

1. LAND TENURE

To: Prof. ...

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to put please the ...
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IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENTS IN HONIARA.

The SISA has developed three ...
and Tenants ...
1. HOUSING IN HONIARA.

a. HOUSING.

After the second world war, when Honiara became the Capital of the Solomon Islands, the drive to improve Housing has mainly concentrated on raising the construction of building and services to the standards legally required. The National Development Plan, (1975, vol. 11: 39) stated the aim that everyone in the Solomon Islands should be able to afford and live in an adequate house with reasonable comfort, health and safety, and that housing should be paid for from family incomes, not subsidies.

Well behind the years after the administrative capital was established at Honiara, separate houses were provided for expatriate officials, while the majority of Solomon Island workers were housed in labour lines. As years passed, number of families established in Honiara increased and the pattern was changed.

According to the 1976 housing census (1977: statistic office), out of 3211 housing units, 66.8 per cent were detached houses, 21.9 per cent was semi-detached and only 8.6 per cent were labour lines, which housed 6 per cent of the population. About 34.5 per cent of conventional permanent housing units were rented from Government by civil servants, 18 per cent were occupied by owner-occupiers, and just under 20 per cent were provided by employers rent free.

Government owned 33 per cent of all housing units plus a large proportion of the 280 houses which were empty. Five per cent of housing units were servants' quarters, which does not include some servants' quarters provided by Government on separate house sites. In all 60 per cent of all housing is tied to employment.

Today there are three main types of housing; houses

1000	20	11000	11000	1000
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The SIHA has developed three estates, Vava, Mbua Valley and Tehameina, and also built houses on individual sites in a number of areas. Cross subsidisation is made possible by purchasers of the cheapest houses paying less than cost price while those of houses in the middle range pay more. The absence of a high-cost housing programme makes cross-subsidisation at this level impossible.

Prices have risen dramatically as a result of inflation during the last two years: the cost of a 485 rose from \$2900 in 1975 to approximately \$5,500 at the end of 1977 (Zwaenepel 1977: para. 22). Because of the rise of costs of SIHA houses most of the Solomon Islanders find it difficult to pay the sum required because of kinship demands on their resources.

According to Zwaenepel's conclusions and instruction, 24 per cent of households cannot afford any new SIHA housing units; 27.5 per cent could only afford a Type 240 house if purchased over 20 years; a further 27.5 per cent can only afford T240 or T384 types purchased over 20 years; and the remaining 21 per cent can afford larger houses.

C. GOVERNMENT HOUSING.

There are 89 per cent of all conventional permanent housing which is tied to employment, of these, just over half are owned by Government and the rest by other employers. In April 1975, government charged sub-economic rents for its houses. The government houses are mainly rented to civil servants. There are two low-cost housing estates, Vava and Tavarahu, in which government employees rent houses which were built before SIHA was established. A number of occupants are buying their houses on favourable terms.

rented from government or other employers, owned-occupied houses built by the Housing Authority; and so-called temporary housing (leaf houses).

b. THE HOUSING AUTHORITY.

The Housing Authority was established in 1970 under the Housing Ordinance 1970 as amended by ordinance 2/1974 to solve the growing "squatter" problem in Honiara. The activities and finances of Solomon Islands Housing Authority have been the subject of a number of studies, including a statement of "Housing Policy" by the Ministry of Works and Public Utilities in 1975. One conclusion reached from a study of these documents is that houses provided by SIHA are, in fact subsidised. The ~~subsidies~~ subsidies benefit the wealthier members of the urban population who can afford SIHA houses. Under Section 22 of the Housing ordinance, the Authority shall have powers "to acquire estates," "to subdivide and develop any land," "to acquire dwelling houses" and to make loans. By October 1977, 517 houses had been built or were under construction, constituting something under one fifth of all conventional-permanent housing in Honiara.

The Housing Authority builds the following types of houses (the figures represent the area of the houses in square feet.).

HOUSES BUILT IN 1977 - NOW THE NO. OF HOUSES INCREASE

TYPE	NO.	PRESENT COST \$	APPROX. SELLING PRICE \$	APPROX. REPAYMENT \$
240	33	2640	-	24
384	56	4224	3800 - 3900	38 - 39
400	5	4400	-	42 - 45
485	212	5335	5500	50
648	13	7128	7500	62
700	46	7700	7700	70
800	94	8800	8800	89
1008	58	11088	11088	125

For some years the government has sought to divest itself of responsibility for housing its employees. Government is giving to civil servants who occupy government houses the opportunity to buy them, although civil service Associations do not consider that interest should be charged. As individuals accept those offers, the Association's objections are likely to subside.

