

## CITY HOUSING SCHEME FOR NATIVES

### COMMITTEE AGREE TO APPLY FOR £704,000 LOAN

The Finance Committee of the City Council yesterday agreed to a recommendation from the Special Housing Committee to apply for a loan of about £704,000 from the National Housing and Planning Commission for the Vukuzenzele economic Native housing scheme, north of Moroka.

The scheme provides 4,640 economic Native homes in three sections—1,348 homes to be built by the Natives themselves on concrete foundations to be laid by Council contractors; 1,787 Council-built austerity homes to be let on monthly tenancies; and 1,505 stands to be made available to the Chamber of Commerce for experiments on self-help lines.

The whole is regarded as a pilot scheme to provide immediate housing for Natives.

To-morrow the Johannesburg Citizens' Native Housing Committee (the Chamber of Commerce Committee) which originally suggested that 15,000 Natives should be allowed to build their own homes, will discuss the implications of the Council's pilot scheme and have invited to the meeting Mr. M. E. Bothner, chairman of the Special Housing Committee.

#### JOINT REPORT

The citizens' committee will have before it a joint report on the Vukuzenzele pilot scheme from five municipal officials—the Town Clerk, City Treasurer, City Engineer, Medical Officer of Health and the acting manager of the Non-European Affairs Department.

The officials point out that a vital factor in the selection of Vukuzenzele (which means self-help) was the probable availability of rail transport fairly soon.

They estimate that in the first section of the scheme (1,348 stands earmarked for development as a 20-year leasehold scheme) the concrete foundations to be provided by the Council will cost from £24 to £28 each, depending on the size of the house. The sole financial responsibility of the Council here will be the provision of the land, plus essential public services and the cost of foundations.

In the second section (1,787 stands earmarked for an austerity building contract, the houses to be let on the usual monthly tenancy) it is estimated that a three-roomed house in cast concrete will cost £130.

In the Chamber of Commerce section the sole financial responsibility of the Council will be to provide land and essential services, for which a monthly charge of 22s. 3d. per stand will be levied.

The officials recommend that an agreement be reached with the Chamber of Commerce on the terms and conditions under which the Chamber is prepared to take over this area, before the scheme is established.

The whole scheme is based on the premises that the entire project shall be economic; and that a greater degree of density of population (the whole area is 440 acres) will be accepted than has hitherto been favoured by the officials, but that both the increased density and reduced standards should be regarded in the light of an experiment only, and not as a precedent binding the Council in any way in the planning of future housing schemes.

## **CITY COMMITTEES ADVISE:**

# **£704,000 LOAN FOR NATIVE HOUSING**

**T**HE Finance Committee of Johannesburg City Council agreed yesterday to a recommendation from the Special Housing Committee to apply for a loan of about £704,000 from the National Housing and Planning Commission for the Vukuzenzele economic Native housing scheme.

Another approved recommendation was to send a deputation to the Commission and the Union Department of Health to ask for the allocation of the loan and for a subsidy for the cost of permissive—as distinct from obligatory—medical services at Vukuzenzele.

The scheme is divided into three parts, providing first for the erection by Natives under supervision of their own houses on 1,348 stands on which council contractors will lay concrete foundations.

Secondly, 1,787 council-built "austerity" houses will be let on monthly tenancies, provision will be made for the development of 1,505 stands by the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, which will guarantee payment of the stand rents to the council.

### **Conductors' Pay**

In view of added responsibilities on the first and second conductors of the Johannesburg City Orchestra on the retirement of the present Director of Music, Mr. John Connell, their salaries will be increased by £250 and £150 respectively.

The Finance Committee agreed yesterday to a recommendation to that effect from the Art and Culture Committee.

### **Market Dues**

Increases in market dues and in rentals for shops, stalls and table spaces at Newtown Market were also agreed to yesterday by the Finance Committee.

The committee adopted recommendations from the Parks and Estates Committee that the dues should be increased from 3d. to 4d. for every 10s. worth of produce sold, and that rentals should be increased by between £1 and £4 10s. according to the footage occupied.

The Parks and Estates Committee reported that administration costs were likely to exceed revenue at the market during the current year and that, although the municipality did not look for a large profit from the market, it was not prepared to run it at a loss.

## **CEILING WAGE CLAUSE NOT WANTED**

### **NON-EUROPEAN HOUSE SCHEME LOANS**

The Johannesburg City Council is anxious that the National Housing and Planning Commission should not specify a maximum ceiling wage when assessing loans for local authorities for non-European sub-economic housing.

The Municipal Association of the Transvaal is to be asked at its executive meeting in the city on Saturday, July 29, to support Johannesburg in this matter.

