Glenmore — where people have no future

By David Forbes

GLENMORE is the newest and perhaps the least known of the resettlement camps. Ever since the camp hit the headlines of Eastern Cape newspapers in April last year — and was then forgotten about — the people at Glenmore have been struggling to make ends meet.

Glenmore is a 1 000 hectare farm, housing 3 800 people in just over 500 houses, and lies on the banks of the Fish River, 42 kilometres from Grahamstown.

The residents are all squatters who were moved there from 'black spots' in the Eastern Cape. The majority of them are either children or old age pensioners.

The residents come mostly from Klipfontein, a farm near Bushman's River, a coastal holiday resort near Grahamstown. Others were moved from Coega and Colchester near Port Elizabeth, Alexandria and Grahamstown.

Small groups were also moved from Middeldrift, Keiskammahoek, Chalumna and Hillside, near Fort Beaufort.

Although the East Cape Administration Board denied that the removals were forced, squatters insisted they had been coerced and intimidated.

'I feel beat up — I don't know the place I'm going to. The place is bad. We will lead a costly life,' said one squatter at the time.

Another reported from Klipfontein that he had gone to see his lawyer in Port Elizabeth and returned to find his house destroyed and his family gone.

Another's comment revealed how the squatters had been tricked: 'They said sign here, and you won't have to move. They bluffed me. I then had to move. Others also had to sign'.

CHILD DEATHS

Eleven children have died at Glenmore since April 1979, many of them between one and three years old. Although the Regional Director for Health in Port Elizabeth, Dr Krannauw, said when the Press reported the deaths in July that there was 'no cause for concern', Glenmore residents believe that conditions in the camp are mainly responsible for the deaths.

One resident has said that he and others have to 'search for food like pigs'. An Eastern Cape Administration Board official said the move had given dignity to the people of Glenmore.

Soon after the move, complaints began to filter through the tight security net around Glenmore. People began to complain their children were vomiting, passing bloody stools and had pustules breaking out on their faces.

The Department of Co-operation and Development said that if people died it was not their responsibility.

There are six churches, which were built by the people themselves, and some services are held in homes.

There is a school, which was still under construction when the first people were moved there. There are six teachers, who teach up to standard four.

There is a clinic staffed by a black sister, assisted by two others. A doctor visits the clinic every Wednesday and Friday, but cannot see everyone in the long queues which await his arrival.

There are 45 taps at Glenmore. The water is very saline — which caused widespread sickness when people were first moved there — and about 33 to 40 houses share one tap.

The ratio of people to bucket latrines is 25 to one. Families of six or more live in wooden structures that have three rooms each. Every room is three metres square. The houses are very hot in summer and very cold in winter.

There are no ceilings, and the inside walls are covered with chicken wire to allow mud or dung plastering. Gaps between the planks allow the wind to blow through houses.

HUNGER AND POVERTY

In an effort to combat the hunger and poverty, and international organisation, World Vision, moved into Glenmore on June 15 distributing two tons of rations weekly for 12 weeks, while the Glenmore Action Group, GAG, distributed blankets and clothing.

Heavy rains flooded 26 houses, and six families were given new houses while others moved in with friends and relatives on higher ground. Many families lost cattle in the move — they died at the rate of two per day for the first couple of weeks from a poisonous weed in the area. They will receive no compensation for their losses.

In 1971 after Dr Koornhof had seen Dimbaza, he said: 'Never again'. Yet within eight years, 680 families had been transported in Government trucks to an arid farm which offered no employment, overcrowded living conditions and which had earned itself the infamous name of 'the Nowhere City'.

When squatters first moved to Glenmore, there were no medical facilities, no shops, post offices or telephone, no employment and

(Continued on page 23)

To ensure a 'family anchorage' for a population of three million Africans aready resident in the reserves in 1936 and a further 1½ million whom the NAC estimated would have to be repatriated from the white areas, the State instituted the so-called betterment schemes. These schemes were legally enforceable in the 7 250 000 morgen of potential trust areas (ie quota land) to be released under the 1936 act, and it was hoped that the remaining 10½ million morgen scheduled in 1913 would also eventually become betterment areas.

