

2p

Number 69 : 30 July 77 : Fortnightly



Nottingham Voice

"STOP THE SALE OF COUNCIL HOUSES, WE WANT OUT". That was the cry that met city councillors as they went into the council meeting on July 25th.

People from clearance areas and flat complexes demonstrated outside the council house before the meeting and then took their banners into the public gallery during the meeting.

The Radford East Association of Tenants and Residents presented a 1,000 signature petition to the Lord Mayor demanding to be told what was going to happen to their clearance area. But he told the council that he would pass it on to the officers. At the end of the meeting George Daley from REATAR shouted that they wanted the petition to go to the councillors who made the policies and not to the officers. During the meeting the Mayor threatened to throw the demonstrators out whenever they clapped Labour speakers.

Tory leader Jack Green accused the Labour group of "whipping up emotions" and "packing the public galleries with people who have time on their hands". In fact, as the tenants associations are well aware, the Labour group has done very little compared with the large amount of work put in by the tenants themselves.

The people in clearance areas are complaining that because of the Tory policy of selling council houses and selling off clearance land to private developers to build houses for sale there are very few council houses available for rent. And that means that people who can't afford to buy houses will have to wait a long time and could be forced to go almost anywhere. And there are many people in flats like Balloon Wood and Basford who cannot get transfers into a decent council house because there aren't any available.

The Council meeting itself was very lively with Labour councillors asking a series

of embarrassing questions. And on a number of occasions Tory leader Jack Green refused to answer questions or give assurances asked for. After Green refused to answer one question from Labour leader John Carroll about the length of time that some new houses had been left empty awaiting sale, Carroll appealed to the Lord Mayor to record that this wasn't a satisfactory answer. But the Mayor just said that he wasn't there to say whether Green's answers were sensible or not.

Both Carroll and Labour Councillor Ben Allsop asked the Tories what had happened to their promises of "open government". But, as Green correctly pointed out, Carroll used to make decisions behind closed doors when he was leader of the council. But, of course, there is no reason why the Tories should follow in Carroll's footsteps.

The Tories decided to sell 17 acres of council land for private house building - most of it on a site off the Wells Road. And they decided to build 104 houses at Clifton for sale. This is on a site where last year they refused to build houses for rent because of insufficient community facilities in the area. Both were opposed by the Labour group.

And finally, Ben Allsop proposed a motion saying that all families with children between 2 and 13 in the flats at Hyson Green, Balloon Wood, and Kildare and Kingsthorpe should be offered transfers to more suitable property. He came out with

the ludicrous suggestion that this was not a political issue. This is in spite of the fact that the Tories cannot offer any transfers at the moment because of their sales policy. And Allsop had previously said that there were only 16 council houses available that week which had not been sold and in the previous week all but 20 houses had been sold.

Tory Housing chairman Charles Borrett went along with this ridiculous non-political theory. That is because he knew that he would come off very badly if he argued on political lines. But he proposed an amendment that people in flats should only be offered transfers "as these become available". In other words there won't be any transfers out of the flats. Labour leader Carroll even went as far as seconding this sell-out to prove that he thought it was non-political as well. Tory leader Green was the only one naive enough to break this two party conspiracy to pretend that Tory housing policy has nothing to do with being able to move people out of flats. He accused Allsop of making a political point.

To be fair to Ben Allsop he is genuinely concerned that families with young children should be moved out of flats like at Hyson Green. And that is more than can be said for the likes of Green who would be content to see them incarcerated there for ever.

THE VOICE will be on holiday for two weeks. The next issue will appear on 27th August.

WILL THEY, WON'T THEY?

Emergency social services cover is still threatened from 1st August as reported in Voice 68.

But it looks as though the service may go ahead almost as normal after all.

At the moment at nights and weekends a rota of senior social workers act as liaison officers staying at home next to a telephone to receive all emergency calls. This is a very demanding job as calls come in frequently. If the liaison officer decides that some action is necessary, and it cannot wait until normal office hours, the case is referred to one of the the ordinary social workers who are on standby at home. There are normally two on duty at any time and they are often called out once or twice. Some calls can take several hours to deal with.

Obviously this work can seriously impair the ability of social workers to do their normal work the following day. They are paid £4.70 a night for doing standby, about 15p an hour after stoppages.

