

Memorandum for Cabinet by the Hon. Minister of Works  
and Housing

Temporary Accommodation and Rehabilitation of Persons living  
in dangerous premises

Since 1957, persons removed from dangerous premises and "temporarily" accommodated in Government owned or private, requisitioned premises have not been made to pay rent in respect of their temporary accommodation.

This policy has raised difficulties in making such persons return to their regular residence and has been the cause of loss of revenue to Government.

It was considered that a revision of this policy was called for and as a first step a Board composed of representatives of the Attorney General, Public Works Department, Finance, Lands, Police and Housing Departments was appointed. The Board's report was passed to the Heads of Departments concerned for their comments.

Having considered all the recommendations made, the Hon. Minister of Works and Housing feels that the following policy should be adopted in future.

(a) Rent: No rent should be charged for an initial period of six months for temporary accommodation. Thereafter, full rent should be charged. Where a plea of hardship is raised, a means test should be held whether full, nominal or no rent should be charged.

(b) Transport of Furniture: This should be considered as a social measure. Incidence of dangerous premises occurs mostly among the poorer classes. Cost of transport from dangerous premises and back to regular residence should be borne by the Housing Department.

(c) Certification of Danger: Once Government is taking a direct interest in these cases, it should be satisfied that danger actually exists. Although the Government architect would be assuming a grave responsibility were he to disagree with the private architect, this is the only means to keep these cases down to the barest minimum possible.

(d) Rehabilitation of Dangerous Premises: The Police can and do take action to cause the owners to remove danger but legal action for the rehabilitation of the premises rests with the tenants. These are generally too poor to institute legal proceedings against the owners. Requests have been made for Government to take legal action in this respect. Legislation ad hoc would have to be introduced, but Government should have the financial means to carry out the works itself should the owners be unable financially to fork out the cost involved. The financial situation does not permit the Government to enter into additional financial commitments - whose extent varies but may at times be considerable - in respect of all cases but Government should have the power, exercisable at its discretion - to take action against the owners where it is in the public interest to do so.

(e) Stand-by Gang or Contractors to transport furniture: There is no fixed rule whether transport is effected by Public Works Department men or by contractor. The Housing Secretary should continue to use his discretion whether to use Government's or contractor's men and vehicles. The setting up of a standby gang

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would most probably prove more costly and less efficient than contract labour which is used only when cases occur at late hours or on public holidays.

Hon. Ministers are asked to agree that the above recommendation should be adopted as the policy to be followed henceforth.

It is also proposed that existing cases should be similarly treated rent to be chargeable after 6 months from appropriate notice and transport of furniture back to regular premises to be done by and at the expense of the Government.

17th November, 1964.

W.H.68/62

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