

WHEN LEGAL IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH :
THE GRASMERE CASE

OVERVIEW

The Grasmere squatters constitute yet another group of people for whom being legal is insufficient to earn them entitlement to belong in South Africa. This overview tries, without repeating too many details from what follows, to hone the miserable story down to its significant point.

Who are the people at Grasmere? Briefly, in order from the most vulnerable to the least vulnerable :

1. at the bottom of the rung are the people squeezed by the poverty of the homelands to substitute for hopeless circumstances there a precarious, even physically dangerous existence on the fringe of the urban areas, although it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to find even illegal employment.
2. "widows" of the migrant labour system - the women who come in search of their husbands who work on contracts and cease to send money home, having set up new families where they are; these women, often with children, find what illegal employment they can or take up prostitution as a more viable alternative than starvation at home.
3. Pensioners - and there are many. In a changing society they have little family support but also receive no institutional support. Not only do many have no family support, they often look after children and grandchildren on the income from their pension. This group pays relatively more for everything than any group of white old age pensioners. A decade ago they were respectable domestics and workers. Now they are superfluous.
4. People who are qualified to be in either OVAB or WRAB areas and may even have lost houses there, who have been, through intense overcrowding or cost and financial privation, crushed out of orderly urban communities.
5. People who were born in Grasmere whose parents before them were often born there too : they lived their lives on the former farms, where they were employed. Urban expansion destroyed the places

they had to live and provided no alternative place for them in the new townships.

So this is not a rag-tag group of marginal people, outside of categories of people whose roles we understand. The Grasmere squatters, except for what seems to be a relatively small category of hopelessly illegal "outsiders", are the products of the government system, of townships limited in expansion, of migrant labour and of simply growing old in a changing society. They are entitled to housing. Crudely, the system has produced these people's privations.

The government's response to its stepchildren is completely irrational. The brief of the authorities seems to be to limit the categories of people permitted in the common area to those who can be contained in planned black urban communities. Whereas it would seem logical, given the facts and that the majority of the people appear to qualify in terms of the government's own rules, that these people should be housed, the official line, (at a time when even whites are being asked to reduce their standards of housing), is stubborn (sinister?) maintenance, in the face of gargantuan housing shortages, of absurdly unrealistic regulations governing housing, with the net result that there is no possibility of housing for all these people. Instead a situation of legalised persecution prevails : raids, arrests, fines, imprisonment..... the whole gamut of uncivilised behaviour that is the norm in our South Africa.

But Grasmere cannot be removed in this fashion. The government is committing itself to an endless game of chasing people in circles.

The challenge of this story is : own the people of Grasmere, take responsibility for them, house them.

BACKGROUND

Up till the mid-seventies Grasmere consisted of white farms and smallholdings. Farmers were allowed unlimited labour and where labour was not available locally they were allowed to recruit from the OFS. Some of the farms were, around 1977, expropriated by the Dept. of Community Development in an area which was then declared for coloured and Indian occupation. In this particular section the township of Ennerdale was built (coloured), and an area called Finetown was opened for occupation by Indians. Lately a third area is being built up for Indian occupation, close to Ennerdale. The ex-farm labourers who remained on the farms found employment in the areas under construction, and on highway construction. As the townships formalised these people were pushed away, and found places to live on the neighbouring, as yet undeveloped farms, in these yet-to-be-built-up coloured and Indian areas, and also on the surrounding farms in the white area.

On these white farms, mostly no longer farmed and with owners no longer resident there, and still left on some expropriated farms, are various categories of people : former labourers and their families, some of whom have been there for up to three generations, some of whom are pensioners paid out at Grasmere; some of whom are children of these families, finding local casual employment in construction as above, some working in Johannesburg and some in Vereeniging. Also here are people with Section 10 qualifications from Soweto, some of whom have been on the waiting list (as per notices in their possession) for up to nine years. A considerable number of the women from these families work in unregistered domestic employment in Lenasia, Ennerdale and Lawley; there are men who are unregistered construction workers around Grasmere, but for the most part the men work in registered employment in Johannesburg. There is a percentage of "squatters" i.e. people whose presence here is unlawful, from Transkei and the northern Transvaal. Some of these are women whose husbands came to work on contracts and when contact was lost and money no longer received, they came to Johannesburg to look for the men, bringing their children with them, in most cases. In addition to casual unregistered employment in surrounding Indian/coloured areas and in Lawley, they engage in selling liquor and prostitution. There is a small group of women (perhaps 25 or 30) all from Lesotho, who have been at Grasmere for many years : they are widows of farm labourers from the district, who took their first reference books in the late fifties at Grasmere. Some receive pensions at Grasmere. Although legally in the area and entitled to receive pensions, they will not get "own housing" because they are foreigners. They must try to find accommodation in other people's homes whereafter they will get a lodger's permit.