To try and improve the situation, the Social Services Department advertised for full time liaison officers to start from 1st August. But they didn't offer enough money to attract people to do this. So the seniors who work the present service said they would not do it from August.

But the management have now offered seniors £2.15 an hour (+15% for unsocial hours) to carry on the liaison service working from a central office and not at home. About a dozen

have agreed. But this is only half the number needed to cover the service properly.

Social workers have said they will carry on doing nights during the week for August as long as there is a liaison officer on duty. But they have refused to cover at weekends even though they have been offered £1.64 an hour (+15%). This is because the offer only applies if they work from a central point which they are refusing to do.

Under the present Pay Code rules management can't pay them more to work at home as at present. It has not escaped their notice that the Pay Code comes to an end this month so they should be able to pay people to work at home as from August. But this is something which hasn't yet been put to social workers.

At the moment it looks as though the service will be able to struggle through the next couple of weeks, though they may not be able to guarantee a service all the time as at present, especially at weekends.

Social Services chairperson Brenda Borrett says that if a full emergency service cannot be guaranteed from August 1st she will make a statement to explain this to the public.



THE BOYS IN BLUE have been getting very paranoid about protecting our wonderful queen. On July 28th a few hours before the queen was due to pass down Mansfield Road three adults and two children were held in the

central police station for over an hour after giving out leaflets outside the Victoria Centre. The leaflets were entitled "Message from the Queen" and part of them said "in times of crisis we must all learn to tighten our tiaras. Even I have had tremendous difficulties managing on a mere £450 per week rise this year".

The police said there was nothing wrong with the leaflet and they were even laughing at it. But they warned that if the people giving it out were punched in the face they would be arrested for causing a breach of the peace.

At the same time a couple of posters were removed by police from the window of the People's Centre on Mansfield Road. These said: "One day only - The Queen - The longest running farce in history - Brought to you at enormous expense by the people who gave you: Inflation, Unemployment, The Cuts, The Social Contrick, and much more. You will be fooled like you've never been fooled before. In fully restricted vision and technicolourbar". (The poster was based on the front cover design of the latest "If you don't hit it, it won't fall", a local paper which is rather more "alternative" than the Voice.)

Does anyone still believe that we live in a free country?



REACTIONARY Evening Post gossip columnist David Levine recently jumped to the defence of

Tory councillors.

Tenants associations are increasing rapidly, he reported, and they are taking up a great deal of officers' and councillors' time. The number of associations should be cut down, ranted Levine, and tenants and residents should rely on their councillors.

The problem according to this aging hack is that some of these nasty organisations are attacking the Tory policy of selling off all the city's council houses. "Politically motivated" is the cry.

What Levine fails to understand is that the massive increase in tenants' organisations is a direct result of Tory policy - they are offering all their houses for sale so that they can't rehouse anyone from clearance areas or from the waiting list, and they can't offer transfers. They have stopped doing repairs and old people's gardens and now they are putting the rents up.

Is the idiot Levine seriously suggesting that tenants should rely on the councillors who have brought in these vicious attacks on tenants? It is certain that Nottingham's tenants are not going to take any notice of such juvenile drivel.



THE MIDLAND Group Gallery will probably, almost definitely, cross your fingers, no this time I mean it, be moving to Carlton Street in the Lace Market in the autumn. It is four years since they found the new premises and over four years since they

PORTLAND ARMS

PORTLAND ROAD, NOTTINGHAM

BEST KIMBERLEY ALE
COOL GUINNESS & LAGER
CHIP BUTTIES
BACON COBS & SOUP
JUKE BOX
POOL TABLE
FRUIT MACHINES

RUGBY PLAYERS WELCOME

developed their plans to change their small, sometimes rather exclusive gallery into a large multi-purpose art complex open, in every sense of the word, we hope, to everyone.

Their plans have received approval and money from many quarters including the Arts Council, the County Council and the Gulbenkian Foundation. There has not, of course, been enough money but building has been going on in fits and starts for 18 months.

The idea is to make art a working part of the working life with cinema, an art gallery, a performance area, a sculpture court and a film workshop all under one roof. There will also be a bar, a coffee bar, a book shop and an information area.

They are certainly making exciting use of the old buildings and it will be fascinating to see, as more and more of the complex is opened, how it all works out. Part of it will open soon and it should all have been worth it. We'll wait and see and hope.



