

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

Minutes of the First Meeting of Sub-Committee No. 1 (Social Trends, Population Needs, Family Structure and Family Economics), held in the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Board Room on 9.10.47. at 10. a.m.

Present:

Dr. P.J. Olckers. - Chairman - (National Council for Social Research).
 Mr. P.H. Connell. - Organising Secretary.
 Miss J. Hanekom. (National Building Research Institute).
 Mrs. Cutten. (National Council of Women).
 Dr. H. Sonnabend. (Dept. of Social Studies. University of the Witwatersrand.)

In Attendance:

Miss S. de Beer. (National Building Research Institute).

Apologies:

Mr. V. Schaerer, Dr. Gordon Laing, Mrs. van der Lingen and Mr. G.I. Nel.

Convening of Meeting.

The Organising Secretary convened the meeting and on behalf of the C.S.I.R. thanked members for agreeing to undertake the work.

He then introduced the Chairman, Dr. P.J. Olckers, and asked him to take the Chair.

In opening the meeting, the Chairman stated that members were free to speak in either official language. He then called on the Organising Secretary to give his Introductory Statement.

Introductory Statement.

Mr. Connell gave the Committee a brief history of the setting up of the Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation. It was common knowledge that the regulations of different local authorities were notoriously at variance, even in regard to fundamental necessities of housing and it was generally felt that much of the legislation governing standards of housing accommodation was arbitrary and out of date. In a number of countries research had been carried out into minimum standards of accommodation, and such research had always resulted in better housing, governed by improved legislation. The National Building Research Institute in common with many similar organisations elsewhere had felt that in South Africa too there was a great deal of room for improvement in housing accommodation standards. To begin with, some definition of the needs of the people to be housed was necessary. In South Africa, with its wide range of climatic conditions and its mixed population the needs to be met by housing differ greatly, and it was desirable

therefore/ ...

therefore that a scientific study of the problem as a whole should be undertaken. A start was made by setting up a research programme in the form of a survey of housing requirements from the users' point of view.

This survey had just been started when the National Housing and Planning Commission requested the National Building Research Institute to examine and report on a schedule of tentative standards of accommodation which it was proposed to apply to all housing schemes for which state loans were to be advanced. In this schedule, minimum standards and certain maximum standards were laid down, in an effort to improve on the existing standards which applied hitherto. To carry out this work, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research set up a special Research Committee to direct and co-ordinate research into the whole question of minimum standards of housing accommodation and to prepare a report on the National Housing and Planning Commission Standards. This report would be issued in June, 1948 and would inevitably be in the nature of an interim statement. Thereafter, the Committee's work would take on a more long-range character and undertake fundamental research into housing standards.

The Organising Secretary then gave the names of various organisations which were included in the Main Committee. The Main Committee would be responsible for bringing out final recommendations, but the work of collecting information would be done by nine working sub-committees. The organisation of the Committees and of the research programme was then described to members as outlined on the attached chart. Mr. Connell stressed that the object of the whole study was to bring about a better housing environment, both in town and country, and that every aspect of the housing environment would come under review and analysis.

The task of this Sub-committee was made clear in the title - i.e. to study and collect information on the social trends, population needs, the structure of families and the problem of family economics, within the Union. This information would then be used to "feed" other sub-committees as required.

Draft Terms of Reference.

In going through the Draft Terms of Reference with the Sub-Committee, the Chairman suggested that to facilitate the allocation of work and the co-option of additional members, it would be a good scheme to formulate some specific questions to be answered.

Dr. Sonnabend said that this particular Sub-Committee would not itself undertake research into the various problems set out in the Draft Terms of Reference, but would serve to collate the information already available. Much of the required information would be available from various sources, particularly from official census and cost of living statistics, and it would be the Sub-Committee's task to sort out the relevant information, co-ordinate it, and present in usable form. It was agreed to accept the Draft Terms of Reference as they stood, viz:

"To examine and report on the social trends and population movements, the structure of families and the problems of family economics of the populations within and outside the Union in so far as these may affect the Union's housing situation and the laying down of minimum standards of accommodation in the Union of South Africa".

Methods of Work and Allocation of Work.

As suggested by the Chairman, it was agreed to consider each

section of the Draft Terms of Reference separately and, following the scheme adopted by Sub-Committee 4, it was suggested that a group should be formed to study each separate head under which the work is to be organised. These groups would consist of one or more members of the Sub-Committee, aided, where necessary, by additional outside members co-opted for the purpose.

Dr. Sonnabend pointed out that in organising the work it was very necessary to choose people for the various sections who had already done work in each particular field, and were, therefore, specially qualified.

Family Economics.

After detailed discussion it was decided that this question could be dealt with under three heads.

1. Study of family budgets of the various income groups with special reference to rent. The question of the management of income could be studied in this connection.
2. To study and make recommendations as to the maximum rental in relation to incomes.
3. To study the cost of transport.

