

not expected of white children in government schools, and that precious learning time is used for this purpose.

There are two creches in the area which between them cater for about 150 children. A welfare organization runs an "early learning programme" at the Eldorado Park Recreation Centre, which cares for a further 200 children during the mornings. Thousands of children in need of day care because their parents work are left unattended all day. A club is run at the home of one of the residents of Eldorado Park for the aged and another club exists at the recreation centre. One other welfare organization is based in the area itself. Otherwise help can only be obtained by travelling into town. The Coloured community of Johannesburg as a whole suffers from a dearth of good welfare services. If, for example, there are problems for the white mother who needs day care for her retarded child in Johannesburg, the problem becomes impossible for the Coloured mother. The same is true of a family needing to place an elderly parent in a home.

With no official figures available for the area, it is suggested by leaders of the community that the unemployment figure at present must stand at 15% – 20% of the male population capable of work. This includes a large number of tradesmen. In addition there are many adults with very limited education who have been the first casualties of the recession in which we now find ourselves. As yet no facilities exist to help them improve their education or skills, partly because of lack of funds for such ventures and partly because of the lack of electricity in many schools and the dangers of walking around the area at night make it difficult to get these projects off the ground. Undoubtedly this community is going to need much help in establishing a greater economic viability for itself within a sick economy.

So much for Eldorado Park. What of Kliptown, adjoining it? Kliptown is the oldest section of the area – once perhaps, like Doornfontein, a fairly respectable area but now a festering slum. The recent floods brought some publicity to the area as did the move of the "squatters" to Eldorado

Park Ext. 3 last year. If these so-called squatters refuse to move back to the place they left – in so far as these survived the rains – they can hardly be blamed. What they left behind them was years of living in damp – sometimes completely flooded – "homes", with leaking tin roofs, uneven floors, collapsing walls, boarded-up windows. They left behind them those days when they had to cook the family dinner holding an umbrella to protect themselves and the food against the leaks over the stove. They left the rats and vermin. They left the bucket toilets, emptied three times weekly, which they and their families shared with often 30 other people in the area. They left the one tap in the yard which they shared with 100 others. And they left behind them thousands of neighbours who still live in these inhuman conditions, despite the pleas of representatives of the community that Kliptown be declared a disaster area and that urgent steps should be taken to rehouse its inhabitants before yet another generation be forced to grow up in it. In Kliptown the overcrowding is severe – and so other problems such as a high school drop-out rate, absenteeism from work, alcoholism, desertion and gangsterism find a natural breeding ground there, as does illegitimacy. Until the people are offered housing fit for humans, efforts made to eradicate these problems seem doomed to failure. The wonder is that so many of the people there are so human – generous with the little they have, humorous, patient.

The approximately 30 000 people of Eldorado Park and Kliptown remained quiet during the recent upheavals throughout the country. Their quiet, however, is no sign of content. Bitterness is rife in the hearts of the people here. If they are quiet now it is only because they have not yet summoned enough courage to rebel openly. But the time will come when they will throw caution to the winds and join with the people of Soweto. Many opportunities to avoid this confrontation have been squandered by a thoughtless and often totally heartless officialdom. Some of the leaders of the community maintain that even now it is not too late for a change. Only time will prove them right or wrong. □

3 Cape Town

by Rommel Roberts

Co-ordinator for Cape Flats Committee for Interim Accommodation

Cape Town has been infested with many squatters ever since the war, and in some cases even before then. Perhaps the word "infest" is the wrong one when seen from a sociological point of view; however, it has been the view of authorities that has counted to date and for them squatters do "infest" and breed all kinds of unruly elements. In fact, most people still have this view since there happens to be an incredible lack of knowledge about these people who litter our beautiful countryside, causing all kinds of eye-sores and therefore grave embarrassment.