Recently, with the handing over to SIHA of government housing for sale or rental, the housing market showed an offer of houses for sale. It may be interesting as government houses represent a large part of the housing stock, to note the estimate value of government owned housing units.

GOVERNMENT HOUSES IN HONIARA.

CLASS	NUMBER	PRICES	\$
I	5	-	75
II	20	-	
III a. Minimum	107	17,600 - 22,500	
III b. H is assumed	98	13,350 - 18,220	
IV 20% of	77	12,500 - 16,000	
V	75	7,100 - 9,500	
VI	43	4,500 - 5,500	
VII	153	4,500 - 5,500	
VIII	102	2,200 - 3,700	
IX	344	2,200 - 3,700	
LABOUR-LINES	73	-	
TOTAL	1,097		

Subsidized rents to employees occupying government house were abolished in April, 1976. The main intention of government was to transfer most of its houses to SIHA (1977-1978) for sale or rental purposes, with its employees having prior opportunity to buy. However, beginning of 1979 this policy was (sale of government

houses), was amended because the government found out that there are more of its employees but shortage of houses, so the sale of government houses was stopped. As SIHA took over government houses for sale (1977-1978) or rent, it was indicated to make a calculation of the affordability thresholds for government housing.

(GOVERNMENT HOUSES - AFFORDABILITY THRESHOLDS)

CLASS	MORTGAGE REPAYMENT	NEEDED MONTHLY INCOME (a)	RENT	NEEDED MONTHLY INCOME (b)
III	214	856	123	615
IV	160	640	103	515
V	145	580	90	450
VI	86	344	73	365
VII	59	236	58	290
VIII	47	188	35	175
IX	38	152	27	135
X	30	120	15	75

a. Minimum 4x repayment

b. It is assured rent should not be more than average 20% of income.

d. INDIVIDUAL.

Nearly all land within the town boundaries of Honiara, is government owned and comes under the Ministry of Agriculture and lands. Land is allocated to SIHA by lands Division for construction of houses in terms of lease. Also a public tender is put out to the public offering sites to individuals or groups.

The financial conditions for leaseholders comprise the payment of a premium and a small monthly land rent. With the higher urbanization and changing demand, the public tender system encourages price inflation of land.

Because of the inflation and increasing of land

prices, the lower-wages earners couldn't afford to get a chance to win or get land through tender system, only a high-wages earners could afford to get it.

This brought a increasing problem of demands to house by the lower-class people and because of that a so-called leaf houses on public land are being built on licence basis. As this is the cheapest way of getting or owning a house by the lower-class groups. This increasingly squashed some workers of government and private sectors tend to squatter behind the fence. Shortage of houses means increasing of squatters.

e. HOUSING NEEDS.

According to the February 1976 census, 14,786 people (now estimated to be 15,000) were living in Honiara. The effective demand of new housing units was relatively high during that period. However at present housing needs are very high than the previous years.

The evolution of the number of households depends upon the natural growth of the population, the migration balance and the evolution of the average household size. Although one of the targets of the National Development Plan 1975-1979 is to reduce the rate of population increase to 2% by the early 1980's, the provisional results of the 1976 census do not show any more move towards that target.

It is more difficult to estimate the future influence of the migratory movements. The migration balance does not always follow predictable trends. As more and more new employment exists today it attracts people to immigrate, but also irrational factors such as the attraction of urban areas and the subjective expectance of better living conditions in the capital may play a role.

The number of households increased by 4.6%

per year and the number of males by 3.6% only in the same 1970-'76 period. At present this is definitely increased to twice the number of that in 1976, because of increased population and employment possibilities offered by government and ~~free~~ private sectors.

Even if the number of households does not ~~change~~ change, it is necessary to have some new dwellings built every year in order to preserve the quantity and quality of the housing stock. If the average life time of a dwelling is for instance estimated at 50 years, there should be a yearly housing production of 2% of the numbers of housing units, to maintain the housing stock at the same level.

