

U. S. Cities Improving

Social rather than physical problems are one of the most pressing issues in cities

► "AMERICAN CITIES are more livable today than they have ever been. To say they are about to collapse is nonsense," said Dr. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former Secretary of Labor and now director of the Harvard-Massachusetts Institute of Technology Joint Center for Urban Studies in Boston.

Dr. Moynihan also said that \$250 billion in Federal aid to cities over the next 10 years is "not a crazy figure, it is almost modest," in view of this country's increasing wealth.

Detroit's Mayor Jerome Cavanagh told a recent Senate subcommittee that American cities will need at least \$250 billion by 1976 to spark their rebirth.

Cities do have some pressing problems, but Dr. Moynihan believes they are primarily social rather than physical. And the nation is financially capable of handling them, he told SCIENCE NEWS.

He said that by 1975, the gross national product should be about one trillion dollars. Between now and then the

nation will realize a yearly increase of a quarter billion dollars. All told, Dr. Moynihan said, that comes to an increase of 2,500 to 3,000 billion dollars in the next 10 years.

To spend a tenth of that or \$250 billion in cities where 70% of the people now live is therefore not so amazing, he said.

Although Dr. Moynihan believes cities are getting better, not worse, he pointed out three areas where money is needed to solve pressing problems.

The first is integrating the American Negro, he said. This means improving schools. "It will take whites a long time to see there is profit in sending their children to school with Negroes" Dr. Moynihan said. "We are not going to bring about integration unless we improve the schools available to everyone, whites as well as Negroes."

The second problem is an old one—providing a stable family structure within the urban environment.

The United States is the only in-

dustrial democracy in the world not to provide a monthly income supplement to its families, Dr. Moynihan said. In Canada a three-child family receives a supplement of about \$36 to \$40 each month—a program which has been instrumental in reducing Canada's school dropout problem, he said.

"We must see that we do not have large numbers of extremely poor families living in cities," Dr. Moynihan said.

The third problem is urban ugliness. "It is almost certain that cities will face the fact they have become needlessly ugly, with a jumble of signs and such," Dr. Moynihan remarked.

As more Americans become better educated, they will realize the cities look shoddy, he said, just as they discovered about five years ago that they had better clean up the rivers. "It was not until the middle class began to take power boats out on the rivers that the move to clean up pollution began," he said.

The Joint Center which Dr. Moynihan heads is currently engaged in two major urban research projects—one in Boston, the other in the new Venezuelan city of Ciudad Guayana. Early this year the Ford Foundation granted the center \$1.4 million to expand its work.

CRIMINOLOGY

Winter Months Highest In Violent Crime

► CITY streets on winter nights apparently offer the highest risk for criminal assault, according to a study of victims reported to a national gathering of sociologists.

The most frequent victims of violent crime are strangers rather than relatives and the motive is usually profit, Dr. Stephen Schafer of Northeastern University, Boston, Mass., found in a survey of 721 prison inmates of Florida in 1963.

His study, reported to the American Sociological Association meeting in Miami, Fla., was limited to the three major violent crimes of murder, aggravated assault and violent theft. It was one of three papers prepared for the National Crime Commission, which is currently engaged in determining the extent of victimization in the United States.

The fact that most violent thefts occur during the winter may stem from greater financial need at that time, Dr. Schafer noted in his study.

Contrary to expectation, Dr. Schafer found that men were victimized more often than women. However, this simply indicates the importance of theft among the violent crimes.

The National Crime Commission has noted that murder and rape have barely kept pace with population growth.

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