At a recent meeting of the Association of Administrators of Non-European Affairs it was reported that the National Housing and Planning Commission refused a claim from one of the Reef towns on a loan for sub-economic housing unless assurance could be given that these houses were all occupied by Natives earning less than £25 a month.

#### **ILLOGICAL**

Johannesburg's Non-European Affairs Committee points out that most local authorities on the Reef have not yet provided economic housing although many, including Johannesburg, have agreed to do so.

"In discussing this problem members felt that it was illogical to lay down an arbitrary figure to determine whether or not an individual should occupy sub-economic housing," says a report of the Non-European Affairs Committee to the Municipal Association.

"The association felt strongly that a formula should be framed providing for the size of family and number of dependants, in relation to the breadwinner's wages."

#### **SURVEYS NEEDED**

The committee points out that acceptance of the present dictum of the National Housing and Planning Commission would make it necessary to have detailed surveys in every location at regular intervals to determine the earnings of the tenants. This would involve considerable staff and additional cost.

Finally it was felt that pending the provision of alternative economic accommodation, it would be a hardship to require Natives who had improved their economic circumstances to move out of a location on the sole ground that their position had improved.

## READERS' VIEWS

**Proposals for Financing  
Native Housing Plan***To the Editor of The Star*

SIR.—Your leading article of Monday on Native housing is a valuable contribution toward crystallising the issues; but I must emphasise that neither the Chamber of Commerce nor my committee has at any time undertaken a scheme to build either 1,500 or 15,000 houses. Our function has been to establish whether economic housing, on the principles we have outlined, is possible.

The experimental houses built at Pimville and at Ruargh Township, costing £100 or less, seem to indicate that it is; and the Council's blueprint for 4,500 houses on Vukuzenzele is evidence of at least its aroused interest.

To that extent we have fulfilled our function and as you point out there now remains to be settled the all important question of finance.

You are on sound ground in requiring that the overriding principles should be settled in regard to the whole larger scheme for 15,000 houses, and only then applied to the pilot scheme.

Otherwise, there is a serious risk of the larger scheme being whittled down to an insignificant number of houses.

What then are the financial implications on the ultimate scheme?

Based on the Vukuzenzele experiment, a capital cost for land and services on 15,000 houses of some £1,500,000, which the Council hopes to obtain from the National Housing Commission at  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. and an additional £1,500,000 for houses at £100 each.

This latter £1,500,000 is to be loaned to the owner-builder in the shape of materials to the maximum value of £100, repayable over 12 years at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest.

**Total Repayment**

The net result will be a total repayment basis of about 40s. per month for (say) 12 years, and thereafter 20s. per month to cover what may roughly be called rates and services.

When my committee claims that this second £1,500,000 should be loaned to the Natives by the people of Johannesburg as a whole, it believes that not only is the claim logical, but that it is expressing the generally held view of the people themselves; and to us, the persistent refusal of the Council either to concede or contest the point, is sheer obstructionism.

Meanwhile, the Council's attempt to have my committee or the Chamber of Commerce accept the responsibility is facetious, for there appears no reason why a particular section of the community should bear the whole burden.

Since we are not a financial institution we have no power to float a loan.

The proper course is obvious. At the right time the Council will be required to float a special Native housing loan for £1,500,000 at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., repayable over 12 years. Since in practice the full amount will only be required over a period of possibly two years, that fact could be taken into consideration.

Collectively, Johannesburg will subscribe to it, and commerce and industry will readily carry their full share of the burden.

**Demonstration  
House**

Sir.—If Mr. L. Leveson has been "deeply interested for years past" in Native housing, surely it would have been better if he had attended the demonstration rather than rely on reports of eyewitnesses.

Does it really matter who built the house?

Mr. Harvey pointed out at the commencement that it was not a competition or speed test, it was only a demonstration by various contractors to show what could be done by the Natives under European supervision.

The fact that Europeans were there was not an infringement of any kind. The fact is that the process, like many others, shows a speedy and economic means of providing Natives with badly-needed homes. Ask Dr. Donnelly!

After all, the home in question can be provided for £100—and that is the vital question, the only one that affects the issue.

Whether it is built by Natives or with a little help from the European supervisors (at no extra cost) is beside the point.

ALSO EYEWITNESS.

## Utility Company Suggested for Native Housing Scheme

To the Editor of The Star

SIR.—The publication of my letter on Native housing has enabled me to discover that there are a number of reliable concerns who are able at a cost of £100 to produce the material reasonably sufficient to build a three-roomed house; further, that at any rate in some cases the material is so constructed that the house can be completed by unskilled labour.

