

SQUATTERS MUST GO, SAYS JUDGE

AN attempt by squatters to establish a community centred on empty houses they had occupied in the Tolmers Square area of Camden, collapsed yesterday in the face of High Court orders.

GLENIFFER FINANCE CORPORATION LTD., owners of the 27 houses, applied successfully for immediate possession orders.

About 60 of the 80 squatters went to the court to contest the applications. Some picketed the front of the Law Courts; others waited outside the courtroom, where the cases were heard in private.

First to be ordered to leave were two girls squatting in a flat in Hampstead Road. Then an Italian woman living with her husband and four-year-old son in Tolmers Square was told by Mr Justice CROOM JOHNSON that the landlords were entitled to possession.

Outside the courtroom the remaining squatters became progressively more despondent as they heard of each new order.

Bitter complaints

They complained bitterly about the unfairness of the situation. "We've really tried to build a community," said one woman. "We've got a community centre, we've organised carnivals and taken the kids on outings."

Their efforts to persuade the company to let them stay had failed, she said. Gleniffer did not seem to understand how difficult it was to find accommodation in London.

The squatters were reluctant to give their names. One—"call me Ruth"—rushed off as soon as an order had been made against her "in case they come to throw me out right away."

They said that in each case the judge was making a £50 costs order against the squatters.

The court has 16 applications by the company.