About 400-500 children of squatters, farm workers and domestics in the area, attend the former farm school at Grasmere which goes up to Standard 5. The farm where this school is situated has been taken over by the Dept. of Cooperation and Development so the school is now illegal and is scheduled to close in June 1984.

WHAT'S HAPPENED

There are a number of major sites which are the target for clearance, and numerous shacks situated on vacant plots and randomly located, even on the side of the roads. In the white area there are three farms informally occupied: One (site A) has an estimated 600 people, of whom at least 200 are pensioners. All the cattle and poultry stalls have been converted into granny flats for which the rent ranges from about R10 to R30 per month. The good farmer takes the pensioners monthly to collect their payments in Grasmere; a fair guesstimate is that his income from informal rental here is about R3 000 per month. Water is free from a dam, which is drying up. Rents are paid at the other farms, reportedly R10 to R15 per month, and corrugated shacks have been erected by the people themselves. On another white farm some ten families who qualify to be in the area have permission from the farmer to reside there free of charge, some of them working for him for pay. Recently the whole lot of them were arrested by the De Deur police and jailed for trespassing. These convictions are being appealed against; they were fined R30 or 30 days imprisonment.

At a farm owned by the Dept. of Community Development but rented by an Indian family (site B) extensive outbuildings are occupied by about twenty families, some of whom were the former labourers there and had been born there. The payment here was R20 per month for water; for reasons not quite clear the landlord closed off access to the borehole in about August 1983. For some while people collected water from a nearby spring or walked 40 minutes to Ennerdale where there was a tap they could utilise, at a price of R1 per 20 litres. Later, after negotiation, access was permitted to water on the site again, twice a day, and for two buckets of water per family. No rents appear to have been collected here since then, but there have been reports of intimidation and assault by outsiders.

In an Indian area, behind a shop, is a "luxury" site, a nicely fenced-in, gardened, protected property. Rents here are R50 per room. The landlord expresses concern and sympathy for the situation of the black people under pressure from the authorities, and they appear to be friendly with him; he allows, for example, access to the telephone.

Apart from concentrated "camps", people find places for themselves on vacant properties, where they erect their shacks until they are raided and pushed off, when they find place somewhere else; some people have put shacks together at the side of farm roads.

Two administration boards, West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) and Oranje-Vaal Administration Board (OVAB), and the De Deur police have jurisdiction over the area. Meyerton and Klipriver, under OVAB, have inspectors with jurisdiction there, and police from Vereeniging and Lenasia have also exercised themselves in the district on occasion. Police who raid are said to be sometimes in uniform or "floral overalls"; other times they have been municipal police in blue.

It has not proved possible for us to ascertain the formal status of the area. What is clear is that it is unclear where the

borders lie between the two boards, due to the spread of Johannesburg and extension of its boundaries; likewise Roodepoort. Grasmere was in former days a peri-urban area but now people get Section 10 qualifications which are urban rights.

Raids, which have taken place at least six monthly from longer ago than people can remember (people say when harvesting started in the OFS there would always be raids), assumed a more concerted pressure and direction since about 1982. At this time the OVAB declared that the area was going to be cleared, the people had to go. Fines were formerly R10, even in 1983 they were R20 for each trespass prosecution, but, suddenly, at the end of 1983 people were fined R100 or 90 days on conviction. The penalties for trespass were increased in 1983 from R50 or three months in prison to R2 000 or two years in prison. There have always been allegations of assaults, non-issue of receipts, bribes paid, brandishing of firearms, attaching to raids. During 1983 dogs were introduced to the scene by the De Deur police - people reported being beaten with batons and told to run, and the dogs then being set loose to catch them. One charge has been laid (at De Deur) by a man who was severely bitten, in January 1984, as a result of which he was in hospital 5 days. There have also been allegations of women being raped on different raids, and movables being lifted. In September 1983 in a raid by De Deur police a shot was fired at a man which fortunately missed him; he had also been beaten.