FOLLOWING our report in the last issue that the Supplementary Benefits Commission had defrauded claimants out of over £4 million last year, the High Court recently gave another judgment which shows that they have defrauded claimants out of a further £60 million over the last eleven years.

This is because when people first claim the Commission has been refusing to pay them for the first few days. The judge said

the Commission has been acting illegally.

We do not expect to see them prosecuted. This is in spite of the fact that hundreds of claimants are prosecuted each year. The total amount which claimants defraud social security by is about £2 million per year. (Information from the Guardian)

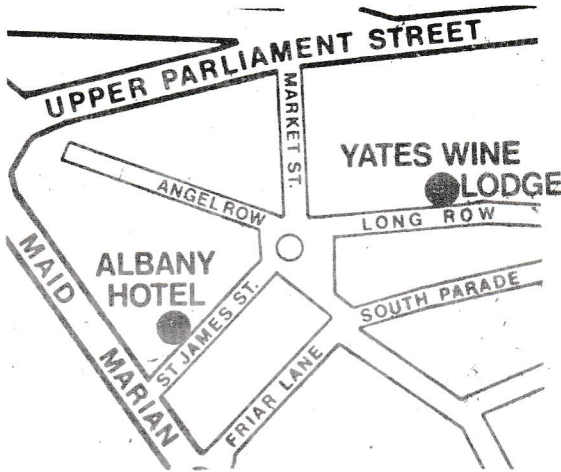
APOLOGY TO MR HAMMOND

IN VOICE 68 we carried an article about a City Council report on bringing forward the clearance programme to rehouse an extra 1,032 families this year and bringing forward 1,409 families to next year.

In the article we described Chief Executive Michael Hammond as a "charlatan". It has been pointed out to us that in a strict dictionary definition this word means an imposter pretending to have knowledge or skill which he does not have. This is not the impression which we intended to give. Mr Hammond is properly qualified and well able to do his job.

The point we were trying to make was that Mr Hammond had not done his job properly in preparing his report on bringing forward the clearance programme. He should have reported on bringing forward the specific numbers given above but he did not do this. The reason was that the Tory leaders did not wish it to be publicly stated that their promise to bring forward this number of families is impossible to fulfil.

We therefore wish to apologise to Mr Hammond for the use of the word "charlatan" in this article.



THIS MAP appeared in the Evening Post on 21st July. It was part of a Carlsberg advert. Post readers who could find their way to the "places shown on the map" were rewarded with a pint of weak gassy Carlsberg. More of a problem than it seems because it appears that Yates's has moved in with Debenham's and the Albany has fallen over. Find-the-Evening Post Competition - readers are invited to mark a cross on the map to show the exact location of the Evening Post offices. Send completed entries to: Advertising Manager, Evening Post, c/o Victoria Centre, Nottingham.



THERE WILL BE a demonstration against police brutality to black people in Nottingham on Saturday 30th July starting at 1.30pm on the Forest.

This follows the incident in Larkdale Street on July 4th reported in Voice 68 where the police arrested six black people after going in in force following

a report of a broken window. These six are now bailed to appear at the Guildhall again on September 9th.

It also follows an incident in the Victoria Centre on 28th April when police were called by security guards to evict a black youth from the centre. The police arrived in force and ten black youths were arrested. The cases of these ten are starting to come up now. The first one, Theodore Richards, was tried on 19th July and received a heavy fine for breach of the peace and obstruction.

Meeting - to discuss setting up an arts and craft/community centre. Sun 7th Aug, 2pm, Hyson Green Community Centre, Gregory Blvd. Further details: tel 250407, Glenn Broughton.

"IT IS A FACT THAT an adventure playground is an asset to any community" and that given one "the children unconsciously develop their faculties to an astonishing degree" (National Playing Fields Association). City councillors on the Leisure Services Committee obviously do not agree.

The Meadows Adventure Playground Association have been trying to get permission to put one up for three years. They have to have a grant and planning permission. But they already have experience from extensive studies, time and determination.

They tried again to make the councillors see sense at a Leisure Services meeting on

June 30th. Their efforts were all but crushed almost immediately by an objecting letter from the Managers of the Welbeck Primary School, the place closest to the site and therefore the place that would benefit most.

The Managers claimed that there was a trend away from adventure play. They based this on the absurd sand-pit and concrete tube already on the site - no, its not swarming with happy children. No, its not an adventure playground!

