

HOUSING.

When I started working on this project, I found that one can approach Housing from many different points of view - statistical, economic, socialological, geographical, political and ideally they should be inter-related. There is an acute shortage of housing throughout the world but the situation in South Africa is bedevilled by the desire of the present Government to tidy the map - I refer obviously to the implementation of the Group Areas Act so that in South Africa housing is placed fairly and squarely in the political and ideological sphere. Since 1948, the separation of the races, that had been practised informally for two centuries throughout the land has been formalised and legalised. This has meant that communities of people, who over a period of time had established themselves in an area where they had put down roots, provided themselves with the amenities which their particular culture called for, and developed a community spirit, have been smashed. The communities, now atomised, have been moved elsewhere without consultation, and their area of choice of how to live, where to live and with whom they would like to live, has been seriously curtailed. These people have been treated as so many inanimate things that could be moved irrespective of their feelings, irrespective of their needs, their cultural affiliations.

In South Africa housing difficulties have been and are compounded and aggravated by apartheid on the micro level, affecting all races and separate development on the macro level, affecting the Africans. In the 1972 Institute of Race Relations Handbook, the following statistics are given for the numbers of people who under the Group Areas Act became disqualified to remain in their previous homes and the numbers who had by then been resettled. I have within reason, rounded figures.

| | <u>Disqualified</u> | <u>Resettled</u> | <u>Shortfall</u> |
|-----------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Whites | 1, 598 | 1, 433 | 165 |
| Coloureds | 76, 500 | 41, 000 | 35,000 |
| Indians | 38, 500 | 26, 250 | 12,250 |

For Africans, I have found, no reliable statistics and it is possible that removals account for some millions. Their position is shrouded in mystery.

The Minister of Community Development on the 9th May, 1972, announced that his Department had estimated the number of dwellings that were required annually to meet the anticipated population increase - 28, 000 for whites, 16,000 for Coloureds and 7,000 for Indians. Africans? The Handbook adds in brackets that the figures quoted probably did not include dwellings needed for removals under the Group Areas Act. We have a policy that legislates for separation of the races and yet there seems to be official lethargy in facing the consequences of the physical implementation of the Act. The Minister accounts for population increases and yet there is doubt as to whether he accounts for removals under the Group Areas Act. This apparent lack of foresight and planning is supported when one analyses the shortfall of housing in a particular area. I have concentrated in this paper on metropolitan Durban not from any solipsistic reasons but because I have been able to obtain information, visit many townships and also because Durban is well represented by all four races and thus exhibits many of the problems that beset the rest of the country.

At the time of the 1970 census Metropolitan Durban had 1,000,000 inhabitants. Africans constituted the largest group, two fifths of the population, 403,000 people. This is considered a conservative estimate. The next largest group are the Asians, three tenths of the population, 329,000 persons. Whites account for one quarter of the population, 267,000 people. The smallest group are the coloureds, 49,000 people, seven per cent of the population. This figure is also considered to be conservative due to the influx of coloureds from other areas, especially the Transkei. Under Group Areas, coloureds are to be restricted in Natal to Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and Estcourt.

COLOUREDS:

The desperate shortage of houses for coloured families has been well documented in the Durban Press. The situation is still confused. Part of the trouble appears to be that the Government has been irresolute in proclaiming suitable areas for coloured housing. Moreover communication between the Government and Corporation appears often to be at a low ebb. Added to this is the attitude of the Government towards the use of labour - e.g. coloured artisans were refused permission to renovate existing empty buildings belonging to the Community Department.

Official coloured areas are at Merebank, Wentworth, Sparks Estate and Greenwood Park. Marionhill and Newlands will become available in 1975. Stockville Valley (now Indian market gardens) has also been proclaimed. Various types of housing are available for coloureds - economic selling and loan schemes, economic letting schemes and sub-economic letting schemes. The Health and Housing Committee of Durban Corporation and Durban Coloured Local Affairs Committee had at the end of September, 1973, 1127 applications for economic selling and loan scheme houses and 887 applications for sub-economic letting scheme units. There are a number of schemes on hand at various stages of development and the number of units of accommodation that will become available is 423. In the last two years it would appear that little has been done by the Municipality to alleviate the shortage. If I am interpreting the facts correctly, the only accommodation made available during this time has been by the Department of Community Development, who have another scheme where work on 54 better type economic flats, 37 better type houses and 570 flats has begun in Austerville. (Overall shortfall 1,300 units - average family of 5 - conservative - 6,500 people affected).

There are very bad slums in Wentworth area and people are living in the bush as well as in the old military camp. The complete demoralisation of many coloured families causes grave concern to many responsible citizens, white and coloured and Morris Fynn, Eric Winchester and Bishop Hurly are to be particularly commended for their efforts on behalf of the coloured community. On present schemes on hand, let alone past output which was minimal, there seems to be no serious attempt to resolve this problem.