The activities of the boards mentioned above seem to overlap not only in raids - not only are various sites raided by officials from different boards, but it has happened that of two people born in the same area who both took their reference books at Evaton (OVAB), one qualifies in the OVAB area and the other in Johannesburg.

At the end of July all the black residents of the area were issued with roneoed slips, unaddressed, evicting them from the area within two weeks. OVAB officials warned the people verbally to be gone by 17th August, or.....

About twenty women, from all over the district, came together to Mrs Beetge to seek help. Different agencies were approached - Sash, Witwatersrand Council of Churches (WCC) - to try to stop the board raiding, evicting, throwing people out, breaking up shacks-..... An appointment was made to see Mr Louwrens, Deputy Chief OVAB, and on 3rd October 1983 he and Mr Ganz, Chief of OVAB, were interviewed. A statement from Mr Ganz had already been made in the Rand Daily Mail (RDM) that there would be core housing available in Sebokeng to everyone in the area whether they qualified or not (RDM Extra 1.10.83). "If we do not house them in our area where do we expect them to go?".

It was learnt that the OVAB had approx. 200 core houses available, but not all were available for Grasmere people. When numbers of houses required was discussed, he seemed surprised that so many people required housing. These houses cost R4,500 each to purchase; they are rented out on a sliding scale with a minimum of 5% of income as rental if the monthly income is less than R150 per family, i.e. R7-50 per month. In addition to rental there is site rental of R40 (vague) to be paid; officials say circumstances get taken into account in assessing this. The core house consists

of a roof, fully-walled bathroom with toilet and bath, and sink outside, all on a concrete floor base on which internal and external walls can be built. (The roof covers the floor base). Taps lead to each house. The Board sells cheap materials e.g. reject iron sheeting and blocks.

An undertaking was given that the Board would investigate the position in the area before any further board raids took place. The Sash had told Mr. Ganz that it is believed that a large percentage of the people there would appear to be lawfully in the area.

Before September, the first removals had taken place - some pensioners were taken from one camp, their shacks broken, and they were found to be relocated in the hospital at Sebokeng. (They qualify). They have since been discharged, because they are now back at the same site, and have put their shacks together again.

On Thursday 13th October 1983 OVAB officials including the Commissioner of Sebokeng, Mr. Kloppers, came to one site (site B) where they spent time examining documents and taking records of names and reference numbers, but were unable to complete the task. Mr. Kloppers told the people there that on the 20th those who qualified, and the old people, would be collected and taken to Sebokeng where they would be put in houses; if they didn't cooperate they would "slaan hulle", as a father trains his children.

On 20th October, when the officials came again, more names were taken and an Inspector Saayman announced that because of the number of people involved it would take a long time to process the people. The officials would return on 8th November to tell them who qualified. He remarked that he had not expected to find so many people there (Star 21.10.1983)*.

On 8th November all the Grasmere people from all sites were supposed to convene at one site (site B) where officials came with one bus to take one member of each family (whom the Board had decided qualified for housing) to Sebokeng to be shown the core houses. People who were said by the Board not to qualify were given notices that they had been found to be in contravention of Sec. 99 of the Act 25 of 1945 and would be prosecuted if they did not leave the area within 14 days. It seems the majority of recipients of this notice qualify to be in the WRAB district next door.

A brief respite occurred at some sites while attention shifted to others. At one site (site B), where the shot had been fired in September, no more raids have been reported, although some white outsiders came in a van and assaulted a couple of people in November 1983, and demanded "rent money".

Then on 17th November 1983 OVAB officials and De Deur police raided at the farm (site A) and approximately 50 people were jailed. From this time sentences were increased to R100 or 90 days in jail. It is known that numbers of those convicted are in fact qualified under Section 10(1)(a) in the OVAB district. Some in fact had housing-waiting stamps in their books for Sebokeng.

On 23rd November there was a report of OVAB officials-plus-truck recruiting women to work on a Portuguese market gardener's holding in Eikenhof; they could take their children with them, but their

menfolk would have to go to hostels, according to the officials. The next day the Portuguese farmer's wife came, together with at least eight Board officials and two trucks, and one woman went to work in Eikenhof.

Also on 24th November five vans were seen going from one site to another - it turned out not to be a removal, but rather more of a raid, in which six people were arrested from one site (trespassing) and one for brewing. The farm-owner, whose permission they have to be there, spoke to the officials and all, except the brewer, were put out and left to walk home.