Agreed: Mr. G.C. Bain ... to act as convenor.
Dr. Olckers ... to enlist help of the National Council for Social Research.
Mrs. Cutten ... to enlist help of the National Council of Women.

Trades and Labour Statistician to be co-opted.

Structure of Families.

1. Study of size of families.
2. Study of rate of growth.
3. Study of population movements, i.e. the "natural" movement of the population - birth, death, change in age composition of families, etc.
 - (a) Changes in total of population.
 - (b) Age composition of present population.
 - (c) Population forecasts.
 - (d) Changes in civil status.
 - (e) Duration of life.

Agreed:

Dr. Olckers.
Dr. Sonnabend to recommend someone.
Prof. Batson Corresponding member.

It was also agreed to approach Dr. de Vos of the Natal University College, Professor Wagner of Stellenbosch and Professor Cronje of Pretoria.

It was suggested by Dr. Olckers that the National Council for Social Research Committee on Sociology and Economics would be able to assist the sub-committee by suggesting useful contacts. The Organising Secretary undertook to contact Dr. Cooke in this regard.

Social Trends.

It was agreed to consider this subject under three headings:

1. Study of the urbanisation problem.
2. Study of the effects on the city of family life.
3. Detailed considerations, e.g. problems arising from the increased employment of women, the problem of domestic help, the provision of recreational facilities in residential areas, etc.

Agreed: Mr. Nel to be convenor.
Mrs. Cutten
Inst. of Race Relations ... to be asked to co-operate. V

With regard to (2) above, the booklet on The City and The Church, published by the Dutch Reformed Church, was mentioned as a useful study. Dr. Olckers mentioned the name of Ds. Nicoll in connection with this publication, and it was decided to obtain a copy of the publication and to contact him.

General.

The next meeting to be held on 13th November, 1947 at 9.30 a.m. in the C.S.I.R. Board Room.

The meeting closed at 11.50 a.m.

Confirmed

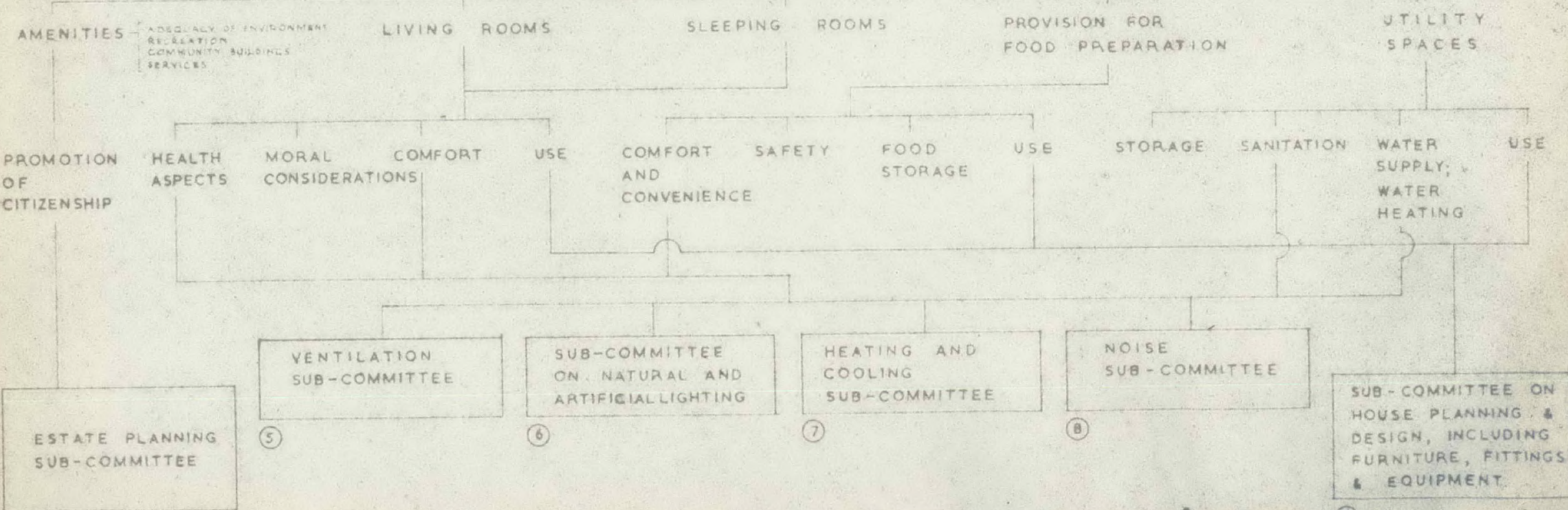
CHAIRMAN.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

① SUB-COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL TRENDS, POPULATION NEEDS, FAMILY STRUCTURE & FAMILY ECONOMICS.

② SUB-COMMITTEE TO SURVEY EXISTING LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

③ SUB-COMMITTEE TO SURVEY THE ATTITUDE OF OCCUPANTS TO EXISTING HOUSING.



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