The Indian community are housed in two areas - the southern area embracing Isipingo, Clairwood and Chatsworth and the northern area which extends through Sydenham, Springfield, Umgeni Valley to Reservoir Hills and onwards to areas which are as yet undeveloped although services are being

being constructed - roads, water-supply and sewerage - I refer to the Phoenix, Mount Edgecombe and Newlands Townships. The two areas are administered in conjunction with the Durban Municipality by two local Indian Affairs Committees both of which, according to Press accounts, are very articulate in voicing their demands and their disapproval.

Twenty per cent of the Indian Communities housing requirements are provided by private enterprise - either private houses, some of a very high standard, or apartments of somewhat mixed quality. The northern area contains most of the private entrepreneurial development and I am afraid I have no information regarding flat rentals. The quality of services provided by the Corporation is often very poor in this area - especially road maintenance, street lighting and refuse removal. The majority of Asians are however, housed in state assisted dwellings and they are subject to certain conditions - income limits (for economic housing, R225 per month and sub-economic R60 per month originally, but I believe the income limits have been raised to R320 and R80 respectively). 2. They must be married 3. Own no other property 4. Require the property for their own occupation.

The largest single complex of state assisted housing is at Chatsworth and comprises economic selling and loan schemes, economic letting schemes, sub-economic letting schemes and sub sub-economic letting schemes. The area is very extensive, is very monotonous but appears to be well administered. Too few amenities have been provided in the way of recreational and community centres. The one thing that struck me when I visited Indian housing schemes was that the Indians are great innovators. The uniformity that oppresses one in African Townships is not so overwhelming. Houses of minimal standards have been improved. Better wages might account for this creative activity but security of tenure probably has much more to do with it. There was only one scheme in the Wentworth area - sub-sub economic which was overwhelmingly awful - for some incomprehensible reason it was situated in the middle of a sand dune. It had the usual sub-sub economic amenities - communal taps and outside sanitation. The second housing area which is oppressively inhuman is Tin Town in the Umgeni Valley. External appearance which has the charm of many of the old Indian community centres, belies the internal living reality.

Indian housing on the whole appears to be well organised but the overall picture is that there is a desperate shortage of housing. For both northern and southern areas the Indian Health and Housing committee had on hand at the end of Sept. 7610 applications for economic selling and loan scheme housing and 10,743 applications for sub-economic letting scheme housing. Various schemes are under way in the Chatsworth area and work has begun in the northern area - Phoenix etc. - but the provision is totally inadequate. In the 1970-1971 period, 1,592 units became available and in the 1971-72 period 868 units and so far in 1973 1,231 units have been provided but it can be seen that even if the population remained static, planning and construction lags behind need quite drastically.

Total Shortfall: 18,353 units - average five in a family -
91,765 people affected.

Whites:

I am going to deal somewhat cursorily with the shortfall of European accommodation. Despite the fact that Whites are protected politically by job reservation, education facilities, geographical and social mobility, many can be classified as under privileged. It came as a shock that despite legislation, South Africa still has a poor-white problem. Although not all the people who are on the waiting list for state assisted accommodation can be classified as poor white but many can. Eighty per cent of white housing in Durban is provided by private enterprise. The housing committee has on hand 1904 applications for economic selling and loan scheme housing, and 795 for economic letting scheme housing.

In the 1971/72 period, 152 units of accommodation became available and in the 72/73 period 55 units. There is one scheme of 210 flats in Hillary under construction and ten houses being constructed under loan. The Department of Community Development has no scheme in hand. Again provision, totally inadequate.

AFRICAN HOUSING:

Durban has, as I have said, on a conservative estimate 403,000 people. Africans apart from domestic servants are housed in Townships on the perimeters of the town. Kwa Mashu (Municipal) and Mtuzuma (Bantu Trust) to the north, Clermont (Freehold) and Kwa Ngendeza (Bantu Trust) to the northwest, and then Umlazi (Bantu Trust), Lamortville and the Glebe to the south. The poorest members of our community are housed furthest from their work places thus adding transport costs and higher living costs to their already strained resources.

As in other parts of South Africa only people qualifying under Section 10 1 (a) or (b) have the privilege of living in a township and also 10 1 (d) workers providing they have permanent accommodation legally. No one can get a work permit without proof of legal accommodation, and no one can get registered as a lodger or in a hostel without proof of employment, so it is a vicious circle and the result is there are probably thousands of illegal residents in Durban, and an equal number either unemployed or working illegally.

In 1969, the Secretary for Bantu Administration asked local authorities to give consideration to two propositions: (a) Where a town is situated in the vicinity of a homeland the Africans employed in such town should be accommodated on a family basis in a Bantu Township in the homeland. (b) If the Homeland was too far distant then hostel accommodation should be provided for workers in the urban area and workers would be able to visit their families periodically.