Another little gem was their claim that old people from a nearby home wouldn't like the noise and would lose part of the ground. At this point someone asked where the home was. A map of the area was produced. No way could they find one!

Are these the people our councillors listen to? If you can't find an objection, think one up. This stunner of a letter was received on the morning of the meeting giving the Meadows people no chance to reply. Also the Managers are in the process of changing. The next lot will probably be strong Tories. What will happen then? Not much if the school is pulled down soon which is likely under Tory education plans to close down schools where the population has gone down.

The councillors seem to have no idea what an adventure playground actually is, in spite of a tour round working playgrounds earlier this year. Chairman Swift thinks the Wollaton Park mock-up is ideal. Birkinshaw, using long words

like dirt, filth and disgusting, said he would never send his children to one. Another councillor mumbled something about amateurs and the problem of building mounds.

It was then that Swift stamped on the whole thing with a very nasty double proposal that: one, the site was wrong and two, that a report be made on play in the Meadows. So anyone for the Adventure Playground has to be against the report. But none of the Labour councillors were bright enough to object to this and some had to abstain as a result.

During the whole meeting the only constructive comment had come from Labour man Maynard who had pointed out the cost in vandalism of not building an adventure playground (Eds - a report on this aspect is expected shortly from a group in Birmingham).

Meanwhile, a short scene through the eyes of a councillor: a group of old people cavorting on the Meadows Recreation Ground halt suddenly in their game of tag to look malevolently at a group of children playing on a hideous eyesore. The old folk dash screaming back to the old folks' home on the bowling green crying, "But they've got the derelict houses to play in, the broken glass, the rotten floorboards, the fun, the fun". In the background, the one child who turned up at the local primary's summer school looks through the railings across to the adventure playground and wonders what he did wrong.

Opening Aug. 4th.

CHRIS HOLMES

WELCOMES YOU TO THE

**OLD
KING'S ARMS**

19, Kirkgate, Newark

ALES FROM:

HARDY HANSON

SAM SMITHS

MARSTONS

WEST CROWN

RUDDLES

MANSFIELD

HOME MADE SNACKS

Dear Editor, - At the monthly meeting of the Executive Committee of the East Nottingham Labour Party, there was a discussion about our relations with the Press, including the "Nottingham Voice".

We read with interest the two recent articles, but, although some of us were named, the reporter, whoever it was, did not pay us the compliment of signing his name.

We are not disputing your right to publish "Nottingham Voice" but since you allege to be the "Guardians of Democracy" we do feel that people contributing articles which are deliberately critical should be prepared to put their names to the articles, otherwise, like all anonymous communications, they can hardly expect to be treated seriously.

Yours sincerely,
Betty Higgins,
Constituency Secretary,
East Nottingham Constituency
Labour Party.

(Eds - This is the first time we have been called "Guardians of Democracy". Perhaps Ms Higgins could say which of our informers she would like to see named.)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

THE CITY Council's report on bringing forward the clearance programme finally appeared at the July Policy and Resources meeting as predicted in Voice 66. And, as stated in Voice 68, there was no mention of the specific figures originally asked for.

The reason for this is that it

is impossible for the Tories to bring forward rehousing by a year and accommodate an extra 1,032 families this year as they promised. At the present rate of progress they will even fall short of the original figure of 1,386. In the last three months they have rehoused only 230 families. To reach 1,386 they should have rehoused 350 in three months, and to reach their promised target they should have rehoused 600.

The question must be seriously asked as to whether the Tories are fit to run this city. Even Chief Executive Michael Hammond who wrote the report had to admit that it didn't pretend to guarantee any numbers. And Housing Director Campbell-Lee was so disgusted with the affair that he spent the whole meeting reading a golfing magazine.

Labour councillor Len Maynard said the Tories were trying to con people and pointed out that the "revised" timetable in the report showed that most of the clearance areas wouldn't be brought forward at all and the most that any area would be brought forward was 7 months.

The best suggestion Hammond could manage to get people out more quickly was a 15% discount for clearance families willing to buy a council house. Labour leader John Carroll said that people would be able to buy an empty house in a clearance area and immediately qualify for a discount. But when Tory leader Jack Green looked as though he may have accepted this argument

Hammond countered it with a forceful statement that people could do this now to qualify for a council house. Carroll pointed out that these people wouldn't get £500 or more as well. But his proposed amendment to prevent this was defeated by the Tories.