In Honiara, as most of the conventional permanent houses exist since less than 25 years, there is no urgency to replace them already now or in the next six years. The situation is not the same with the non-permanent housing units. Houses with walls in leaves (sago palm leaves) have to be replaced more frequently. The use of chemicals to combat malaria, has a weakening influence on the resisting power of leaf, used as building materials. With the progress of modernization, there is a tendency to replace non-permanent units with dwellings in more durable materials.

ESTIMATED HOUSING NEEDS

	DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS		REPLACEMENT STOCK		TOTAL
1977	136	+	45	=	181
1978	144	+	45	=	189
1979	150	+	45	=	195
1980	158	+	45	=	203
1981	166	+	45	=	211
1982	174	+	45	=	219

ANNUAL AVERAGE: 200 TOTAL: 1198

F. HOUSING DEMAND.

The indications about effective housing demand do not show any amelioration to be expected in the next years: in 1976, 60 applications for housing plots were granted by the lands Division, 36 to SIHA and ~~26~~²⁴ to private applicants.

The following targets for SIHA were adopted in the National Development plan:-

1975-1979: SIHA constructs 150-200 houses to accommodate a year, according to demand;

1976: Government introduces economic incentives for its employees;

1976-1977: takeover of government houses and increased housing by SIHA;

1976-1978: SIHA extends operations in all main centres.

Although SIHA has constructed and still constructing houses the demand of houses are still high. This is merely (as stated previously) because of more and more opportunities of employment provided by both government and private sectors, and of this, people from other Islands within the Country migrated into Honiara.

2. SQUATTERS IN HONIARA.

a. SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS.

Squatter settlement is a characteristic common to nearly all towns in under developed and overpopulated countries. It does not appear to be nearly so bad in the Islands of the South Pacific as in most Afro. Asian countries, due presumably to a higher standard of living and ^{lower} ~~lower~~ population density.

In Honiara squattling started soon after the town was first established after world war II, (this was when the capital was transferred from Tulagi to Honiara). Since then, Honiara has become the major goal

of internal migration. More and more people migrated into Honiara as more employment opportunities and services were provided by the government and private sector. Before people from the other island groups migrated into Honiara they expected land and accommodation facilities to be provided by the employers.

However most people when they arrived found a different situation from what they expected, usually the accommodation facilities provided were inadequate and the land areas allocated to various companies were very small. Thus the people concerned had to find somewhere to live. The shortages of houses and increased rentals and prices made the average wage earners unable to rent houses. These conditions forced them to build their own houses in squatter settlements with bush materials (leaf houses) and some purchased materials such as corrugated iron.

TYPE OF HOUSES IN SQUATTERS.



GNAIMAOA VILLAGE: SETTLEMENT. Houses made of Bush Materials.

The reasons why these settlements take place was due to a combination of several of the following factors:-

- i Insufficient land allocated for low cost housing;
- ii Insufficient low cost housing within the town to meet the needs of the lower paid class workers;
- iii high building standards and building costs. Low level of wages;
- iv high cost of living, particularly food prices;
- v lack of living hotel, hostel or other transit accommodation within the town;
- vi the desire of the people to avail themselves of the employment opportunities and amenities of the towns, without paying town rates and taxes; and
- vii the desire to retain traditional communities and kinship ties.

In Honiara where squatter problem is mostly experienced, the temporary housing areas were not planned squatter settlements when they were started. They were government chosen areas where people were allowed to settle provided they have a licence, basically to permit them to occupy public land. People living in these squatter settlements on public land paid rents to the lands divisions and are given temporary occupation licences for 12 month basis (terms). Usually the rental charged to the people is \$5.00 per head per year who owns a house.

There are other settlements like Cheviri and White River where rental is charged \$10.00 per person per annum. This is because the occupants have been allocated a surveyor's blocks to build their leaf houses, whereas the settlements where the rental is \$5.00 the area has not been surveyed. The houses were built disorderly, i.e scattered in the bush, eg. Matais Village. Services are also provided to these surveyed settlements except for electricity supplies.

MATARIU SETTLEMENT:



HOUSES SCATTERED IN THE BUSHES. STREAM USED BY DWELLERS (Left of the ^{ARROW POINTED} houses).

Licensing was one of the ways the Government tried to prevent people settling illegally on public land. Unfortunately the system has broken down in recent years and many people have moved into the government land behind Honoring town without permission and without paying for a licence. At present numbering 16 villages, with five hundred dwellings, housing about two thousand people, these settlements are slowly but steadily increasing.

