbreaks. But it needs no such report to show that one of the root causes of rioting is the appalling condition of Native housing in Johannesburg.

Now that a crisis has come, it is apparently easy to contemplate spending £10,000,000 to meet that crisis—for the sake of the Europeans living in Melville and Newlands. It was never considered possible to spend even £1,000,000 on improving the existing townships of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare.

Let us not deceive ourselves about this. It is not because the City Council really wants the Native to be better off that this step of expropriation is now decided upon: it is simply to meet the demands of those European ratepayers who, be it remembered, have encroached on an existing Native area and now object to its proximity.

It might well be that, if a township sufficiently close to Johannesburg were erected, the people of the western areas would be attracted to it, and would move of their own free will. No

one likes to be an object of hatred to his next-door neighbour.

But the point I am making is this: It is morally wrong to use as an excuse for the uprooting of people from their homes a situation such as the Newclare riots have created. The cause of these riots—whatever else it may have been—is certainly not the fact that Sophiatown and Newclare happen to be next door to Westdene and Newlands, and it is dishonest to pretend that it is.

Once again we are being given evidence of the pagan neutrality of our European citizens. I have chosen these words carefully. It is of the essence of paganism to regard personality lightly: to treat people, families and homes not as the sacred things they are, but as part of an abstraction which we here call "The Native Problem." In the interests of solving this abstraction it does not matter, apparently, whether people are uprooted or homes destroyed. Instead of—as should have been the case—devoting every available strength and skill and surplus to the improvement of existing homes over the past 10 years we wait till the crisis comes and then plan vigorously for demolition.

Wanton Dishonesty

WE are constantly told that white civilisation is in danger. So it is. But not from the Native. It is in danger because its moral and spiritual content is almost gone. It is just not worth preserving any more: for the value of "white" civilisation does not lie in its "whiteness" but in its ethical and moral force.

The decision of the City Council is likely to create far more problems than it solves—and these not purely financial—because it has immediately increased the sense of bewilderment, frustration and uncertainty which are at the bottom of all such social upheavals as the riots.

Nothing whatever can be done immediately to provide housing even for the existing 58,000 homeless Native citizens of Johannesburg: at least so it seems. It is a lack of realism amounting again to dishonesty to make public announcements of decisions which cannot conceivably be implemented. And it is just such announcements which add fuel to

Star 4-3-50
by
the Rev. Father Trevor
Huddleston, C.R.

the flames of resentment and bitterness on both sides of the colour bar.

But, above all else, there is a wanton and deliberate dishonesty in this matter, which calls for the stronger protest from anyone who professes any principles at all.

The Natives living in Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare are being described in the most evil terms: as a menace to the peace of this city and as a people who have not the right to live next door to the white race. This is nothing new, of course. But it is none the less a hideous injustice.

I have known and loved these people for six years. I have been in and out of their homes day after day. I have seen their sorrows and shared them to the best of my ability. And I say, without hesitation, that they are glorious people: patient, hard-working, honest and deeply religious. Their virtues are on the heroic level, because merely to live in such an environment needs heroism. The average European cannot hold a candle to most of these men, women and children of Sophiatown for sheer depth of character. If the poison of race-hatred is now working in their veins (as I fear it is) we have none to blame but ourselves.

Day of Reckoning

ULTIMATELY, I am convinced, we shall reap what we have sown.

Our apathy to their hunger and homelessness; our presumptuous superiority, abusing their patience and courtesy; our blind acceptance of their labour as a right which is ours for the taking; in a word, our refusal to respect them as persons—all this will in the end bring upon us the judgment of God.

And we shall not escape that judgment by specious arguments about the desirability of "separate residential areas."

It is well to remember that, even after this life, there will be "separate residential areas" and "a great gulf fixed." But there it will no longer depend on the colour of the man's skin.

See 14.3.51

Clearance scheme will mean moving 18,000 families

New homes for residents of western areas expected to cost £5,600,000

TO clear Johannesburg's western Native areas accommodation will have to be found for about 18,000 families (16,154 Native and the remainder Coloured, Indian and Chinese) at a total rebuilding cost of about £5,600,000.

The results of the seven-month-long survey of the western areas—described in the City Hall to-day as "one of the mightiest jobs undertaken by the City Council"—have now been sent to the Government.

One room to a family in most cases

Some of the facts revealed in the western areas survey are:

Of the total Native population, 98 per cent. of all employed heads of families were found to be working in Johannesburg;

More than half of all the Native families were occupying one room to one family;

Eight in 10 families are tenants and about one-sixth of the families are sub-tenants.