Also on this day World Vision reported receiving a call from an inspector saying that they should not deliver food to Grasmere anymore because the people were being moved the next day.

On 25th November it transpired that officials had been to one of the larger sites (site B) but the people said the children were still at school, and the school was closing on 6th December so they did not want to go yet. The officials promised to return on 1st December to see if the people were ready. After much dilly-dallying, a final date was set for 4th January 1984 for the removal. As at date of writing nothing has changed.

On 13th December OVAB officials ordered three families on a plot to pack their belongings and break their shacks in preparation to be moved at 8 a.m. on the 14th. A truck arrived, all belongings were loaded, but there was no room for their corrugated iron. So three children of one family were sent on the truck to guard the possessions until the parents and the balance of the materials were fetched. The truck never came back. The children were retrieved from Sebokeng some three days later, by taxi; a lorry was hired to bring back the goods. A neighbour on the site remarked that if that had happened to her and she had known what would happen, she would have sent her husband, not the children!

On Saturday 14th January 1984 at 2.a.m. a reported 200 people were taken from site A; a special Court convened at 7.30 a.m. that morning heard the cases and fined them R100 or 90 days. Allegations were made that no pleas were called for and there was no legal representation. Dogs had been used, several people were bitten, one badly. Review proceedings have been applied for on behalf of some, but as at 13th March 1984 some of these people are still in jail at Vereeniging serving their sentence (having been "sold" as farm labour for the period).

During February 1984 eight people, proved 10(1)(a) and (b) in WRAB area, were among people served eviction notices by a Westonaria (WRAB) inspector near Finetown in WRAB district. At least six had housing waiting list notices, from WRAB.

NUMBERS

The experience of Black Sash workers at Grasmere has led them believe that the majority of the people who are the object of the clearance (where to has never become clear so removal does not seem accurate) are lawfully present in the Administration Board areas of Oranje-Vaal and of West Rand; that some of them were already qualified i.e. accepted by the authorities and are on housing waiting lists; others who are lawful in either

of the two areas require assistance to prove it.

Investigations at three sites have shown as follows : -

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Qual. in Grasmere</u>	<u>Possible Qual. in Grasmere</u>	<u>Qual. in WRAB</u>	<u>Possible Qual. in WRAB</u>	<u>Illegals</u>	<u>Lesotho</u>
Site A	11	3	6	-	1	1	-
Site B	48	6	18	7	11	6	-
Site C	5	-	-	-	-	3	2
	<u>64</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>

Briefly it appears that about 75% of those people described as "Grasmere squatters" are lawfully present in the district. i.e. They are allowed to be in the area; they are just not allowed to live where they are but are not offered alternative accommodation. It is understood that the OVAB has moved 49 families to Sebokeng, and that 35 more have been processed as qualified to be moved there. They do not seem to have a "solution" for pensioners.

The figure of 75% lawful coincides with the experience of SAIRR's former Regional Manager for the Southern Transvaal, who found similarly at four sites previously worked at, viz. Kliptown, Chicken Farm, Witkoppen and "Car Dump". Moreover, she says that if those people had been assessed after the Rikhoto decision in 1983, she believed the figure of those qualifying to be in the areas concerned would have risen closer to 90%.

Such people have rights to remain in the urban areas but are squatters because they are living unlawfully at a particular place. At the moment the position is that the authorities can arrest them for trespass and can demolish their illegal structures, but cannot order them to leave the prescribed areas.

There is nothing in the law to compel the authorities to furnish them alternative accommodation before demolishing their illegal homes.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

