

• Their finding -- a rent average of \$40.86 for 38,896 dwelling units -- agrees well with the Bureau's figure. The gist of the survey is given below:

Rented and vacant dwelling units by type of structure and rent classes - Washington, D.C.  
(Source: Public Utilities Commission Survey, January, 1934)

Range of Rent	Number of Dwelling Units			Total	% of Total Dwelling Units
	Houses	Larger Apartments	Smaller Apartments		
Under \$20	8510	--	92	5402	15.9
\$20 to \$30	7541	118	472	8131	20.9
\$31 to \$40	10282	3038	825	14401	37.1
\$41 to \$50	2020	2045	84	4149	10.9
\$51 & over	2104	889	--	2993	7.8
Total	31907	3886	1185	36878	100.0

• What did they get for their money? Pitifully little, the housing census indicates. "Houses renting below \$35 per month are, with few exceptions, dilapidated, lacking modern conveniences, or located in the most undesirable environments," the Commission reported. "A large number of these homes are probably at this time in process of condemnation. It can be asserted with the greatest conviction that there are few houses fit for human habitation to be found vacant in the District of Columbia for less than \$35 per month for white tenants and \$30 for Negroes."

• The following table shows the cost of space in modern apartment buildings for white tenants in January, 1934. Such high rentals lead in many cases to serious overcrowding.

1 room & bath, no kitchen.....	\$25 to \$30
1 room & bath, kitchen.....	\$30 to \$40
2 rooms, kitchen & bath.....	\$40 to \$50
3 rooms, kitchen & bath.....	\$50 to \$60
4 rooms, kitchen & bath.....	\$65 to \$125

• How do Washington rents compare with rates elsewhere? They are about one-third higher than the average rental in other cities. In November, 1934, the rent index for the Capital was 95.4 as against 64.4 for 32 representative towns, according to Labor Department figures. Here are some specific comparisons:

• In Real Property District No. 1, which includes such typical cities as Trenton, Providence, and Portland, Me., 70 percent of the rental units could be had for less than \$30. District No. 2, which takes in Cleveland, Richmond, Va., and Wilmington, had 74 percent of its units available under \$30. In District No. 4, including Decatur, Peoria, Racine, and Indianapolis, 83 percent fell below this level. In Washington, however, only 35 percent of the rental units could be had for less than \$20.

• Since this survey was made, the number of federal employees in the District has increased more than 20 percent -- and rents have soared in proportion. The upshot is that many government workers either are living in quarters hardly better than slums, or else are paying exorbitant prices to escape them. They literally have no other choice.

• Federal employees, however, are living on velvet in comparison with the city's lower-paid laborers. Repeated efforts to mop up the slums have failed, chiefly because of the complete lack of low-rent homes into which to move their inhabitants. The average slum-dweller cannot afford to pay more than \$10 or \$12 a month for rent. Yet there were only 68 houses available for white families at less than \$20 a month, the Public Utilities Commission discovered in its 1934 census. (Today the figure is considerably smaller). Negro houses were more plentiful, with 654 being listed at a rental of less than \$20. In both classes the number of homes with even the most primitive sanitary arrangements was negligible.



Sanitary system --- laundry, toilet, and water supply.



Property values tumble when this kind of neighbor moves in.



American homes.



Three reasons why Washington taxpayers spend nearly a million dollars a year on public health and hospital services.

• Human costs are even more serious. "Bad housing and criminal tendencies go hand in hand," the Commission reported. "The account of children who have never had a chance because of conditions of their home life and the lack of normal cleanliness might be extended to great length." Police figures show that both crime and juvenile delinquency reach their peak in the slum areas. Of all juvenile probationers, for example, 72 percent come from crowded or congested homes.

• The health of thousands of children also is slighted by slum conditions. Washington's tuberculosis death rate, to cite only one instance, is six times as high as its traffic fatalities; and the great majority of these deaths occur in congested neighborhoods. Dr. Charles R. Halley recently told health officials that "it is safer to be born a calf in Montgomery county than a child in Washington" so far as tuberculosis is concerned.

• The inability of private enterprise to take care of the situation has been demonstrated over a long period of years. Low-cost housing is not an emergency need, although emergency accentuates it. In its recommendations the Public Utilities Commission outlined the only effective remedy.

• Slum clearance and resettlement, it declared, "cannot be accomplished if the buildings are erected under speculative conditions, and the management subordinated to the selfishness of speculative or promotional interests. The construction of low-cost housing... should be undertaken only in conjunction with a plan for systematic inspection and careful management of the flats or houses. By this plan two important economic groups of the city's population may be served: the low-paid government employee and the poor residents of the alley slums."