MONTHLY EARNINGS

One quarter of all Native families earn less than £10 a month and six in 10 families less than £15 a month.

The first child born in a normal mother-father relationship has a 50-50 chance of living under overcrowded conditions. Subsequent children have one chance in nine.

In Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare almost half of all families are based on a Native customary union, and one-sixth on a Christian marriage. These proportions are almost reversed in Western Native Township and there seems to be a positive relationship between the number of Christian Churches and the number of Christian marriages in each township.

More than half of all families have sleeping arrangements conducive to immorality.

INDIANS' INCOMES

Nearly half of the Indian families have incomes less than £25 a month. Of the Chinese one in 10 have incomes below £15 a month and four in 10 incomes below £25.

The survey gives the total municipal valuation of 3,381 privately owned stands (land and buildings), at £2,840,325 and the probable expropriation value at £4,260,487, and estimates that, if the entire area is cleared, £1,800,000 will be lost because many of the buildings must be demolished.

Johannesburg has been talking about moving non-Europeans from the Western Areas (Sophiatown and Martindale, Newclare and Western Native Township) since 1937. The riots in these areas in 1949-50 underlined the need for early measures, and the survey was decided on after a conference with the Government.

SURVEY'S FINDINGS

The survey reveals that moving crowded Native families only would involve moving considerably more than half the population, which totals more than 66,000 people.

To move families from major slum structures needing demolition, just under half the Native population would have to be provided for. To move tenants and sub-tenants and leave only owners in the area would mean moving virtually the entire population with the exception of Western Native Township.

More than half the families in the areas are overcrowded in shared rooms and buildings that have been condemned.

RESIDENTS' FEARS

Most of the families interviewed were keen to move to more spacious quarters, but all, without exception, expressed fear that any move would mean that their travelling time and costs would be greater.

Incomes were generally low and any increases in spending would seriously affect the family budget.

To move the Coloured people would require two new townships—one sub-economic of about 804 houses and the other economic of about 471 homes. Indians (most of whom now live in their shop premises) would need 234 sub-economic and 209 economic houses; and the relatively small Chinese population would need 63 sub-economic and 92 economic homes.

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STATE PLANS TO REMOVE CITY "BLACK SPOTS"

**£5,000,000 to be Spent on
Buffer Areas and New
Native Townships**

SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION

CAPE TOWN, Friday.

SENATOR H. F. VERWOERD, Minister of Native Affairs, said in the House of Assembly to-day that the Government had decided that £5,000,000 should be set aside to begin the removal of the "black spots" in the western areas of Johannesburg, which included Sophiatown, Martindale, Newclare and Vrededorp.

To make certain that the process would be begun this year the sum of £500,000 had been set aside in the Estimates. It would be distributed as loans to the Municipality of Johannesburg for two purposes:

Firstly, the purchase of ground to provide a buffer area, and

Secondly, the establishment of an alternative housing area for the Natives.

It was essential that there should be the closest co-operation with the Municipality of Johannesburg, and he would have consultations with the municipality to work out the details.

The removal of the "black spots," if it were done in one process, would cost in the neighbourhood of £18,000,000. But it could be undertaken in two phases, the first of which would generally improve the present position and allow for the assistance of private capital.

In place of the immediate buying up of these areas, there should be the purchase of a wide buffer area around the territory concerned. This could be turned into an industrial area.

He was convinced that was a practical proposition.

"It will be seen that we are dealing with an undertaking of the greatest importance, not only to Johannesburg, but also to every other city in South Africa which has to settle the problem of black spots," Dr. Verwoerd said.

Basis for Other

Schemes

If the scheme were successful it would be the basis on which other places could be similarly dealt with.

If local authorities, with the financial assistance of the Government, could secure such buffer areas for the establishment of light industries, then private industrialists could advance the scheme with their own funds.

The public of Johannesburg would be grateful for the Government's initiative on this problem.

R.D. 17.
7-4-51

COUNCIL HASN'T MONEY TO SPEND ON PLAN TO REMOVE 'BLACK SPOTS'

—Finance Chairman

Loan of £18,000,000 Would Increase Rates "Substantially"

THE City Council of Johannesburg has no money to spend on the Government plan to eliminate the city's "black spots".