1. For the "illegals" - those people described earlier, who have been found to be small in number in the area, who have come in search of their families and ultimately because, as is well known, there is no hope of work/ money for them in the Transkei (see Sunday Tribune report 27.11.1983)* - there is Hobson's choice: to stay in Grasmere where, in a case documented by Sash workers, a man lived with his wife and two small children in real physical danger so that he could earn cash rather than stay in the Transkei where his triplets had died of starvation; or now, as the pressures of daily existence in Grasmere, including the raids written about above, with increased jail sentences, and the increasing difficulty of finding work because of inability to be registered, returning to the Transkei and the hope of assistance from some welfare feeding agency, maybe. But this category will at least have fitted into the neat (if fictitious) oft-recited -verse of government: these people must not think they can just come to the cities to live; they must go back where they come from. Although this group of people is not the main concern of this account, they are perhaps the ones most to be held in mind in their predicament. Always to be affirmed must be our commitment to the principle of the fundamental right of people to work and live where they like. The circumstances of these people turn them into victims, unable to master their lives in any viable fashion, whereas if they were free to work where they wish they would indubitably establish self-sufficient existences, and an increased quality of life.
2. Grasmere legals, (a) whose documentation supports this. Strictly speaking and according to the rules of the game, this group could be a bit more cheerful about their fate: they have thrown six and qualify to move to core housing in Sebokeng. But the game's not going so smoothly according to its rules. From our somewhat lengthy account it can be seen that the Oranje-Vaal administrators in the first instance were quite cheerful in their welcoming announcement that everyone would be housed; then came their surprise at how many would have to be catered for; and a sort of withdrawal of the invitation; the announcements that everyone would be screened to see who could come; the apparent realisation of how big a job this is (and, might we guess, some dismay that what looked as if it was going to be a nice, straightforward, simple push of everyone out was turning into one hell of a job), a few half-hearted attempts to have a go at it, to the final state of play at present, where the other arms of administration are solidly hacking away, raiding, putting large batches of people into jail for 90 days at a time, in what could be an activity for time immemorial, at least until the new version of the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill. Because as long as these people don't get their houses, they can be arrested 24 hours a day for trespassing. The exercise seems to be limited only by logistics.

Meanwhile, at Sebokeng it is not clear how many houses have been built in the core-housing scheme, nor how many it is intended to construct. We do not know how many are already occupied, save that they are not all going to be available for Grasmere legals, because some people, "natural growth" in Sebokeng, are also allocated them. We have said that 49 families/units from Grasmere have already been removed to Sebokeng, and that 35 more are awaiting such relocation. It is not known how many Grasmere people, who might be proved/provable legals, have been removed to the homelands.

(b) who would qualify, if they can substantiate this.
The same applies as in (a).

3. WRAB legals (a) These comprise people who qualify in WRAB districts, some of whom lost houses there when they could not pay rent and others who are on housing-waiting lists there but cannot find accommodation meanwhile and found it preferable, because of the pressure of extreme overcrowding, to find a place next door in Grasmere. It is almost trite to say that with the housing shortage in Soweto running into an official 39 000 units that the likelihood of these people being housed there is remote.

So the action of the Westonaria inspector issuing eviction notices to Section 10(1)(a) qualified people to remove themselves from that section of the Grasmere district which falls under WRAB's jurisdiction (see page 5 above) has an extra touch of the bizarre - he is telling people who are lawfully in his own area to stop trespassing there, although it is from his Board that they are entitled and acknowledged to await housing.

(b) who would qualify, if they can substantiate this.
The same applies as in (a).

4. Pensioners It is painfully obvious how vulnerable the aged are when the state seeks primarily productive healthy adult workers. Perhaps they are best described, despite the euphoric "new dispensation" and the apple-blossom days of reform, as being as "superfluous" as they were in the olden days of 1967 when infamous General Circular No. 25/67 of the Secretary of Bantu Administration and Development described them thus.

They warrant being described separately from people qualifying, because there are facets of their situation that require a different approach. From informal discussions with officials it seems that the government views them as a great problem; that some type of housing scheme might be contemplated, but details are not known. A conventional old-aged home type solution would not be feasible, in that in some instances pensioners are women looking after a number of children; in other instances the whole family exists on the income of the pensioner.

It must be mentioned that in the case of pensioners, or units where the sole income is a disability pension, for

example, it is unrealistic to expect that even if these people are housed in core-housing, even on a rental scale adjusted to their means, that they will come out financially in the urban township structure. Such people require socially assisted housing, at no rental. They certainly do not have the resources (financial and other) to build up their core-houses and maintain even reduced rental and service payments.

But if the fear of the effects of the provisions of the revised Orderly Movements Bill is founded, such concerns become hypothetical, because the pensioners too will be consigned to join the discarded people in the homelands.

5. The Grasmere Widows: Unlike, for example, the Transkei illegals, this small group has rights to pensions and can look for accommodation, but only in Evaton/Sebokeng. They cannot stay on farms because they are not farm labourers; they are trespassers.