Squatting has always been a problem. Its seriousness a matter of degree. Certainly the Sophiatowns (JHB) and Elsie's Rivers (CT) have been in existence for more than a few decades. People have always found the cities to offer more lucrative positions, salaries, though never houses, hence the equivalent development in S.A. of the USA grey areas (squatters situated close to city industrial areas) plus the birth of a new culture (a sub culture) as opposed to that of the city. In S.A. this is probably more evident than in the American situation by virtue of the

fact that the people have so many diverse interests and backgrounds resulting in a diversification in the whole transferral process including actual habitation. Obviously a metamorphosis takes place in the modification or sometimes even total change of groups or community structures, aspirations (due to new environment) culture etc. In S.A. there has been the tendency to coast along on the squatter problem until it reaches such immense proportions that something has to be done. Sophiatown experienced something of this nature years ago when it was simply eliminated. However, the Cape Town situation has highlighted the whole squatter problem because suddenly as a result of the Group Areas Act the whole squatter problem was exposed in the transferral process resulting in a sharp increase in squatters (backyard and dune squatting). It suddenly took on huge general proportions which authorities prefer to ignore rather than tackle. To date they had been dealing with localised problems e.g. Facreton, Sophiatown etc. The problem was never seen in its totality with its string of side-effects, nor the aspect of causality entered into for serious consideration with the idea of affecting future change on the long term basis. To date only festering sores have been dealt with but never the real deep underlying problem, threatening now to burst the seams of the larger community. There has been a very negative approach in trying to control the situation — special legislation has been passed for this purpose by central authorities aimed at curbing rather than developing. The desire to eliminate the problem is present, the method and means happen to be negative and limited.

The squatter problem in the Cape Peninsula, (the "O1 Region", as it is called by the planners, incorporating greater Cape Town), is not a new phenomenon and has in fact existed from the time of Jan van Riebeeck, who happened to be among the first. Since then the position has deteriorated considerably, particularly in the period after World War II when settlements in Windermere and Elsie River came into prominence causing great concern within council circles as well as constituting health hazards. Overcrowding has of course also been a very significant factor particularly in areas like District Six. A whole development has since taken place in the growth to its present proportions.

Cape Town has both African and Coloured squatters. Many come from outlying areas through a process of immigration. They serve the community in numerous ways and are seen as being an asset to the community (from the point of view of being a positive labour force). The majority of these people do come from the city itself but are forced to squat due to a serious lack of accommodation. This should be attributed more to the Coloureds than the Africans. Cape Town is the Coloured persons traditional homeland. The percentage of immigration in the African community is much higher (60%) than Coloureds (22%) due to an almost total lack of opportunities in the rural areas.

There are now more than 50 different squatter settlements within the O1 region comprising both African and Coloured people numbering over 300 000, living in existing shanties. A further 150–200 000 are living in grossly overcrowded conditions within African and Coloured Townships. These people exist and cannot be wished away no matter how much anyone tries. The

problem in terms of numbers is of such magnitude that it has evoked a series of responses from the public, local and central authorities. The problem is further complexified through the varied responses by local authorities and central government as well as the public when dealing with each particular race group affected, as each group either enjoys or suffers a certain status attributed to it by law.

Africans have no rights within the Peninsula as it is classed as a Coloured preferential area. Consequently job opportunities are very limited. Provision of Black Housing was officially frozen in 1967 and theoretically the Black population should have reduced at a rate of 5% p.a. in a movement back to the homelands. This has, however, not worked and instead has given rise to a rapid increase in influx (as much as 60%) to the city. In a recent survey (Feb. 1977) undertaken by the Cape Flats Committee for Interim Accommodation in the Modderdam Squatter Camp (10 000 people), the findings were that of the number of Africans (over 80%) over 70% of the men were legal residents and in regular employment while over 90% of the women were illegal. This raises the point of the dreaded Bachelor quarters where men are forced to live without their wives hence the squatter problem, since the only means whereby men are able to live with their women and children are in hastily put up shacks.

The coloured people experience a projected backlog (1975 to 1985) of 60 000 dwelling units required by 1985 for Coloureds and 40 000 for Africans, requiring a building rate of about 12 000 dwelling units per annum which to date has never been remotely reached in any building programme in the region. 1976 produced 4 000 units approximately. This group is not restricted in its movements, however, the ¹"Platteland" situation is similar to that of the urban areas except that the problem is not one of unemployment. The very low wages and the continued existence of the "dop system" has driven many families to Cape Town where facilities and better employment opportunities exist. ²About 22% of the total Coloured squatter problem can be accounted for in the process of immigration.