"I am not prepared to borrow money that is going to saddle the ratepayers with any more increases in rates. If the Government wants to make this move it can get on with the job—and provide the money," Mr. G. B. Gordon, chairman of the Finance Committee of Johannesburg City Council told the "Rand Daily Mail" in an interview yesterday.

"We are not in a position to borrow any more money. Even with our present capital expenditure plan we will have the utmost difficulty in keeping the rates at their present level.

"If we have to borrow a large sum to make up the £18,000,000 required, it would mean a substantial increase in the rates.

"Before the council can make any move in this matter there must be a very clear understanding about who will be responsible for financing the scheme: we cannot afford it.

"As it is, 40,000 families have to be housed and re-housed, and extending sub-economic housing facilities is out of the question. We cannot even keep pace with the growth of the present population, let alone new arrivals and the movement of so many people.

Annual Loss

"The council is already involved in an annual loss of £274,000, and we have claims for wage increases pending. The capital programme for the next five years makes no provision whatever for this proposed scheme."

Mr. Gordon said that apart from the financial difficulty the municipality would be unable to find labour at present for such a project.

If a large number of people were moved from the "black spots," where were they to be put? The council had not enough ground to accommodate them.

Transport to the western areas was already difficult enough. The railways were unable to provide adequate transport, and there were no immediate prospects of the rolling stock position improving.

Road transport was already making the Potchefstroom road dangerous, and the council had been compelled to spend £40,000 for a new road to deal with the existing traffic.

"It was pointed out to the Government in 1947, at a conference in Cape Town that plans to provide more houses in the vicinity of Orlando, Orlando West and Moroka depended on the railways, who would have to extend existing services.

the money, I am dead against it," Mr. Gordon said.

Mr. I. E. B. Attwell, Deputy-Mayor of Johannesburg and former chairman of the non-European Affairs Committee of the City Council said the actual removal of the "black spots" was at present almost an impossible task.

"Johannesburg is already short of accommodation for 57,000 of its Native population. There are probably about 100,000 at Martindale, Newclare and Sophiatown, and to remove them to other areas would not help our present housing difficulties. It would be a gigantic task, requiring expenditure of at least £20,000,000, and would take up time which could be used in providing additional housing for the 57,000 Natives in urgent need of it," he said.

Mr. Attwell explained that the City Council could not formulate its own plans for action until it knew what the Government intended doing over the "black spots."

"My opinion is that the western areas Native townships should be left where they are and a light industrial belt constructed around them.

"I suggested this to the former Minister of Native Affairs, pointing out that it would be more economical to move the comparatively small White population from that area and leave the Natives there.

Mr. Attwell said that apart from housing, the other important factor in any such scheme was transport.

"The services have not been extended, and the position has gone from bad to worse.

"It is high time something was done to reduce the number of Natives housed in these areas, but to move entire neighbourhoods is a tremendous task and, unless the Government is going to provide

BUFFER PLAN: This map shows the City Council's plan to eliminate black spots and to create buffer strips between European and non-European areas in the western suburbs of the city. The plan was submitted some time ago and Johannesburg City Councillors believe that Dr. Verwoerd may be basing his £18,000,000 scheme on it. The dotted area, the Western Native Township, Coronationville and Newclare, was set aside as a Coloured area. It was planned to move the Natives from Sophiatown, convert it to a European area, and make Martindale an industrial area or buffer between the two. Claremont, on the council's plan, was to be a European area, with a buffer on its eastern boundary to separate it from Newclare.

GROWING SCEPTICISM OVER "BLACK SPOTS" PLAN FOR CITY

ESTATE agents, business men and many members of Johannesburg City Council believe that the Government will never be able to overcome the difficulties involved in its scheme to remove the "black spots" in European areas.

Scepticism has been growing in the last few days as repeated questions about the financial side, transport, labour and housing problems go unanswered.

Although most City Councillors are prepared to co-operate with Dr. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, in getting down to details of the plan, they do not believe that he will be able to "pull something out of the hat" and suddenly overcome the difficulties that have been facing the council ever since the scheme was envisaged.

As the rough plan stands now, Sophiatown will be cleared and

the Western Native Township, Coronationville and Newclare will be made Coloured areas.

Sophiatown and Claremont will be European areas, and Martindale and a portion of the eastern boundary of Claremont will be turned into light industrial areas, to act as a "buffer" between the European and non-European areas.

But to-day 40,000 families in Johannesburg have to be housed and re-housed, and the municipality is not in a position to extend sub-economic housing facilities.

