

FINGO VILLAGE DEVELOPMENTS.

The sad saga of removals from Fingo Village continues. Since Prof. R. Davenport reported to the last Black Sash Conference there have been a number of interesting developments. (Fingo Village, until a Group Area Proclamation in 1970, was one of those few areas in "white" South Africa in which Blacks owned the land on which their houses stood.)

In April 2500 printed letters from the Secretary of Bantu Administration, Mr I P van Onselen, were distributed in Fingo Village. This letter was in English and Xhosa and set out the Government proposals for the move to Glenmore, just outside the Ciskeian border. There were promises of housing, retaining present employment, heavily subsidised daily bus service, waterbourne sewerage and all township amenities. All adults resident in Fingo Village were asked to vote on the proposed move to Glenmore. Mrs H Suzman asked a question in Parliament about the results of the referendum, to which she got the answer that there had been no referendum. All the information was sent and the question was again raised. This time the results were given showing that of the 20% who voted 65 were in favour of Government proposals and 647 were against any removal.

In the meantime at least 450 Fingo Village tenants and some property owners faced removal to temporary housing in order to move the people in the lower Fingo area out for the redevelopment of the area as an Indian area. These temporary houses were nothing more than corrugated iron shacks with no floor or ceiling, no proper window, obviously very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Lodgers strongly objected to the temporary houses of galvinised iron units. In August 1976 there was a great outcry about these temporary houses and an article appeared in Rapport which gave a good deal of detail of the Fingo plight. The removal to these temporary houses eventually did not take place except on a voluntary basis.

Rumours about plans for Committee Drift/Glenmore being shelved were rife. In November 1976 there appeared an article in the press that Mr R Knott, owner of Glenmore farm, had been given two months for the expropriation of his farm, a farm where his family had been since 1830. This indicated that the government was to press on with its plans to move Africans from Fingo Village to Glenmore despite all the protests.

In December, after a visit to Grahamstown, Mr Cruywagen (Deputy Minister of Bantu Admin.) announced new options for the Fingo Title holders. The residents were informed that they could move to Glenmore, Makenas Kop or Kings Flats on differing conditions.

- 1) If they choose Glenmore houses will be available for them to buy. They may also acquire stands and build their own houses.
- 2) If they choose Makenas Kop they may buy houses built by the BAAB or build them on on stands allocated for this purpose. About 200 stands with sewerage will be available.

According to Mr Cruywagen additional land had been made available to the City Council for this purpose. So while Fingo Village residents could become registered property owners at Glenmore, they would only gain the right of occupation for an undetermined period at Makanas Kop. It was pointed out, however, that those unemployed or without means of support would be moved to Glenmore. According to our information Mr K Knott owner of Glenmore, left his farm on January 10, 1977, but there has been no activity in the area whatsoever.

A recent report by government health inspectors highlights conditions now obtaining in Fingo Village. They investigated conditions in Grahamstown and said "that it is difficult to imagine equally poor conditions in African townships anywhere else in the country". Their report stresses overcrowding and bad sanitation. In Fingo Village on 1 plot there are 46 families (208 people), poor hygiene and associated conditions which have contributed to the spread of disease and the high infant mortality rate. They point out that removals in this case would involve 46 plots to replace this 1 plot

It should be remembered that Grahamstown suffers from Government contrived slum conditions. The Government has, since 1967, consistently refused City Council's requests to build more houses for an Africal population growing at a rate of approximately 1 000 a year.

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ALBANY REGION

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