

Housing 'scandal' laid to congressional laxity

WASHINGTON-- If Congressmen had been as diligent in "scrutinizing the affairs" of the Federal Housing Administration as they were in slashing public housing, "we would not today be faced with the scandalous revelations, an NAACP official told a Senate appropriations subcommittee this week.

Testifying before the subcommittee April 21, Clarence Mitchell, director of the NAACP's Washington bureau, asserted: "Year after year, the public housing program has been scuttled by the same persons who showered every possible advantage on FHA."

A View

He added that "in the eyes of some House members, the chief sin of the public housing program is that it helps the weak and the humble."

These House members, he said, "seem to believe that the

chief virtue of FHA is that it enjoys the support of the rich and the powerful."

Mr. Mitchell asked for clarification of the present confusion created by the House in cutting public housing. This could be done, he noted, by authorizing the construction of 140,000 new public housing units for the next four years, as proposed by President Eisenhower.

A Good Beginning

This would not be enough, Mr. Mitchell contended, but it would be a good beginning.

The NAACP representative estimated that present slum clearance programs will displace 71,000 families and that some 35,000 of these will be eligible for public housing.

"It is still impossible to see how we can have a productive slum clearance and redevelopment program without public housing," he said.