On the city's housing difficulties the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Johannesburg City Council, Mr. G. B. Gordon, said in his budget speech in June, 1949:

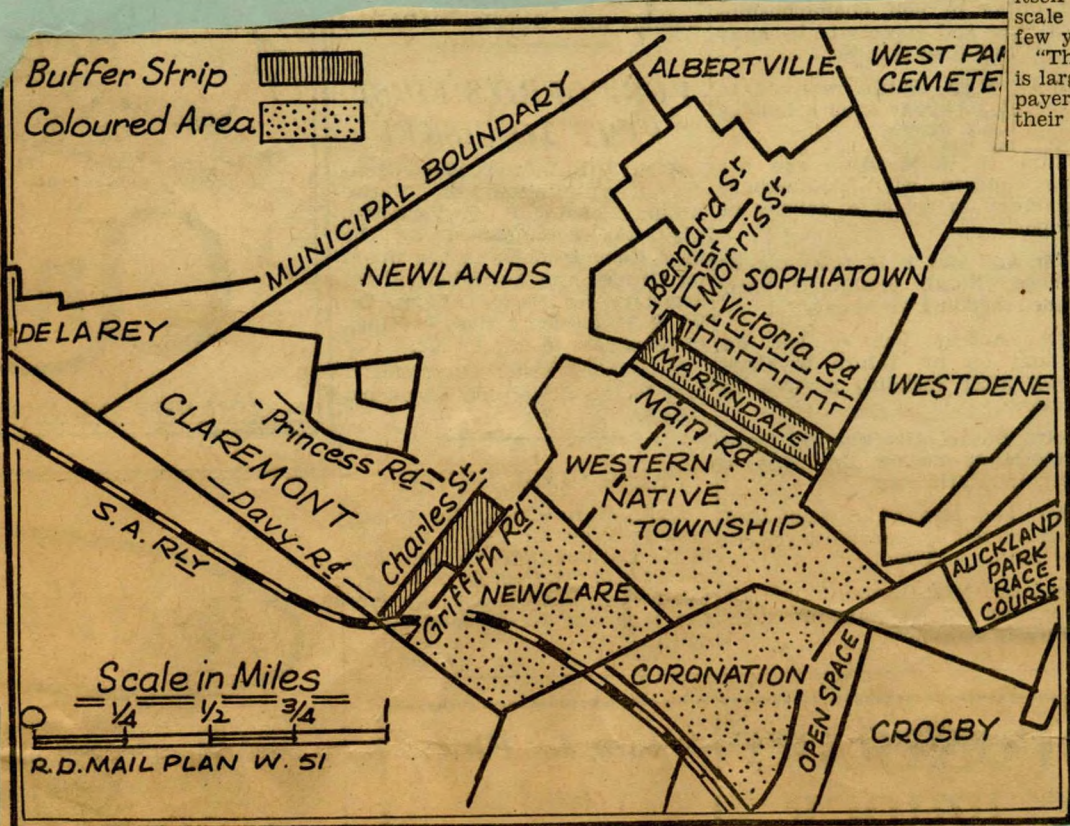
"Expenditure on the upkeep and administration of European housing schemes is estimated at £192,789, and on Coloured housing £75,925. Income from rentals and Union Government subsidies will amount to £187,351, leaving a shortfall of £81,363 for 1949-50 to be transferred to the rate fund.

"It is perfectly clear that the ratepayers of the city cannot be expected to continue meeting such losses, much less to enter into fresh commitments in this direction.

"Even the Government finds itself unable to continue on the scale it has done for the past few years.

"This matter, like many others, is largely in the hands of the ratepayers of the city, acting through their elected representatives."

R.D.M.,
10-4-51



Early start to be made on western areas "buffers"

Minister proposes £5,000,000 loan to clear black spots

DETAILS of the Government's scheme to remove non-Europeans from Johannesburg's western areas are revealed to-day in a letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the City Council.

The Minister of Native Affairs' three main proposals are: £5,000,000 will be loaned to Johannesburg in the next few years to remove non-Europeans from the Sophiatown-Martindale, Newclare and Vrededorp areas;

Some of the money will be loaned each year at 3½ per cent. a year so that land for buffer strips can be bought or expropriated;

The balance each year will be loaned at ½ per cent. "on condition that it is used only to build houses additional to the Council's ordinary programme, the houses to be built in sufficient numbers to house only those Natives displaced under this scheme."

