

## Housing Shortage

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pg. 12

has conducted with Federal aid in an attempt to define the country's shelter requirements for the next ten years. The evidence points to 23 million units of housing needed from 1970 to 1980. The "housing-deprived" families are now put at 13.1 million. In the face of such increased numbers, it has taken nerve or notable insensitivity to scuttle housing programs, as the Administration has virtually done.

One of the report's striking findings is that people seek other homes and ways to live primarily because of the nature of the neighborhood itself; to Americans of every class and need, neighborhood stability is as important as shelter. Clearly implied are a lot of things many people would rather not talk about: fears about safety and sanitation, the security of social conformity and the specter of racism.

A great deal more is involved in housing need than simple shelter. New housing production, particularly for the poor, has been narrowly overemphasized. The report suggests the necessity of a mix of answers, to vary with local conditions, including rent subsidies, housing renovation and neighborhood rehabilitation. This country is still a long way from the "decent home and suitable living environment for every American family" set up as a goal a quarter of a century ago. But there is little sign of movement in Washington, except a negative retreat from reality.

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The Joint Center for Urban Studies estimates that the country now has twice as high a rate of "housing deprivation" as it did five years ago. Today, that deprivation is increasingly economic—measured in terms of the high and still-climbing cost of housing, rather than by the conventional yardstick of substandard physical condition. More people than ever cannot afford a proper place to live, or they endure economic hardships for it.

These shocking facts emerge from a study the center