Labour councillor Bert Littlewood said he was with the Tories if they could accelerate clearance. But he said there were too many ifs and buts and very little said about rented accommodation. He wanted people to be given the opportunity to purchase or rent the same property. And he wanted sales of two-bedroom houses which are in short supply to be stopped completely.

In fact the only way to rehouse people from clearance efficiently is to give them top priority as always used to be the case. That would mean at the very least not offering any house for sale until after it had been offered to clearance families.

But that is not going to happen. And because of this the report is very disturbing, saying "It is not always possible to offer people the type of house or the location for which they have stated a preference" and residents should be revisited to inform them of "the desire of the City Council to speed up the clearance programme and to discuss the availability of properties". It also admits that the houses available do not suit the "specific requirements of particular clearance areas".

In other words they can't

rehouse people any quicker unless they are forced into accommodation which may be totally unsuitable for their needs. And Housing officials will shortly be expected to persuade them how reasonable this is and how ungrateful they will be if they refuse the Council's kind offer.

But even so, because of the massive number of houses being sold there will not be enough accommodation to offer even on these terms.

If Housing Department officers have any self-respect they should refuse to carry out this policy and, if necessary, should strike for the right to have decent housing policies to carry out. And tenants and residents who have to suffer this policy should give the officers enough stick (verbally) to persuade them to do this.

Remember: the Tory manifesto said nothing about offering all council houses for sale and nothing about forcing clearance families into unsuitable accommodation. They should not be allowed to get away with it.



WE WOULD LIKE TO apologise to our readers for repeating in Voice 66 an incorrect statement made to us by Jim Broughton, chairman of the City Transport Committee.

This was in a report that Sounds in Motion, who were organising the dreadful sound advertising on city buses, had

Be sure to visit the

NEW MARKET HOTEL

Parliament Street (opposite Palais)

FINE HOME ALES from only 22p

LUNCH-TIME SNACKS

ROOM AVAILABLE FREE FOR PARTIES

BUFFETS ON REQUEST

STUDENTS WELCOME

TEL. NOTTM 411532

gone out of business.

Broughton told us that receipts had been nearly £50,000 since the project started last autumn. In fact the Council has received less than £500. In future we will check any statement by Broughton before printing it.

July's Transport Committee was told that the company's original estimate (£168,000 a year) was totally wrong and their performance was "abysmal". The report was so embarrassing that it was not circulated to the press or public.

But Labour man John Pennington pointed out to anyone listening that the Council has got only £364 in the first three months. He described the project as an "utter shambles".

It appears that the Council has been promised another £654 but they will get no more. In spite of getting their fingers thoroughly burnt they are going to try to get someone else to sign another contract for sound advertising. And it seems that the firm they have in mind is associated with Radio Trent. So people rich enough to travel on city buses will eventually again have to put up with "sounds like they really don't want to hear".

Footnote: David Levine, the Evening Post's political gossip columnist, should take out a subscription to Nottingham Voice to help him keep up with the news. Our report on the collapse of the sound advertising project appeared on June 18th. But it took

Levine until July 14th to catch up. He announced that the project had "met with some snags".



THE FEDERATION of Tenants and Residents Associations have just adopted a new manifesto. The main points are: no rent increases, no council house sales, maximum effort for improving houses, stop the scandal of empty council houses, expand the direct labour force, increase council house building, greater control for council tenants, the council should be responsible for all repairs.

The Federation is writing to the three local MPs to ask them to meet a delegation. They want the MPs to get off their backsides in Parliament and do something to oppose the government policy of increasing council rents.

They are also planning another lobby of the City Council in October.

CIS JUBILEE ANTI-REPORT -
Published by Counter Information Services. 60p. This pamphlet gives the dope on the Queen and the 25 "glorious" years. It has many ironic and interesting photos from the last 25 years and, as well as exposing the "Royal Spoils", gives a brief account of British imperialism's activities during the Queen's reign juxtaposed with royal events. Available shortly from Mushroom, Heathcoat St.

ONE LAW FOR THE RICH and one for the poor. Last year the government found that 8,993 employers were illegally paying low wages. None of them has been prosecuted. And over 200,000 companies failed to file accounts as required by law. This is a criminal offence but the government rarely prosecutes in such cases.