Councillor wants to cut red tape

"I will suggest that the Government appoint an independent commission of business-like people to handle the whole Western Areas removal scheme," Mr. J. J. Page, chairman of the General Purposes (Western Areas) sub-committee, said in an interview to-day.

"If possible this scheme should be divorced from all the red tape and financial regulations now existing between local authorities and the State, and should be treated on entirely new lines.

"I am sure the City Council will be happy to provide all the technical advice and help it can."

PROBLEMS

The most important of the initial problems to be solved would be the location of the new site for rehousing, because on that would depend whether the scheme would get the wholehearted co-operation of the people to be moved.

Transport to that site was also of paramount importance, and heavy spending on health services, including drainage and sewage, could be avoided if the site was located as near as possible to existing main sewers.

NEW BUILDING

"The proposals to finance the rehousing scheme have merit provided everything is done on the strictest business-like line without creating additional financial burdens. All the new building should be done by non-Europeans with the help of trained builders."

The Minister's proposals will be put before a special joint meeting of the Special Land and Development, and Western Areas committees to-morrow afternoon.

The Minister's proposals, says the letter, should be undertaken in two stages; first the Council should remove non-Europeans from a broad buffer strip along the boundary of each area where it adjoins an occupied European residential area, "these strips to be left either as open buffers or to be developed immediately as industrial buffer zones."

TRUST ACCOUNT

Thereafter the Council must ensure the further removal of the non-Europeans from within each "buffered-off" area "either by continuing the process in the first stage, or by European individuals or interests buying the sites in the areas for approved purposes."

The letter adds that as the land bought or expropriated for buffer strips will subsequently be resold, a scheme will be considered for amounts accruing from the resales, for example for industrial purposes, to be placed in a trust account, so that the same funds and any profits may be used repeatedly for further purchases.

In order to start the first stage of the scheme, £500,000 is being provided in the budget for the current financial year.

CO-OPERATION

The letter adds: "It is realised that the City Council will need to undertake the role of active partner, while the Government co-operates by providing the funds. The Government will also help by being represented on a supervisory and co-ordinating body which, with representatives of the City Council, should be set up with a view to fullest co-operation in achieving rapid results and gaining experience which may lead to tackling other similar problems both in Johannesburg and elsewhere."

The Minister expresses great interest in the municipality's survey of the western areas and asks whether city councillors and officials will meet him soon in Cape Town so that the scheme may be speeded up and co-ordinated with the facts revealed by the survey.

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Council deputation to see Minister on W. Areas plan

“Bare minimum” cost likely to be £15,000,000

A CITY COUNCIL deputation, consisting of Mr. J. J. Page, Mr. G. B. Gordon and Mr. L. V. Hurd, will leave for Cape Town on Friday to discuss the Western Areas scheme (which involves moving about 18,000 non-European families) with the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Verwoerd.

A special meeting of the Western Areas Sub-Committee was held at noon to-day to discuss “tentative policy.” The sub-committee was told that a master plan and its financial implications could be investigated only after general principles had been agreed on by the Government and the Council.

The main fact to be put before the Minister is that the bare minimum capital cost of the scheme is likely to be £15,000,000—£6,000,000 for housing, £5,000,000 for compensation and £4,000,000 for development services.

HOUSING BACKLOG

At the same time Johannesburg has a backlog of 31,000 homes needed for Native families (apart from 18,530 in the Western Areas); needs a further 7,750 houses for Native families in the peri-urban area; and should urgently house about 2,000 Coloured and 1,500 Indian families, of whom only a few live in the Western Areas.

The memorandum before the sub-committee to-day says that it is against this background that the practicability of the Western Areas scheme should be judged.

“With only 55,000 ratepayers, the Council finds it difficult, if not impossible, to view with equanimity additional taxation for non-European housing.”

The memorandum says that one of the obstacles now hampering the progress of non-European housing is that Johannesburg estimates to lose £234,000 in the current year on existing Native housing schemes and the National Housing and Planning Commission refuses to finance sewerage, water and access roads from housing loans.

If Natives are to be attracted to schemes alternative to the Western Areas they will want all essential amenities. Adequate rail transport at reasonable fares will have to accompany the development of the new areas.

VAST SCHEME

The memorandum suggests that the scheme is so vast, and involves planning on so large a scale, that it will be necessary to appoint a staff of technical, legal and administrative officials to work on the scheme full-time over a long period.

Furthermore, the claims for housing of many non-Europeans who live outside the Western Areas should not be overlooked.

These are some of the general principles that will be discussed with the Minister.

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