

Glenmore plan slammed

EAST LONDON — The proposal to move blacks on Monday from Kenton-on-Sea to the Glenmore resettlement camp is "horrific and without compassion," a former chairman of the Kenton Village Management Board, Mr D. R. Savage, said in a statement to the Daily Dispatch.

"Large numbers of the helpless are being moved in 40 ten-ton trucks at very short notice from the Kenton-on-sea Bantu Emergency Camp to Committees Drift, which is now spoken of as "Glenmore." Committees Drift achieved some notoriety when it was proposed to shift the inhabitants of the Grahamstown Fingo Location there. "They will be moved, reports state, to houses which have been erected there. A school and water will be provided" the statement said.

"From what I know of the locality, a hot, barren and inhospitable wilderness founded on shales which yield scanty water from underground and likely brack at that, it seems that they will have to wait till the Orange-Fish scheme is extended to that area before the water becomes something of a sinecure.

"They have, I believe, been promised jobs.

"The only jobs in that locality which I can visualise will be to erect more homes and roads to service them, to accommodate more people who will be forced into a similar plight.

"Fairly recent newspaper reports which carried no suggestion of the present move, have indicated that ground will be available on which to grow crops and vegetables.

"Any livelihood from that source is not likely to be more than marginal until a fully implemented irrigation with reasonably sized individual holdings has been realised, and that too must presumably await the Orange-Fish water.

"Even granted that crop and vegetable production forthwith achieves reasonable

proportions, there is no local market for produce, and the locality is served by dirt roads of no high standard to Grahamstown, Alice, Peddie and King William's Town.

"Lack of any infrastructure, a word much favoured by planners, applies also to the marketing of other goods they may be fortunate enough in the future to produce.

"Who have been moved from Kenton?

"The majority are women, old and young (many of them gainfully employed in domestic employment at Kenton) and their children, many of whom, on a lesser scale, are also gainfully employed.

"Some of the males who are affected may well be employed as gardeners and caretakers by the resident and non-resident owners of property at Kenton. This source of money for the maintenance of themselves and their families will immediately be cut off and can never be replaced.

"Should any optimist suggest that their skills and loyalties can be diverted to serve Grahamstown, which is the nearest market of any consequence for such skills, I can only point out that the market there is already hopelessly oversupplied.

"Here at Kenton these people have made lives and homes for themselves and have been in lawful occupation of their properties - all must be abandoned. Their means of livelihood must be abandoned as must the community into which they have become integrated.

"The majority may well prove to have been born here. This has certainly been the home of some for at least 20 years. I do not imagine they will receive any or in any case adequate compensation for what they must leave behind.

"Admittedly they are being given new homes for which in some measure they will be expected to pay; but where? Committees!

Mr Donald Savage was a resident of Kenton-on-Sea for 10 years. He was a member of the Village Management Board for eight years, serving as chairman for a short while.

A retired attorney, Mr Savage practised in East London during the first few months of the last war and the first few years thereafter.

He moved to Alexandria in 1949 and practised there until he retired in 1970. He is a former town councillor and Mayor of Alexandria.

"Thanks to the efforts of many members of Kenton's white community, several of them well beyond the call of Christian duty, the relationship between the two communities is on a very healthy basis of mutual goodwill and trust and is reflected in the growing, if gradual, prosperity and health of the black population.

"The health services rendered and the assistance with pensions have been remarkable. I am certain that equal facilities will not exist at Committees, where the need for them will be vastly greater. These facilities and the mutual trust between white and black they are also called on to abandon.

"Nancy is a domestic worker. At present she is caretaker of a flat for an absentee employer and receives a monthly retainer.

"At weekends or during holidays when her employer or members of her family are down at Kenton, she works at a daily rate.

"She has another job for a local resident for two days a week and a third similar job. Two teenage daughters are employed at weekends and the holiday season by visitors, the one also on a permanent, if part time, basis. Her eldest daughter is a hopeless paraplegic. A small son, survivor of twins who had T.B., is now healthy and at school.

"Her husband who until recently has been in steady and continuous employment, but who is nevertheless mentally unstable, is now unemployed and is, I consider, unemployable.

"Nancy has striven for her family and she now has a home and a family which have been built up into a respectable and reliable entity.

"She was supposed to go at 10 days notice to nothing with no hope of employment or income.

"This is one case of which I am only too well aware. Until I left Kenton 18 months ago, she had been our regular, loyal domestic for eight years. She had been left in good hands. She was well-liked and trusted.

"What monstrosity enveloped her? These women, as in so many poor communities are the ones who battle for their families.

"Nancy, in fact, has now received a reprieve negotiated by one of her employers, but there are hundreds of cases like hers.

"A man who has given years of good, loyal and trustworthy service to the business community has recently become unemployable owing to a stroke. He is virtually dying but I hear he and his family must go. There is case upon heartrending case, old widows and orphans among them.

"Why must they go? Why has the fate which was reserved for the Grahamstown Fingo Location suddenly been visited on them?

"It seems possible that it has to do with Klipfontein, a farm occupied by certain Coloured families under a testamentary trust close to the Municipality of Boesmans River Mouth, across the river from Kenton.

"Large numbers of black squatters have settled there in recent years, many reportedly unemployed. There have been recent reports in the papers of action being taken against the Coloured landlords.

"The squatters are be-

ing moved. Those males who have employment locally are being moved into the Kenton Emergency Camp with their families, replacing the unfortunates who have been lawful and, in many cases industrious members of the Kenton community for many years.

"Is this justice? Is this compassion?

"On April 2 this unhappy convoy of 40 trucks, after leaving the tarred road between Grahamstown

and Fort Beaufort at Botha's Hill, will soon be winding along the dirt road down the defile of Pluto's Vale, the valley of the shadow of death. I only hope they pass without mishap."

Mr Savage posed the following questions:

What clinic or other medical facilities will be available at Glenmore? (He had heard there were none.)

What are the specifications of the homes at Glenmore?

How many people will be allocated to a house?

What rent will be payable?

What are the specifications of the water supply available? How much will be available for irrigation and when? How large will the irrigation units per family be?

He also asked what facilities would exist locally for pensions, new applications, renewals and transfers and all medical examinations in connection with pensions.

"What rations or monetary relief is to be available for those with inadequate income or without any income whatsoever?" he asked.

"Who has the compassion to extend a helping hand to these people? I fear they need more than prayers," Mr Savage said.

Attempts to put Mr Savage's questions on Glenmore to the director of the Midlands Administration Board, Mr L. Koch yesterday afternoon were unsuccessful. Neither Mr Koch nor his deputy were available. — DDR.