In Durban, Africans are perhaps luckier than in other centres in that the homeland townships of Umlazi, Mtuzuma and Ngendeza are within daily commuting distance of the Industrial centres of Hobeni and Pinetown. Kwa Mashu which is at present a Municipal township will become part of Kwa Zulu in August 1964.

African housing in Durban townships exhibits the same dreary uniformity characteristic of townships throughout the

ten country - rows and rows of two or four roomed houses brick or concrete block under asbestos, some with internal water and sanitation, and many with external sanitation and communal taps. Any improvement a householder makes to his property is at his own expense and on vacating it he receives no compensation from the local authority. Stringent regulations apply to the renting of houses and to the registration of lodgers. Women, whatever their financial circumstances can never rent a house in a Municipal township. Widows are allowed to retain their houses in homeland townships but even this appears to be uncertain in practice. Services are, on the whole, of minimal standards and community and recreational facilities are generally inadequate. Overcrowding is endemic due to the lodger system and this does lead to frustration and lawlessness aggravated by the lack of privacy, the lack of space, the lack generally of amenities. One curious thing I have discovered when I was at Kwa Mashu recently was that the beer halls are kept open on a Sunday and weekend drinking is a problem of mounting proportions. I find this a strange anomaly in that the liquor laws in the white areas do not permit this. But it did occur to me that profits from the sale of beer subsidise services officially considered to be in the interest of Africans.

There is hostel accommodation provided in Kwa Mashu and Umlazi and the City Council has applied for authority to build multi-storey hostels for some 19, 600 men in the Glebe which area has apparently been converted into hostel accommodation for men. (This hostel accommodation is obviously designed for the ever increasing migrant labour population). There is a giant multi-storey complex under construction in Clermont which is designed to house ten to twelve thousand African contract workers who labour in Pinetown. Despite these additional complexes it is apparent that accommodation will still be totally inadequate for the fast growing migrant labour population.

The area that worries me most, and I am not sure whether I am interpreting what I saw correctly, was Clermont where Africans do have freehold rights. There are many reasonable houses in the area but Africans have acquired land where they have put up shacks constructed out of hardboard, wood, corrugated iron, asbestos and these are obviously hired out to families and migrant labourers. It is possible however, that many of these shacks may have been rented by squatters. In these dilapidated areas there is no sanitation, no refuse collection, no electric light - slum conditions prevail and police protection is virtually non-existent. The area is controlled, or possibly uncontrolled would be more apposite, by the local Health Commission who appear to turn a blind eye to the misuse of land and the exploitation of many Africans. Can it be that the Government will use this area as an excuse to deprive Africans completely of freehold rights, stating that he is too immature to exercise this privilege? The African friend who took me to Clermont has serious misgivings about the situation in Clermont and its future.

Statistics about African accommodation shortfalls are totally misleading due to the many laws that circumscribe an African's 'right' to be in an area let alone rent a house. The official figures are houses required 5, 906, men's hostel beds 31,270. As far as I can see it would appear that the Bantu Development

Development Corporation and Trust are concentrating on hostel accommodation for men. There is some home building in the Umlazi Township and the Institute Handbook states that 8,000 houses are to be erected at Iva Ngendeza near Clermont but as yet there is no evidence of this.

I have drawn the following conclusions from the facts I have gleaned from various sources:

- (1) Government often appears irresolute in defining the appropriate areas for various groups and even when a community has been established, changes it's mind - the Coloureds have suffered in this respect - irresolution in Durban and in Kingwilliamstown where a community established in 1950 has now been declared white.
- (2) Groups of people are expropriated without adequate alternative accommodation being provided. Moreover, instead of expropriating settled communities who are adequately housed even if they do not contribute to a tidy map, the authorities could pay attention to those people who live in slums.
- (3) Government policy and the implementation of the Group Areas Act has placed the burden for the provision of housing for three quarters of the population on the local authorities who do not have the resources to cope with this situation - here I do not necessarily mean financial resources but planning resources and the execution thereof. Much valuable time is lost because the local authorities have to wait for National Housing Commission approval before schemes leave the drawing board stage. Red tape snarls up most schemes because so much departmental processing has to be done and Municipal authorities appear to be chronically under-staffed.
- (4) Related to (3) I suggest comprehensive planning-one department instead of the many that operate. We need a department of housing that could coordinate development of housing schemes. The Department of Community Development has failed and is not worthy of it's title.
- (5) The design of housing projects appears to have been considered from the engineering point of view only - a problem of technology - that is multiple units of accommodation with minimal variations used as economically as possible - often bear shelter as opposed to the social needs of the people.
- (6) Housing in South Africa is a political problem. But the majority of the population who desperately require adequate shelter let alone a stable sociologically balanced environment are deprived of a political voice. The Coloureds may have a representative council, and the Indians may have a representative council - they are powerless to affect a change. Morris Fynn, Chairman of the Wentworth Civic Association, made an impassioned plea at Archbishop Hurley's house - he appealed to the whites, who have a voice, who have the institutional means to make representations on behalf of the under-privileged to act.