

of his own downfall as the deterioration of the community follows its natural course.

Any individual who would live beyond his means, voting himself into a home which he cannot afford, is not a desirable neighbor for those who adhere to the concepts of private ownership and control of property. A person who will swallow his self-respect in order to live in subsidized housing may be expected to evade his other obligations and responsibilities in a similar manner.

High-Cost Public Housing

PUBLIC HOUSING is sometimes thoughtlessly, or maybe willfully, described as "low-cost government housing." Though it may be low-rent housing to the subsidized tenant, it is not low-cost by any acceptable method of accounting.

The late Senator Taft said: "I have not any doubt that as a general thing it probably is more expensive and usually does cost the government more to build than a private person."³ And he might well have added that the costs to the government are always assessed in one way or another as taxes to be paid by private persons.

³ U. S. Congress, Senate, *Housing and Urban Redevelopment*, Hearings before Subcommittee on Housing and Urban Redevelopment, 79th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2100.

Senator Taft's conclusions probably were influenced by page after page of sworn testimony before Congressional committees, comparing the record of private and public construction costs. For instance, "the average construction cost of new privately financed nonfarm dwelling units started in the United States in the first 9 months of 1948 was \$7,640, whereas the average publicly financed unit cost was \$9,350."⁴ A Senate subcommittee study of public housing in Washington, D. C., revealed that private enterprise can build at a cost of from 25 per cent to 40 per cent less than the public housers.⁵

It stands to reason that private builders, who must bear the cost and responsibility of their own mistakes, would be more efficient than those who plan and then keep changing their plans at the taxpayer's risk and expense. It is not that private industry doesn't perform the actual construction job on a public project; the difference is that they do the job under the added handicap of governmental rules and regulations, with the added overhead of gov-

⁴ U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Housing Act of 1949*, Hearings before Committee on Banking and Currency, 81st Congress, 1st Session, p. 458.

⁵ *Public vs. Private Housing*, National Industrial Conference Board, March, 1945; also *The Answer to Public Housing*, Home Builders Assoc. of Metropolitan Washington, Washington, D. C., 1945, p. 8.