Although Coloureds have a legal right to be resident in Cape Town, they suffer the same fate as their African counterparts. All squatting is illegal and carries heavy penalties for the squatter and the owner of the land on which squatting takes place. Squatters are entirely at the mercy of the State and landowners. Their only hope is public sympathy (Thornhill — Ciskei, Limehill — Natal, Modderdam — Cape Town, Crossroads — C.T., etc.). The present Squatting Act (passed May 1977) raised a public outcry because it effectively removed whatever rights squatters had and contains certain elements which make squatting extremely difficult while at the same time providing no positive alternatives.

The Act brings to an end the long standing Roman Dutch Law principle that notice must be given to a person residing on land to move. The owner may now do as he likes, for instance:

- (i) He may demolish any illegal structure without prior notice,
- (ii) his action will be condoned in that the victim of the demolition will have absolutely no claim for damage to his property against the demolisher;

- (iii) the squatter's right of recourse to the courts is removed. The onus is placed on the squatter to prove the legality of his occupation of the place where he is squatting. In terms of the Act, however, it is illegal to be a squatter, which effectively means that no squatter has grounds for approaching any court for relief.

The Act is seen as a direct reaction to recent successful litigation by squatters in the Cape Town settlements of Modderdam and Kraaifontein. These actions prevented the eviction of the people who brought them. The present legislation is made retrospective and thus sets aside the successful applications brought by the Modderdam and Kraaifontein people.

The Act places a heavy onus on the landowner to rid his land of squatters. In the event of his failing to do so he can be ordered to demolish any squatter houses on his land himself. If he fails to do this he can be charged and fined and/or imprisoned. In the meantime the demolition can be carried out by the responsible authority in the area and the cost of it charged to the landowner. The squatter who lives in the demolished home may also, be fined and/or imprisoned.

The Act increases the penalties for squatting or harbouring squatters. It makes no provision for alternative accommodation to be given to people whose homes are demolished.

It is evident that the law is not designed to protect the squatter but rather a stern preventative measure in the light of inadequate provision of housing.

One of the most retarding factors in community developments has been the insecurity experienced by squatters giving rise to two extremes namely, apathy and aggression in the face of the inability to cope with the problem.

The approach has been to build standard housing on a mass scale as quickly as possible. Funds have been made available for this reason. However to be realistic, leading sociologists (S. P. Cillier and others) do not see the problem being alleviated within a period of 10 years.

Interim measures are necessary growing to an eventual permanent solution in the following ways.

- 1 Provision of land and basic services where people can be encouraged to erect houses under supervision (or on the lines of Zambian experiments).
2. The establishment of low cost housing on the lines of starter or core housing which is financed by the State, employer or general public (as in the case of the Shelter Appeal Fund). The idea would be the encouragement of self-help housing.
3. A lowering of building standards and the cutting of red-tape in order to stimulate growth are necessary measures.

We are faced with a growing problem of homeless and inadequately housed people. The problem has taken on emergency proportions and must therefore be dealt with in this light. The niceties of red-tape and group areas are luxuries which we cannot afford. Bold steps are required to meet the problem if one is to save various South African Communities and families from suffering the fate of disintegration. A positive step could avert chaos. □

¹ The surrounding farming areas of the Cape where most people are employed on wine, fruit and other farms.

² Prof. S. P. Cilliers report on the Coloured Housing Crises 1972.

³ Prof. W. H. Thomas – Housing Projections.

A Project for Mr Dunne

Suggested by A. R. Morphet

I was struck by Tim Dunne's description of the early morning workers as "the people of God" Mr Dunne has clearly himself heard the things that are said by them and has seen the world they leave so early in the morning. I would like therefore to propose that Mr Dunne arrange to lead a group of people into this world and for members of the group to listen, to look and to record what they see and hear. The columns of Reality would I hope be available to the group for publishing their cumulative record and their conclusions. □