I was not at all surprised that the ball which was being tossed so lightheartedly from the City Council to "Commerce" finally went irretrievably out of bounds.

It occurred to me, as an elementary proposition, that no reasonable person can expect those somewhat vague and nebulous institutions referred to in the generic term of "commerce and industry" suddenly to crystallise into gigantic milch cows from whom unlimited capital can be obtained by mere digital pressure.

The proposal I am going to make is made with some diffidence, as I realise that the members of the various industrial and commercial groups view with horror any suggestion which may savour of subsidisation. Their reaction in effect is not dissimilar to that of labour's reaction to any suggestion of piece work or bonus system.

At the same time, it has become increasingly apparent that it is essential that every interested body or person must help to shoulder the burden.

The interested bodies are the Government, the local authorities, the employers and the employees.

My suggestion is really a simple one. It is (1) Insofar as the Government are concerned, they must be prevailed upon to do their share in providing cheap adequate transport; (2) the share of the local authorities is obviously to provide the land, and subsequently to provide the necessary amenities in the way of roads, water and, particularly sanitation. The land should be provided free, but the amenities would be paid for in the scheme set out below.

A non-profit company should then be formed on the lines of the existing housing utility companies already operating in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Commercial and industrial employers of Native labour should be invited to become shareholders.

Each £100 contributed, whether by purchase of shares or loans to

the company, would carry the right to house one Native family at a nominal rental.

Shares with the privileges attached thereto shall be transferable.

A nominal rental shall be assessed on the following basis:—

(a) moneys required shall be lent free of interest; (b) maintenance and depreciation shall be assessed, at 5 per cent. per annum; (c) redemption 5 per cent; (d) supervision, management, collection, etc., 2 per cent.; (e) assessment rate to cover amenities such as water reticulation, sewerage, roads, etc., 3 per cent.

On this basis a £100 house can be let at £1 5s. per month.

I am aware that my figures may be subject to criticism, but as a rental as high as £2 per month could not unreasonably be charged, a wide margin is available.

I have called the Native occupant a tenant, but actually he would ultimately become the owner, and would, in effect, be a hire-purchase tenant.

He would have the right to pay off the balance of capital at any time. He would then either receive transfer, or perhaps preferably a certificate of title, in the same manner as was originally done in the old Malay location.

In this manner, the individual who contributes the original £100 does not lose his money, and ultimately has it returned to him.

Finally, I would suggest that a certain number of trading stands be made available, and that these be allocated to Natives only.

They would be let at considerably higher rentals, and the profits can be used to form an insurance fund against losses to shareholders. Thereafter, they can be used for the provision of amenities.

I make these proposals in all seriousness after the very considerable experience that I have had for many years as chairman of the Johannesburg Housing Utility Company which, as you know, is a non-profit company which has already built the Octavia Hill Flats, the Africa Star Flats in Turfontein, and the Brixton House for Girls in Brixton.

L. LEVESON,  
Chairman, Johannesburg  
Housing Utility Company.

*Walter Hester*  
*L. Leveson*  
*Sandra May*

## CITY NATIVE HOUSING STUDIED

### VISIT OF MISSION FROM CAPE

Johannesburg lent a sympathetic ear to Cape Town's non-European housing problems to-day when a housing mission of ten Cape-tonians visited the city's housing schemes as the start of a tour in the Transvaal, Natal, and the Eastern Province. The mission includes members and officials of the Cape Town City Council and the Cape Divisional Council.

The Cape Town municipality has devised an asbestos house (to cost just over £100 with skeleton services) as a method to deal urgently with the eradication of its black spot at Windermere, where overcrowding and slum conditions constitute a serious problem. In addition, Cape Town has a waiting list of between 5,000 and 6,000 Coloured families who need proper housing.

Mr. W. H. Ross, chairman of the Cape Town Council's Housing Committee, said to-day that his Council had applied for a loan of more than £100,000 to provide about 1,000 of these homes for Natives at Langa, and for about £30,000 to house 500 more families at Retreat.

#### CHEAP METHODS

The asbestos houses had been planned as an urgent temporary measure, but the National Housing Commission had suggested that Cape Town should first study other forms of cheap, permanent housing of which reports were filtering through from other centres.

"Now we are on tour to see if we can find something that we can adapt to climatic and topographical conditions at the Cape," added Mr. A. V. Linnington, housing architect for the Cape Town municipality.

The visitors saw the experimental £100 houses at Pimville; the housing schemes at Moroka/Jabavu and Orlando; the vocational training school at Orlando; pre-war and post-war houses at the Coloured township, Coronationville; and the Denver Native men's hostel.

