

# Sunshine Advocate

## She died alone

30th January 1974 Pages 1 & 7

# SHE DIED ALONE

**AN ELDERLY woman lay dead in her Maidstone flat for 13 days before she was discovered.**

***Dead for 13 days and no one knew***

This was one of the startling facts presented by three Sunshine people to the Committee of Enquiry into Aged Person's Housing last week.

**The committee was told that the woman had suffered a heart attack, but because she lived alone and there was no supervision of the flats, the woman's death was not known for almost two weeks.**

Evidence was presented to the committee by Mrs. Bell Lockwood, Mrs. Ellen Lewis and Mr. Bernard Leeman.

**Mrs. Lockwood is the convener of both the Sunshine Elderly Citizens' Welfare Committee and the Western Region Committee on the aging, and is secretary of the Sunshine House of Happiness Elderly Citizens' Club.**

Mrs. Lewis is a member of the committee of the House of Happiness, and Mr. Leeman is Sunshine's social worker with the Aging and secretary of the Western Region Committee on the Aging.

Mrs. Lewis, who lives in the block of flats where the woman was found dead told the Rev. K. D. Seaman, Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry, that supervision and assistance was badly needed by older people living alone in a flat.

"We have to bring up the firewood, for the stove, carry up, the shopping and bring down the garbage," Mrs. Lewis, 78, said.

### GETTING HARDER

"It is getting harder every day," she said.

She said that it was most important that there was someone that elderly people could contact if they fell sick or had an accident.

Mrs. Lockwood told the committee that all people had the right to receive financial assistance with their housing problems, especially rates and maintenance.

"The most urgent need of the elderly are adequate community service," Mrs. Lockwood said.

"We should have district nursing 24-hours a day physiotherapy, occupational therapy, expert medical assessment by a specialist, geriatrician and better transport and welfare services," she said.

Mr. Leeman presented the enquiry with two written submissions, one from each of the organisations he represents regarding elderly citizens.

Besides stressing the need for comprehensive community care services for the aging, he emphasised the need for more and better housing.

"Under the existing legislation, only approved organisations are assisted to build flats units, or hostels for the aging," he said.

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# DEAD FOR 13 DAYS!

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"In the absence of such organisations the aged get nothing — that is precisely what happened in the west," he said.

"Only in three of the 10 municipalities was there some accommodation provided under these Acts. The other seven municipal areas missed out.

"The Housing Commission has not built one flat for elderly people in four of these local government areas.

## DECADE AGO

"The last of such flats built in Sunshine was almost 10 years ago," he said.

He said this created the situation which existed today in which aged people were forced to live in inadequate rooms and bungalows paying high rent — sometimes as high as \$12 to \$15 a week for a single room and kitchen.

Mr. Leeman said modular housing for the aged was seen as a possible answer to the situation.

These are fully self-contained "Granny Flats" which could be erected in the backyard of an established home and rented by a single pensioner.

The chairman of the committee thanked the Sunshine delegation and said he would welcome further submissions on the subject.

If anyone is interested, please contact Mr. Leeman on 311 7066.