In Sash (Vol.26. No.4. February 1984, page 31) Sheena Duncan writes :

The Orderly Movement Bill has been "postponed" to 1984but it is clear that the Government intends to go ahead with :

.....
 ...Reducing the number of people who have legal rights to remain in town;

.....
 Making a permit to be in town dependent on having "approved accommodation", and limiting the amount of accommodation available in the towns by providing new housing in the homelands or just outside the homeland borders;
 Increasing the costs of living in black townships so much that poor people are forced to move out to the homelands.

So the sting in the tail is that the hapless people of Grasmere, irrespective of whether they can prove their lawful existence there already or could do so, irrespective of whether they spend the rest of their lives squatting on housing waiting lists interchanged with odd periods housed in jail, irrespective of whether they have lived in the district all their lives (some are third generation there) are doomed to have their already meagre and unhappy conditions exchanged for loss of their rights to be in the area and removed outside the white area into homelands they have never seen and where what little access they presently have to being "in the system" is totally lost.

Perhaps the most important feature of this account is that it adds one to the collection "Fairy Tales of Apartheid". The stories of Grasmere, Witkoppen, Chicken Farm, Car Dump and Kliptown are not of outsiders seeking to swamp the white urban

areas and infect us with poverty and all its associate detestable miseries. The story, told as it is, is of the growth of the city, which, coupled with apartheid policy, crept over the inhabitants of Grasmere and instead of making space for and incorporating them, chose instead to squeeze and throttle them out of existence, in the mythical belief that they would "go back where they come from". This is not the dreaded Transkei-to-Nyanga model. The Grasmere inhabitants, except for a few, are where they come from.

The Deputy Minister of Cooperation and Development has discovered and revealed this secret about "squatters" to the Transvaal National Party Congress (Sunday Express 25.9.1983). It is unlikely that he will likewise discover the truth about the "new" Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill before his officials have completed their nasty work.

Merle Beetge
Sue Sher
Josie Adler

Johannesburg
13th March 1984

* Copies of cuttings attached.

Meanwhile in Pretoria ^{S. EXPRESS} . . . 25/9/83



● Dr G de V Morrison

AT the Transvaal National Party congress in Pretoria last week, the Deputy Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr G de V Morrison said of squatters: "We can't just offload them in the homelands. We can't just offload them in the towns if they're told to get off the farm."

"It may be that the man or

woman of the family is a breadwinner or that an old black man and his wife have lived for years and years on the farm.

"What is going to happen to them? It may be that their children have left the farm or that the old couple have lived there with the permission of the farmer.

SAT. 1. 10. 83
Squatters to be housed RDM
E-BA

By SOPHIE TEMA

FAMILIES squatting in En-berdale — recently rezoned "coloured" — will be housed in core-houses in Sebokeng whether they qualify to be in the area or not.

Mr D C Ganz, chairman of the Orange-Vaal Administration Board, said yesterday: "These people are actually in an area that falls under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Co-operation and Development but live in our area."

"And because they live there — where some of them where actually born — the Orange-Vaal Board cannot get rid of them by chasing them out."

"Our Board is prepared to help them. If we do not house them in our area where do we expect them to go?"

Mr Ganz said: "We have the core-house scheme where people can be housed and can develop those houses. The cost of the houses is worked out on a sliding scale and arranged for people who do not

earn more than R250 a month."

Meanwhile, the squatter families in Enberdale claim they have been harassed by constant raids and arrests by police.

Mr Peter Soal, Progressive Federal Party MP for Johannesburg North, visited the area this week and said he would investigate the problems and conditions under which the squatters lived.

He would take the matter up with the Department of Co-operation and Development and the SAP, he said.

In Kattlehong, about 50 squatter families were yesterday waiting for East Rand Administration Board officials to decide their fate after their deadline to move out of the area had expired on Thursday night.

The families were told by Erab officials this week they were to be moved to their respective "homelands" and if they refused to go they would be regarded as illegals in the area.

Migrant labour carries the can in Transkei

By BARRY STREEK

MORE than half the households in Transkei survive on R80 cash income or less a month.

And those families — with more than five people in each household — are utterly dependent on payments from migrant workers.

More than 90 percent of household cash income is contributed by migrants for those households existing on R1 000 or less a year.

These are the shock findings of a survey conducted by Mr P M Wakefield of the Institute of Management and Development Studies at the University of Transkei.