The mission will visit Germiston and Boksburg to-morrow and will later go to Pretoria, Durban, Newcastle, Maritzburg, Port Elizabeth and East London.

# READERS' POINTS OF VIEW

## WHO'S THROWING HOUSING "BABY"?

### Criticism of City Council

To the Editor, "Rand Daily Mail."

Sir, — The chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Johannesburg City Council accuses Commerce of losing its enthusiasm for home ownership for non-Europeans, and suggests that Commerce, having now found that the money cannot be raised, has "thrown the baby into the hands of the City Council."

In making this statement Mr. Page falls back on an alleged misunderstanding, which is no misunderstanding at all.

I have repeatedly stressed that neither Commerce nor the Johan-

nesburg Citizen's Native Housing Committee has at any time offered to raise the money to be lent to the Natives for building their own houses; and indeed it is difficult to see why they should. Undoubtedly this is a responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the people of Johannesburg as a whole, through their representatives on the City Council. It is a responsibility that is being accepted by smaller municipalities throughout the country to-day, such as Bloemfontein, Springs, Benoni, Germiston, Nigel, Vereeniging, East London—to quote but a few.

The question still remains to be answered, and has not yet been answered by the City Council—why will Johannesburg not accept its equal responsibility? Why does there remain enshrined in the minutes of the Special Housing Committee of the City Council the clear statement: "The Council will not lend money to the Natives to build their own houses"?

Mr. Page plaintively quotes four main obstacles, which in his mind are insuperable:

*"We are awaiting a report from the experts on the question of services."*

But we have been waiting for this report for ten years, and in point of fact a full report on the exact cost of all the services has been in the hands of the Council for the last two months.

*"The difficulty of raising the money."*

The Council has persistently refused to make any attempt to raise the money, and continues to throw the burden on to the shoulders of anybody, provided it is not the City Council itself. I repeat that the money is there, and will be provided by the people of Johannesburg when the Council asks for it.

*"The services will probably take at least two years."*

Mr. Page doubtless has reference to sewerage reticulation. He ignores the fact that the present scheme envisages the use of the bucket system while sewerage is being laid. But, in any event, why two years? With the will to do, the job could be completed in six months; but the will is lacking.

*"We cannot provide freehold tenure to Natives."*

This alleged obstacle is a figment of the imagination. The Native Affairs Department has indicated that a lease of 30 years can be granted, with the option on the part of the owner of an extension for a further 30 years; theoretically a 99 years' lease.

The fact is that the City Council is creating obstacles which do not exist, and, while they are cavilling at imaginary bogeys, other Municipalities are getting their land and service loans from the National Housing Commission and proceeding apace with their plans.

Until our City Council is prepared to approach this problem in a realistic fashion; until there is a change of heart on this whole matter within the City Council, home-ownership houses for non-Europeans must remain the pipe dream of those citizens of Johannesburg who know that the problem is one of relatively easy solution.

B. N. HARVEY

## RATEPAYERS REFUSE RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATIVE HOUSING

—Commerce Speaker

**M**R. R. N. HARVEY, vice-president of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, said yesterday that it seemed as if the ratepayers of Johannesburg had repudiated their responsibility for doing anything about Native housing. They were prepared to let the Natives be housed—as long as it cost them nothing.

Mr. Harvey was speaking at the annual meeting of the St. Martin's Hostel for African Girls.

Johannesburg wanted expensive clinics and doctors' quarters at the proposed pilot Native housing scheme at Vukuzenzele to protect its own health, but the city was not prepared to pay for them.

He said that 10s. 8d. of the 30s. monthly rent for a house at Vukuzenzele would go for the salaries of Native Affairs and medical officials who were administering the scheme. He suggested that the Native residents should be allowed to manage the township themselves, with the advice of a committee of Europeans.

"If we accept that principle alone, we can reduce that figure of 10s. 8d. to 5s. or less." With that reduction the houses could be provided with extra amenities.

### EAST LONDON QUOTED

The cost of the houses at that rental of 30s. would be about £130. At East London houses costing as much as £250 were rented at 30s.

The Vukuzenzele scheme would be a slum if there were no fences to the houses and no big stands, as were provided at East London, and if they had one central washing block for the 1,787 families.

"We must limit our rental to 30s., and we accept that the scheme must be economic," said Mr. Harvey. He said that the Chamber's approach was that of "hard-headed businessmen", and they believed that the Native wanted to do things for himself.

He said that land was waiting for the 15,000 Native families who were without housing at present.