One of the criminal offenders which has escaped prosecution is the London company Grunwick which is over a year behind with their accounts. But hundreds of people picketing Grunwick for the right of workers to join a union have been arrested (including two from Nottingham) in a massive police operation.

According to Home Secretary Merlyn Rees the number of police used at Grunwick each day in the last two weeks of June rose from 300 to 1500. Even if the cost of each policeman is only £10 a day, the taxpayer has paid well over £200,000 so far for the police to protect the criminal Grunwick company from workers who wish to join a union.

Meanwhile the holding company which owns Grunwick has just filed its accounts for 1975-76. This shows that Managing Director George Ward and his family own 51% of the shares and the other two directors, Hickey and Pearson, with their families, own 36%. The 432 people employed earned sales of £4.2million and a gross trading profit of £385,064 - a return on capital of 34% compared to an average industrial rate of 25%. And the company gets away with

paying very little tax - out of pre-tax profit of £210,687, the tax liability was only £58,702 and most of this was "deferred" with no indication of whether it will ever need to be paid. The actual tax paid so far on the 1975-76 profit is only £8,352.

This compares to the atrocious wages paid to Grunwick workers. They are paid about £32 for a 40 hour week compared with a minimum wage of £59.85 agreed by the Association of Film Laboratory Employers for their workers. In addition to low pay the Grunwick workers have to do compulsory overtime at five minutes notice and many have been dismissed for trivial reasons.

The current dispute has lasted nearly a year. The strikers are asking for recognition of their union APEX and to be reinstated in their jobs. The government conciliation body ACAS said the company should recognise the union and this was recently upheld in the High Court. But it is not legally binding on the company which is refusing to abide by the ACAS recommendation. An inquiry on the dispute is to report shortly.

The Strike Committee has asked for mass picketing to re-start on May 8th.

(Information from Labour Research and APEX)



THE TRADES COUNCIL are calling on all local trades unionists to support the mass picket at Grunwick called for Monday 8th August.

The first buses should leave Nottingham around 3am in order to arrive in London by 7am. For details contact Vernon Gapper, AUEW, 218 Mansfield Road, Tel. 601923. Arrangements should be finalised at the Trades Council Executive on Tuesday 2nd August.

A motion to urge trades unionists to support the picket was passed at the last Trades Council on 20th July. It was proposed by SLADE and also applauded the action of the Cricklewood post workers in supporting the Grunwick strikers.

They also passed a motion proposed by GMWU deploring the action of the city council in increasing rents and a motion from NUPE opposing the increase in school meals prices from 15p to 25p. Delegates were told

that this would cause many more children to take sandwiches and that would cause redundancies and short-time working for NUPE members.

NALGO, the local government officers' union, were criticised by Brian Simister from the local cuts committee. He said their policy in not supporting the recent UCATT (building workers) strike was foolish. He pointed out that the County Council intended to cut staff. But whereas manual workers have manning agreements and teachers have "establishment" agreements the administrative staff do not have the same sort of protection. A UCATT delegate had complained that NALGO members had crossed picket lines.

The July/August issue of the local cuts bulletin is now avail-

able from NUPE, 49 Mansfield Road. It includes information on "a bleak future for the elderly", the building workers' strike, cuts in the health service, extracts from the June "Housing Action", and a report on the recent government discussion paper on housing which wants to encourage home ownership and consequently is not good news for council tenants.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

"COUNCILLORS face surcharge" reads the headline of the latest issue of "Housing Action", the paper distributed free to 10,000 council tenants.

It refers to the fact that the local Housing Action Group is preparing a dossier on the millions of pounds that are being lost through council house sales. is to be presented to the

against the Tories. They claim that:

1. in ten years time the council will be losing over £600,000 a year just on the two or three thousand houses which will have been sold by the end of this year. This is because repayments on the 100% council mortgages stay fixed whilst rents increase. So, although there may be an initial short term gain from higher mortgage repayments and savings on repairs, there will be a net loss of several million pounds in the long term. This follows similar studies which estimate a loss by Leeds of £1 $\frac{3}{4}$ million on 900 houses sold so far, and a loss by Birmingham of £16 million on 10,000 houses sold from 1966-72.
2. slum clearance sites are being sold to private developers at "market values" which are

n-e

7

5

5

e

d

for
l