Based on the study of 4 500 households from rural and urban areas in Transkei conducted in October and November last year, the study emphasises just how important migrant labour is to the lives of most people in Transkei.

It is the first study in South Africa of cash incomes of families in rural homeland areas, and it is unlikely that the extent of poverty in Transkei is significantly different from other rural areas.

The study shows that the export of labour is the primary economic asset of the homeland areas, which would find it impossible to exist without those migrant workers sending back home a portion of their income.

It estimated that there were 349 026 men and 50 476 women from Transkei working in South Africa — and this was probably a low figure because many seasonal agricultural workers were at home at the time.

It also found that another 68 738 people worked as migrants inside Transkei.

On the basis of the survey results, it estimated that about 13 percent of men and 65 percent of women were working "illegally" in South Africa.

Most men — 73,39 percent — were employed in the labour/miner category while 44,39 percent of the women were in domestic service.

The extent of the dependence of Transkeian households on migrant labour was highlighted by the estimate that more than R500-million is remitted to Transkei in a year.

It estimated that more than 30 percent of the families survived on a cash income of less than R600 a year — less than R50 a month — and up to 95 percent of this came from migrant remittances.

But even households with cash incomes of up to R3 000 a year were still very dependent on migrant remittances: 75 percent of the cash for households with incomes between R2 100 and R2 500 a year came from migrants and 60 percent of those with incomes of between R2 500 and R3 000.

One surprising statistic was that, on average, the South African Government paid the highest salaries to migrants compared to other sectors — R3 600 a year.

The lowest-paid sectors were household work, a miserable R780 a year, on average, shops, hotels and restaurants.

In another Institute of Management of Development Studies paper, Professor Wolfgang Thomas estimated a 25 unemployment rate in the Transkei, with only 20 percent of the work force being in locally paid employment.

The worst hit were school leavers. About a third of those people between 16 and 22 were in "open" unemployment.

Prof Thomas also found that between 25 and 30 percent of Transkeian people had no direct access to land.

It is hardly surprising that he concluded that the worst to happen to Transkei's economy, in the short run, would be the curtailment of migrant labour.

Both studies have exposed the levels of poverty in one homeland which are almost certainly comparable in other homelands — and stressed the urgent need for major development in the rural areas.



Grassmere farmer Mr Abraham Letshwedi and his neighbours face eviction.



About 80 people, who face eviction from an area some of them have occupied for three generations, stand around an Orange-Vaal Administration Board official. The official, a Mr Saayman, took down their passbook particulars and said the board would try to accommodate them in Sebokeng near Vanderbijlpark.

Vaal officials change plans on removals

By Michael Tiscog

About 80 people who expected to be forcibly moved from an area near Grassmere yesterday, instead had their reference book particulars noted by Orange-Vaal Administration Board officials.

About 20 of these people said they had been told they were to be moved to Sebokeng near Vanderbijlpark yesterday.

Many of those at Grassmere claimed their families have been there for three generations.

RAIDS

Word spread through the community, which claims it has been harassed by frequent raids from administration board officials, that the 20 people would be moved to houses in Sebokeng. As a result many more people from the surrounding areas turned up yesterday at the area where the 20 people stayed.

The administration board official, a Mr Saayman, remarked that he "did not expect to find so many people" there. He and two other officials took down the particulars of the extra people.

Mr Saayman said the particulars of the 20 people had been processed and all qualified for residence in the Orange-Vaal area.

While he was taking down particulars of the other people, he promised one of them that

there would not be any more administration board raids on anyone in the area.

Mr Saayman said the Regional Commissioner of Co-Operation and Development in the Orange-Vaal area "had the last say" concerning the processing of the particulars.

He said the people would be notified at a later date when the removals would take place.

The area — which is farmland — has been taken over by the Department of Community Development.

One of the middle-aged residents, Mr Abraham Letshwedi, pointed to his herd of 11 cattle, several sheep, fowls and other animals and said: "I cannot go with these to live in Sebokeng."

"I am a farmer. I cannot imagine how I could restart my life there. I will have to arrange with relatives who live on farms out in the west, to accommodate me and my animals."

CHILDREN

Mr Letshwedi who is a widower, lives with his seven children. He said if it was possible he would like to secure the house he was promised in Sebokeng for his children.

Several other people complained that their children went to the local school and were due to write examinations soon. They said moving the children now would be detrimental to their education.