Zanyokwe, like most other areas in Keiskammahoek, was, for some undisclosed reason, left out of the 1913 schedule. It was one of the first to be proclaimed a betterment area in 1939 and was immediately subjected to a whole host of regulations restricting the number of stock, and about the fencing of grazing camps and land allocation.

In drawing up the scheme the administrators apparently relied heavily on some o fthe labour devices used by Cecil Rhodes in his Glen Grey Act of 1894.

The success of Rhodes' system was that it increased the government's control over Africans in districts surveyed under the act. This control was strengthened by ensuring that 'headmen in the pay of the Government' would serve on councils created under the act.

The headmen would be responsible not only for levying taxes for local development, but also for collecting government ones. Secondly, the act limited people to four-morgen allotments under individual title, which was hardly sufficient for an economic peasant hcIding, but small enough to impose severe restrictions on squatting.

There was to be hereditary succession on the basis of primogeniture, and land could not be alienated without special permission. Rhodes thereby ensured an ever-increasing labour force, for in each generation all but the eldest son would be made landless; and by declaring the surveyed lands inalienable the move towards segregation had begun.

The betterment planners modified Rhodes' scheme in one important respect. Although it was usual in trust areas for the eldest son to inherit the land, this was seen as a privilege given at the State's discretion, not as a legal right. Under the new scheme a man could only have a certificate of occupation and it could be withdrawn if he failed to obey any of the trust's demands — any of their proclamations or servitude regulations.

GLENMORE — Continued from page 19

only the promise of rent and high transport costs, where before there had been none. The cost of living at Glenmore is exorbitantly high.

In 1976, the Poverty Datum Line for a family of six, living in Grahamstown, was R105,06. In Glenmore, three years later, where basic commodities are more expensive than they are in Grahamstown, most families have an income of only R27 per month.

Two farmers recruited women and young men to pick sprouts at 90c per day or at 2c per kilo, plus a meal of beans and mielie-soup. Worker turnover was high, and productivity low, with women earning R1,40 per week. They were in the fields before dawn, soaked to the waist before the dew was off the freezing plants, and then remained there until after 5 pm.

Glenmore was destined to receive 40 000 blacks from isolated pockets in the Eastern Cape, who were to live in 5 000 houses on a 1 000 hectare farm on the banks of the Fish River.

But in August 1979 further removals were stopped and development of the R26 million scheme was frozen after Dr Koornhof visited the area. Shortly afterwards, Dr Koornhof, in an address to the Grahamstown Library of the Blind, said he was 'the honorary mayor of Alexandria, the Godfather of Crossroads, and would soon be the Father Christmas of Glenmore'.

By November, there were only four people employed out of the 3 800 Glenmore residents, family incomes had dropped by more than two thirds — from an average of R80 per month to R27 per month — and more than 20 people had died, mostly from malnutrition or kwashiorkor-related diseases.

Mr D. Hitge, Chief Commissioner for Co-operation and Development in Queenstown, said that where people worked was not his responsibility. 'There are the rural areas where there is no work either — the people are migrant workers'. He said: 'The provision of jobs has nothing to do with me'.

LOSS OF RIGHTS

The most important loss, apart from family members and cattle, is of Section 10 rights (Section 10 of the Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945), which enables them to seek work in urban areas. This loss is extended to their children, whcih means the Glenmore people have been forced to become migrant workers.

The Government endorses this view. Ten years ago, the then Minister of Bantu Affairs and Development, Mr M. C. Botha, said resettlement areas were not meant to be areas of employment, but areas from which blacks could become migrant workers.

Resettlement, in Government terms, aims at clearing 'non-productive Bantu' or 'redundant blacks' from white areas, and sending them to resettlement camps or back to their homelands.

These 'non-productive Bantu' have been classified by the Government as: the aged, unfit widows, women with dependent children, families who do not qualify for Section 10 rights, superfluous farm labourers and squatters.

Ironically, even professional blacks, such as doctors, attorneys, agents, traders and industrialists have fallen into this category because they do not fit into the so-called 'white' economy.

Glenmore reveals that there has been no major shift of Government policy over the past few years.