They range from a sizeable village of about eighty households to isolated houses built in gardens or in niches close to place of work. They are organised on a very narrowly defined kinship basis with each village drawing its population from a small area of the home islands.

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All the villages are immigrants of Malade except for few settlements which have mixture of people of other islands of the country.

One significant characteristic of squatters is

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iii. Some of these people tried to escape increasing rents by living in squatters where they would not spend too much on living expenses.

b. REASON FOR SQUATTING

Discussions with the settlers elucidated the following reasons for squating:

- i. the shortage of housing within Honara especially for married workers with families;
- ii. the need to cultivate gardens. Married men with families find it too expensive to live on imported foods and local produce purchased in the market.
- iii. Lack of accommodation for outpatients attending the central hospital, and discharged patients awaiting transport to their home islands;
- iv. there appears to be a growing attitude that it is desirable to have a private country residence as well as a government or Company provided houses in town;
- v. Not wishing or cannot afford to pay for the sort of houses that are currently being offered by the S.I. Housing Authority nor could they manage to keep up with rents payments for houses that have been allocated to them.

In addition to the above social and economic pressures, many of the settlers appear to have received permission or even encouragement from their employers, even to the extent of assistance with building materials, such as used timber, masonry etc.

This applies particularly to the PWD and local building contractors. The churches also appear to have considerable influence among the settlers who have built several churches in the settlements.

Most of the adult males are employed in various jobs in both government and private sectors in the town, and for most of them there is no alternative accommodation. The nearest village of Matavio for example has a total population of about 200 adults, 75 per cent of them are government semi-skilled workers from P.W.S. There are, however, about five adults in each village who are workers capable of owning houses in town, and amongst them are civil servants.

c. CONTROLLING OF SQUATTERS

A real attempt is now being made by the Lands Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Lands with the help of other organisations to re-establish government control of Temporary Housing Areas (squatters) on public land.

In essence this entailed the control of growth of these settlements, the planning of better settlements, and the provision of services such as access roads, water supplies and rubbish disposal. The results of this are slow to materialise but improving. The government's stand on temporary housing areas was as on the amended motion which was moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and passed by the House of Parliament in early 1978, and reads as follows:

"That the government give immediate attention reviewing the conditions under which temporary housing areas are occupied and take steps to prevent unlawful squattling."

This motion was a counter to the Hon. Sethuel Kelly's motion which was intended to evict all

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squatters on public land. The government's stand on THA's was further reiterated by the following recent cabinet decision on MA's memorandum on THA:-

- i That all ministries take immediate steps to identify their roles and exercise their responsibilities in relation to Temporary housing areas;
- ii That the ministry of Agriculture and lands immediately employs up to ten local headmen to control building and enforce tenancy agreements in the villages; and
- iii That the ministry of Agriculture and lands also makes provision for improvement and, or replacement of temporary housing areas when the Honiara town plan is prepared.

Regarding the MA's memo. on THA's, (part ii), MA has followed it up and has already selected headmen for each village. The headmen worked under the supervision of lands division and doing the duties directed by the division.

d. SQUATTER PROBLEMS: HONIARA.

The Solomon Islands has a population of about 200,000 people. Honiara's population is about 15,000 people. The urbanisation rate of Honiara is low at about 5% per annum. About 15% of Honiara's population live as squatters. According to 1976 census the percentage of population living as squatters were low than today. Reason being that more and more people forced themselves to squatter on public land and the population increased.

The problems about these squatter settlements are:-

- i. that there are no proper water supplies, no electricity, no proper roads and rubbish is not properly disposed of;
- ii. lack of services and planning has lead to poor health conditions;
- iii. Uncontrolled gardens are being made within the

the town boundary and also on government land extending towards Mt. Austin to the South;

- iv The development of buildings in small steep-sided valleys is leading to erosions, eg. Mataru Village, and this could quickly become a serious problem in such settlements.

e. CONCLUSION.

There is an urgent need to control settlements in the Honiara area, including gardening activities. There is a need for existing situations to be established by making better temporary houses on map for ease of identification. Squatting on Honiara Public land had increased steadily over the years when more employment possibilities have been undertaken in town. Shortages in housing and land in the areas provided forced people to squat. Since squatting is inevitable, certain control measures should be imposed to control illegal squatting. Decentralisation of development should be encouraged so that employment elsewhere would be provided. The respective provincial governments should improve towns in the Provinces to provide adequate service facilities.

FROM.....

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