

Crossroads spirit has gone to sleep

"IN old Crossroads, we had people but no houses.

HERE in New Crossroads, we have houses but no people."

New Crossroads resident, Mrs D Mananga.

ON the dusty sands bordering Nyanga East, more than 900 houses have been built to accommodate some of the Crossroads families, who have struggled for decent housing for years.

The strength of those who struggled forced the authorities to start providing homes on a strip of land which today has become known as New Cross-

roads.

But the spirit of unity which strengthened them in fighting for these houses, has gone to sleep.

New Crossroad residents interviewed by Grassroots said that they no longer feel the close bonds with their neighbours as they had in old Crossroads.

"Here you must mind your own business," one resident said.

"I think this is so because some people have more than others," she said. "While we have houses now, there are no other facilities."

Many women complained that they cannot manage to survive on the low wages their husbands earn. They want work but there is nobody to look after our children. Not only are there no cre-

ches but no proper playgrounds for them," they said.

New Crossroad resident, Mrs D Mananga, has lived in the area for more than a year, had great hopes when she moved into her one-bedroomed home. "I thought things would be much better here," she said. "But we must face the fact that the standard of living is low. Our people must

understand that there is more to life than just having a house."

Mrs Mananga has not given up believing that something can be done to improve the situation.

"If people put their minds together, things will soon come to us. If we can put our feet together and stand for our rights, then there will be no delay."



The price of rent increases



Hout Bay residents stand united to form civic

MORE than 100 people attended the rent meeting on Wednesday night, March 24 at Sentinel School, Hout Bay. The meeting was called by the Block Club residents Committee.

Residents worked hard to inform people about the meeting. This was done by door to door contact and speaking through the loud hailer. Union Committees informed workers in the fish factories.

At the start songs were sung and Mr Bezuidenhout formally opened the meeting with prayer. The chairman, Mr Willoughby, introduced the speakers.

The first speaker, a South African Sea Products tenant gave a message of support to the Divisional Council tenants since SASP tenants are not directly affected by increases in rents but still stand by the tenants that are affected.

A further message of support was given by the youth. The speaker said that youth stand by their parents and grandparents in the struggle for rents they can afford. She said: "Often the youth are pulled out of school to help our parents to pay for basics like rents."

The speaker appealed to the community to stand united to form a democratic people's organization through which the people can channel their grievances and resist oppressive laws.

The guest speaker, Mr Wilfred Rhodes, chairperson of CAHAC spoke on housing in South Africa and on CAHAC.

A community worker in the area spoke on CAHAC's meeting with the minister of Community Development, Mr Pen Kotze. The meeting was then opened to the floor.

After residents had discussed their grievances related to high rents, one resident said: "It is no use sitting on the fence and shouting. Something must be done. We must come together and form an organization that will actively take up our problems and work under the wing of CAHAC."

The residents unanimously agreed with this statement and decided to elect a committee to organize a mass meeting where a new civic organization will be born.

Residents were elected onto this committee. Their task is to make all the arrangements for the mass

meeting and to inform the community about the meeting through house-meetings and pamphlets.

One of the residents on the committee commented, "I think it was a very successful meeting. This was something new to us and something we've been waiting for for a long time. We must join up with CAHAC. It was through this organization that our grievances went forward to the Minister of Community Development.

"Now he knows how

we feel about the Group Areas, about not having enough facilities, about how we struggle to pay our rents and how we struggle to make ends meet. Now we also know how little he thinks about us."

Another resident had the following to say about the meeting. "It was a good start to what will be a long struggle. There will be opposition and we will have to work hard in drawing people into becoming active and committed to building our peoples' organisation."



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MERRYDALE AVENUE, PORTLANDS

ANGER AT EVICTION NOTICES

THE people of Avonwood, Avondale and Lyndoc have received eviction notices because they cannot afford to pay the latest rent increases.

At the monthly meeting of the Divisional Council last month the people aired their grievances in a silent protest.

Banner

As the council sped through the agenda, the people stood up as one with the banner of their association and another banner stating the demand that rents be lowered and evictions stopped.

The chairman of the Council, Mr Louwtjie Rothman, asked the people to leave, which they did.

Outside the hall the people said they were

upset at the way in which the Council went through the agenda.

"It's amazing that they can discuss things that concern us so quick without considering how we feel," said one woman.

The people then took a letter with their demands to the office of the Council secretary, Mr Vivier.

They demanded that:

- the various due dates be changed to one date for all tenants - notably the seventh of each month;
- the interest charged on arrears be scrapped immediately;
- penalty rentals be lifted and provision be made for tenants to submit their blue forms;
- eviction notices be delivered personally to tenants;
- office hours at the

local rent offices be extended;

- rent forms should be computerised and not handwritten;
- an effective rent system must be developed;
- a full enquiry be launched into the books and inefficient administration of the local rent office;
- the system of two families in one house paying rents be scrapped immediately;
- clarity should be given on the paying of rents on a weekly and monthly basis;

- and finally we unequivocally demand rents all tenants can afford.

The people of Elsie River have shown how they feel. Now they are waiting for the Council to reply to their letter.

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