

# GROUP

## AREAS PROCLAIMED

### *Fingo village now for Coloureds* <sup>Lyricists</sup> 26.3.70

Group areas have been proclaimed in Grahamstown. After 13 years of negotiation and planning, a proclamation in the Government Gazette issued this morning has set aside zoned areas for Whites and Coloureds.

Much of the area in Grahamstown which is presently occupied by the European and Coloured communities has remained the same. But the Fingo Location, the oldest African location in the City, is now to become a proclaimed Coloured area.

The whole proclamation (Nos. 100 and 101 of the Government Gazette, 26th March, 1970) has come as a surprise to the municipality.

The Mayor, Coun. C. J. Oosthuysen, said that the proclamation of Group Areas in Grahamstown was not the same

as the City Council had recommended, and certainly not what he had expected.

No one had foreseen the Fingo Village being proclaimed for the Coloured community.

"There seems to be very little that the City Council can do at this stage," said the Mayor. "I trust however that this will be a long-term policy of the departments concerned as no one would like to see this change take place overnight."

#### 356 ERVEN

At a rough estimate, it is thought that the proclamation of the Fingo Village for Coloureds will affect about 5,000 people. There are 356 erven in the area, the majority of which are owned by Bantu ratepayers, the Assistant Town Clerk, Mr. A. D. Lofting, told the 'Mail'.

These people will have to be rehoused in alternative accommodation.

The Fingo Location was given in trust to the Fingo people in 1857. These African people were granted urban freehold rights in return for their services to the government of that time.

Today, there are very few Fingos left, and the majority of occupants in the village are Xhosas. The Fingos have gradually inter-married and been replaced by Xhosa.

It is thought that the Group Areas Board may have created a Coloured area out of the Fingo Location in order to have a buffer zone between the Whites and the Bantu.

#### A GREAT SHOCK

"This is absolutely contrary to the last recommendations made by the City Council in 1965 to the Department of Planning," he said, "in which it was pointed out that the proclamation of an African area for Coloureds could cause racial disharmony, and that the idea was unrealistic in view of the comparatively small Coloured population in Grahamstown."

Furthermore, the City Council has now received permission from the Department of Community Development to erect an additional 94 economic houses for Coloureds on Scott's Farm.

There is still a question of the Indian community in Grahamstown. Following the proclamation of group areas, they will only be allowed to continue living and running businesses in White areas if they are in possession of a permit.

#### JOINT STATEMENT

In a joint press statement issued by the Departments of Planning and Community Development, it is stated that the proclamation of Group Areas is a positive step, and as has been repeatedly stated by the Government, no person who cannot fend for himself will be uprooted unless alternative accommodation can be provided.

"The provision of such alternative accommodation is receiving the attention of the Department of Community Development in collaboration with the local authority concerned," the statement reads, "and persons who become disqualified in terms of the proclamation will be duly informed."

The proclaimed area for Europeans is west of a line bordering on Scott's Farm, Currie Street and Grave Street. The line then circumvents the station and then passes along Cobden Street, crosses the national road into Matthew Street, cuts Market Street East.

It then follows the course of the

spruit below Ogilvie and Wright Streets, bordering on the vacant land which has just been proclaimed for a European residential township in the vicinity of Fort England Hospital.

From there, the line cuts back to join the railway line to Port Alfred and this is the landmark for the rest of the border as far as the municipal boundary in Belmont Valley.

#### NON-PROCLAIMED AREA

It must be emphasised however that there is a non-proclaimed area between the European zones and Coloured zones. This is bounded by the railway line and the station, the gas works, Orsmond Terrace, Ogilvie Street and adjacent streets.

It is not yet known what is intended for this small, non-proclaimed area, but the Acting Town Clerk, Mr. A. D. Lofting, said in an interview that the Group Areas Board might consider it industrial or Indian occupation at a later date.

The area proclaimed for Coloureds remains virtually the same as it always has been, except for the surprise inclusion in the plan of the Fingo Village as a Coloured area.

(A map has been inserted in the page opposite to assist readers to trace the borders of the proclaimed areas.)

At present, it appears that there are a few European-owned properties between Currie Street and Albany Road which will become disqualified, as well as one or two properties in the Fingo Location.

Enquiries in connection with any resettlement aspect, including housing, should be directed to the Regional Representative, Department of Community Development, Private Bag 3913, Port Elizabeth.