There were several objectionable features of the pilot scheme, but the present discussions between the Chamber and Johannesburg City Council, would he felt sure, eventually produce a scheme that would please everyone.

The scheme will be discussed by the Chamber this afternoon.



## CITIZEN BODY REJECTS A COUNCIL NATIVE HOUSING SCHEME

**T**HE Johannesburg Citizens' Native Housing Committee decided yesterday to reject the City Council's Native housing scheme No. III at Vukuzenzele.

The decision was made on the ground that excessive land and service charges were proposed in relation to the services offered; that it was inevitable that slum conditions would develop because the services would be inadequate; that the stand sizes were inadequate; that the scheme would consequently be unsuitable for home ownership; and that, in general, the scheme failed to fulfil its intended function of serving as pilot for a larger scheme originally envisaged by the Citizens' Committee.

The committee also decided to "register its disapproval" of the proposals relating to Scheme II.

### MOVE FOR PUBLIC MEETING

At its meeting yesterday 20 people signed a petition to the Mayor asking to be allowed to hold a public meeting in the Johannesburg City Hall to discuss Native housing, and to put the views and proposals of the committee before the public.

Speakers attacked the City Council and said that it had been "unco-operative."

The chairman, Mr. R. N. Harvey, said that it was time to begin to go straight to the public.

A resolution adopted requested the City Council to carry on immediately with the preparations of plans for home ownership on a scheme of 15,000 houses, applying the experience gained.

Scheme III, said the committee, should be planned to allow of larger stands, individual water-borne sewerage, water taps and gullies or a four-block house system, with a monthly land and service charge of approximately 22s. 6d.

The council should advance loans to Natives for home building, it was added.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT WANTED FOR PROVIDING HOUSES FOR NATIVES

**T**HE Johannesburg Citizens' Native Housing Committee yesterday rejected the City Council's housing Scheme III at Vukuzenzele and decided to make a direct approach to the public for support in providing 15,000 Native houses.

A public meeting is to be held in the City Hall and the committee proposes to start a publicity campaign to lay the full facts about Native housing before the people of Johannesburg.

Another resolution called upon the City Council to proceed immediately with the preparation of plans for home-ownership on a scheme of 15,000 houses. The committee also reaffirmed its belief in the possibility of floating a non-profit-making public utility company which would assist Natives to raise sufficient money for a cash deposit in such a home-ownership scheme.

Reasons for the rejection of Scheme III were: The excessive land and service charges proposed in relation to the services offered; the inevitability of slum conditions developing; the smallness of stands and the failure of the scheme to fulfil its intended function as pilot for the larger scheme originally envisaged by the committee.

The committee also disapproved of Scheme II Vukuzenzele owing to "the excessive rents proposed, the lack of fencing and the inevitability of slum conditions developing."

*Münzger Com*

## Going Round in Circles

APPROACHES to Johannesburg's huge Native housing problem still lack realism. Consultations between the Citizens' Native Housing Committee and the City Council, based on the latest idea of home building and home ownership by Natives themselves, seem to have degenerated into a squabble. Building materials were to be loaned to the Natives, but finance apparently remains the great obstacle. Theoretically this should not be so. A year ago Dr. Jansen said money would be made available to municipalities to buy building material in bulk to retail to Natives on a non-profit basis. But where in fact is this money? Mr. Havenga has warned against spending; and though Johannesburg has apparently sought a loan from the Housing Commission for a "pilot" scheme at Vukuzenzele, it has been stated that the Council's allocation of money from the commission is hardly sufficient to maintain even existing schemes begun two years ago. The position is further complicated by the Government's vague and contradictory statements about apartheid, and by their other proposal for a Native housing levy on the Natives' employers. At yesterday's meeting of the Citizens' Native Housing Committee it was suggested that the Council should underwrite a loan "subscribed by the citizens of Johannesburg themselves." These various proposals fail to advance the matter a step further. Going round in circles getting nowhere seems to sum up the position.

The problem that has to be tackled, and tackled squarely, is that because of the huge influx of Natives to Johannesburg in recent years—an increase in the city's Native population of well over 70 per cent.—many thousands of houses are needed; and these must be of a standard adequate to a heavily built-up area if the housing shortage is not simply to be replaced by an appalling slum problem. The cost of services alone suggests that, at the Natives' present income level, the solution is bound to involve a heavy financial burden on someone. The plain choice is between having an enormous black proletariat, a perpetual menace to orderly and civilised living, or transforming them into a decent, self-respecting working class. The latter choice means building houses. But they will not be provided by attempting, vainly, either to shift the burden or to pretend that it can be reduced to trifling proportions.

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