

Tight Situation

Housing For Poor Crowds Big Family

By **JAMES L. SRODES**

WASHINGTON (UPI) —
The rich get richer and the poor get crowded.

At least the poor get crowded when it comes to finding a place to live. And, according to a recent survey by the National Commission on Urban Problems, overcrowding gets more serious as the family unit gets larger.

THE COMMISSION is an independent agency appointed by President Johnson with former Illinois Sen. Paul Douglas as its chairman.

Its study on overcrowding in housing for the poor came from a seven-city survey which took in both existing or planned housing in both public and private sectors of the communities.

THE CITIES studied ranged from Philadelphia with more than two million people to Richmond, Va., with 220,000 inhabitants. Also studied were Washington, D.C., New Orleans, St. Louis, Denver and San Francisco.

The results of the survey are not too surprising.

ANYBODY who has followed the course of public housing in the last 20 years knows that one of the most frequently stated criticisms is that housing for the poor neglects the family of five members or more.

Public housing planners

have been particular sinners in this area by sticking to statistical standards for the average family.

THE RESULT is hundreds of thousands of public housing units for the family with two children against a handful of multiple bedroom units for the larger family.

The survey brought this problem home clearly. In the seven cities there were 103,464 poor families ranging in size from five to 18 members. Of this number 71,000 families could not find adequate housing space even if they had the financial assistance necessary to pay for it.

EVEN counting the units which are planned, the situation falls greatly short of the need:

For families of five and six there were 23,700 adequate units available, leaving a gap of 40,000 families.

FOR FAMILIES of seven or eight, there were nearly 7,000 units leaving a gap of 19,000. For nine or 10-member families there were 1,400 units leaving a gap of 8,000 dwellings.

For families of 11 or more, there were only 202 units in the seven cities, leaving 3,701 families of this size without adequate housing.

The survey estimated that more than 340,000 children alone were affected by this overcrowding.